



Socio-economic situation and prospects for the development of cities and villages of Turkmenistan on the territory of the Balkan velayat.

Report

Democratic Civil Union of Turkmenistan

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Socio-economic situation and prospects for the development of cities and villages of Turkmenistan on the territory of the Balkan velayat.

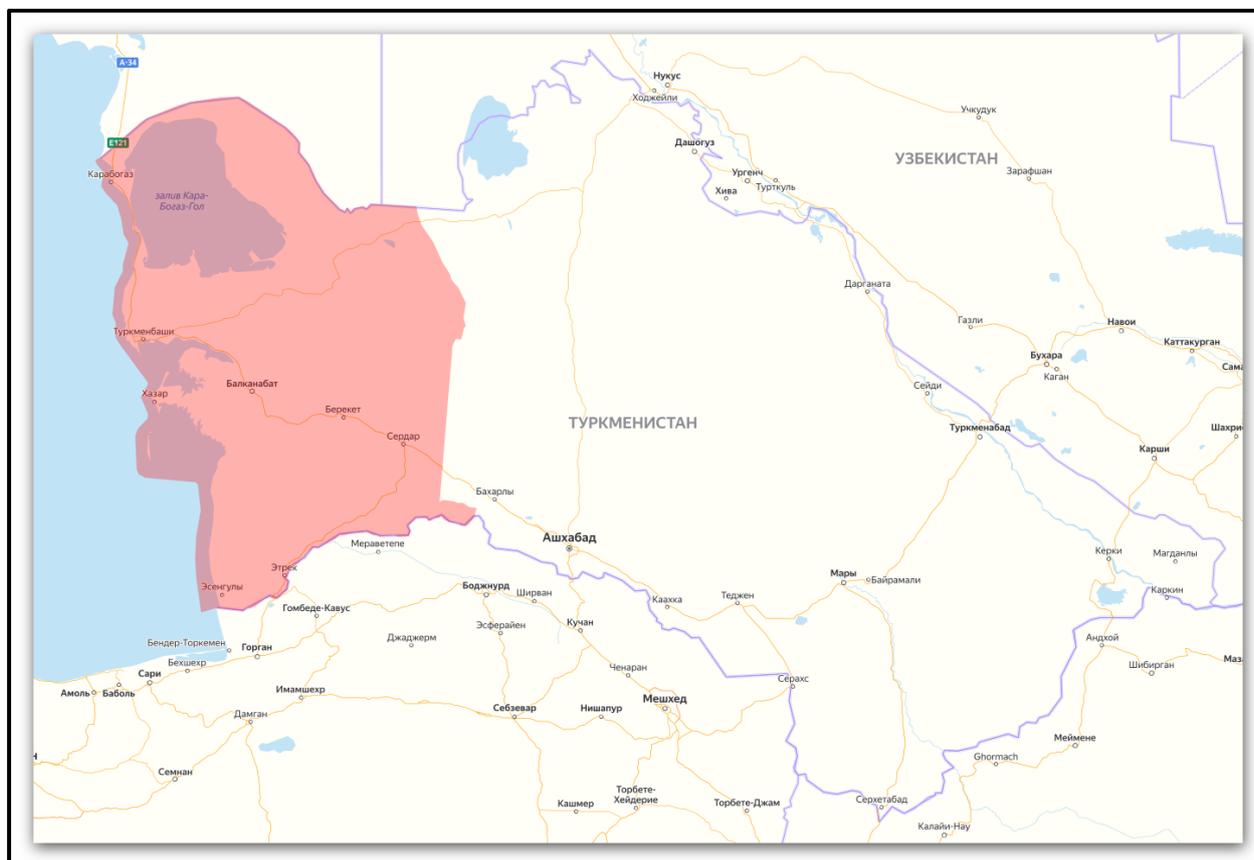


Illustration. Balkan velayat of Turkmenistan

Introduction

The proclamation of the beginning of the era of "Power and Happiness" in Turkmenistan required the authorities to develop and implement large-scale projects that confirm this statement for the population and the world community. For this purpose, the Balkan velayat was chosen as an indicative region, where, on the initiative of President K. Berdimukhamedov, pilot projects were developed for the implementation of Maksat Namasy - a large-scale nationwide 3-stage "National Program of socio-economic Development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030". Plans for the development of all sectors of the national economy, cultural and social spheres were spelled out in Maksat Namasy. Among them are plans for the economic and social recovery of small towns and villages for the period up to 2020¹, which have exhausted the infrastructure resources of the Soviet heritage and were in a deplorable state. These plans took a leading

¹ The national program of the President of Turkmenistan for the radical transformation of the social and living conditions of the population of villages, settlements, cities of etrap and etrap centers for the period up to 2020.

position in the first two stages of the national program². It was planned to make the active interrelation of economic and social aspects of regional development dominant in the social transformations of small towns and villages.

A number of large-scale projects implemented in the Balkan velayat became significant events of this time. Among them is the reconstruction of the administrative center of etrap (district) Esenguly, construction of the National Tourist Zone "Avaza", radical reconstruction of the existing capacities of the TKNPZ. In the same row, the opening of a new airport and a new International Seaport of Turkmenbashi, the laying of the North-South railway, the launch of innovative enterprises of the gas and petrochemical industry on the Krasnovodsk Peninsula and in the Kara-Bogaz-Gol zone, the construction of the Turkmen Lake in Karakum and the construction of an innovative village on its shore, which began in 2020. At the same time, most of the projects were implemented in the city of Turkmenbashi and on the territory of the eponymous etrap (district), which occupies half of the Balkan velayat to the north of the transnational railway crossing the country in the latitudinal direction from the Caspian Sea to the Amu Darya.

The choice of the western region as an illustration to the topic under consideration of the undertaken study is dictated by the same considerations that guided the Government of Turkmenistan in determining the place for the pilot run-in of national programs of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan. The presence of a developed industry, production and transport infrastructure, compact settlements in terms of the number of inhabitants and territory, ensured a high speed of project implementation and lower capital investments for their implementation.

The Balkan velayat occupies a special place among the administrative-territorial formations of the regional level. A distinctive feature of this velayat is its favorable geographical location. The eastern part of the Caspian Sea, where the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) was founded, has long been called the sea gate of Central Asia³, and the Turkmen Balkans – the Primorsky Territory. The velayat occupies 139.3 thousand square kilometers. This is almost the third part of Turkmenistan (28.5%) and the first place in the country in terms of occupied territory. Western Turkmenistan is rich in minerals⁴, natural energy resources, flora and fauna, and landscape diversity. The population of the velayat is one tenth⁵ of the population of the whole country. 4/5 of the population lives in the cities of the velayat. The share of industry accounts for 2/3 of the products produced in the region. On the scale of Turkmenistan, the manufactured goods of the Balkan velayat account for 22% of the country's GDP⁶ (gross domestic product). This figure is steadily growing.

There are six etraps, seven cities⁷, 16 urban-type settlements, 40 gengeshes⁸ and 136 villages in the Balkan velayat. The proposed analytical work presents the administrative centers of etraps: Esenguly (Hasan Kuli), Etrek (Kizil Atrek), Makhtumkuli (Kara Kala), Serdar (Kizil Arvat), Bereket (Kazanjik). The etrap of Turkmenbashi is considered separately together with the city of Turkmenbashi (Dzhanga), which was the administrative center of the Krasnovodsk district in the 20-50s of the last century and, according to tradition, has retained the status of the economic, cultural and historical center of the district to this day (not to be confused with Turkmenbashi-Krasnovodsk, a neighboring large city and port). At the beginning

² 2011-2015 and 2016-2020.

³ Central Asia-since Turkmenistan gained state independence.

⁴ Almost the entire periodic table is presented in the Kara-Bogaz-Gol Bay on the Caspian Sea.

⁵ 8 to 12%.

⁶ According to other sources – 25%

⁷ Their number is constantly growing by renaming settlements and villages by local authorities into "small towns", or, in Turkmen, - shakherchi. This is done in order to create a good picture of the sustainable urbanization of the region (country), but most importantly - to increase budgets and expand staff in towns and villages in connection with their acquisition of a new administrative and territorial status.

⁸ In Soviet times, the territory of village councils (possovets) with settlements, industrial infrastructure and agricultural land.

of Berdimukhamedov's reign, this entire territory became a testing ground for the run-in of the socio-economic development program of Turkmenistan proclaimed by him, using the example of the implementation of the strategic potential of the Primorsky region for the country. The program was supposed to confirm to the people and to the world community the Era of Power and Happiness that has come in Turkmenistan. For this purpose, the concept of socio-economic development of the Balkan velayat for 2008-2012 was approved. The concept tested in Western Turkmenistan has formed the basis for long-term reforms and continues throughout the country.

As a result of huge investments from budget funds and profits of enterprises of the public sector of the economy, dozens of socio – cultural and industrial facilities were built in the etrap (districts) of the Balkan velayat, in the city of Turkmenbashi and the administrative center of the Balkan velayat - Balkanabat.

In the first part of this report, the implemented projects are reflected in the administrative-territorial sequence of etrap and cities of the Balkan velayat, starting with the pilot project in shakherchi (urban-type settlement-village) Esenguly. And the second part analyzes the reasons why many projects have remained monuments of the ambitions of the President of Turkmenistan, and why many localities have remained aloof from large-scale, and mostly politically motivated transformations.

Part I. The construction of the Balkan facade of the Era of Power and happiness - a mirror of the socio - economic programs of President K. Berdimukhamedov⁹.

In March 2007, shakherchi (village) Esenguly¹⁰ and the eponymous etrap were chosen as the first indicative territory from which positive changes were to come to all corners of the country. Construction in the Esenguly etrap was carried out at a rapid pace¹¹.

In the village of Esenguly - the administrative center of etrap¹², a multimedia school for 500 seats and a kindergarten for 140 seats, a multidisciplinary hospital¹³ for 70 beds with a maternity ward and a health house¹⁴ were put into operation in a short time. A Palace of culture¹⁵, a shopping center, a seawater

⁹ The socio-economic programs attributed to Berdimukhamedov today, including "New Village", "Education", "Health", the development of physical culture movement and high-performance sports, the construction of the Avaza NTZ, the reconstruction and modernization of the TKNPZ, the seaport and other large-scale projects were formulated and implemented during Niyazov's presidency.

¹⁰ The village of Hasan-Kuli before becoming part of Russia with a fishing and livestock lifestyle. In Soviet times, it was transformed into the village of Hasan-Kuli. As part of the Krasnovodsk region and during its abolition, it was a rural, volost and district center. In the era of independence, it was transformed into the administrative center of the eponymous etrap. In 2016, it was renamed shakherchi Esenguly. In 2020, approximately about 9.5 thousand people lived in etrap.

¹¹ In March-December 2007, immediately after the inauguration of Berdimukhamedov, almost all the objects planned for construction in the urban village of Hasan-Kuli were commissioned, which indicates his predecessor as the author of the reconstruction of Hasan-Kuli within the framework of the "Village" program prepared by him.

¹² Esenguly. The status of the urban - type settlement since 1935. The name until 1933 was Hasan-Kuli. In May 2016, it was granted the status of a city.

¹³ The building of the central hospital of etrap. Before independence, it was the central district hospital.

¹⁴ The new building of the polyclinic. The total cost of the two medical institutions is 3 million 208 thousand 313.72 euros.

¹⁵ For 350 seats.

desalination plant¹⁶, a stadium and a sports and recreation complex were built. In addition, a modern administrative building of the etrap hyakimlik (executive authority) was built in the village of Esenguly. Comfortable residential houses (cottages)¹⁷ have become the hallmark of the social well-being of the village. Esenguly began to be called a symbol of the new Turkmen village.

The Esenguly etrap development project was launched in the spring of 2007 during Berdimukhamedov's¹⁸ first trip here. During the implementation of the project, more than 20 different objects were built. In 2008, in addition to social and cultural facilities, a new carpet factory building for 300 jobs was included in their number. The issue of creating an industrial-type fishing farm in etrap was resolved, small vessels (20 units) with tools for coastal fishing were purchased, a tender was announced for the construction of a complex for processing fish products with a production infrastructure¹⁹.

Simultaneously with the new buildings in the administrative center, construction was carried out in the villages of etrap. So, in Chekishlyar and Karadegish, modern schools for 240 places each came into operation.

The transformations in the gengeshliks²⁰ concerned mainly the distant prospects of their development and were more declarative in nature. This was supposed to radically improve living conditions in settlements near Keimir, Southern Kamyshlydzh, Akpatlauk, Korpedzhe, Shatut, Ekerem, Nebitlitzhe and other large oil and gas fields. From here, oil goes to the oil refinery in the city of Turkmenbashi, and natural gas goes to the Turkmenistan-Iran gas pipeline and the northern branch of the Turkmenistan-Europe interstate highway stretched along the Caspian coast along the route, Ekerem-Belek-Garabogaz. On the territory of the Esenguly etrap, it was planned to build a medium-capacity oil refinery and a modern seaport in the village of Ekerem, as well as laying railway branches from the transnational North-South steel highway to it and the village of Karadepe from the Etrek village of Madau. The Esenguly development programs involved the expressway from Balkanabat, laid through the settlements of Kumdag-Madau-Etrek to the Etrek village of Gudriolum²¹ on the border with Iran. The road was associated with plans for the revival, rise and development of rain-fed agriculture, animal husbandry and processing industries in the Esenguly and Etrek etrap.

In the etrap of Etrek²² and its administrative center²³ - the village of Etrek, socio-economic transformations began immediately after Esenguly. The incentive for this was the laying of the Bereket-Etrek section on the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway. With the implementation of this project, railway stations with modern track infrastructure, power supply, communications, bridges, passenger stations and office premises for road workers appeared near the Etrek villages of Danata, Dovlyar, Bugdaily, Balkui, Madau, Akjadepe.

In shakherchi Etrek, a kindergarten for one hundred kids, two dozen high-comfort residential buildings for families of railway workers, a station building and an original symbolic geographical and topographic access arch were erected according to standard projects.

For the maintenance of rolling stock at the Etrek station, a centralized relay protection point, a complex of fan depot facilities, loading and unloading platforms for receiving and sending large-capacity containers

¹⁶ With a capacity of 3000 thousand cubic meters per day.

¹⁷ Three residential 4-apartment buildings for civil servants.

¹⁸ To the village of Esenguly – the administrative center of etrap.

¹⁹ A production complex for breeding and processing commercial fish with a capacity of 50 tons per year, with a total cost (including VAT) of 10 million 994 thousand 999 US dollars.

²⁰ In Soviet times - the territories of possovets and village councils.

²¹ Güdürolum - on the administrative-territorial map of Turkmenistan.

²² Population of 11 thousand people, as of 2020.

²³ In Soviet times, the village of Kizil-Atrek, since 2016 - shakherchi Etrek.

have been built. In the system of engineering structures of the station, there is a turning circle with a lifting capacity of 280 tons for turning diesel locomotives and a platform for replacing wagon wheel pairs.

A checkpoint building has been erected and equipped at the Akyaila station on the border with Iran. The total length of the railway section Bereket (former Kazandzhik) - Etrek, together with side and additional tracks, is 325 km, of which the main highway is 256.5 km. The Etrek section of the North-South²⁴ railway is given great importance in the formation of new routes using the potential of TRACECA in the direction of Europe-Caucasus-Asia and the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman-Qatar²⁵ transport corridor. It is expected that the role of the Etrek etrap in the system of international transport links will increase even more with the launch of another new route, namely, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway, at full capacity.

