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Kazakhstan



February inflation made 0.8 %

February inflation in Kazakhstan in 2007 made 0.8 % and from the beginning of the year - 1.9 %. According to the statistics agency, in February, price for articles of food grew by 1%, nonfoods - by 0.2 %, paid services - by 1.1 %.

As it was informed earlier, in January, 2007 inflation in Kazakhstan made 1.1 %, from the beginning of the year - 1.9 %. Prices for articles of food have increased by 2.6 %, nonfoods - by 0.5 %, paid services - by 2.2 % within two months. - *Source: Kazakhstan Today*

Kyrgyzstan



Kyrgyzstan bans poultry imports from Russian regions

According to the source at the Kyrgyz Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry, the Kyrgyz authorities have imposed a temporary ban on the import of poultry products from Russia's Moscow and Krasnodar regions, where bird flu cases were registered.

The republic's veterinary services have been instructed to toughen control over the quality of Russian poultry exports. No bird flu cases have been registered in Kyrgyzstan.

Aside from preventive measures at poultry farms, Kyrgyzstan banned bird hunting season last spring. No information about the authorities' decision to impose a similar ban this spring has been reported yet. - *Source: Kyrgyz National News Agency*

Kyrgyzstan is ready to sign treaty on WTO – Ukraine's first Deputy Prime Minister

Kyrgyzstan is ready to sign a protocol on access to markets of goods and services with Ukraine to facilitate its efforts to secure admission into the World Trade Organization, Ukraine's first Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister Mykola Azarov announced.

"The government of Kyrgyzstan officially informed us that it is ready to sign the final protocol", - he said. In his words, this step of the Government of Kyrgyzstan is a result of conducted negotiations of the leaders of two states. - *Source: Kyrgyz National News Agency*

Veterinary surgeons of Kyrgyzstan prepare for spring passage of birds, which may become carrier of "bird flu"

According to the Deputy Director of the Veterinary Department - Talantbek Usenaliev Veterinary surgeons of Kyrgyzstan prepare for spring passage of birds, which may become carrier of "bird flu".

"We know regions, where the birds are staying. Every region is under control of the country's veterinary service. Besides, the Central Laboratory's Department of Virology and other departments are ready to determine pathological material if suddenly there appear danger of bird flu infection", - said T.Usenaliev.

He said that all battery farms have received instructions to work in closed regime. However, there are no vaccines in Kyrgyzstan against "bird flu" as it costs very expensive for the country. "At the moment we are working with the World Bank in order to acquire vaccines", - emphasized T.Usenaliev. It is necessary to note that a "bird flu" project under the patronage of WB work in the country. According to the project's

plan, WB has already presented special equipment and personal protection equipment to the veterinary department. Collaborators of the department received vaccination against “bird flu”. - *Source: Kyrgyz National News Agency*
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Kyrgyzstan's GDP in February increased by 3.6% in comparison with 2006

Kyrgyzstan's GDP has increased by 3.6% in comparison with similar period of the last year (13.588 billion som). It amounts to 6.3% without taking into account of “Kumtor” gold-field (12.856 billion som). The consumer price index against December 2006 has increased by 1.9%.

Industrial production fell 4% year-on-year in the first two months of the year to 8.62 billion som. - *Source: Kyrgyz National News Agency*

Tajikistan



Tajikistan introduces restrictions on imports of poultry

Tajikistan has introduced temporary restrictions on poultry imports from Russia, Turkey, Japan, China, Thailand, Iran and Pakistan due to recent outbreaks of the deadly H5N1 virus in those countries.

The two-month ban is a part of tougher control measures launched earlier this month, and would cover imports of eggs, poultry meat and poultry products.

Simultaneously, Ukraine's veterinary control department has banned poultry imports from Russia's Kaluga Region because of bird flu and from Japan's Toyama prefecture following an outbreak of Newcastle bird disease. Russia's food safety watchdog stated that a bird flu outbreak that hit Moscow and the Moscow Region on February 10 had been contained and its reoccurrence in the future was highly unlikely. Until then, outbreaks have occurred only in southern provinces and in Siberia, while Russia recorded its first cases of avian flu in August 2005.

The watchdog said Tajikistan's ban is irrational, as it includes poultry from all Russian territory and not from those regions where bird flu cases have been registered. - *Source: Poultext*

Domestic producers need help

Some economists in Tajikistan are backing plans to introduce protectionist measures, arguing that this could help domestic producers prepare for when they have to compete on the world market. Tajik parliament is reviewing a draft bill drawn up by the Ministry for Economic Development and Trade which aims to protecting local producers from foreign competition.

Locally-produced goods often remain unsold because of their high manufacturing cost, hence the need for a new law. Preferential terms and protectionist measures should stimulate production, said the source, adding that this will help curb inflation, create new jobs and increase tax revenues.

Economist Sodik Ismoilzoda is in favour of the measures, arguing that the most vulnerable economic sectors - agriculture and textiles - should be targeted first. He suggests that local producers should be given a 15 per cent discount on the export price of cotton.

Other commentators caution that any protectionist measures will have to be in line with the requirements of the World Trade Organisation, WTO, which is broadly anti-protectionist. The Tajik government has been conducting membership negotiations with the WTO over the last few years, and has started harmonising its legislation with WTO requirements. Parliament has already passed laws cutting customs duties, a measure which will open up the Tajik market to manufacturers in other WTO members.

Larisa Kislyakova, Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Trade, said that in spite of the country's WTO ambitions, local producers should retain a privileged position and the state should use the negotiations to insist on a long transition period to help them become more competitive in export markets. - *Source: Institute for war & peace reporting*