The article gives a cursory review of crucial regional integration trends in Asia-Pacific region, it examines prospects for free trade area within Trans-Pacific Partnership and Asia-Pacific FTA of the 21 APEC members. The author has conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the member countries' tariffs and duty ranges, evaluated the "integration potential" in banking services.

The author concentrates on the "hybrid approach" to the regional integration that allows FTAs developing, on a bilateral basis and making offers to the TPP and APEC membership as a whole simultaneously. It also reveals the core contradictions among regional actors in integration negotiations within the whole region.

The article contains an analyze of the «Open Letter» addressed to Dr. Ibrahim Awad al-Badri (the same Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi), to fighters and followers of the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISLAMIC STATE by G.R.Baltanova, Dr.Sc. (Philosophy), Kazan State Power Engineering University

Keywords: Islamic state, the caliphate, jihad, sharia, fiqh, hadith, verse, Kurf

The situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Syrian conflict has become one of the most devastating since the time of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. More than 200 thousand people are killed, about 8 million persons are internally displaced, there are more than 3 million refugees. Third of the country occupied by militants of "Islamic state". In this context, it is of interest the analysis of the Syrian opposition parties and movements. It is important to understand whose interests they represent, one of them can play a useful role in the settlement process, and who seek to further destabilize the situation in order to achieve the his own objectives.

The article explores the phenomenon of democracy in modern Mongolia. According to some scholars, the democratization of Mongolia was unlikely and could hardly succeed. However it happened: on a number of criteria a country can be declared a consolidated democracy. To understand how and why this was possible, the author refers to the history of the democratic revolution of 1990, considers the initiators of democratic reforms in Mongolia, the formation of democratic parties and political history of the country in 1990-2000.

The article also presents data of sociological studies that show how the Mongolians themselves see democratic values and evaluate the state of democracy in Mongolia. Most of the Mongolians are committed to democratic values. This phenomenon can be explained by the scarcity of the population, its homogeneity and common values, as well as the benefits of the democratic image of the country.

Despite being a unitary state overall, China is not unitary in its fiscal system, that’s why it is called decentralized structure of public finance and municipal fiscal, or tax federalism. This article describes the features of fiscal system of China which is formed as a fiscal federalism. The author reviews in details the process of forming and reforming fiscal federalism in China, and analyzes its current situation.

In addition, the article gives some recommendations of usage of the Chinese experience in the Russia to improve local practice of fiscal federalism.

The article deals with political and constitutional processes in Tanzania regarding the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The constitutional referendum, presidential and parliamentary elections both in the URT and in Zanzibar are to be held in 2015. According to the draft Constitution of Tanzania which is quasi-federal but de jure unitary transforms into a de jure federation. The objectives of the constitutional reform is to respond to the demands of the opposition, to counteract the Zanzibar separatism, and, finally, on how to retain the Union. The author questions if the new constitutional design of the Tanzanian state provides for a structural transformation per se.

The article analyzes the parliamentary elections, which took place in New Zealand in 2014. It was won by the National Party, led by John Key. Along the way, the author refers to the electoral system, which operates in the country since 1996 and has led to the replacement of a two-party party system for multi-party system and to creation of the government coalitions. John Key is a charismatic leader who has made a quick political career. The main attention is paid to the reasons that led him to such an impressive victory for the third time.

The author questions if the new constitutional design of the Tanzanian state provides for a structural transformation per se.
EVENTS, FACTS, COMMENTS

«CHARLY EBDO»: A VIEW FROM AFRICA by G.A.Karpov, PhD (History), Institute for African Studies, RAS

Keywords: France, Islam, Africa, Charly Ebdo

This article analyzes the response of Africans to the terrorist attacks in Paris on 7-9 January 2015. Shooting in the editorial office of «Charly Ebdo» left no one indifferent in Africa. Virtually all significant structures presented in this regard its position - the authorities, religious leaders, the media and community leaders. «Charly Ebdo» provoked controversy on many different issues and challenges, both domestic and foreign policy in Africa.

FROM OUR STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MODERN TURKS. WHAT ARE THEY LIKE? by S.A.Khamdokhov, our Staff correspondent in Turkey

Keywords: Turkey, the Turks, the national character, culture, features of life, traditions

The history of Russian-Turkish relations dates back several centuries. There were ups and downs in cooperation between our countries. Almost the entire 20th century due to the current geopolitical situation in the world, Russia and Turkey, despite their geographic proximity, in fact, were close to each other.

The situation began to change dramatically with the removal of the «Iron Curtain» and the opening of the borders of the new Russia. Tourist boom began. Turkey was a real Mecca for Russian travelers. The author shares some of his experiences on various aspects of life of the citizens of this country.

TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS, MANNER

THE PAST AND PRESENT TRADITIONS IN THE MINDS OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDERS by S.E.Pale, PhD (History), Institute of Oriental Studies

Keywords: Oceania, traditions, mana, cannibalism, cargo cults, economic interests

This article overviews the role of traditions in the modern political and economic environments in Oceania. The author tracks down the evolution of the money concept in the perception of the Pacific Islanders throughout the 20th century. The meaning of such traditions as mana, cannibalism and cargo cults is reflected as pivotal in establishing ties between the two worlds of the Pacific and the Western civilizations.

The article contains the examples of traditions widely used in the modern political and economic life of the Pacific States. The author concludes that nowadays the traditions in Oceania are successfully integrated into the modern life and meet the challenges of the globalizing world.

RELIGIONS, BELIEFS, CULTS

AVATIME PEOPLE: TRADITIONAL RITUALS AND CHRISTIANITY by A.O.Lapushkina, Institute for African Studies, RAS

Keywords: Ghana, avatime, syncretism, Christianity, rituals

Avatime is a small people (about 24 thousand) living in the south-east of Ghana. The author's first expedition to areas inhabited avatime took place in 2011 and lasted three months. Ethnographic material was collected, interviews with representatives of different social strata avatime were conducted, students of primary and secondary schools in one of the villages were questioned. The second expedition in 2012-2013 also lasted for 3 months. There were meetings with the elders and chiefs of villages and collected material which allowed us to fix in writing form an oral history of the people.

POST-GRADUATE COLUMN

RUSSIA - NORTH KOREA THE "KHASAN-RAJIN" PROJECT by O.V.Kiryanov, Staff correspondent of "The Russian Paper" on the Korean peninsula

Keywords: DPRK, Russia, the Republic of Korea, Khasan, Rajin, logistics

In the last months the sudden intensification of Russia-cooperation in many spheres is actively discussed. After many years of oblivion a number of large scale projects are again discussed between Russia and North Korea assuming possible participation by South Korea as well. A huge amount of attention received so-called "Pobeda" (Victory) project which is about modernization of the whole DPRK railway network in exchange for the access by Russian companies to North Korea rare metals deposits.

At the same time Russia is pursuing another - so-called "Khasan-Rajin" - project together with the DPRK.

CULTURE, LITERATURE, ART

MALAYSIAN POET Y.ACAOB HASHIM: RUSSIA, TAKE HEART OF GRACE by V.A.Pogadaev, PhD (History), Malaya University (Kuala Lumpur)

Keywords: Hashim Yaacob, Malaysia, Malay poetry

Moscow poetess Elena Taneva visited Malaysia for the World Poetry Reading «Kuala Lumpur-2002». In the interview to the Malaysian newspaper «Berita Harian» she said that “the poetry is there in the air and grows from generous Malaysian soil”.

Hashim Yaacob is a dentist by profession but the poetry is his second (if not the first) vocation. It is no casual, that the collection of Hashim's poetry «I only want to sail across the unknown pages of the Academy from its inception to the 110th anniversary of the National Academy of the Republic of Madagascar» rewarded with the State Literary Prize. His poems by its beauty, sincerity and the simplicity of the form are among the best in the modern Malay literature.

BOOK REVIEW

WORLD OF LUSOFOHNYA IN RUSSIA by E.S.Lvova, Dr.Sc. (History), Institute for Asian and African Studies, Moscow State University

«Portugalistika in the USSR and Russia» (M., 2014, 184 p., with illustrations) by A.A.Tokarev is for the first time in our country an attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the work of scientists and experts of various humanitarian areas: linguists, translators, teachers, historians, journalists, foreign affairs, etc., who are working with the Portuguese language or use materials and resources in Portuguese.

SCIENCE ON THE DISTANT LAND by N.I.Nikolayev

The 5th edition of literary miscellany is devoted to the 110th anniversary of the National Academy of the Republic of Madagascar.

This is the first book, co-written by Russian and Malagasy scientists. The authors of the anthology explore and reconstruct the unknown pages of the Academy from its inception to the present time and represent a gallery of prominent members who have contributed not only to the Malagasy, but in the world of science.

THE CONFLICT IN DARFUR IN THE EYES OF AN AFRICANIST by N.I.Petrov

Young scientist-Africanist, PhD (Political Sciences) S.V.Kostelyanets published his first major work titled "Darfur: The History of The Conflict" (M., Institute for African Studies, 2014, 388 p.). The author analyzes the causes and conditions, driving forces and the course of the conflict, the way his permission, as well as the role that was played by international peacekeeping forces.