In the administrative center and villages of the Makhtumkuli etrap²⁶, socio-economic reforms were launched four years after they began in the Esenguly etrap and shakherchi²⁷. A multimedia school for 500 students, a kindergarten²⁸ for 80 visits and a sports school for 365 seats were built there, similar to those in the neighboring Esenguly and Etrek etraps. A gas station with a capacity of 240 cars/hour and other facilities were also built there. The Sumbar plant for the production of drinking water from mountain springs and soft drinks was commissioned in the Daikhan association "Yenishch". A comprehensive school for 170 students has been opened in the village of Gagel of gengeshlik Yankel, and a new school for 240 places has been opened in the village of Yankel (the central estate of the eponymous gengeshlik). In the village of Gerkez – the birthplace of the Turkmen poet and philosopher Makhtumkuli - a park ensemble-museum dedicated to the Turkmen classic has been erected and equipped.

A great event for the Makhtumkuli etrap²⁹ center was the construction and commissioning of the production complex named after the Hero of Turkmenistan, mother of the first President of Turkmenistan Gurbansoltan Eje on its territory. The complex consisted of factories - clothing and footwear, with an annual capacity of half a million pairs of leather shoes and three million seven hundred thousand pieces of finished garments. The construction of a light industry enterprise, which, as expected, would employ eight hundred people, cost Turkmenistan six million 850 thousand US dollars, which, according to experts, should have paid off within three and a half years.

In the Serdar etrap³⁰, innovative transformations of cities and villages of the Balkan velayat were marked by the diversion of an additional channel from the bridge on the 969th kilometer of the Karakum River in 2008. A new 38-kilometer canal was laid in the direction of the Daikhan associations "Goch", one named after Azadi, one named after Niyazov, "Purnuar", in order to expand the irrigated land here by 20 thousand hectares and water the fields of the neighboring Bereket etrap³¹ for the intensification of crop

²⁴ Uzen (Kazakhstan) – Serkhetyaka – Kyzylgaya – Bereket - Etrek (Turkmenistan) – Gorgan (Iran).

²⁵ The agreement on its creation was signed in Ashgabat in April, 2011.

²⁶ The former district of Kara-Kala of the Krasnovodsk region with the administrative center in the village of Kara-Kala, which was renamed the village of Makhtumkuli, which received the status of a city (shakherchi) in 2016. The population is 14 thousand people.

²⁷ At that time, the administrative center of the Makhtumkuli etrap was an urban - type settlement.

²⁸ In 2008-2012, 25 schools and kindergartens of a new model were built in the Balkan Velayat. In the following years, the number of school and preschool education facilities under construction and put into operation has significantly decreased. By 2020, there was a clear shortage of places in schools and preschool institutions (the coronavirus pandemic showed this).

²⁹ The former village of Kara-Kala.

³⁰ The former Kizil-Arvat district with the center in the urban-type settlement of Kizil-Arvat, which received the status of a city in 1935. During the years of independence, it was renamed the city of Serdar. By 2020, the population of etrap has approached 90 thousand people.

³¹ The former Kazanjik district.

production and animal husbandry. The irrigation facility with a capacity of 20 cubic meters of water per second was associated with the arrangement of new villages, the creation of new jobs.

At the same time, the construction of industrial, municipal and socio-cultural facilities has begun in the city of Serdar. The list of particularly significant objects was headed by the building of the hyakimlik (city hall) of the city with a conference hall for 300 seats and a dining room of the same capacity. The city has acquired a shopping center with an open market-bazaar and a parking lot. The building of the center houses the offices of entrepreneurs - mainly individuals (individual enterprises).

A new building was built in the city for a carpet factory, which was called the enterprise of artistic carpet making. The factory is designed to employ 500 people, mainly young women and girls. The productivity of the enterprise is five thousand m² of carpets and carpet products.

Among the new production facilities is a complex for the production of 50 thousand tons of flour per year, with an elevator for storing 50 thousand tons of grain³². In addition, a new railway station and a passenger station "Serdar" were built. The Serdar bus station with a passenger station has been put into operation.

The socio-cultural block of objects erected in the city of Serdar includes a house of culture for 500 seats³³, a school of carpet making and fine arts³⁴ for 300 seats, a kindergarten for 160 seats and secondary schools³⁵. A real gift for the city was a stadium with three thousand seats, a sports and recreation complex and a swimming pool. Two 16-apartment 2-storey houses and two 32-apartment 4-storey residential buildings of improved layout were built. A new infectious diseases hospital has been put into operation.

Municipal facilities in Serdar have been replenished with modern sewage treatment facilities, overpass overpasses on railway tracks and mudflow branches, which have increased the safety of people and improved the environmental situation in the city, which is prone to natural floods from the mountains during heavy rains.

In the Bereket etrap³⁶, the prescribed items of the directive program for the radical transformation of the social and living conditions of cities and villages were carried out according to almost the same patterns as in the neighboring districts in the south of the Balkan velayat. In the city of Bereket, during the implementation of the program, an artistic carpet weaving enterprise³⁷, a sewing factory³⁸, telephone stations, electric substations, a kindergarten³⁹, secondary schools⁴⁰, a cultural center⁴¹, a polyclinic⁴², a hospital⁴³, markets, shopping centers, a sports and recreation complex, four 2-storey 8-apartment residential buildings and other industrial and socio-cultural facilities were put into operation. The new

³² The total cost of the object is 19 million 700 thousand euros.

³³ With a library, exhibition and dance halls, an auditorium for 500 seats, an orchestra pit, recording and choreography studios, computer courses, a conference hall, a library and a dining room for 130 seats.

³⁴ The school, designed mainly for the training of future carpet makers, has opened additional classes in painting, sculpture, jewelry, music and theater arts.

³⁵ Two schools for 600 students each and one for 320 student places. A sports school with 350 seats has been built in the village of Janakhir.

³⁶ The former Kazandzhik district with the administrative center in the village of Kazandzhik, which received the status of a city in 1939. In the era of independence, it was renamed the city of Bereket. The population of etrap exceeded 35 thousand people in 2020.

³⁷ Carpet factory for 120 jobs with a capacity of two thousand square meters of products per year.

³⁸ For 150 workplaces with a capacity of 600 thousand pillowcases and sheets per year.

³⁹ Kindergarten in the city of Bereket for 160 kids.

⁴⁰ Two schools, with 520 and 340 seats, are equipped with interactive multimedia, language and computer classes.

⁴¹ With a concert hall for 400 seats, a library and creative studios, like in Serdar.

⁴² Health house for 100 visits per day.

⁴³ A multidisciplinary medical center with 130 beds.

manufacture was the production of iodine products at the enterprise with a capacity of 300 million 500 thousand packages per year⁴⁴.

In addition, a new post office building with a telephone exchange for 1000 subscribers, an office of the city's hyakimlik, and a new hotel for 50 people has been built in Bereket. In the public utility service of the city, water and sewer networks, other engineering communications have been modernized. An intercity bus station with a parking lot has been built. A motor transport company with a large fleet of cars⁴⁵ has been opened to provide services to enterprises, institutions and the population. A new enterprise has been created - "Bereket Production Department" for the production of crushed stone, washed sand, gravel-sand mixture and other non-metallic building materials to cover the needs for the construction of roads, engineering structures, industrial, public and residential buildings.

As part of the presidential reforms, a poultry breeding complex was opened in the village in the Bereket etrap, designed to produce eight million eggs per year, keeping 50 thousand laying hens⁴⁶ and raising 400 thousand chickens per year.

The construction of the Uzen – Kyzyl – Kaya – Bereket – Etrek – Gorgan⁴⁷ transnational railway had a huge impact on the formation of priority directions in the modernization of the city infrastructure of Bereket. On the Turkmen section of the North-South railway, Bereket was assigned the role of a central junction station. In this regard, a new depot was built on the site of the locomotive depot built at the beginning of the twentieth century - the largest enterprise in the railway industry in velayat⁴⁸.

The city of Balkanabat⁴⁹, a major industrial and cultural center of Western Turkmenistan, **was also affected by the transformations.** Formally, the administrative centers of the velayats were not included in the list of settlements covered by the presidential program of social and household transformations of cities and villages until 2020. However, most of the budget funds, despite targeted program investment, were directed to the development of these centers. The capital of the Balkan velayat is no exception – a city of original architecture and thoughtful development of residential areas with a strict layout on the cardinal directions. Balkanabat is decorated with numerous parks, squares, monuments to the ancestors of Turkmen and the memorial of military glory named after the Hero of Turkmenistan Atamurat Niyazov. There are no industrial enterprises in the city – all of them are taken out of the city limits.

After gaining independence, the city began to be built up with modern buildings of the socio-cultural sphere, architectural and park complexes, and replenished with innovative urban engineering facilities. Before the implementation of the presidential program on the transformation of cities and villages of Turkmenistan until 2020, a gas turbine power plant⁵⁰ and a diagnostic center⁵¹ were put into operation in Balkanabat.

⁴⁴ The project cost of the new medical industry facility is 22 million US dollars. Annual production: 250 million iodine sticks, 50 million iodine pencils and 500 thousand dental tampons. The production uses local raw materials – Turkmen cotton and iodine-bromine waters.

⁴⁵ 70 motor transport units.

⁴⁶ Having a replacement fund of seven thousand elite chickens.

⁴⁷ On the Turkmen map – Gürgen (Iran); in the Russian transcription - Gurgun.

⁴⁸ The shortest and most convenient route from Europe to the ports of the Persian Gulf, to South Asia and the Middle East passes through the Bereket station. The total length of the steel route, from the Kazakh steppes through the Western Karakum Mountains to the north of Iran to the mountainous province of Gulistan, is 900 km. The new Uzen – Bereket – Etrek – Esenguly will pass through the southern etraps of the Balkan velayat, rich in energy carriers and other raw materials.

⁴⁹ The former Nebit-Dag, the status of the city since 1946. The population in 2029 is about 95 thousand people.

⁵⁰ With a generation capacity of 126 megawatts.

⁵¹ With a channel capacity of 200 people per day.

In 2008-2009, the urban planning modernization of Balkanabat began. The Center for the Protection of Maternal and Child Health "Ene Myakhri", a new building of the historical and local history museum, a 2-storey shopping center with a multidisciplinary market⁵², a drama theater, a sports town⁵³ with a hotel and a stadium for 10 thousand seats, an equestrian complex with a racetrack, a sports and recreation complex and other facilities were built. The city was decorated with the buildings of the Palace of Culture, the Bagt Koshgi Wedding Palace, the hyakimlik and the 7-storey library⁵⁴ of the Balkan velayat. Two kindergartens⁵⁵, two multimedia schools, an educational complex with a 420-seat rehabilitation center for children with disabilities have been opened, and a "Health Path" has been laid.

Within the framework of urban transformations, large-panel construction of houses of the city housing fund was revived, departmental residential buildings⁵⁶ were erected, city streets and facades of old residential buildings were reconstructed, which gave a new modern look. The second gas turbine power plant of 254.2 MW was built and put into operation. The production of washed sand in the amount of 36.5 thousand cubic meters per year and expanded clay has been established.

A kaolin plant was opened in 2008 in **Jebel**⁵⁷, a suburban village of Balkanabat. In 2011, the largest cement plant in Turkmenistan was built with an annual capacity of one million tons of finished product. In 2014, a plant for packaging therapeutic mud and sea salt⁵⁸ was launched. A pharmaceutical enterprise for the production of iodine products was also put into operation there.

In the vicinity of Jebel, on the territory⁵⁹ under the jurisdiction of the Balkanabat city hyakimlik, there is a balneotherapy mud clinic Mollakara. The medicinal properties of the muds of the salt lake Mollakara have been known for a long time. Now on its shore, 24 km from Balkanabat, a whole resort village of Mollakara has appeared with two, three and six-storey residential and medical buildings, mud and water baths, a laboratory, physiotherapy, diagnostic and other departments. The funds included in the project estimates of the National Program for the Transformation of Cities and villages of the Turkmen hinterland until 2020 were allocated for the modernization of the sanatorium.

In the city of Khazar⁶⁰, the administrative center of the Cheleken Peninsula, during the implementation of the program for transforming the social and living conditions of cities and villages of Turkmenistan until 2020, about a dozen⁶¹ enterprises and industries of the oil and gas complex and the chemical industry operated. Of these, the city-forming centers were the Cheleken Chemical Plant, the carbon black plant,

⁵² With a project cost of 89 million manats; an area of 35 hectares, with 120 shops and more than 500 shopping sections.

⁵³ The project cost is 20 million US dollars.

⁵⁴ The cost is 78 million 375 thousand manats.

⁵⁵ For 160 seats each.

⁵⁶ Two 2-storey 18-apartment buildings, two 2-storey 16-apartment buildings, three 12-storey 96-apartment buildings commissioned by the State Corporation Turkmennebit.

⁵⁷ The urban – type settlement is 18 km from Balkanabat. In the media and official correspondence, they are often called, as we pointed out above, "shakherchi" - "town". The former center of extraction and grinding of table salt. The status of the urban – type settlement since 1940.

⁵⁸ An enterprise for the packaging of therapeutic mud with a capacity of 600 packages of finished products per hour and 3600 packages of sea salt per hour. During the year, the therapeutic mud workshop is able to produce 200 thousand packages of Mollakarin clay and 100 thousand packages of volcanic mud. The project cost is 10 million US dollars.

⁵⁹ It exceeds the area of the Cheleken Peninsula by four times. It extends from the town of Yaskhan in the north-east of Balkanabat to the coast of the Caspian Sea in the Turkmen Bay on the traverse of Ogurjali Island.

⁶⁰ The former urban – type settlement of Cheleken, received the status of a city in 1956. The population in 2020 is 25 thousand people.

⁶¹ This number has hardly changed by 2020.

NGDU Galkynyshneft⁶². In the era of independence, the leadership in social cooperation with the population of the city passed to the British-Arab oil company Dragon Oil, which has been operating on the Turkmen shelf since the end of 1999. Thanks to the company's investments, a desalination plant⁶³ was built in Khazar, the city engineering networks and the city hospital were reconstructed. Dragon Oil has built a children's health center with 400 beds⁶⁴, equipped an oil collection point⁶⁵, built the Aladzha oil loading pier and the Khazar port, laid technological roads, built a new health center (polyclinic) for 200 patients a day. With the organizational and material support of the Dragon Oil company, new buildings of a sports and recreation complex and a sports school have been completed. At the request of NGDU Galkynyshneft, a recreation center "Khazar", a kindergarten "Dostluk" and other facilities were built. The Khazar compressor station was built on the peninsula by the order of Turkmenneft Group of Companies.

The city of Turkmenbashi⁶⁶ was in the focus of perestroika immediately after the start of transformations in the Esenguly etrap center. On July 24, 2007, Berdimukhamedov signed a decree on the establishment of the National Tourist Zone "Avaza" in the town of Avaza on the seashore in the suburban zone of the city of Turkmenbashi. The sanatorium-resort project was implemented in three stages. As part of the first stage, one billion US dollars was allocated from public funds. In total, from 2007 to 2020, about three and a half billion dollars were invested in the implementation of the recreational and tourist project. The project has been repeatedly criticized by environmentalists, since the necessary environmental assessments were not carried out before the implementation and the choice of contractors was determined on the basis of the corruption component.

Projects with multibillion-dollar expenditures from the state budget and the profits of field ministries and departments were implemented in the city itself. **The investments of foreign investors were not publicly discussed, perhaps they did not exist at all or they amounted to a negligible figure**⁶⁷.

The modernization of the TKNPZ⁶⁸ (Turkmenbashi complex of oil refineries) continued. At the second stage⁶⁹ of the reconstruction of the plant, a marine terminal for storage⁷⁰ and shipment⁷¹ of LPG (liquefied

⁶² The former Oil and Gas Production Directorate of Leninneft (Chelekenneft), since 2000, the Vostochny Cheleken field has been developed by the Khazar consortium. The operator of the project is the State Corporation "Turkmenneft", which includes the oil and gas production enterprise "Khazarneft". The main contractors of the Khazar consortium for the construction of oil wells are drilling divisions of the State Corporation Turkmenneft.

