

Kazakh-British joint venture to explore a series of partially studied reserves

Astra Mining Ltd, one of the first companies to be registered at the Astana International Finance Centre, is a Kazakh – British exploration mining company based in Nur-Sultan and London.

The joint venture will explore a series of partially studied reserves over the next 3-5 years. Astra Mining is the third international exploration company to have this relationship with KazGeology, the first two are Rio Tinto and Yilmaden.

Recent changes in Kazakh legislation introduced the Western Australian model and the establishment of the Astana International Financial Centre with its International Court of Arbitration and the Astana Financial Services Authority. This makes the long-neglected sector of the Kazakh economy a major driving force to increase FDI into Kazakhstan to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars over the next few years.

The Department of Subsoil Use which is part of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development has made great efforts to engage with international exploration companies and to ensure a transparent process of meeting with company officials and experts to properly prepare the application documents. Astra Mining is now applying for a series of exploration licenses focused on gold, platinum and palladium.

Astra Mining is the first British mining company to commit to scores of millions of dollars of investment over the next two years in exploration operations; their success, or failure, will provide a strong indicator for the British investment community. The relationship between the AIFC and the mining and exploration sectors demonstrates more opportunities to undertake investments.

Beijing Expo 2019 UK Garden and Pavilion partners announced

The Department for International Trade and the British Embassy in Beijing has announced learning company, Pearson, as a partner of the UK's Garden and Pavilion at the Beijing Expo 2019 as the Expo passes its halfway mark.

The UK's Garden and Pavilion offers students a chance to learn more about

British history, language and environmental technology. 450,000 people have already visited the UK's pavilion at this year's expo, 14% of all visitors to the Expo so far.

As lead sponsor of the pavilion, Pearson will organise a series of activities for visitors in the coming months, including the Young Ambassadors Skills Belt and Road activities, and English learning experience seminars for teachers and students focused on employability and STEM subjects.

On September 17 the UK will have a day to celebrate at the Expo, where Pearson will hold a tailored STEM workshop. This is part of the event's green-themed activities, where children will build sustainable greenhouses. Offering educational products and services, assessment, and professional development for all stages of learning, Pearson has 24,000 employees in 70 countries, with a significant presence in China. Its CEO John Fallon took part in a Skills Belt and Road International Talent Hub Programme workshop on a visit to China last June last year.

Pearson expect more than 20,000 students to participate in its workshops throughout the expo.

Richard Burn, DIT's HM Trade Commissioner for China said:

We are delighted to collaborate with Pearson at the Beijing Expo. Through this collaboration, we hope that Pearson will be able to introduce its world-leading education expertise to the visitors of our UK Garden and Pavilion, encourage innovation in education through its events, and help propagate broader ideas around sustainability.

Cynthia Granzo Nespoli, Senior Vice President of Pearson Corporate Affairs, said:

This is the first time that Pearson has showcased its brand and sustainability expertise with Chinese consumers in such a high profile way at the Beijing Expo in China. The Expo represents a milestone for our brand development, and gives us a platform to identify and build further sustainability and innovation opportunities between the UK and China going forward.

Royal Warrant holder and renowned British caterer's Mosimann's are also serving their seasonal menu at the UK Garden and Pavilion, including scones, strawberries and cream, and coronation chicken.

Earlier this month, BP was also brought on as a sponsor. BP is a major partner in China's growing energy market and earlier this year opened its first retail site in Shandong offering fast-charging for electric vehicles as part of its carbon-neutral operation.

Further Information

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Follow us: [@tradegovuk](https://twitter.com/tradegovuk) [gov.uk/dit](https://www.gov.uk/dit)
- Find out how to get to Beijing Expo 2019 and the UK Garden and Pavilion at horti-expo2019.org

Notes to editors

The Beijing Expo 2019

The Beijing Expo is the largest event taking place globally this year, running from 29 April to 7 October 2019. The theme for the UK Garden and Pavilion is 'Live Green, Live Better'.

Over 100 countries and international organisations are participating in this horticultural expo, alongside Chinese provinces, municipalities, commercial organisations and scientific and academic institutions. It will be hosted by the Chinese government and the Beijing Municipality.

It will be the biggest Horticultural Expo the world has seen with over 16 million visitors expected, of which 20% will be international, to the 500-hectare site.

[Commercial Gaming Industry Offers Creative Solutions to Defence Analysts](#)

Wargaming experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) are harnessing the creative talents of the commercial gaming industry to bring a novel approach to their work.

