

**Distinguished Fellow Lee Kuan Yew awarded highest honour by President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan**



Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerlan Baudarbek Kozhatayev (left) with former Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew at Istana

Many leaders admire Singapore's former Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew. They include leaders in Africa such as Paul Kagame, South East Asia and also Russia and Central Asia. The reasons are obvious: strong economic growth, political stability, the rule of law, and individual and media freedoms all within a harmonious multi-ethnic society with numerous languages and religions. Such societies are well-served by shrewd and visionary leadership.

One such admirer is President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, one of the longest-serving leaders in Asia. Now 72, he has been the President of Kazakhstan since independence in 1991. He frequently mentions Lee Kuan Yew's legacy and philosophy in his speeches to the public and government. In his book "The Kazakhstan way", President Nazarbayev, referred to Lee Kuan Yew and former French president Charles de Gaulle as the two "eminent founding statesmen", whom he respects as good examples. Besides the admiration and respect there is a deep friendship between the two leaders. Lee Kuan Yew visited Kazakhstan in 1991 and made subsequent trips in 1996 and 2003 to boost bilateral relations, while Nazarbayev visited Singapore also in 1996 and 2003.

On February 21<sup>st</sup> President Nazarbayev awarded Lee Kuan Yew one of the highest state honors "Order of Friendship" and the medal commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence in recognition of the contributions Singapore has made to Kazakhstan. Other recipients of the award were United Nations Secretary-general Ban Ki Moon and Thai princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The award and the medal were presented by Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerlan Baudarbek Kozhatayev, on behalf of

the Kazakh Government, as recognition of the valuable contribution Singapore has made by sharing its strategic development lessons with Kazakhstan.

One of Singapore's most effective policies is the tremendous investment into education which has changed people's lives and transformed the country. A similar policy has been implemented by the Kazakh Government, under President's initiative and includes awarding "Bolashak" scholarships to students pursuing a degree at prestigious universities all around the world. On January 26, 2012 while addressing the public, the President instructed the government to select best candidates for the State cadre reserves and prepare them as elite managers to lead Kazakhstan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Under President Nazarbayev's initiation the Government of Kazakhstan is establishing the first world-class international Nazarbayev University, in the capital Astana. Some of the best universities in the world are taking part in this historic event including the Lee Kuan Yew School of NUS, University College London, Duke University Fuqua School of Business, Wisconsin-Madison, iCarnegie, affiliate of Carnegie Mellon University, and University of Pennsylvania. President Nazarbayev's long-term vision is to produce strong and elite generation of Kazakh leaders and policy makers, scientists and medical doctors to make the country one of the leading tigers in Central Asia by 2030. It is not just education but many other policies that are adopted from Singapore and tailored to country's needs. These include building a strong civil service, reforms in medical, pension and judiciary and law enforcement systems, diversification of industrial and innovative projects and infrastructure development.

The number of our Executive Education Alumni from Kazakhstan reached 200 and includes current Prime Minister Karim Massimov and his cabinet members, vice ministers and executive secretaries. Lee Kuan Yew School is proud to be an active and strategic partner of Nazarbayev University and help to produce the next generation of leaders and policy makers.

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