⁶³ 1.5 thousand cubic meters of drinking water per day.

⁶⁴ The children's health center "Gara Altyn" was built by specialists of the Turkmenneft Group of Companies on the seashore.

⁶⁵ An oil collection point for the storage and shipment of commercial oil with a capacity of 2.5 million tons of oil per year and a cost of more than \$25 million.

⁶⁶ 2020, population of 70 thousand people.

⁶⁷ At the expense of foreign investments in the Avaza NTZ, only the Turkish yacht club "Ýelken" was built under a lease agreement, which after the expiration of the lease period will be transferred to the possession of the Turkmen side.

⁶⁸ At the first stage of modernization of the plant (1991-2006), about \$1.5 billion was allocated for these purposes. Platforming, catalytic cracking, hydrotreating of diesel fuel, lubricating oils, a gas turbine power plant, a reverse osmosis desalination plant and other industrial and infrastructure facilities were put into operation. In 2007-2020, more than one and a half billion US dollars were additionally invested in the renovation of the plant.

⁶⁹ 2007-2020

⁷⁰ Tank farm. The project cost of the tank farm is 9,150,000 US dollars (USD), the capacity is 3 thousand tons of liquefied petroleum gases (LPG).

⁷¹ Marine shipping pier. The project cost is 22326000 euros (EUR); the capacity is 180-200 thousand tons per year.

petroleum gases) was built in the village of Kiyanly; reverse osmosis desalinators in the Avaza oil refinery⁷² and the village of Kiyanly⁷³; treatment facilities for industrial sewerage and recycled water supply⁷⁴, and other production infrastructure facilities. At the same time, the kerosene purification plant⁷⁵, ELOU-AT-7⁷⁶, technological lines for the production of valve bags⁷⁷ and for the production of 2-axis-oriented synthetic film⁷⁸ made of polypropylene were put into operation. A complex of four technological installations has been commissioned to increase the depth of processing of hydrocarbon raw materials. It includes installations for vacuum distillation of fuel oil⁷⁹, alkylation of light olefins, mixing of gasoline and isomerization of light gasoline⁸⁰. Currently, the construction of a delayed coking unit with a tar de-asphalting unit (UZK-DAG)⁸¹ has been resumed.

Large-scale projects were implemented at the Avaza NTZ with factory funds. These include the construction of a shipping channel and the construction of recreational facilities⁸² and entertainment complexes. The factory workers subsidized the construction of residential buildings, schools⁸³ and kindergartens, carried out major repairs and reconstruction of sports facilities and buildings of social and cultural purpose⁸⁴. **At the same time, for all the years of independence, only one residential building⁸⁵ was built in the city with the participation of the hyakimlik (i.e. the state) at the expense of the centralized budget.**

The new buildings of the city during the implementation of the presidential program were replenished with an industrial refrigerator warehouse "Sovaduju toplum" for storing meat and dairy and fruit

⁷² The desalination plant was put into operation in 2010, the capacity is 35 thousand m³ / day, the cost is 156 million USD.

⁷³ The desalination plant was put into operation in 2015, with a capacity of 50 thousand m³ / day.

⁷⁴ The total cost (excluding VAT) is 15.9 million US dollars.

⁷⁵ Aviation fuel TS-1. The project cost of the installation is \$11 million, the capacity is 500 thousand tons per year.

⁷⁶ The annual capacity for raw materials is three million tons.

⁷⁷ The project cost is 11 million euros (EUR); the capacity for box bags is 10 million units for "big bags" - 25 thousand units.

⁷⁸ The project cost is 40 million euros (EUR); the annual capacity is 21 thousand tons of commercial product.

⁷⁹ The annual capacity is 2 million tons of processed raw materials.

⁸⁰ The total cost of four units is \$533 million US dollars; the total capacity is 480 thousand tons of components per year for high-quality gasoline.

⁸¹ The contract value is 211.6 million; the capacity for the UZK is 900 thousand tons, for the DAG block – 500 thousand tons per year.

⁸² The hotel type health center "Arzuv" for 900 seats for adults and children, the hotel "Nebitchi" for 220 seats, etc.

⁸³ Multimedia secondary school with 600 seats.

⁸⁴ The Rukhyet Palace building was erected at the expense of the TKNPZ in the city of Turkmenbashi, two kindergartens for 160 and two kindergartens for 320 places were built, residential buildings of improved layout: six 4-storey 24-apartment buildings, one 4-storey 40-apartment building, three 4-storey 48-apartment buildings, one 52-apartment building and two 12-storey 72-apartment houses of increased comfort. A sports and recreation complex was built in the industrial zone of the plant, a cardinal reconstruction of the city stadium and the historical building of the city – the Palace of Culture of Oil Workers was carried out.

⁸⁵ The 4-storey 24-apartment building was built in the 110th quarter by the individual enterprise "Resul Gurlyshyk" by order of the OKS of the Balkan Velayat. Seven more 4-storey 24-apartment buildings were built by order of the OKS of the Balkan Velayat and commissioned in 2019.

products⁸⁶, the Turkmenbashi office of the branch of the State Service "Turkmenstandarlary", the building of the commercial bank "Turkmenbashi" and other civil and industrial facilities⁸⁷.

The Turkmenbashi etrap⁸⁸, the largest district in the Turkmen Primorye by area, was also not bypassed by the innovations of the two eras proclaimed by the Turkmen leader: A New Rebirth era, and then Power and Happiness era. The most substantive innovations left their mark in the etrap center - shakherchi Turkmenbashi⁸⁹ (11 km away from the city of Turkmenbashi-Krasnovodsk). Roads and engineering networks were reconstructed in the town, cellular communication base stations were equipped, a small town was built for families of military personnel and teachers of the Naval Institute, environmentally harmful lime-gypsum production facilities at the Turkmenbashi Plant of Non-metallic and construction materials were closed. Kindergartens, a secondary general education school, an etrap (district) hospital, sports and recreation complexes and sports facilities have been completely renovated. In the administrative center and nearby livestock villages and urban-type settlements⁹⁰, individual housing construction on mortgage bank loans and at the expense of personal savings has intensified.

A marine terminal for the storage and shipment of liquefied petroleum gases and a seaport for the transportation of LPG on gas carriers have been built near the former fishing village of Kiyarly, which is 40-45 km north of the etrap center of Turkmenbashi. The annual throughput capacity of the technological facility is 200 thousand tons of LPG/year, the one-time acceptance of commercial products for storage is three thousand tons. There, in Kiyarly, a plant for preparing for the sale of natural gas and a shipyard for the assembly of offshore drilling platforms⁹¹ were built. A gas-chemical complex for the production of polyethylene and polypropylene has been built and put into operation within walking distance from them. The capacity of the chemical plant is 386 thousand tons / year for polyethylene and 81 thousand tons / year for the production of granular polypropylene⁹².

The urban-type settlement of Guvlymayak of the Turkmenbashi etrap is located three kilometers north of the village of Kiyarly. "Guvlyduz"⁹³, the oldest plant in the chemical industry of Turkmenistan, is located in Guvlymayak, which produces iodized food salt for the population, and technical table salt for many branches of the national economy. The transformations that took place within the framework of the implementation of the program of the President of Turkmenistan were expressed for the urban-type settlement of Guvlymayak in major repairs of production facilities and equipment, updating the fleet of

⁸⁶ Built by the Turks on the order of the sole proprietor; the total volume of the refrigeration sections is 2,475 m³. The refrigerating chambers are designed for a one-time reception of several thousand tons of food products.

⁸⁷ Of these, an administrative and residential complex with a socio-cultural infrastructure in the administrative center of the Kenar etrap of the city of Turkmenbashi and there are also 1300-and 400-meter overpasses with two-level interchanges on the Airport-Avaza highway with three-row traffic in both directions. The largest structures were the Turkmenbashi International Airport with the service of 15 thousand aircraft per year, the military shipyard and the International Seaport of Turkmenbashi with a modern and extensive transport and logistics system and a ship repair and shipbuilding plant, which provided the city with more than 3.5 thousand jobs.

⁸⁸ In 2008, the population of etrap was 16 thousand 500 people. Over the past 12 years, it has increased by almost a third due to natural growth and immigrants from other Balkan etraps and other velayats. Now there are 21.5 thousand people in etrap.

⁸⁹ 2020, the population is about four thousand people.

⁹⁰ The settlements of Kiyarly, Guvlymayak (Kuuli-Mayak), Belek (often called shakherchi-gorodok), Garabogaz (the former urban – type settlement of Bekdash, the status of a city since 2002) , etc. Now it is 21.5 thousand people.

⁹¹ Property of the Malaysian company "Petronas Charigali (Turkmenistan)".

⁹² The plant provided 1,200 new jobs to the population of etrap.

⁹³ The former "Kuulisol plant".

trucks and tracked vehicles of the Guvlyduz plant, technological communication routes⁹⁴ with its raw materials base, warehouses, workshops and the Kiyanly port point. At the end of 2019, a workshop for the production of 40 thousand tons of iodized salt and 2.5 thousand tons of tableted table salt was built and put into operation at the Guvlyduz plant.

Belek, an urban-type settlement⁹⁵, is located in the middle between the cities of Turkmenbashi and Balkanabat. It is a railway station, as well as a pipeline hub for pumping extracted oil to an oil refinery in the city of Turkmenbashi. It began to play an even greater role in connection with the construction of the East-West main gas pipeline. Since 1976, a gas compressor station of the western department of the main gas pipelines of the Turkmengaz Group has been operating in Belek, transmitting natural gas from Goturdepe to the SAC gas pipeline⁹⁶. The station was subjected to a radical reconstruction as the main object of modernization of Belek⁹⁷. More than 10 new socio-economic facilities were opened in Belek. Among them: a comprehensive school, a kindergarten, a house of culture, a recreation park, a railway station, a health house with a pharmacy, a communication office with a ATS, a shopping center, a gas station, a procurement enterprise for livestock products, etc. A hotel with a dining room and a shop is open on the front side of the village along the Turkmenbashi-Balkanabat-Ashgabat-Farab intercity highway.

But over the past thirteen years since the implementation of the Presidential Program, most of the villages and villages in the depths of the Turkmenbashi etrap have hardly changed their traditional way of life. The exception was the residents of large settlements⁹⁸ near the laid North-South railway corridor, which provided new jobs to the indigenous inhabitants of the steppe.

For residents of the far north-western corner of Turkmenistan, the most important event of these years was the construction and launch of a urea production plant⁹⁹ with a capacity of 1 million 155 thousand tons per year in the vicinity of the city of Garabogaz in the Turkmenbashi etrap. The project provided for the construction of a residential complex for 3.5 thousand people for workers, engineering and technical workers and employees of the plant.

Part II. Behind the front facades of the transformations of cities and villages

Many plans and tasks for the construction of the Western Balkan facade of the era of Power and Happiness have remained unfulfilled. Familiarization with the real state of affairs on the ground revealed many problems that are carefully suppressed by official propaganda. Among them is the further impoverishment of the population and the colossal enrichment of the leadership layer, as a result of the implementation of large-scale corruption schemes.

The Turkmenbashi-Ashgabat-Farab¹⁰⁰ transnational highway passes through hundreds of villages and cities of various administrative subordination. In the foreground of the settlements located along the main road, modern offices of state institutions and enterprises, elegant buildings of social and cultural purpose, well-maintained mansions, cottages and apartment buildings are erected. These are business cards

⁹⁴ Road and rail.

⁹⁵ The population is about two thousand people.

⁹⁶ Central Asia - the Center.

⁹⁷ The Belek gas compressor station is the end point of the East-West main gas pipeline with a capacity of 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year, designed to ring together the largest gas fields in the country.

⁹⁸ Kizylkiya (about 1800 people) and Chagyl (more than 1400 people).

⁹⁹ 900 new jobs have been created at the Garabogazkarbamide plant.

¹⁰⁰ Construction of the road began in 2007 and continues to this day on the eastern segment of the road.

designed to witness in concrete images the vast geography of the rich and joyful life of the Turkmen people in the era of Power and Happiness. This is impressive. Especially for foreigners visiting Turkmenistan. And in some way it corresponds to the truth. At least, for those citizens who live in cities on the "protocol street"¹⁰¹ or in the first row of buildings facing the main road. As for the backyards of blissful-looking settlements, they contrast sharply with the picture seen from the windows of cars. And this is all along the entire route of the transnational "autobahn". Even in Ashgabat – the white marble capital of Turkmenistan. Even there, inside residential quarters, in the back alleys, are many examples of desolation and need. The cities and towns of the Balkan velayat are no exception.

In the city of Esenguly, which, being still a village, became the starting point in the socio-economic transformations of small towns and villages of Turkmenistan, the heads of hyakimlik, law enforcement officials, the management, leading specialists of education, health, culture, sports and other etrap departments became the owners of apartments in well-maintained houses and cottages. Oil field workers, fishermen on the coast and villagers employed in agriculture were not included in the privileged list of beneficiaries of high-comfort housing.

The new building of the carpet factory with 300 workplaces became a place of work for carpet workers who worked in the former distressed building of the carpet factory. We are not talking here about opening a new enterprise, but about partially renaming the old one and relocating the service personnel from it to a new building, but with the same patriarchal working methods and exhausting manual work. Young people, contrary to the official statement and statements of the state media, are not particularly in a hurry to join the ranks of the heroic successors of the national art of carpet making, seeing premature old age and untimely decline of health by the example of their mothers and grandmothers – professional carpet makers. So these jobs did not have a positive impact on the employment statistics of the etrap population.

Not a single project has been implemented in the fishing industry of etrap. Plans for the creation of coastal fishing teams remained on paper. 20 small fishing vessels¹⁰² purchased for fishermen of former fishing collective farms (or rather, honestly - aluminum boats with outboard motors) turned out in the hands of poachers. Poachers (the same socially unprotected local fishermen) worked under the "roof" of the hyakim, the prosecutor, the police chief of etrap, etc. for the negotiated part of the catch. They supplied the lion's share of the catch of valuable, including sturgeon, fish breeds and black caviar for free satisfaction of the etrap and higher authorities for five years until the complete wear of the watercraft and engines. Left without fishing gear, the fishermen joined the army of the unemployed. Also, the production complex for artificial breeding, processing and canning of commercial fish with a capacity of 50 tons per year with a total cost of 11 million US dollars¹⁰³, which was widely advertised in the media, was not built. The local population believes that the deprivation of their income from traditional fishing is a well thought-out policy of the authorities in Ashgabat. This policy has led to the impoverishment of the Yomud clans of the Caspian region, which objectively represent a layer of internal opposition to the Akhal Tekin people who seized power in the state.

From 2007 to 2020, the issue of the construction of an oil refining petrochemical plant in Ekerem¹⁰⁴ was not resolved. Feasibility studies were developed for its construction, and this was the end of the matter.

¹⁰¹ Protocol Street is the popular name for the streets along the route of the presidential motorcade.

¹⁰² Motor boats (boats) of the Wellboat-63 brand in the amount of 20 units, including 15 units of the open type and 5 units of the closed type (with a cabin), for a total amount of 1,488,500 US dollars. The "boats" have not recouped even 10% of their cost during operation. Such transactions, and they cannot be counted in modern Turkmenistan, are classic criminal schemes of embezzlement of state funds that are being lowered from above.

¹⁰³ Another criminal scheme of uncontrolled theft of public funds. After how many years will this plant pay off and bring income?

¹⁰⁴ Okarem - according to other sources. There are no well-established names in the Turkmen topography.

In this regard, and also taking into account the natural growth of the population, it became impossible to get a job at the Ekerem port point¹⁰⁵ and at production sites near Ekerem, Korpedje, Kamyshlydj and other large oil and gas fields¹⁰⁶ without fraud and large bribes. The living conditions in the settlements (working settlements) that have arisen around the deposits are extremely unfavorable.