Several wargaming tools – based on strategy games which can be bought and played at home – offer an additional way of looking at combat strategy as well as being relatively easy to learn and operate.

It was this creative approach which led the UK to adopt commercial games for military-decision-support use, and Dstl has now placed a contract with a British video games firm. Wargaming experts from Dstl demonstrated the potential of the games with the Royal Navy, which is now trialling the use of one of the games for educational purposes.

Traditional analytical tools are often not as user-friendly as commercial games and can require significant experience to operate, being mainly focused on the algorithms over usability and engagement.

The tools will be enhanced for our purposes through gaming company

Slitherine, who publish popular games such as Command and Flashpoint Campaigns. These recreational products include huge maps of simulated battlefield areas and modelling of modern and historic combat operations, vehicles and weapons. The contract with the Epsom-based company is worth up to £1.5million over a 2-year period.

Nick, Principal Analyst at Dstl, said:

We work on computer-assisted wargaming and manual wargaming. I have played strategy video games myself – even some of the titles that we looked at for this project. They are generally easier to learn how to use and have far larger user bases than analytical defence simulations.

Of course there are things we can't use these for. Our own simulation modelling, as well as more traditional manual wargaming, is still vital. It's just another tool for the job.

We'll use these tools with our own data and scenarios to provide better ways of visualising military problems. The benefits are accessibility and ease of use, and the amount of existing users there are. For example, we've been able to train users quicker by going out to Dstl staff who have played these games and training them to use them in a professional capacity.

We're always looking for things to give us a wargaming edge. These games help us to think more creatively around issues.

Rob Solly, Division Head for Defence and Security Analysis said:

We are excited to be working with a non-traditional supplier such as Slitherine, supporting the UK's prosperity agenda. We are always looking for creative, collaborative solutions to the challenges of effective and user-friendly wargaming and simulation.

Dstl is recruiting software and wargaming experts to [work in this area](#).

[Dstl and Slitherine's Flashpoint platform](#)

[Commission for Countering Extremism publishes further eight academic](#)

[papers on extremism](#)

The independent Commission for Countering Extremism is today (31 July 2019) publishing eight peer-reviewed academic papers on the causes of extremism, extremism online, and approaches to countering extremism.

The papers cover the arguments on the causes extremism, the complex relationship between social media and extremism, as well as discussions on how to best counter extremism.

The academic papers are the views of the author and not necessarily the Commission's views.

The Commission will continue to publish evidence and analysis across the summer as it builds up to a report making recommendations on extremism for the Home Secretary.

On Friday 19 July, the previous Home Secretary announced plans for a refreshed counter-extremism strategy.

The new Prime Minister has put uniting the country at the heart of his vision.

Sara Khan today argues that if we are to unite the country, then we have to challenge extremism.

Lead Commissioner Sara Khan said:

I've held the most extensive national conversation on extremism. It has lifted the lid on a range of urgent concerns we must address.

I'm releasing some of the findings as we build up to our landmark report on extremism.

The public are fearful of violent extremism, but they are also deeply concerned about hateful extremism.

At the same time minorities are having their rights restricted.

And there is a wider context of intolerance and incivility, especially online.

To unite the country – and to protect our freedom and democratic principles – we have to address each of these issues.

Today, I am publishing eight academic papers covering the causes of extremism, social media and online extremism, and responses to extremism.

I want to thank the authors of these academic papers for their work, and for their contribution to our national conversation on

extremism.

Academic papers on what causes extremism

The moral ecology of extremism: a systemic perspective

Dr Noémie Bouhana, University College London

Author's summary:

Polarisation, social media, multiculturalism, economic strain, loss of political trust... The list of suspected drivers of extremism grows every day. How do we tell which of them really contribute to the risk of extremism? Why do some individuals seem more vulnerable to this risk than others? This paper answers these fundamental questions.

Drivers of extremism: global political antagonisms reproduced in Cypriot and Italian insurgencies

Dr. Charlotte Heath-Kelly, Reader in International Security, Political and International Studies, University of Warwick

Author's summary:

In this paper, Dr Heath-Kelly uses her interviews with militants from Italian and Greek-Cypriot struggles to show how international politics shapes local conflicts. Social movements respond to shifting norms on the global stage, using them to shape local struggles – claiming legitimacy for protest, resistance and even violence.

