

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Aga Khan visits Central Asia



Central Asia, October 2008 - His Highness the Aga Khan completed a nine-day tour of three central Asian nations during which he met with top government officials, visited projects of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and addressed gatherings of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

The official central Asia trip marking the Aga Khan's Golden Jubilee year included visits to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

In Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, the Aga Khan met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev and visited the future site of Tekeli Campus of the University of Central Asia (UCA) – a regional educational establishment that will also feature campuses in Khorog, Tajikistan and Naryn, Kyrgyzstan.

In Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the Aga Khan met with President Emomali Rakhmon and toured the construction sites for the city's Ismaili Centre and the luxury Serena Hotel – part of AKDN's broad programme of development in the country. The Aga Khan also travelled to Khorog, in the heart of the Pamir Mountains, where he addressed gatherings of his Ismaili followers and toured the site of the UCA's Khorog campus.

In the Kyrgyz Republic – the final leg of the Aga Khan's Central Asia visit – His Highness met with Prime Minister Igor Chudinov and travelled to the mountainous Naryn region, home to the third UCA campus.

In public speeches and encounters with officials throughout the trip, the Aga Khan expressed gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him in Central Asia and praised the region's determination to safeguard stability and improve the lot of its people. Discussions with top-ranking officials focused on ways in which the Aga Khan Development Network could work with the Central Asian governments to help them cope with the negative effects of the global financial crisis.

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