Esenguly etrap has always been primarily a fishing and livestock area, and crop production was carried out here on plots just for personal consumption. In Soviet times, subsidized wheat and other grain crops were sown here little by little. The Turkmen innovators failed the attempts to transfer crop production to industrial rails. The plowed acreage decreased. At the same time, fishing was practically eliminated¹⁰⁷ in etrap and the share of cattle breeding in the district's economy was reduced. In urban-type settlements and the administrative center of etrap, it was forbidden to keep large and small cattle on farmsteads. This caused a massive increase in the price of meat from local dealers and sellers from other etraps.

The number of jobs provided to the population of etrap in the field of culture, education, healthcare, communications, railway transport¹⁰⁸ and administrative structure is extremely insignificant and is practically distributed among visiting specialists, without affecting the indigenous Esenguly residents.

The promised number of jobs was not created. Against this background, problems with youth employment and a negative migration balance have increased. The overwhelming majority of young men are looking for work at the construction sites of Balkanabat, Turkmenbashi, in foreign gas and oil producing companies on the shelf of the Caspian Sea and on the right and left banks of the Amu Darya. Individual construction enterprises (IE) opened in etrap are low-power. Due to the decline in the level of the construction boom, they either self-destruct, or drag out a miserable existence and cannot serve as an alternative to unemployment. Only small retail sellers working under patents are somehow kept afloat (especially in the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic). However, they are also heavily dependent on suppliers of food and industrial goods and often go bankrupt.

To provide the population with drinking water, a reverse osmosis desalination plant with a capacity of 3 thousand cubic meters/day was built in the administrative center of Esenguly etrap. A desalination plant of the same type with a capacity of 5 thousand cubic meters/day¹⁰⁹ has been built in the urban-type settlement of Ekerem, but there is not enough water, and desalinators often fail. At the beginning of the campaign of innovative transformations, 20 KAMAZ water carriers were purchased to cover the needs for drinking water. Water is brought from different places¹¹⁰, but mainly from the local Adjiyab reservoir, where water from the Atrek River is collected for livestock watering and irrigation farming (vegetable gardens, melon fields). The brought water is drained into the buried concrete pools arranged in the courtyards of the residents of etrap. Since then, out of 20 KAMAZ water carriers, just two have remained on the move. First of all, KAMAZ trucks serve the etrap authorities at relatively low state tariffs. Private traders bring water to the rest of the residents of Esenguly for a high fee.

Radical transformations aimed at improving the life of the Turkmen hinterland have practically not affected **the Etrek etrap**. It is impossible, in fact, to consider two dozen cottage-type residential houses for future railway workers and a kindergarten for 100 places for their own children in shakherchi Etrek as a radical contribution to improving the life of the population of etrap. These social facilities were built according to technical and economic indications during the construction of engineering and technical

¹⁰⁵ The new port, marked in the Esenguly etrap conversion program, has not been built.

¹⁰⁶ The deposits are listed in the first part of the report.

¹⁰⁷ The Iranians blocked with a dam the passage of fish to the spawning grounds in the upper reaches of the Etrek and Sumbar.

¹⁰⁸ In connection with the construction of the North-South transport corridor, such jobs have also appeared.

¹⁰⁹ The project cost is 756.7 thousand US dollars.

¹¹⁰ Clean drinking water, which has passed factory processing, is brought from Balkanabat (Nebit-Dag) – it is expensive.

infrastructure along the Bereket-Etrek transnational steel highway. However, the Pharisees of the ideological front compulsively represent them as the social concern and care of the Turkmen government for all residents of etrap.

The new railway industry for Etrek may one day provide high-paying jobs to the residents of etrap, but it is too early to talk about this. There is no cargo yet - the cargo flow has yet to be ensured at a high managerial and political-economic level. But the policy of Turkmenistan's absolute isolation makes plans to increase cargo flows an impossible task at all. The capacity of the transnational railway Uzen-Gyzylgaya-Bereket-Etrek-Gorgan is still far from the design capacity. There are few jobs, and the salary size is small¹¹¹.

The main occupation of Etrek women and girls is carpet weaving and sewing at home. Men engage in animal husbandry and agriculture with a relatively low volume of production. Self-employment, as in the Esenguly etrap, is explained by the limited amount of irrigated land and feed. Their lack prevents the creation of fruit and vegetable processing plants and fattening complexes in animal husbandry.

Crops of wheat, industrial and fodder crops occupy insignificant areas. In Etrek, pomegranates¹¹², pistachios, persimmons, figs, olives¹¹³ and other subtropical fruits are mainly grown. Some attention is paid to viticulture¹¹⁴, but more to gardening, greenhouse farming and melon fields on rain-fed lands. The arid subtropical zone has a huge potential for increasing the volume of plant products. But there is not enough irrigation water, and the water pipeline from the Karakum Canal has not yet been carried out here. The fruits collected here are used for domestic consumption and are rarely exported for sale outside the etrap..

Animal husbandry in Etrek, in contrast to the Soviet period, when the generalized livestock was kept on large farms under the supervision of animal technicians and veterinarians and provided a large number of jobs, is now limited to a modest personal farm with livestock. Sometimes the villagers are engaged in grazing for hire in the pasture of other people's flocks¹¹⁵, secretly belonging to entrepreneurs (telekech) who have become rich on state contracts and nouveau riche officials, including of the highest rank. In general, the livestock breeders of Etrek do not provide the population of etrap with meat and dairy products in a sufficient volume and assortment.

The spiritual life and physical health of the population of etrap are determined by typical houses of culture, health¹¹⁶, sports and mosques, which have grown up after independence like mushrooms after rain in every village. Sport is focused on the development of mass physical culture, and cultural education is focused on the development of creative amateur activity.

The economic model of survival of most of the inhabitants of Madau, Gyudyurolum, Eylegushluk and other large villages of the Etrek etrap is based, as hundreds of years ago, on subsistence farming and seasonal work. This type of labor activity of Etrek residents includes retail sales¹¹⁷, taxi service (passenger and cargo), construction and repair of housing, arrangement of tamdyrs¹¹⁸, shepherding, etc. The money earned goes to the maintenance of a personal farmstead, the purchase of transport, the wedding of children and the arrangement of housing for them within the established way of life. Perhaps for this reason, the inhabitants of Etrek are not inclined to internal, and even more so – external migration. They

¹¹¹ On average, 2400 manats, or +/- 100 US dollars on the black market. The state exchange rate in Turkmenistan is ostentatious in reports on the happiness of the Turkmen people and is not applied in real life.

¹¹² 120 hectares are allocated for pomegranates.

¹¹³ Olive trees cover more than 50 hectares.

¹¹⁴ About 80 hectares have been given over to vineyards.

¹¹⁵ For example, the livestock farm "Gyzyl Baýyr".

¹¹⁶ Polyclinics in large villages, and the central district hospital in the administrative center of etrap.

¹¹⁷ From cars and trucks in the major cities of the Velayat - Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi.

¹¹⁸ Semi-buried egg-shaped oven for baking Turkmen tortillas (breads) in the open air.

are quietly waiting for better times, when the New Great Silk Road promised by the president will work in full force, and it seems that they will not be very upset if he orders to wait a long time.

The Makhtumkuli etrap is rightfully a natural pearl of Turkmenistan. The mild subtropical climate in the valleys of the Sumbar and Chandyr mountain rivers, the abundance of springs and underground springs have created favorable conditions for people to live here. Since ancient times, the character of the highlanders, unlike other representatives of the Turkmen tribes, has developed an invaluable fusion of sedentariness and an easy-going nomadic spirit at the time of decision-making and developing responses to the challenges. The Karakal residents¹¹⁹ have preserved their love for their native places to this day, and few of them have ever voluntarily left their small homeland. The beautiful climate and fertile land allow the residents of etrap to collect good harvests of olives, peaches, apricots, cherries, sweet cherries, plums, cherry plums and other stone fruits even on private plots. Cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, beets, carrots, cabbage and other organic vegetables are grown in vegetable gardens, and Turkmen melons, watermelons, pumpkins are unsurpassed in taste, growing in melon fields. Karakal residents cultivate sunflowers, sow wheat, oats, plant apple trees, pears, figs, walnuts, pomegranate trees. Raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, gooseberries, currants and other berries are planted. They are engaged in beekeeping and collecting wild pistachios, almonds, blackberries, honey, medicinal herbs, etc. Mountain and water meadows provide cattle with rich foot food, stimulating the growth of camels, small cattle and horned cattle on farms. The highlanders¹²⁰ profitably sell their surplus products in the industrial centers of the Western Kopet-dag: Bereket, Serdar and etraps of Esenguly and Atrek. Therefore, for many years and even centuries, the migration index among the residents of the Makhtumkuli etrap is almost zero, despite the socio-political upheavals, trials of fate and life troubles. It should be noted that cotton growing, which was instilled in the highlanders throughout all the "great eras"¹²¹, did not receive support from them, and the sown areas of cotton, as well as spring and winter wedges for wheat and other grain crops, are extremely insignificant.

Innovative reforms to implement the presidential concept of creating equal opportunities¹²² for social development exclusively for all territories of the country were expressed in the Makhtumkuli etrap by the construction of socio-cultural facilities in the administrative center¹²³ and large villages of etrap - mainly secondary schools and kindergartens, which, even without the presidential program, were replaced as distressed structures from the already distant Soviet era. Within the framework of the innovative program, a biographical and bibliographic historical and household museum complex dedicated to the great poet was built in the homeland of the classic of Turkmen literature, the village of Gerkez, where the main decoration is the books of the Hero - Arkadag.

Of the newly built production facilities, only the clothing and footwear complex should be mentioned as the only industrial facility provided for in the Makhtumkuli etrap by the President's program¹²⁴ for the transformation of small towns and villages for the period up to 2020. According to the project, the light

¹¹⁹ This is what the residents of the Makhtumkuli etrap call themselves.

¹²⁰ Karakalyans live in a mountainous area.

¹²¹ The Era of Rebirth, the Era of a New Rebirth and Great Transformations and the Era of Power and Happiness declared by the Government of Turkmenistan.

¹²² From the capital of the Turkmen state to the cattle-breeding village lost in the sands of the Karakum mountains.

¹²³ The former urban - type settlement of Kara-Kala, now shakherchi Makhtumkuli.

¹²⁴ In fact, the construction of the clothing and footwear complex was initiated by the first President of Turkmenistan S. Niyazov-Turkmenbashi and was almost completed by 2006. However, when Berdimukhamedov came to power, the construction of the facility was suspended, then resumed, and the initiative to build the factories was assigned to Arkadag, who attributed to himself many of the initiatives and merits of his predecessor.

industry enterprise was supposed to produce 500,000 pairs of leather shoes per year and 3,700,000 pieces of clothing. It was supposed to employ 800 employees.

In fact, as reported in the media¹²⁵, the sewing and footwear facility produced **6,200 pairs of shoes instead of 0.5 million** in the first half of 2020, and 302,649 pieces of knitwear instead of 3.7 million. According to the verification calculation, this will amount to 2.48% of the annual design capacity of the shoe shop and 8.2% of the same indicator for the sewing shop. At the same time, 303 people work in two workshops of the mixed factory, or 38% of the staff of the project estimate.

It turns out that almost half of the personnel declared in the project are working on the implementation of the one-tenth part of the projected production volume, whereas, based on the amount of the produced commodity, no more than 80 people should be engaged in its production. What are the other 220 people doing? Are they idling, getting an unearned salary for a pulled or a purchased position? Or do they produce shoes and sewing products manually in the absence of Japanese equipment, which is stated in the project? It is reported that at the sewing and shoe factory, experienced fashion designers are developing new styles of sewing and shoe products, knitwear, ladies', men's clothing and school uniforms are produced.

But buyers of the Balkan velayat and beyond do not see these products. Because, according to well-informed sources, the factory in Makhtumkuli etrap has not been working almost since its opening. Due to the lack of responsible supplies of raw materials – well-made leather, high-quality threads, fabric, glue, accessories. And most importantly - because of the ridiculously low salary, which will not entice young people to work. The factory is periodically launched by the authorities of etrap in connection with some staged action on the occasion of an inspection or visiting distinguished guests from the capital or even from abroad. The hope is that a large factory worth 68 million¹²⁶ US dollars (the exact price of the factory is unknown) will pay for itself in three and a half years, did not come true. Some official sources indicate the amount is 10 times less, but a large factory designed to produce 500 thousand pairs of shoes can not be built for \$ 7 million. But who cares? Such factories are built for completely different purposes. They do not need any couturiers or experienced tailors, although biased media write about them as real workers.

In such "innovative" shebang businesses¹²⁷, erected throughout the country with hypocritical concern for the people, the basis of the product line are guaranteed orders for sewing bed linen, mattresses, military uniforms, working overalls and uniforms for workers of various departments. Orders are carried out according to standard patterns by ordinary seamstresses-motorists. Prices for tailoring are negotiable and highly inflated. But no matter how high they are, the products of enterprises like the clothing and footwear complex in the Makhtumkuli etrap will be forcibly sold at prices that exceed its cost by several times to employees of various departments who agree to extortion in order to keep their jobs¹²⁸.

The declared advantages and objective disadvantages of the presidential program for the formation of a decent social and household environment in small towns and villages were most clearly manifested in the traditionally livestock-breeding etrap of Serdar, Bereket, Turkmenbashi and their administrative centers.

Over the years of the implementation of the program, these livestock-breeding areas have become the basic agricultural lands of the Balkan velayat for the cultivation of wheat and cotton, which have never grown here. The introduction of livestock breeders to agricultural work began in the 80s of the last century in connection with the laying of the Karakum Canal to Kizil-Arvat¹²⁹ and further to Kazandzhik¹³⁰. Mastering the unusual ways of work was slow and difficult. Animal breeders did not understand why they

¹²⁵ "Neutral Turkmenistan", July 21st, 2020.

¹²⁶ Taking into account kickbacks.

¹²⁷ In this case, an enterprise in which criminal schemes of embezzlement of budget funds are scrolled under the guise of a state brand.

¹²⁸ A long-running scheme of fraudulent withdrawal of money from the population.

¹²⁹ The city of Serdar in the years of independence.

¹³⁰ The city of Bereket in the years of independence.

were forced to abandon the free trade of cattle breeders, which they inherited from their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and become earthworms, forever attached to their allotments. Time has shown that human-grown forages with their optimal combination with natural grasses on pastures serve as a powerful incentive to increase the number of small and large cattle, the number of which decreased significantly in the era of independence compared to the Soviet period. It was necessary to restore the livestock, and agriculture was to become the main assistant in this.

The understanding of this played the role of an impulse to the gradual restoration of the former share of animal husbandry in Western Turkmenistan and, in particular, in the Bereket and Serdar etraps, to the development and development of agriculture – a new branch in the economy of the Balkan velayat. In addition, crop production provided jobs to the increased population of the velayat and, thus, made its own contribution to solving the important social task of ensuring stability in society. According to official propaganda, in 2005, 300 thousand tons of wheat were harvested in the whole velayat, in 2006 - 350 thousand tons¹³¹. In the same years, cotton growers collected 35 thousand and 40 thousand tons of cotton, respectively, in only one etrap of Serdar¹³².

Farmers are provided with services for the maintenance of agricultural machines on preferential terms, they are provided with water for irrigation, mineral fertilizers, high-quality seeds, chemical means of combating plant pests. Powerful bread and cotton harvesters are used to carry out the grain harvest and cotton harvesting. Thousands of workers and employees who were forcibly mobilized from enterprises and institutions of the velayat with the preservation of the average salary at the main place of work¹³³ participate in the manual cotton harvesting. Since Soviet times and to this day, they continue to serve forced labor in cotton fields in difficult living conditions. They pay for food from their own funds, prepare their own dinners and often spend the night in koshars (premises for livestock) and other premises that are not adapted for humans.

