
THE MONTH IN REVIEW – FEBRUARY 2001

KYRGYZSTAN

CITY COURT TRIES ASABA APPEAL

BISHKEK. February 1 Janyl Alieva, the judge of the Bishkek city court, began to try the appeal lodged by the opposition newspaper *Asaba*. MP Turdukun Usubaliev has sued the newspaper for regularly insulting him over the last 8 years. Usubaliev has claimed compensation of moral damage amounted 50 million soms (about USD 1 million). Usubaliev, 82, was the First Secretary of Kyrgyzstan's Communist Party Central Committee between 1961-1985. He is a parliament member since 1995. Last October the Leninsky district court convicted the newspaper and sentenced it to pay a 5 million soms (about USD 100,000) fine; and every journalist who has written something critical about Usubaliev is due to pay him 1,000 to 1,500 soms. //RFE/RL, 2.2.2001

PRO-GOVERNMENTAL JOURNALIST UNDER TRIAL

BISHKEK. Omurbek Tekebayev, Vice Speaker of the parliamentary Legislative Assembly, has sued Kalen Sydykova, a pro-governmental journalist. He has accused the journalist of lie. Sydykova wrote in an article published in *Argument* newspaper of October 27, that is two days before the presidential elections, that Tekebayev had interests in Baipak joint-stock company. The trial began on February 1. The same day Tekebayev told the RFE/RL correspondent that he withdrew his claim for 1 million soms compensation (about USD 21,000) and only demanded rejoinder to be published. According to Tekebayev, *Argument* was published without having been registered with the Ministry of Justice. //RFE/RL, 2.2.2001

INDEPENDENT TV COMPANY'S APPEAL NOT SATISFIED

OSH. An appeal by *OshTV* independent TV company against the resolution of the Bishkek court of arbitration has been dismissed. February 1, 2001, the appellate authority confirmed validity of the act issued by Kyrgyzstan's State Commission on Radio Frequencies (SCRF). As per this act *OshTV* should have to stop broadcasting on 5 meter channel and to switch to 23 decimeter one. The TV company decided to uphold the extension of the permission to operate the 5 meter channel TV transmitter till 2004 in court order. The company substantiated its decision by the fact that as per the law of the Kyrgyz Republic On Electric and Postal Communication the permission is issued for the same period of time as that of the TV and radio programs distribution license. In addition to switch to the decimeter channel a sum of USD 42,675 is needed (to equipment, materials, etc.), that is beyond its force. *OshTV*, one of the country's oldest independent stations, was licensed in March 1999 to operate TV transmitter for 23 decimeter channel for five years (till 2004) but for one year only (till 2000) for the 5 meter channel. Protests of the public and human rights agencies have resulted in the issue consideration in the Kyrgyz Republic President's Administration. Following this the State Commission has extended the execution of its decision up to July 1, 2000 and later the

National Communication Agency has extended the permission to use the 5th meter channel transmitter till the end of 2000. //Internews- Kyrgyzstan, 2.2.2001

TAJIKISTAN

INFORMATION EXCHANGE INTENSIFYING

An information exchange agreement has been signed between Khujand-based *Varorud* news agency and Tashkent-based Turkestan-press non-state news agency. Ilkhom Jalolov, *Varorud* agency director, is confident that the cooperation between the journalists of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is an important step in creating the joint information space in Central Asia.// Matluba Muzhammadzoda, Inter-press-service news agency.

JOURNALIST'S MEMORIAL DAY

A memorial day for Maksujon Huseinov, the early deceased well-known Tajik journalist, was held in Dushanbe on 26 February 2001, initiated by Tajikistan's Journalists Memory and Rights Protection Foundation. He died when he was 46 after having dedicated all his difficult life to journalism. Maksujon Huseinov had suffered brutal moral, psychological and physical pressure, especially during the civil war in Tajikistan. His colleagues-journalists and representatives of non-governmental and international organizations came to pay a tribute in memory of him. //Inter-press-service news agency.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

Three times they tried to dismiss Shamsiddin Orumbekov, a well-known journalist and the chairman of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region's (GBAR) TV and Broadcasting Committee. The first time, it was during the republican parliamentary elections: Orumbekov was condemned for supporting the candidates "undesirable" for the local hukumat (administration). Fortunately, the powers that time failed to find someone whom they would have been happy to have as the chairman of the TV and Radio Committee. The next time, the provincial hukumat clamoured around the fact that the local TV had only once showed the GBAR hukumat chairman during the broadcast covering the local hukumat's activities. Orumbekov was forced to write an application to resign of his own will. The entire staff of the committee rose up to defend the chairman. A general strike was envisaged. Orumbekov sustained his position. The third effort was a success. That time, Orumbekov was "promoted": he was appointed deputy head of the provincial chairman's department because it was said there was a lack of worthy specialists in documents editing. Orumbekov, just like all the Pamirians, had no alternative: it's a great problem in the Pamirs area to have a permanent job and maintain the family. According to unofficial data, Rukiya Davronshoeva, an amateur poetess having worked long time as a primary school teacher, had already been approved for that position. Davronshoeva had had one year of experience of working with the Ma'rifati Shugnon district newspaper and somewhat longer as the editor of Khorog town's newly opened newspaper Oinai Zindagi. Her candidacy was supposedly put forward due to the Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov's statements supporting national women managers. //Kurban Alamshoev, member of Tajikistan's Association of Independent Media.

DISMISSED FOR AN INTERVIEW

An interview Col. Abdurakhmon Rustamov, the chief of the GBAR department of interior, gave to local TV journalist Faiz Mirasanov became a sensation. However, that was not due to any scandalous denunciations. The main thing emanating from this interview was its tone: frank and natural. Rustamov is the first non-Pamirian Tajik appointed to this post during the last 15 years. Pamirians used to be appointed chiefs of the department of interior due to the region's difficult conditions, remoteness and high crime rate. Questions were asked during the interview about Rustamov's aims of working in the Pamir area, his credo and why he lived in the interior department building rather than in the town. Next day, at the hukumat session, the GBAR chairman deputies, K. Kadirov and N. Muborakshoeva, ordered the acting chairman of the Radio and TV Committee, N. Khairuloev, to dismiss Faiz Mirasanov who they believed was the cause of unrest in the region.// Kurbon Alamshoev, member of Tajikistan's Association of Independent Media.

UZBEKISTAN

DEUTSCHE WELLE TRAINS UZBEKISTAN'S JOURNALISTS

TASHKENT. A two-week training seminar on Radio Magazines held by Deutsche Welle radio station's Journalists Retraining Centre has begun in the International In-service Training Centre for Journalists. Radio journalists of the Uzbek TV and Radio Company and private FM radio stations participate in the seminar. The programme includes coaches' recommendations on how to make news reports, comments, interviews and radio reports. The participants will be informed about a range of concepts, words and methods which are new for them. The training seminar's special section will focus on how to compose radio magazines and their types (radio news magazine, actuality magazine, magazine for target groups of radio audience and theme magazine). This kind of radio journalism is especially popular in Germany, said Udo Preinzel, the seminar leader. This seminar is the third one; the previous two were held by Deutsche Welle's Journalists Retraining Centre for the Uzbek TV and Radio Company.//By Tatyana Yakovleva, *Inetrnews, Uzbekistan.*