

Kazakhstan crisis escalates

Russian-led troops have been deployed at the request of the Kazakh president, to quell the worst unrest in the Central Asian country for decades



Jan 2, Zhanaozen: Protests begin after government doubles cost of liquefied petroleum gas. Trouble spreads across country, embracing political grievances

Almaty: Police say dozens of protestors killed during attacks on government buildings in country's biggest city – along with 12 members of security forces

POLITICAL PLAYERS



1. Nursultan Nazarbayev, 81

Steers country to independence in 1991 to become longest-serving ruler of any ex-Soviet state

2. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, 68

Hand-picked successor of Nazarbayev, becomes president in 2019 after election condemned by international observers

KAZAKHSTAN FACTFILE

Population: 18.8 million*

Area: 2.7 million sq km

Main languages: Kazakh, Russian

Main religions: Islam, Christianity

Economy: Largest in Central Asia, believed to be controlled by Nazarbayev family

Resources: Country has large oil, gas and metal deposits, producing more than 40% of world's uranium

Kazakhstan has close ties with Moscow, but maintains links to U.S. with oil investment, seen as counterbalance to Russian influence