Mazes, Krazes, Volvos, Tatras and other heavy-duty vehicles are provided by the State Concern "Turkmenneft", the Turkmenbashi complex of oil Refineries, the trust "Balkanavtotrans", the Production Association "Balkanavtotrans" and other enterprises to transport the harvested crop from the fields to the receiving points to help the villagers.

It would seem that ideal conditions for a happy life have been created for Daikhans. Other people do everything for them in their stead, and they are left with just paying off the state for the services provided to them from their income and calculate the profit. Perhaps this conclusion is partly suitable for the owners of land plots, individual landowners. But there are few such people in the country, and in the Balkan velayat, we can say, there are none at all. The central figure of agriculture is a Daikhan tenant, but his social status is still unclear. According to a common idea, this is a person who rents land¹³⁴ either from the state, or from a Daikhan farm. The Daikhan farm, in turn, is provided with land by a larger agricultural

¹³¹ One ton per inhabitant of the Balkan Velayat. The figures, of course, are exaggerated at least three times, but they are also impressive. After all, we are talking about a waterless land that did not know the blade of the plow in the memory of the previous ten generations of ancestors.

¹³² They were the first in the velayat to start growing cotton.

¹³³ The bulk of those mobilized through intermediaries (as they are the heads of enterprises, organizations and heads of administrative entities at the place of residence of people involved in agricultural work) pay themselves off from cotton duty during the autumn harvest and spring weeding of seedlings, to which they are also attracted. With the money collected, the management of daikhan farms (even the hyakims of cities and etraps take on this mission) hires day laborers from among the population of cotton-growing areas, and workers and employees who have bought off agricultural work sit at home.

¹³⁴ Or a flock of sheep, a herd of camels, a herd of horses, etc.

entity - the Daikhan association¹³⁵, which has leased land from the state, or uses it under an agreement with the local administration in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture. It is believed that the tenant cultivates the plot on his own and with the involvement of family members. There are some, but there are also a few of them, and they go bankrupt after two or three seasons due to a lack of proceeds to pay debts for seeds, equipment, water, fertilizers, etc. provided to them. There are still daikhans who rent 10 or more hectares. Virtually, they divide the leased land between subtenants-villagers, on whose shoulders fall all the hardships of working on the land with an extremely modest remuneration for their work.

The beneficiary of this well-camouflaged criminal and corruption scheme is a large tenant, who often turns out to be a figurehead of high-ranking officials not only of the etrap (city), but of the velayat and the country. By introducing their relatives and friends into the leadership of daikhan farms and associations and distributing rent among trusted persons, state officials, depending on their rank and the importance of the department in the architecture of power, concentrate in their hands huge tracts of land¹³⁶ scattered in parts in different regions of the country. Officials, having turned bureaucracy into an absolute form of thieves' state management – kleptocracy¹³⁷, covered with a fig leaf of democracy¹³⁸ and a legal society, manage land resources¹³⁹ with impunity. In case of non-fulfillment of state orders, the switchman is responsible for their failure: a farmhand-subtenant or a fake tenant.

Officials of local authorities and management, law enforcement agencies, directors of textile, sewing, carpet complexes and other state-owned enterprises in the Bereket and Serdar etraps became the first unofficial tenants of the land¹⁴⁰, registered under figureheads. The process of seizing state property is monotonous throughout the territory of Turkmenistan. The tangle of criminal ties affiliated with the ruling family, which covers almost all spheres of life of the state, living in an atmosphere of greedy and uncontrolled privatization, cannot be unraveled and abolished in the modern conditions of the Turkmen state, which is closed from any criticism. Officials of state departments, enterprises, law enforcement agencies and public organizations, as well as heads of local, regional and central bodies of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan and its party - this legalized nest of state corruption - are involved in the robbery of the country. These thieves, intoxicated with power, acquire land under false names and then rent it not only to subtenants-Daikhans, but also lease the land plots acquired in this way to state agricultural associations and enterprises, siphoning off rent from them as annuity. Finally, in November 2020, seeing this as a threat to his sole power, the Arkadag President banned this vicious practice¹⁴¹ by a special order.

The same practice, but more clearly and openly, is observed in animal husbandry. According to state statistics, the largest number of small cattle is kept today not in the Balkan velayat, but in the east of the country - in the farms of the Mary and Lebap velayats. In the Murghab valley¹⁴², the number of small cattle in farms of all forms of ownership is over 5.6 million heads. Of these, almost one million sheep and goats

¹³⁵ Something like former collective farms based on collective management, or state farms working on the principles of unity of command. In practice, Daikhan farms and associations get along with both.

¹³⁶ In terms of size, the lands that have fallen into the hands of officials who use their official position and administrative resources for selfish purposes are comparable to the latifundia of the New World.

¹³⁷ Cleptocracy.

¹³⁸ Democracy.

¹³⁹ And other riches of the country.

¹⁴⁰ Actual landowners.

¹⁴¹ NT, dated November 20th, 2020, No. 295 (29655): "In accordance with the Code of Turkmenistan "On Land", the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan No. 14668 dated March 18th, 2016 "On issues of regulation of land relations in Turkmenistan", the President of Turkmenistan signed an Order ordering to abolish the right of relevant legal entities to land use on the basis of contracts for the provision of land plots used by them to enterprises and institutions, members of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs".

¹⁴² In Mary velayat.

are kept on state farms and enterprises. More than 4.6 million small cattle are in private farms¹⁴³. The same number of small cattle and the ratio of public and private flocks is observed, according to official sources, among livestock breeders of the Lebap velayat¹⁴⁴. It turns out that just in two velayats there are more than 11 million sheep and goats, not counting camels and cattle. At the same time, there are two million of them in the public sector. The media and other sources engaged by the government report the presence in the country of a total of 17, 20 or more million heads of goats and sheep of the Saradzhin, Karakul, and Hissar¹⁴⁵ breeds. An abundance of wool and meat and milk! But it is not visible on the bazaars and store shelves, and what is available is fabulously expensive for the skinny wallets of ordinary Turkmen citizens.

So state statistics and the official press should not be trusted recklessly. Closed sources unequivocally stated that currently only one million 443.5 thousand animals are kept in the sheep farms of the state. If this is the case, then in the whole country, the number of sheep and goats that are privately owned should be halved accordingly. And even in this case, the total number of sheep and goats, as well as other animals, will actually be less than on paper.

The reason for the shameless game with numbers is the administrative and economic dominance of officials not only in agriculture, but also in all other areas of the economy. An example of this is given by the head of state, who signs contracts for the construction of all industrial and civil facilities, the purchase of equipment, consumables and authorizes the allocation of investments for the implementation of projects, regardless of their scale and significance. This, of course, is not the level of a "popularly elected president", but a way of dirty enrichment of the first official in the country in rank and power with the psychology of a small shopkeeper-cooperator, pathologically multiplying his fabulous fortune by cheating and corrupting everyone and everything around him with unlimited power, greed and unrestrained accumulation. Today, private and state flocks of the Balkan velayat, as well as throughout the country, are formed from animals that actually belong, with the exception of livestock on the farmsteads of ordinary citizens and villagers, to various officials of the national, velayat and etrap levels, regardless of their place of residence and service. No one is surprised by the numerous herds, the owners of which are de facto major officials of the central government apparatus. Accordingly, the social stratification¹⁴⁶ of the people is actively going on in rural areas. This process has also penetrated into the urban strata of the population.

However, the corruption of the authorities is comprehensive. These days, any employee or police officer from the lower ranks is considered a loser¹⁴⁷ if he does not have at least a small dukan¹⁴⁸ or a car service company. Such pseudo-entrepreneurs (telekechi) are active members of the Union and the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan. In this corrupt sewer, where the main values are bribes and offerings, the undisguised essence of the corrupt "legal society" of independent neutral Turkmenistan is presented in a concentrated form.

In the etraps of Turkmenbashi, Serdar, Bereket, as well as throughout the country, private individual farms, tenant shepherds from Daikhan associations, and the public sector are involved, as it were. In general, almost 70 thousand sheep and goats and a little more than three thousand camels¹⁴⁹ grazed on

¹⁴³ NT, dated July 22nd, 2020.

¹⁴⁴ NT, dated April 1st, 6th, 10th, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Meat breed, like the Saradzhin.

¹⁴⁶ In fact, it is the class differentiation of the rural population.

¹⁴⁷ Loser.

¹⁴⁸ Store.

¹⁴⁹ In total, the state farm "Kazandzhik" of the same district and three livestock farms in the village of Kizylkiya of the Krasnovodsk district: "Turkmenistan", "26 Baku Commissars" and "Komsomol" in 1982 contained twice as many heads of small cattle. In total, in the Krasnovodsk region in the last years of Soviet power, there were about 420 thousand heads of sheep, goats, 18 thousand camels and 7,500 cows. The collective herd was catastrophically reduced during the collapse of the USSR and the legal

the pastures of the Balkan velayat in February 2020. All this livestock belongs to the livestock farms of the agricultural associations "Gyzylarbat" and "Balkan". The agricultural association "Gyzylarbat" unites livestock breeders of the Serdar etrap¹⁵⁰, the agricultural association "Balkan"¹⁵¹ - of the Turkmenbashi etrap.

The largest number of settlements, which have been the main points of steppe cattle breeding for many decades and even centuries, are located in the northern regions of the Balkan velayat. The largest of them are considered to be in the etrap of Turkmenbashi, Janga, Yangaja, Nefes, Hasan, Ajagir, Dokhly, Ovlamysh, Sulmen, Suili, Janurpa, Yazdyshe, Ybyk, Demirjan, Orpa, Akoik, Akkuyu, Koshoba, Gokdere, Yaskhan, Kizylkiya, Chagyl, Tuver, Kaymat, Karaiman, Hudayberdy, Gurji, Irikli and many others. In the Bereket etrap, these include Akhchakuima, Kulmach, Kurbanmamed, Uzunsuv, Iskander, Yasga, Daneata, Oboy Jamal and others – in total about two dozen villages. In the Serdar etrap, these are Toutli, Garabogaz, Melegoch, Khojakala, Janahir, Khojakala, Bendesen, Parau and other villages located in the sands and mountainous terrain.

The socio-economic crisis that has deeply penetrated the Turkmen society has affected the architectural appearance of most small towns and villages, emphasizing the differentiated approach¹⁵² by region to the implementation of the "National Program of the President of Turkmenistan for the radical transformation of the social and living conditions of the population of villages, settlements, cities of etraps and etrap centers for the period up to 2020". The innovative program, except for the replacement of analog stations with electronic ATS, absolutely did not affect the above-mentioned livestock villages of the Balkan velayat, which are located away from the transnational railway and the Turkmenbashi - Ashgabat - Turkmenabat - Farab highway, that is, away from the parade stage of the solemn displays of the achievements of the era of Power and Happiness. The development of these villages is due to the personal labor and own funds of local residents. The natural growth of the population and the lack of jobs, material and organizational difficulties¹⁵³ in starting their own business provoke an outflow of young people from villages. The migration flow from the etraps of Turkmenbashi and Bereket is mainly directed to the cities of Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi, and from the etrap of Serdar – to Ashgabat and the Akhal velayat.

It should be added that some of the residents of the border areas¹⁵⁴ who got rich in the 90s on drug trafficking and food starvation by selling the surplus of their own agricultural products and smuggling goods and food from Iran, marked the beginning of an expansionist migration to seize managerial positions and prestigious jobs in the cities of Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi. The residents of Bereket (Kazanjik) were particularly successful in this. In the city of Turkmenbashi, in a short period of time, they

lawlessness that unfolded throughout the former country and the struggle for the redistribution of socialist property.

¹⁵⁰ It has 17 thousand small cattle and 1,725 camels.

¹⁵¹ It has 52 thousand heads of small cattle and 1,350 thousand camels.

¹⁵² This is evidenced by the continuous construction of industrial and civil facilities in small towns and villages of the Tekin regions-Mary and Akhale. A multimillion-dollar medical complex has been built in Arkadag's homeland, the village of Sagant, while a hospital has not yet been built in Krasnovodsk, the former center of the Russian – speaking population of Turkmenistan. The construction of grandiose objects in the villages is exempt from the exacting inspections of financial and legal authorities, as it is carried out under the patronage of the President. Here one can implement any criminal schemes with cash kickbacks and direct theft of building materials on a large scale. According to independent experts, large-scale facilities in the villages are being built with an eye to their future privatization by the Gakhryman (President) clan and his immediate entourage. An example of this is laid in the Esenguly etrap, where a shopping center was put up for auction by the time the program for the transformation of cities and villages was completed.

¹⁵³ Counteraction of local bribe takers.

¹⁵⁴ Including natives of the Bereket etrap.

squeezed out the local Turkmens without a trace from their familiar seats and seized key places in the city with the arrogance and criminal way of management usual for the "termites"¹⁵⁵.

Now they have been replaced by Tekin nouveau riches from the Mary and Akhal velayats. The new settlers have pushed the Kazandzhiks in Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi and are settling in these cities seriously and for a long time. In achieving their goals, they, relying on their clans, who have gained access to administrative levers in Ashgabat and Akhal, act more harshly than their predecessors - the Kazandzhiks. The Tekin people uncompromisingly¹⁵⁶ push out of private business, trade, education, culture, healthcare, sports, management structures and state-owned enterprises indigenous citizens, mostly coastal Turkmens¹⁵⁷, natives of fishing villages from Garabogaz to Esenguly. With the "light" hand of the Tekin people and Kazandzhik Yomud in the cities of Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi, functionaries¹⁵⁸ from local authorities and city law enforcement agencies launched a real hunt for jobs of budgetary and private organizations. They secretly discredit their employees, forcing them to dismiss at their own will or under far-fetched articles of labor, administrative, civil and criminal law¹⁵⁹, and they arrange their relatives for vacant jobs or resell vacant positions for bribes to third parties¹⁶⁰.

The newly-appeared "managers" are not connected by a common tribal history for the population of this region with Balkanabat, and even more so with the city and etrap of Turkmenbashi. At the beginning of his presidency, Berdimukhamedov, getting acquainted with the National Tourist Zone "Avaza" from his helicopter, expressed dissatisfaction with the abundance of ancestral cemeteries on its territory. The pleasers from his entourage and the velayat authorities perceived the leader's discontent as an order. They demanded that local officials level the ancient ancestral cemeteries of Kazakhs and Caspian Turkmens¹⁶¹ to the ground. To protect the graves of their ancestors from the ruin of the newly-appeared barbarians, the residents of the city and etrap covered the tombstones and monuments with branches of kandym, cherkez, grebenshchik, sandy acacia, wormwood, camel thorn, other steppe grasses and bushes. So that no one could see the holy places from a helicopter, or from an airplane, or from the sea, or from land - from nowhere.

The aliens treat the city in a consumerist way. The main thing for them is to fill their pockets and, as a springboard, use a position in a seaside city to move up the corporate ladder in another place. They build luxury mansions in Turkmenbashi and its vicinity - often several houses at once. And this is in a city where the allocation of land plots for housing construction to citizens has been temporarily¹⁶² suspended, and a

¹⁵⁵ This is how the coastal Turkmens unflatteringly dubbed the Kazanjik people who arrived in their homeland.

¹⁵⁶ This is due to the strengthening of Tekin people in command positions in Balkanabat, the administrative center of the Balkan velayat.

¹⁵⁷ The representatives of the Russian-speaking population, especially Russians, can be forgotten because of their extremely small population, social passivity and disunity, ignorance of the state language and relatively low culture and literacy as a consequence of the flawed education in secondary schools of Turkmenistan. This seriously restricts the opportunities of the Russian-speaking population in defending their constitutional rights and legitimate interests.