Academic papers on extremism online

Extremism online – analysis of extremist material on social media

Professor Imran Awan, Birmingham City University

Hollie Sutch, Birmingham City University

Dr Pelham Carter, Birmingham City University

Authors' summary:

This paper examines the role of extremism online and uses two primary studies to generate empirical evidence that examines the differences between general online discussion of extremism and

discussion inspired by offline events through the analysis of tweets and YouTube comments. We focus on two offline events (the Shamima Begum case and the New Zealand Christchurch terrorist attacks). Our findings suggest that increased anonymity is associated with an increase in extremist language, that conspiracy theory and media bias-based language is more common in response to offline events than general online discussion.

Exploring radicalisation and extremism online – an experimental study

Dr Mark Littler, University of Huddersfield

Author's summary:

This paper explores the relationship between exposure to online extremist content and social and political attitudes including support for violence. Analysis found no relationship between these phenomena, with work exploring the role of network proximity suggesting that the source of extremist content has little impact on social and political attitudes.

Academic papers on responses to extremism

Belief, attitude, and behaviour change: leveraging current perspectives for counter-radicalisation

Dr Kurt Braddock, Penn State University

Author's summary:

To effectively prevent vulnerable audiences from being persuaded by extremist ideologies, it is important to first understand the processes by which persuasion occurs independent of context. This paper describes multiple persuasion frameworks that have been utilized and studied in several other domains that can be applied to counter-radicalisation efforts.

Embedding human rights in countering extremism: reflections from the field and proposals for change

Dr Katherine E. Brown, Corresponding Author. Senior Lecturer in Islamic Studies, Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham

Professor Fiona De Londras, Chair of Global Legal Studies, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham

Jessica White, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science and International Studies, and Theology and Religion

Authors' summary:

Countering extremism (CE) programmes and policies have been criticised for infringing on human rights. The expanding remit of CE means that state and security agendas now infuse many more areas of 'ordinary living' than would previously been countenanced, with a disproportionate impact on socio-economically disadvantaged parts of society. Under such conditions extremist beliefs can inadvertently be affirmed, extremist behaviours strengthened and extremist modes of belonging and identity normalised. To help address this, this paper proposes the instigation of a rights-based approach to CE and of independent review of CE activities

Critiquing approaches to countering extremism via certain preventive measures

Professor Helen Fenwick, School of Law, Durham University

Author's summary:

This paper concerns the impact of the Prevent duty and accompanying Guidance in the education sector. It considers the argument that the duty leads to stigmatisation of Muslims, and could thereby have the counter-productive effect of deterring some Muslims from co-operating in counter-terror efforts, concluding that any such effect can be combatted.

Critiquing approaches to countering extremism: the fundamental British values problem in English formal schooling

Dr Diane Webber, Visiting Fellow, Georgetown University Center on National Security and the Law, Washington D.C

Dr Alison Struthers, Assistant Professor, University of Warwick School of Law

Authors' summary:

Teaching fundamental British values in schools to deter and counter extremism is seen as a central part of counter-terrorism policy. We critique the current approach, highlighting the more controversial aspects of the FBV agenda and point to other values frameworks more suited to the role of combatting extremism within schooling.

CMA recommends protecting prepayment energy customers beyond 2020

The prepayment price cap was put in place following the CMA's energy market investigation to protect customers from high prices as a result of not being able to switch suppliers as easily as other customers.

The cap was only due to be in place until the end of 2020, when it was expected that the roll-out of smart meters would be complete and increased competition would lead to lower prices.

The CMA's review assessed both the progress of smart meter roll-out and accuracy of the price cap, following the introduction of Ofgem's separate price cap for default tariff customers.

It now recommends that Ofgem should continue to protect prepayment customers once the CMA's cap expires, given that the full roll-out of smart meters will not have completed by 2020. This recommendation applies to the period from 1st October 2020.

The review has also found that Ofgem's default tariff price cap was set using more current and detailed data than that available to the CMA in 2016 when it was conducting its energy market instigation. As a result, the CMA has decided to adopt Ofgem's more recent methodology, resulting in an increase to the cap price with prepayment customers paying roughly £1 a week more based on current prices.

The adjustment is necessary to keep the cap accurate in today's market. The prepayment price cap will continue to protect customers from high prices and give them wider choice in the market by enabling suppliers to compete effectively below the cap. A price cap set too low may lead to suppliers leaving the market, reducing both competition and consumer choice. Even with revised level of the price cap, prepayment customers will still be protected from unnecessarily high prices.

The amendments to the price cap methodology will come into effect on 1 October 2019 when the price cap is re-calculated to take into account changes in the energy market during the last 6 months.

All information relating to the [prepayment price cap](#) is available on the case page.