

《Belt, Road outcomes await Xi》

Visit to Kazakhstan expected to yield harvest of cooperation

President Xi Jinping's upcoming trip to Kazakhstan, beginning on Wednesday, is expected to bring more outcomes of cooperation on jointly building the China-proposed Belt and Road, analysts said.

At the invitation of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Xi will make a state visit to the country. During the four-day trip, he will also attend the 17th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the opening ceremony of Astana Expo 2017, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Friday.

The wide support from the international community for the Belt and Road Initiative was highlighted by the successful Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, held last month in Beijing.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, proposed by Xi in 2013, aim to boost interconnectivity and free trade between Asia and the rest of the world through reviving the ancient Silk Road trade routes.

Kazakhstan witnessed the initiative's origination when Xi, in a speech in September 2013 at Nazarbayev University in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, proposed building the Silk Road Economic Belt. Last month, Xi and Nazarbayev met in Beijing on the sidelines of the Belt and Road forum.

It will be Xi's third state visit to the western neighbor. Xi and Nazarbayev have met with each other 15 times in recent years.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Kazakhstan has played a positive role in working with China to implement the initiative. In 2014, the two countries signed documents to enhance cooperation under the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Xi and Nazarbayev have expressed willingness many times during their meetings to connect Kazakhstan's "Bright Road" economic policies with the Belt and Road Initiative.

Xi, in his keynote speech at the opening of the Beijing forum, said, "We have enhanced coordination with the policy initiatives of relevant countries, such as the Eurasian Economic Union of Russia, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, the Bright Road initiative of Kazakhstan."

Kazakhstan's advantage of geographic location has made the country an important partner for building the Belt and Road, said Jin Yong, a professor of international relations at Communication University of China.

As an inland nation, Kazakhstan could export its products through maritime routes by cooperating with Chinese seaports, he said.

Xing Guangcheng, a senior researcher on Russian and Central Asian studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "Xi's visit to Kazakhstan can have positive effects on building the Belt and Road amid China's efforts to boost regional interconnectivity."

China should make full use of the platform of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to push forward the construction of the Belt and Road, he added.