¹⁵⁸ Mostly Yomudis from Kazancik, Tekin people from Akhal and Mary velayat.

¹⁵⁹ It is enough to recall the endless and continuing punitive personnel purges at the TKNPZ, the former State Enterprise "Balkanbalyk", in the State Service of Sea and River Transport of Turkmenistan (now the Agency "Turkmendenizderyaellary"), the International Seaport and other enterprises, as well as in state institutions - hyakimlik, the governing bodies of the city of Turkmenbashi, etc.

¹⁶⁰ It should be recalled that in Turkmenistan it is forbidden to mention unemployment under the threat of criminal prosecution, despite its obvious and incessant growth.

¹⁶¹ Chovdurs, soyinajs, igdyrs, saryks, yomudas.

¹⁶² The allocation of land plots for the construction of private housing has been prohibited in the city of Turkmenbashi for almost 30 years (since the declaration of independence). However, this ban, with the connivance of the authorities and the joint benevolence of architects, lawyers, notaries, land surveyors

huge number of families, primarily newlyweds, do not have a roof over their heads. But the "termites" and their followers, having secured themselves with mutual responsibility, using unspoken preferences and criminal schemes for squeezing (weaning) real estate, continue to build manors with super-modern household infrastructure on the sites of demolished barracks, extinct houses, poor people's shacks and even plots with burials in the city's Russian cemetery¹⁶³.

As a rule, these "kings for a day"¹⁶⁴ build houses for themselves aiming for the subsequent resale. Because they consider the territories of the traditional settlement of their ancestors to be their place of residence until the end of their days, and they will certainly return there even after death. They are not concerned about the future of the city of Turkmenbashi, as well as other cities where they work, but they take good care of their own well-being in places of permanent residence - Mary, Akhal, Turkmenabat, Dashoguz, Kazandzhik, etc., where they simultaneously build elite-level dwellings for themselves. The skyscrapers¹⁶⁵ erected under their leadership in Turkmenbashi and the chaotic construction of departmental and private housing sanctioned by them without an approved Master Plan for the development and socio-economic development of the urban territory disfigured the inimitable face and original layout of the seaside city. The central government's indulgence in the lawlessness of local authorities revives and deepens inter-ethnic discord on tribal soil, which is fraught with gigantic political upheavals for the state.

Similar processes are observed in the Turkmenbashi etrap (district) - in the development of urban-type settlements that seem to be prosperous in the light of the implementation of the Presidential program. The administrative center of the Turkmenbashi etrap with the same name, **the villages of Akdash, Kiyanly, Guvlymayak and the city of Garabogaz**¹⁶⁶ are indicative in this regard.

At the moment, the technological capacities of the production association "Garabogaz Sulfate", which is the city-forming enterprise, have completely exhausted the production resource in Garabogaz. In the association, production fell and the staff was reduced synchronously with it. The personnel of the association hoped for modernization, which was promised to it for many years from various high tribunes. However, in 2020, the reconstruction was abandoned and the dismantling of the factory equipment began. Hundreds of new workers and employees have joined the army of unemployed in Garabogaz – this is very sensitive for a city with a population of just over seven thousand people.

The construction of the carbamide plant brought hope to the city on the bank of the Kara-Bogaz-Gol - the mineral treasury of the world, strengthened the faith of its residents in the future days. Some of them got a job building a chemical plant, some were supported by trade, crafts, fishing and hunting. However, the hopes of Garabogaz residents for 900 new jobs were not fulfilled. The plant for the production of carbamide could not reach its design capacity in the planned time, besides, the demand for new product was low, and in the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, it almost reached the bottom. A residential town for three and a half thousand people was not built in the industrial zone of the plant as well.

and judges, does not prevent chaotic erecting of entire palaces on cleared plots in the depths of urban slums.

¹⁶³ The Russian Cemetery in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) is a multi-confessional resting place. In addition to Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, and Muslims are buried here.

¹⁶⁴ A separate study would be needed to count all the khakims, prosecutors, judges, police chiefs, directors of the seaport, TKNPZ and other officials who have replaced each other during the years of independence of Turkmenistan.

¹⁶⁵ For all the years of independence, only two 12-storey residential buildings and two 12-storey hotels have been built.

¹⁶⁶ Until recently, only the city of Garabogaz (Bekdash) was called an urban-type settlement, and now the urban-type settlements are: Turkmenbashi (Djanga) is the administrative center of etrap, the fishing village of Kiyanli and the urban-type settlement of Guvlymayak in the Guvlyduz salt field are often called shaherchi towns.

There is no shortage of housing in the city itself. The solid housing stock has not been inhabited until now after the mass exodus of Kazakhs, Dagestanis, Jews, Russians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Uzbeks and other representatives of national minorities from the city. The city needs major repairs of the hospital, the opening of the market and the uninterrupted supply of food, manufactured goods and medicine.

From 2007 to 2020, two asphalt plants and two crushing and crushed stone plants with a capacity of one million tons of finished product each have been put into operation in **shakherchi (village) Turkmenbashi**¹⁶⁷, where about 4 thousand people live. A plant for the artificial breeding of sturgeon fish, the production of black caviar and fish, including canned products, has been built near the village. Private construction organizations¹⁶⁸ were opened in the administrative center. There were individual enterprises for the production of building materials from local raw materials and the production of basalt insulation wool¹⁶⁹. A private high-tech company "Tugra", which produced certified wet sanitary napkins "Deñiz"¹⁷⁰, worked on imported raw materials. The etrap road administration and the country's oldest plant of non-metallic and construction materials¹⁷¹ are involved in the village.

As part of the modernization of 2007-2020, a stadium for 1,500 seats and a kindergarten for 100 visits were built in shakherchi. Internal roads, electrical lines, sewage and water supply systems were reconstructed. Near shakherchi Turkmenbashi, a building of the Naval Institute and a small town for military families were built. A whole street of cottages has been built on the terms of long-term lending. It were officials - overwhelmingly - who became their owners, as in the city of Turkmenbashi. Many of them work in the city of Turkmenbashi and have comfortable houses and apartments, both over there and in other cities of the country. Only a few ordinary residents of the village took advantage of mortgage lending, the rest have refused because of fear of losing a permanent job in the conditions of growing unemployment and not having enough time to pay off the loan.

A blissful picture of the radical transformations in the administrative center of the Turkmenbashi etrap can be observed, as in other settlements on the Turkmenbashi-Ashgabat-Farab highway, only from the car window. The basis of residential areas in the villages is, as before, modest real estate of ordinary people, modernized with cosmetic repairs with the help of water-based paints, inexpensive building materials and sanitary equipment.

The village of Akdash is located 20 km from the city of Turkmenbashi. The settlement arose on the site of a temporary camp settlement for prisoners from a local prison who worked during the day at a stone quarry under the supervision of guards. Over time, stone houses for guards, a hostel for freelance workers, an office, warehouses, a mechanical workshop, an auto garage and the first residential buildings made of the construction stone "gyusha" (belonging to the limestone group) were built next to the camp fence. After the abolition of the penitentiary institution, the quarry was handed over to the civil authorities, and very soon a working village appeared around it. After the liquidation of the quarry in the late 90s of the last century, the settlement continued to expand due to immigrants from the demolished village No. 7 and rural residents of Khasan, Sulmen, Chagyl, Tuver and other near and far villages of the Turkmenbashi etrap. A new school and kindergarten were built for the children of the villagers, they promised to build a gym and open a market (bazaar). The streets in the village are not paved, there is no water supply and sewerage. The population is growing. Now it is almost two thousand people and continues to increase.

¹⁶⁷ Djanga.

¹⁶⁸ Existed during the construction work. Most of them were closed due to the lack of contracts.

¹⁶⁹ It was forcibly closed on a national basis because of the Russian-speaking (Jewish) founders of the Individual Enterprise.

¹⁷⁰ It is closed because of the nationality of the owner of the Individual Enterprise - an Azerbaijani by nationality.

¹⁷¹ The volume of production and the number of jobs due to a decrease in demand for the products of the non-metallic construction materials plant and the DU services decreased several times.

The new settlers in Akdash are the former owners of privatized apartments and private houses from the old housing fund in the city of Turkmenbashi. They invest the proceeds from the sale of real estate in the city of Turkmenbashi in the construction of houses in Akdash. They commence the construction themselves, preferring not to get involved with roguish builders from individual entrepreneurs. Builders-entrepreneurs inflate the prices of building materials and carelessly build homes according to individual orders of residents of the village, whom banks oblige in advance to transfer the mortgage loan taken from the bank to the accounts of individual entrepreneurs. Few people are satisfied with such rules, and for this reason, many do not take a mortgage. They try to build their own houses with their own funds: "Without a garrote on the throat," as they say in Akdash It is better to build it yourself - even if it is made of stone chips¹⁷². From it, solid houses are made on cement masonry, which are larger and more comfortable than adobe, adobe-stone and lath houses sold in a seaside town for good money to new owners. Among the buyers of dilapidated housing going to be scrapped in the city of Turkmenbashi, a significant part are not representatives of small and medium-sized businesses, but thieving officials. But the new settlers of Akdash are happy that with the proceeds from the sale of old junk¹⁷³, they have acquired, albeit far from civilization, good houses, homesteads and the opportunity to keep cattle for their own needs.

There is no work in the village. Mining of quarry stone "gyusha" is carried out in small volumes, almost in an artisanal way with violations of elementary safety rules. The construction materials plant relocated from the etrap center employs no more than thirty people, mainly from the Akdash suburb of Kozhman¹⁷⁴. In the village there is a small garbage disposal¹⁷⁵ enterprise, an individual entrepreneur for the production of building materials, several private shops and individuals engaged in private transportation. About 40% of the adult population (60% are male, 20% are female, the rest are unemployed) work at enterprises of all forms of ownership, in communal services and institutions of the city of Turkmenbashi. The share of villagers engaged in socially useful work in Akdash is insignificant and is not taken into account. Even teachers of the village school and civil servants come to work from the etrap center of Turkmenbashi and the resort city of the same name. The same can be said about health, culture and sports workers. Akdash today is not a settlement of promising socio-economic development, but a place of forced habitation of people.

There are many places like Akdash in the Balkan velayat. Take at least the village of Karagel¹⁷⁶ – in the past a large fishing village and a transshipment base of the Cheleken chemical plant. Currently, fishing is prohibited. The residents, mostly men, are engaged in poaching and, with a lucky combination of circumstances, get a job in the Dragon Oil company. A small number of them work at the chemical plant,

¹⁷² Building stone is now a big shortage.

¹⁷³ This "junk" is not needed by anyone - the land plot on which it stands is valued. Buyers of real estate in an old urban development do not stop at anything to get it. Using administrative resources, forgery of documents or outright bribery, they expand the acquired plots several times and build palaces on them.

¹⁷⁴ In the 90s, Kozhman was spontaneously built along the Airport-Akdash road by the residents of the village No. 7, who were left without a roof over their heads, demolished by order of the authorities of the city of Turkmenbashi. Settlement No. 7, or, as it was popularly called "Nakhalstroy", was built arbitrarily in the 70s of the last century by steppe dwellers (Kazakhs and Turkmens) at the entrance to the city of Krasnovodsk from the airport. Subsequently, Kozhman has grown and is now being actively built up by Turkmens from distant villages of etrap and the city of Turkmenbashi, as well as by visiting developers from other velayats. It is built up in one row along the road for several kilometers. In the back yards of the village there are outbuildings – tamdyrs, sheds, cattle pens, stables, workshops, etc.

¹⁷⁵ Ship waste (ballast water, etc.) from ships serving offshore fisheries in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea.

¹⁷⁶ Garagel is a urban - type settlement in the Balkan Velayat. The population is about eight hundred people. The settlement is located on the territory of the administrative district of the city of Khazar. Krasnovodsk railway station is 140 km away. The status of the village since 1956. Until 1993, it was called Karagel.

the compressor station and other facilities of the Turkmenneft Group of Companies, the public utilities service of the city¹⁷⁷. During the policy of modernization of the life of the inhabitants of the region, there were no special changes in the lifestyle of the population and the appearance of the village of Karagel. In fact, they are not noticed in the administrative center of the Cheleken peninsula - the city of Khazar as well. All local innovations were carried out within the framework of a social partnership with the oil and gas company Dragon Oil. Local officials and their colleagues from velayat and Ashgabat built for themselves several residential houses of improved layout and a private boarding house on the shore of the open sea in order to earn extra money on a sea holiday. But the Cheleken residents did not benefit from this even in terms of temporary employment for the summer period, not to mention a vacation in a boarding house.

Residents of **Kiyanly**¹⁷⁸, which was also a fishing village in the past, for the most part also received nothing from the President's program for the transformation of small towns and villages for the period up to 2020. The fishing industry has died out, the population of the village has become impoverished, and the complex for artificial breeding of sturgeon fish promised by the president has not been built. The concrete frame of the unfinished office of the fish factory and the column of the BSU¹⁷⁹ serve as a sad reminder of it on the seashore. Local residents directly associate this with their belonging to the Iomud tribe and the personal hostility of President Berdimukhamedov, a native of the Tekin tribe, to the Iomud of the Caspian region.

Since 2009, the TKNPZ sea terminal for the storage and shipment of liquefied gas worth 9 million 150 thousand US dollars¹⁸⁰ has been idle in Kiyanly. Of the specialists here, there are only engineering and technical workers visiting from the TKNPZ, checking the technical condition of the preserved equipment, and factory guards. There are no jobs for the residents of Kiyanly. Jobs are not available for them at the plant of the Malaysian company "Petronas Charigali (Turkmenistan)" as well. To get a job with the Malaysians, a bribe of one and a half or more thousand US dollars is required. This is an unimaginable amount for the almost completely unemployed and impoverished indigenous residents of Kiyanly. Some of them work at the neighboring gas-chemical complex for the production of polyethylene and polypropylene. The salary here is small: 2500-3500 manats per month, or 88-120 US dollars¹⁸¹. This is very little for large families of Pomorians. However, people suffer - there's a shortage of jobs¹⁸². The

¹⁷⁷ In the Khazar municipal utilities company.

¹⁷⁸ There are less than one thousand people in Kiyanli. The inhabitants of the village live mainly in former barracks built during the Soviet era and slightly redeveloped during the years of independence. Household amenities are located in the courtyard. New houses are being built on the front side of the village, but half of them belong to the natives of the village, who now live in the city of Turkmenbashi, Ashgabat and other cities. Having a house on the seashore is very prestigious and profitable in modern Turkmenistan.

¹⁷⁹ The construction of an industrial facility worth 42 million US dollars was started in 2008 and abandoned without a preliminary and comprehensive study of the feasibility and socio-demographic justifications. It was assumed that the state complex for the artificial breeding of sturgeon fish and the production of fish products would produce five tons of black caviar, 120 tons of portioned sturgeon fillet in vacuum packaging, five million conventional cans of canned fish and 120 tons of smoked sturgeon fish. In addition, frozen semi-finished products in the amount of 10 tons per year will be produced from the same raw materials, as well as: 10 tons of ready-made culinary products, 30 tons of pickles and 50 tons of fish flour.

¹⁸⁰ The initial project cost. The construction of the facility began in 2003 and was completed with commissioning on December 9th, 2009.

¹⁸¹ According to the "black market" rate of November 29th, 2020. Consumer prices for all products and goods are equal to the "black rate".

¹⁸² The gas chemical complex provided about 1,200 new jobs. However, during the recruitment of maintenance personnel, priorities were given to the builders of the complex, who became qualified operators during the construction.

polyethylene-propylene plant employs people from the city who worked on its construction from the laying to the commissioning. They are serious competitors to the residents of Kiyarly. And what's there to do? - There is no less unemployment in the city of Turkmenbashi, especially among young people.

The water in Kiyarly is imported, the roadways of the streets, as in all settlements and villages in the outback of the Balkan velayat, are unpaved, there are no sidewalks.

To the north of Kiyarly, between the Caspian Sea and the Guvlyduz salt lake, lies the urban-type settlement of Guvlymayak, which arose on the site of a salt field at the end of the XIX century. In Soviet times, as well as today, it is developing as a working settlement at the salt field, reorganized over time into the Kuulisol plant¹⁸³. The territory of the village was originally built up with barracks for families of salt miners and Finnish houses¹⁸⁴ for managers. Since the 60s, the Kuulimayak residents began to build one-story unsettled houses made of gyusha stone according to independently compiled projects. In the 70s and 80s, two two-story apartment buildings were built for the specialists of the plant with a minimum of household amenities, since there is no centralized water supply, sewerage and heating system in the village.

Currently, a little more than 1,200 people live in Guvlymayak. The able-bodied population is employed in production at the Guvlyduz plant and in institutions of the socio-cultural sphere: a general education school, a polyclinic, a house of culture, communications, etc. But the unemployment rate remains high – at the level of 40 percent of the working-age population. They hoped to relieve the tension with employment with the launch of a high-grade salt production plant on December 9, 2019 and 140 promised jobs. The hopes were not fulfilled, and the promises were greatly exaggerated. The need for jobs remained. It forced people to look for additional sources of existence. Residents of Guvlymayak began to rent rooms to vacationers at the sea in privatized apartments, their own and even departmental houses.

However, the forced business comes to an end. A large construction of capital cottages with sea views has unfolded in the village. Two-level cottages and two-and three-storey houses with autonomous engineering and household and energy infrastructure of a modern type are being built: there are swimming pools, playgrounds, diesel generators, transformers, boiler rooms, water supply, sewerage and ventilation systems of the Chiller type, fiber-optic and cellular communications, WI-FI, etc. Unsettled dachas with amenities in the yard cannot compete with them. The estates are built by the heads of the Guvlyduz plant, successful businessmen, specialists and officials of the Malaysian company "Petronas Charigali (Turkmenistan)" from citizens of Turkmenistan, and, of course, officials of departments of various levels and territorial affiliation that are quick to profit. A "recreational" town on the outskirts of the village of Guvlyduz is turning into a highly profitable corner of a secluded holiday by the sea¹⁸⁵. Indigenous residents¹⁸⁶ who have lost an unreliable business can only look at this feast during the plague and hope for better times.

Conclusion

¹⁸³ The modern name is "Guvlyduz".

¹⁸⁴ Prefabricated house made of insulated wooden panels. The houses have been preserved, and people still live in them.

¹⁸⁵ By the way, the demand for the elite "Guvlymayak recreation area" and similar corners of unobtrusive service is much higher than in the recorded National Tourist Zone "Avaza".

¹⁸⁶ By the way, there isn't a single manager among them at the plant, even at an middle level of management.

For the implementation of the initial part of the **Maksat Namasy** program - a large-scale nationwide 3-stage "National Program of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030" for the reconstruction of cities and towns of Western Turkmenistan, huge funds were spent from the state budget and the own funds of the wealthiest enterprises. Dozens of socio-cultural and industrial facilities were built in the Balkan velayat. But as the study showed, many projects failed to achieve the stated goals for the accelerated socio-economic development of cities and towns in Western Turkmenistan. And some of the most expensive projects, such as the "Avaza International Tourist Zone" or the "International Trade Port in Turkmenbashi", will not be able to recoup themselves even in the coming decades, if they will ever be able to recoup the funds invested in them.

In our opinion, there are several reasons for the low efficiency of projects for the reconstruction of cities and towns not only in Western Turkmenistan, but also in the country as a whole. And they are as follows:

- ***The lack of scientific analysis in the development of projects;***
- ***Low competence of government structures in the field of strategic planning in matters of economic development of the country;***
- ***The lack of a system of independent expertise in the country for the analysis of projects, as a result of an authoritarian management system;***
- ***Lack of participation of civil society in the discussion of governmental projects;***
- ***Colossal corruption and the lack of a competitive climate in the country for honest business making;***
- ***The lack of favorable business conditions in Turkmenistan for attracting private investors in the implementation of economic projects.***

It is possible to solve the problem of low efficiency of projects for the reconstruction of cities and towns only through the democratization of the state management system. Only a democratic system can create an effective anti-corruption system in the country, create a successful competitive business environment and involve civil society in the implementation of projects.

Democratic Civil Union of Turkmenistan,

The Netherlands 2020

**Socio-economic situation and prospects
for the development of cities and villages of Turkmenistan
on the territory of the Balkan velayat.**

GLOSSARY

¹ The national program of the President of Turkmenistan for the radical transformation of the social and living conditions of the population of villages, settlements, cities of etrap and etrap centers for the period up to 2020.

² 2011-2015 and 2016-2020.

³ Central Asia-since Turkmenistan gained state independence.

⁴ Almost the entire periodic table is presented in the Kara-Bogaz-Gol Bay on the Caspian Sea.

⁵ 8 to 12%.

⁶ According to other sources – 25%

⁷ Their number is constantly growing by renaming settlements and villages by local authorities into "small towns", or, in Turkmen, - shakherchi. This is done in order to create a good picture of the sustainable urbanization of the region (country), but most importantly - to increase budgets and expand staff in towns and villages in connection with their acquisition of a new administrative and territorial status.

⁸ In Soviet times, the territory of village councils (possoverts) with settlements, industrial infrastructure and agricultural land.

⁹ The socio-economic programs attributed to Berdimukhamedov today, including "New Village", "Education", "Health", the development of physical culture movement and high-performance sports, the construction of the Avaza NTZ, the reconstruction and modernization of the TKNPZ, the seaport and other large-scale projects were formulated and implemented during Niyazov's presidency.

¹⁰ The village of Hasan-Kuli before becoming part of Russia with a fishing and livestock lifestyle. In Soviet times, it was transformed into the village of Hasan-Kuli. As part of the Krasnovodsk region and during its abolition, it was a rural, volost and district center. In the era of independence, it was transformed into the administrative center of the eponymous etrap. In 2016, it was renamed shakherchi Esenguly. In 2020, approximately about 9.5 thousand people lived in etrap.

¹¹ In March-December 2007, immediately after the inauguration of Berdimukhamedov, almost all the objects planned for construction in the urban village of Hasan-Kuli were commissioned, which indicates his predecessor as the author of the reconstruction of Hasan-Kuli within the framework of the "Village" program prepared by him.

¹² Esenguly. The status of the urban - type settlement since 1935. The name until 1933 was Hasan-Kuli. In May 2016, it was granted the status of a city.

- ¹³ The building of the central hospital of etrap. Before independence, it was the central district hospital.
- ¹⁴ The new building of the polyclinic. The total cost of the two medical institutions is 3 million 208 thousand 313.72 euros.
- ¹⁵ For 350 seats.
- ¹⁶ With a capacity of 3000 thousand cubic meters per day.
- ¹⁷ Three residential 4-apartment buildings for civil servants.
- ¹⁸ To the village of Esenguly – the administrative center of etrap.
- ¹⁹ A production complex for breeding and processing commercial fish with a capacity of 50 tons per year, with a total cost (including VAT) of 10 million 994 thousand 999 US dollars.
- ²⁰ In Soviet times - the territories of possovets and village councils.
- ²¹ Güdürolum - on the administrative-territorial map of Turkmenistan.
- ²² Population of 11 thousand people, as of 2020.
- ²³ In Soviet times, the village of Kizil-Atrek, since 2016 - shakherchi Etrek.
- ²⁴ Uzen (Kazakhstan) – Serkhetyaka – Kyzylgaya – Bereket - Etrek (Turkmenistan) – Gorgan (Iran).
- ²⁵ The agreement on its creation was signed in Ashgabat in April, 2011.
- ²⁶ The former district of Kara-Kala of the Krasnovodsk region with the administrative center in the village of Kara-Kala, which was renamed the village of Makhtumkuli, which received the status of a city (shakherchi) in 2016. The population is 14 thousand people.
- ²⁷ At that time, the administrative center of the Makhtumkuli etrap was an urban - type settlement.
- ²⁸ In 2008-2012, 25 schools and kindergartens of a new model were built in the Balkan Velayat. In the following years, the number of school and preschool education facilities under construction and put into operation has significantly decreased. By 2020, there was a clear shortage of places in schools and preschool institutions (the coronavirus pandemic showed this).
- ²⁹ The former village of Kara-Kala.
- ³⁰ The former Kizil-Arvat district with the center in the urban-type settlement of Kizil-Arvat, which received the status of a city in 1935. During the years of independence, it was renamed the city of Serdar. By 2020, the population of etrap has approached 90 thousand people.
- ³¹ The former Kazanjik district.
- ³² The total cost of the object is 19 million 700 thousand euros.
- ³³ With a library, exhibition and dance halls, an auditorium for 500 seats, an orchestra pit, recording and choreography studios, computer courses, a conference hall, a library and a dining room for 130 seats.

³⁴ The school, designed mainly for the training of future carpet makers, has opened additional classes in painting, sculpture, jewelry, music and theater arts.

³⁵ Two schools for 600 students each and one for 320 student places. A sports school with 350 seats has been built in the village of Janakhir.

³⁶ The former Kazandzhik district with the administrative center in the village of Kazandzhik, which received the status of a city in 1939. In the era of independence, it was renamed the city of Bereket. The population of etrap exceeded 35 thousand people in 2020.

³⁷ Carpet factory for 120 jobs with a capacity of two thousand square meters of products per year.

³⁸ For 150 workplaces with a capacity of 600 thousand pillowcases and sheets per year.

³⁹ Kindergarten in the city of Bereket for 160 kids.

⁴⁰ Two schools, with 520 and 340 seats, are equipped with interactive multimedia, language and computer classes.

⁴¹ With a concert hall for 400 seats, a library and creative studios, like in Serdar.

⁴² Health house for 100 visits per day.

⁴³ A multidisciplinary medical center with 130 beds.

⁴⁴ The project cost of the new medical industry facility is 22 million US dollars. Annual production: 250 million iodine sticks, 50 million iodine pencils and 500 thousand dental tampons. The production uses local raw materials – Turkmen cotton and iodine-bromine waters.

⁴⁵ 70 motor transport units.

⁴⁶ Having a replacement fund of seven thousand elite chickens.

⁴⁷ On the Turkmen map – Gürgen (Iran); in the Russian transcription - Gurgen.

⁴⁸ The shortest and most convenient route from Europe to the ports of the Persian Gulf, to South Asia and the Middle East passes through the Bereket station. The total length of the steel route, from the Kazakh steppes through the Western Karakum Mountains to the north of Iran to the mountainous province of Gulistan, is 900 km. The new Uzen – Bereket – Etrek – Esenguly will pass through the southern etraps of the Balkan velayat, rich in energy carriers and other raw materials.

⁴⁹ The former Nebit-Dag, the status of the city since 1946. The population in 2029 is about 95 thousand people.

⁵⁰ With a generation capacity of 126 megawatts.

⁵¹ With a channel capacity of 200 people per day.

⁵² With a project cost of 89 million manats; an area of 35 hectares, with 120 shops and more than 500 shopping sections.

⁵³ The project cost is 20 million US dollars.

⁵⁴ The cost is 78 million 375 thousand manats.

⁵⁵ For 160 seats each.

⁵⁶ Two 2-storey 18-apartment buildings, two 2-storey 16-apartment buildings, three 12-storey 96-apartment buildings commissioned by the State Corporation Turkmennebit.

⁵⁷ The urban – type settlement is 18 km from Balkanabat. In the media and official correspondence, they are often called, as we pointed out above, "shakherchi" - "town". The former center of extraction and grinding of table salt. The status of the urban – type settlement since 1940.

⁵⁸ An enterprise for the packaging of therapeutic mud with a capacity of 600 packages of finished products per hour and 3600 packages of sea salt per hour. During the year, the therapeutic mud workshop is able to produce 200 thousand packages of Mollakarin clay and 100 thousand packages of volcanic mud. The project cost is 10 million US dollars.

⁵⁹ It exceeds the area of the Cheleken Peninsula by four times. It extends from the town of Yaskhan in the north-east of Balkanabat to the coast of the Caspian Sea in the Turkmen Bay on the traverse of Ogurjali Island.

⁶⁰ The former urban – type settlement of Cheleken, received the status of a city in 1956. The population in 2020 is 25 thousand people.

⁶¹ This number has hardly changed by 2020.

⁶² The former Oil and Gas Production Directorate of Lenineft (Chelekeneft), since 2000, the Vostochny Cheleken field has been developed by the Khazar consortium. The operator of the project is the State Corporation "Turkmenneft", which includes the oil and gas production enterprise "Khazarneft". The main contractors of the Khazar consortium for the construction of oil wells are drilling divisions of the State Corporation Turkmenneft.

⁶³ 1.5 thousand cubic meters of drinking water per day.

⁶⁴ The children's health center "Gara Altyn" was built by specialists of the Turkmenneft Group of Companies on the seashore.

⁶⁵ An oil collection point for the storage and shipment of commercial oil with a capacity of 2.5 million tons of oil per year and a cost of more than \$25 million.

⁶⁶ 2020, population of 70 thousand people.

⁶⁷ At the expense of foreign investments in the Avaza NTZ, only the Turkish yacht club "Ýelken" was built under a lease agreement, which after the expiration of the lease period will be transferred to the possession of the Turkmen side.

⁶⁸ At the first stage of modernization of the plant (1991-2006), about \$1.5 billion was allocated for these purposes. Platforming, catalytic cracking, hydrotreating of diesel fuel, lubricating oils, a gas turbine power plant, a reverse osmosis desalination plant and other industrial and infrastructure facilities were put into operation. In 2007-2020, more than one and a half billion US dollars were additionally invested in the renovation of the plant.

⁶⁹ 2007-2020 rr.

⁷⁰ Tank farm. The project cost of the tank farm is 9,150,000 US dollars (USD), the capacity is 3 thousand tons of liquefied petroleum gases (LPG).

⁷¹ Marine shipping pier. The project cost is 22326000 euros (EUR); the capacity is 180-200 thousand tons per year.

⁷² The desalination plant was put into operation in 2010, the capacity is 35 thousand m³ / day, the cost is 156 million USD.

⁷³ The desalination plant was put into operation in 2015, with a capacity of 50 thousand m³ / day.

⁷⁴ The total cost (excluding VAT) is 15.9 million US dollars.

⁷⁵ Aviation fuel TS-1. The project cost of the installation is \$11 million, the capacity is 500 thousand tons per year.

⁷⁶ The annual capacity for raw materials is three million tons.

⁷⁷ The project cost is 11 million euros (EUR); the capacity for box bags is 10 million units for "big bags" - 25 thousand units.

⁷⁸ The project cost is 40 million euros (EUR); the annual capacity is 21 thousand tons of commercial product.

⁷⁹ The annual capacity is 2 million tons of processed raw materials.

⁸⁰ The total cost of four units is \$533 million US dollars; the total capacity is 480 thousand tons of components per year for high-quality gasoline.

⁸¹ The contract value is 211.6 million; the capacity for the UZK is 900 thousand tons, for the DAG block – 500 thousand tons per year.

⁸² The hotel type health center "Arzuv" for 900 seats for adults and children, the hotel "Nebitchi" for 220 seats, etc.

⁸³ Multimedia secondary school with 600 seats.

⁸⁴ The Rukhyet Palace building was erected at the expense of the TKNPZ in the city of Turkmenbashi, two kindergartens for 160 and two kindergartens for 320 places were built, residential buildings of improved layout: six 4-storey 24-apartment buildings, one 4-storey 40-apartment building, three 4-storey 48-apartment buildings, one 52-apartment building and two 12-storey 72-apartment houses of increased comfort. A sports and recreation complex was built in the industrial zone of the plant, a cardinal reconstruction of the city stadium and the historical building of the city – the Palace of Culture of Oil Workers was carried out.

⁸⁵ The 4-storey 24-apartment building was built in the 110th quarter by the individual enterprise "Resul Gurllyshyk" by order of the OKS of the Balkan Velayat. Seven more 4-storey 24-apartment buildings were built by order of the OKS of the Balkan Velayat and commissioned in 2019.

⁸⁶ Built by the Turks on the order of the sole proprietor; the total volume of the refrigeration sections is 2,475 m³. The refrigerating chambers are designed for a one-time reception of several thousand tons of food products.

⁸⁷ Of these, an administrative and residential complex with a socio-cultural infrastructure in the administrative center of the Kenar etrap of the city of Turkmenbashi and there are also 1300-and 400-meter overpasses with two-level interchanges on the Airport-Avaza highway with three-row traffic in both directions. The largest structures were the Turkmenbashi International Airport with the service of 15 thousand aircraft per year, the military shipyard and the International Seaport of Turkmenbashi with a modern and extensive transport and logistics system and a ship repair and shipbuilding plant, which provided the city with more than 3.5 thousand jobs.

⁸⁸ In 2008, the population of etrap was 16 thousand 500 people. Over the past 12 years, it has increased by almost a third due to natural growth and immigrants from other Balkan etrap and other velayats. Now there are 21.5 thousand people in etrap.

⁸⁹ 2020, the population is about four thousand people.

⁹⁰ The settlements of Kiyarly, Guvlymayak (Kuuli-Mayak), Belek (often called shakherchi-gorodok), Garabogaz (the former urban – type settlement of Bekdash, the status of a city since 2002) , etc. Now it is 21.5 thousand people.

⁹¹ Property of the Malaysian company "Petronas Charigali (Turkmenistan)".

⁹² The plant provided 1,200 new jobs to the population of etrap.

⁹³ The former "Kuulisol plant".

⁹⁴ Road and rail.

⁹⁵ The population is about two thousand people.

⁹⁶ Central Asia - the Center.

⁹⁷ The Belek gas compressor station is the end point of the East-West main gas pipeline with a capacity of 30 billion cubic meters of gas per year, designed to ring together the largest gas fields in the country.

⁹⁸ Kizylkiya (about 1800 people) and Chagyl (more than 1400 people).

⁹⁹ 900 new jobs have been created at the Garabogazkarbamide plant.

¹⁰⁰ Construction of the road began in 2007 and continues to this day on the eastern segment of the road.

¹⁰¹ Protocol Street is the popular name for the streets along the route of the presidential motorcade.

¹⁰² Motor boats (boats) of the Wellboat-63 brand in the amount of 20 units, including 15 units of the open type and 5 units of the closed type (with a cabin), for a total amount of 1,488,500 US dollars. The "boats" have not recouped even 10% of their cost during operation. Such transactions, and they cannot be counted in modern Turkmenistan, are classic criminal schemes of embezzlement of state funds that are being lowered from above.

¹⁰³ Another criminal scheme of uncontrolled theft of public funds. After how many years will this plant pay off and bring income?

¹⁰⁴ Okarem - according to other sources. There are no well-established names in the Turkmen topography.

¹⁰⁵ The new port, marked in the Esenguly etrap conversion program, has not been built.

¹⁰⁶ The deposits are listed in the first part of the report.

¹⁰⁷ The Iranians blocked with a dam the passage of fish to the spawning grounds in the upper reaches of the Etrek and Sumbar.

¹⁰⁸ In connection with the construction of the North-South transport corridor, such jobs have also appeared.

¹⁰⁹ The project cost is 756.7 thousand US dollars.

¹¹⁰ Clean drinking water, which has passed factory processing, is brought from Balkanabat (Nebit-Dag) – it is expensive.

¹¹¹ On average, 2400 manats, or +/- 100 US dollars on the black market. The state exchange rate in Turkmenistan is ostentatious in reports on the happiness of the Turkmen people and is not applied in real life.

¹¹² 120 hectares are allocated for pomegranates.

¹¹³ Olive trees cover more than 50 hectares.

¹¹⁴ About 80 hectares have been given over to vineyards.

¹¹⁵ For example, the livestock farm "Gyzyl Baýyr".

¹¹⁶ Polyclinics in large villages, and the central district hospital in the administrative center of etrap.

¹¹⁷ From cars and trucks in the major cities of the Velayat - Balkanabat and Turkmenbashi.

¹¹⁸ Semi-buried egg-shaped oven for baking Turkmen tortillas (breads) in the open air.

¹¹⁹ This is what the residents of the Makhtumkuli etrap call themselves.

¹²⁰ Karakalyans live in a mountainous area.

¹²¹ The Era of Rebirth, the Era of a New Rebirth and Great Transformations and the Era of Power and Happiness declared by the Government of Turkmenistan.

¹²² From the capital of the Turkmen state to the cattle-breeding village lost in the sands of the Karakum mountains.

¹²³ The former urban - type settlement of Kara-Kala, now shakherchi Makhtumkuli.

¹²⁴ In fact, the construction of the clothing and footwear complex was initiated by the first President of Turkmenistan S. Niyazov-Turkmenbashi and was almost completed by 2006. However, when

Berdimukhamedov came to power, the construction of the facility was suspended, then resumed, and the initiative to build the factories was assigned to Arkadag, who attributed to himself many of the initiatives and merits of his predecessor.

¹²⁵ "Neutral Turkmenistan", July 21st, 2020.

¹²⁶ Taking into account kickbacks.

¹²⁷ In this case, an enterprise in which criminal schemes of embezzlement of budget funds are scrolled under the guise of a state brand.

¹²⁸ A long-running scheme of fraudulent withdrawal of money from the population.

¹²⁹ The city of Serdar in the years of independence.

¹³⁰ The city of Bereket in the years of independence.

¹³¹ One ton per inhabitant of the Balkan Velayat. The figures, of course, are exaggerated at least three times, but they are also impressive. After all, we are talking about a waterless land that did not know the blade of the plow in the memory of the previous ten generations of ancestors.

¹³² They were the first in the velayat to start growing cotton.

¹³³ The bulk of those mobilized through intermediaries (as they are the heads of enterprises, organizations and heads of administrative entities at the place of residence of people involved in agricultural work) pay themselves off from cotton duty during the autumn harvest and spring weeding of seedlings, to which they are also attracted. With the money collected, the management of daikhan farms (even the hyakims of cities and etraps take on this mission) hires day laborers from among the population of cotton-growing areas, and workers and employees who have bought off agricultural work sit at home.

¹³⁴ Or a flock of sheep, a herd of camels, a herd of horses, etc.

¹³⁵ Something like former collective farms based on collective management, or state farms working on the principles of unity of command. In practice, Daikhan farms and associations get along with both.

¹³⁶ In terms of size, the lands that have fallen into the hands of officials who use their official position and administrative resources for selfish purposes are comparable to the latifundia of the New World.

¹³⁷ Cleptocracy.

¹³⁸ Democracy.

¹³⁹ And other riches of the country.

¹⁴⁰ Actual landowners.

¹⁴¹ NT, dated November 20th, 2020, No. 295 (29655): "In accordance with the Code of Turkmenistan "On Land", the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan No. 14668 dated March 18th, 2016 "On issues of regulation of land relations in Turkmenistan", the President of Turkmenistan signed an Order ordering to abolish the right of relevant legal entities to land use on the basis of contracts for the provision of land plots used by them to enterprises and institutions, members of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs".

¹⁴² In Mary velayat.

¹⁴³ NT, dated July 22nd, 2020.

¹⁴⁴ NT, dated April 1st, 6th, 10th, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Meat breed, like the Saradzhin.

¹⁴⁶ In fact, it is the class differentiation of the rural population.

¹⁴⁷ Loser.

¹⁴⁸ Store.

¹⁴⁹ In total, the state farm "Kazandzhik" of the same district and three livestock farms in the village of Kizylkiya of the Krasnovodsk district: "Turkmenistan", "26 Baku Commissars" and "Komsomol" in 1982 contained twice as many heads of small cattle. In total, in the Krasnovodsk region in the last years of Soviet power, there were about 420 thousand heads of sheep, goats, 18 thousand camels and 7,500 cows. The collective herd was catastrophically reduced during the collapse of the USSR and the legal lawlessness that unfolded throughout the former country and the struggle for the redistribution of socialist property.

¹⁵⁰ It has 17 thousand small cattle and 1,725 camels.

¹⁵¹ It has 52 thousand heads of small cattle and 1,350 thousand camels.

¹⁵² This is evidenced by the continuous construction of industrial and civil facilities in small towns and villages of the Tekin regions-Mary and Akhale. A multimillion-dollar medical complex has been built in Arkadag's homeland, the village of Sagant, while a hospital has not yet been built in Krasnovodsk, the former center of the Russian – speaking population of Turkmenistan. The construction of grandiose objects in the villages is exempt from the exacting inspections of financial and legal authorities, as it is carried out under the patronage of the President. Here one can implement any criminal schemes with cash kickbacks and direct theft of building materials on a large scale. According to independent experts, large-scale facilities in the villages are being built with an eye to their future privatization by the Gakhryman (President) clan and his immediate entourage. An example of this is laid in the Esenguly etrap, where a shopping center was put up for auction by the time the program for the transformation of cities and villages was completed.

¹⁵³ Counteraction of local bribe takers.

¹⁵⁴ Including natives of the Bereketsky etrap.

¹⁵⁵ This is how the coastal Turkmens unflatteringly dubbed the Kazanjik people who arrived in their homeland.

¹⁵⁶ This is due to the strengthening of Tekin people in command positions in Balkanabat, the administrative center of the Balkan velayat.

¹⁵⁷ The representatives of the Russian-speaking population, especially Russians, can be forgotten because of their extremely small population, social passivity and disunity, ignorance of the state language and relatively low culture and literacy as a consequence of the flawed education in secondary schools of

Turkmenistan. This seriously restricts the opportunities of the Russian-speaking population in defending their constitutional rights and legitimate interests.

¹⁵⁸ Mostly Yomudis from Kazancik, Tekin people from Akhal and Mary velayat.

¹⁵⁹ It is enough to recall the endless and continuing punitive personnel purges at the TKNPZ, the former State Enterprise "Balkanbalyk", in the State Service of Sea and River Transport of Turkmenistan (now the Agency "Turkmedenizderyaellary"), the International Seaport and other enterprises, as well as in state institutions - hyakimliky, the governing bodies of the city of Turkmenbashi, etc.

¹⁶⁰ It should be recalled that in Turkmenistan it is forbidden to mention unemployment under the threat of criminal prosecution, despite its obvious and incessant growth.

¹⁶¹ Chovdurs, soyinajs, igdyrs, saryks, yomudas.

¹⁶² The allocation of land plots for the construction of private housing has been prohibited in the city of Turkmenbashi for almost 30 years (since the declaration of independence). However, this ban, with the connivance of the authorities and the joint benevolence of architects, lawyers, notaries, land surveyors and judges, does not prevent chaotic erecting of entire palaces on cleared plots in the depths of urban slums.

¹⁶³ The Russian Cemetery in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) is a multi-confessional resting place. In addition to Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, and Muslims are buried here.

¹⁶⁴ A separate study would be needed to count all the khakims, prosecutors, judges, police chiefs, directors of the seaport, TKNPZ and other officials who have replaced each other during the years of independence of Turkmenistan.

¹⁶⁵ For all the years of independence, only two 12-storey residential buildings and two 12-storey hotels have been built.

¹⁶⁶ Until recently, only the city of Garabogaz (Bekdash) was called an urban-type settlement, and now the urban-type settlements are: Turkmenbashi (Djanga) is the administrative center of etrap, the fishing village of Kiyanli and the urban-type settlement of Guvlymayak in the Guvlyduz salt field are often called shaherchi towns.

¹⁶⁷ Djanga.

¹⁶⁸ Existed during the construction work. Most of them were closed due to the lack of contracts.

¹⁶⁹ It was forcibly closed on a national basis because of the Russian-speaking (Jewish) founders of the Individual Enterprise.

¹⁷⁰ It is closed because of the nationality of the owner of the Individual Enterprise - an Azerbaijani by nationality.

¹⁷¹ The volume of production and the number of jobs due to a decrease in demand for the products of the non-metallic construction materials plant and the DU services decreased several times.

¹⁷² Building stone is now a big shortage.

¹⁷³ This "junk" is not needed by anyone - the land plot on which it stands is valued. Buyers of real estate in an old urban development do not stop at anything to get it. Using administrative resources, forgery of documents or outright bribery, they expand the acquired plots several times and build palaces on them.

¹⁷⁴ In the 90s, Kozhman was spontaneously built along the Airport-Akdash road by the residents of the village No. 7, who were left without a roof over their heads, demolished by order of the authorities of the city of Turkmenbashi. Settlement No. 7, or, as it was popularly called "Nakhalstroy", was built arbitrarily in the 70s of the last century by steppe dwellers (Kazakhs and Turkmens) at the entrance to the city of Krasnovodsk from the airport. Subsequently, Kozhman has grown and is now being actively built up by Turkmens from distant villages of etrap and the city of Turkmenbashi, as well as by visiting developers from other velayats. It is built up in one row along the road for several kilometers. In the back yards of the village there are outbuildings – tamdyrs, sheds, cattle pens, stables, workshops, etc.

¹⁷⁵ Ship waste (ballast water, etc.) from ships serving offshore fisheries in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea.

¹⁷⁶ Garagel is a urban - type settlement in the Balkan Velayat. The population is about eight hundred people. The settlement is located on the territory of the administrative district of the city of Khazar. Krasnovodsk railway station is 140 km away. The status of the village since 1956. Until 1993, it was called Karagel.

¹⁷⁷ In the Khazar municipal utilities company.

¹⁷⁸ There are less than one thousand people in Kiyanlı. The inhabitants of the village live mainly in former barracks built during the Soviet era and slightly redeveloped during the years of independence. Household amenities are located in the courtyard. New houses are being built on the front side of the village, but half of them belong to the natives of the village, who now live in the city of Turkmenbashi, Ashgabat and other cities. Having a house on the seashore is very prestigious and profitable in modern Turkmenistan.

¹⁷⁹ The construction of an industrial facility worth 42 million US dollars was started in 2008 and abandoned without a preliminary and comprehensive study of the feasibility and socio-demographic justifications. It was assumed that the state complex for the artificial breeding of sturgeon fish and the production of fish products would produce five tons of black caviar, 120 tons of portioned sturgeon fillet in vacuum packaging, five million conventional cans of canned fish and 120 tons of smoked sturgeon fish. In addition, frozen semi-finished products in the amount of 10 tons per year will be produced from the same raw materials, as well as: 10 tons of ready-made culinary products, 30 tons of pickles and 50 tons of fish flour.

¹⁸⁰ The initial project cost. The construction of the facility began in 2003 and was completed with commissioning on December 9th, 2009.

¹⁸¹ According to the "black market" rate of November 29th, 2020. Consumer prices for all products and goods are equal to the "black rate".

¹⁸² The gas chemical complex provided about 1,200 new jobs. However, during the recruitment of maintenance personnel, priorities were given to the builders of the complex, who became qualified operators during the construction.

¹⁸³ The modern name is "Guvlyduz".

¹⁸⁴ Prefabricated house made of insulated wooden panels. The houses have been preserved, and people still live in them.

¹⁸⁵ By the way, the demand for the elite "Guvlymayak recreation area" and similar corners of unobtrusive service is much higher than in the recorded National Tourist Zone "Avaza".

¹⁸⁶ By the way, there isn't a single manager among them at the plant, even at an middle level of management.