

Bakutel 2018, the 24th Azerbaijan International Telecommunications, Innovations and High Technologies Exhibition and Conference was held in Baku from the 4th to the 7th of December. The exhibition marked the beginning of High Technologies Week. Today, Bakutel is much more than an exposition of ICT achievements; it is a business exhibition, networking platform, inspirational conferences, promising start-ups and a high-tech game zone. This is a meeting place for those involved in shaping the digital future.

The exhibition was preceded by a press conference. The press conference was attended by Mr. Elmir Velizade – Deputy Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Edward Strachan – Director of Caspian Event Organisers, Ms. Emiliya Ismayilova – Project Manager. More than 30 media attended the press-conference, including AzTv, Azertag, ARB, CBC, Interfax, Lider, SalamNews, TREND, Interaz and other agencies. During the press conference, journalists were informed about the participants, and the record-breaking statistics of the exhibition.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughters Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva viewed Bakutel 2018. Mr. Ilham Aliyev also personally tested the Robokeeper. Robert Pires presented the official Euroleague's ball to Mr. President.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ramin Guluzade, emphasized that Bakutel became a traditional meeting place for industry professionals and the largest ICT event in the region. Business leaders, professionals on the Bakutel platform solve global issues, discuss promising projects and make important decisions. At the same time, the exhibition demonstrated the latest achievements and innovations in the field of ICT, determining the possibilities of international cooperation in this field.

Kirill Oparin, head of the zonal branch of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the CIS, read a welcome letter to the participants of the exhibition of the ITU Secretary-General, Mr. Houlin Zhao. The message, in particular, notes the growing role of Azerbaijan in numerous projects implemented by ITU, and the influence of our country on the long-term development of the industry on an international scale.

The director of Caspian Event Organisers, Mr Edward Strachan, underlined the positive factor of the exhibition, which this year brought together 230 companies from 20 countries of the world. Mr. Strachan also thanked the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC), and sponsors and partners of the event for their support.

Over the course of four days, the exhibition showcased the following thematic sections: digitalization solutions, Big Data, M2M, Internet of Things, banking technologies, 4-5G mobile technologies, services in the field of fibre-optics and cloud technologies, the latest ways to suppress cyber-crime, government services, e-health, artificial intelligence, mobile devices and accessories, Smart City, unmanned air vehicle control systems and drones, and much more.

The exhibition receives the support of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, ITU – International Telecommunication Union, Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC), Azerbaijan Fund for the Promotion of Export and Investment (AZPROMO), the National Confederation of the Entrepreneurs (Employers) Organizations of

Azerbaijan Republic (AEC), and Small and Medium Business Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The organiser of the exhibition is Caspian Event Organisers (CEO). The general sponsor of the exhibition was Azercell Telecom, which has been a participant of the exhibition for 20 years.

Traditionally the exhibition is visited by foreign experts and heads of industry organisations. This year the honored guests of the Bakutel were the ministers and representatives from Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Latvia, and Bulgaria.

BAKUTEL 2018 – INNOVATIONS' AREA

The Bakutel 2018 exhibition gathered 230 companies from 20 countries around the world on one site, which means a 25% increased of occupied exhibition space. Leading ICT companies, mobile operators, Internet providers, system integrators, distributors of well-known brands and young developers represented the real solutions and technologies necessary for success. Enterprises dealing with electronic commerce (e-commerce) were located at a separate stand. Debutants of this year made up 30% of the total number of exhibitors. Also the list of participants was replenished thanks to new companies on-board; so, among this year's debutants were Silk Way Business Aviation, the State Advertising Agency of Azerbaijan (ADRA), Systematics (Russia), Suntech (Poland), Hostimul (Azerbaijan), IPG IRE-Polus (Russia), Xerrow Technologies (UAE) and many more.

This year, 10 countries – Belarus, Croatia, France, Turkey, Iran, Italy, Slovenia, UAE, USA and Poland presented at their stands leading companies from their respective countries and innovative projects not only for Azerbaijan, but for the entire Caspian region, in addition to presenting various products and ICT services.

Leading Azerbaijani state ICT structures represented on a single national stand, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan. New developmental projects in the fields of communication, high technologies, mail projects, a nanotechnology, E-government, the infrastructure of "electronic signature", and cloud services Data Center and some startup were presented at the stand. The exhibition reflected many international and local projects in the field of ICT, in which Azerbaijan is directly involved.

During the exhibition, a museum dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of postal communications in Azerbaijan was organised in the lobby. Communication devices, commutator phones, Morse code alphabet, and official documents for the period, postal and communication workers' clothing, letters, small packages and wrappers, exhibits, letters, telegrams were demonstrated at this stand. At the same time, postcards from World War II, military letters, mailboxes, and postcards coinciding with the 70s and 80s of the last century were presented. A special area dedicated to the development of postal service during National Leader Heydar Aliyev's presidency was presented at the exhibition.

The new direction of the exhibition was the involvement of small and medium-sized businesses and private technology developers to solve problems in various fields – from oil to entertainment – to help them promote their business. This direction was being developed with the support of the Agency for Development of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Ten companies AG Development, emobile.az, Frazex, Hesab.az, IDEA Consulting, iticket, Morooq, Remart Group, SMART IT and Ticketsetup were represented at the joint stand.

For example, among this year's debutants was the Azerbaijan State Advertising Agency (ADRA), showcased a new outdoor advertising tracking system. The company Eurodesign presented the technology of tele-presence used for courts, as well as special bracelets for those under house arrest.

START-UPS

The exhibition continues the tradition of providing opportunities for young developers to discuss their inventions and projects, along with industry leaders and government agencies. It was gratifying that this year the exhibition featured a record number of start-ups – over 50 from various innovation centres. Thus, start-ups of the High-Tech Park, finalists of the recently-launched start-up tour “From Idea to Business” in Azerbaijan, which included start-ups from Baku and other regions, innovation and entrepreneurship centres Barama (Azercell Telecom) and AppLab (Bakcell), all took part in the exhibition. Start-ups present their bright innovative ideas for such sectors as tourism, ecology, HoReCa, healthcare, and accounting. An impressive part of developments was based on the application of virtual and augmented reality technologies, the development of websites and mobile applications.

BUSINESS PROGRAM

The business programme of the exhibition was opened by the 54th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Administrations of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications. Then the Meeting of the ICT Ministers of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) took place, and also the 4th Belarus–Azerbaijan ICT Forum.

The First Caspian Innovation Conference on the subject “Digital Interaction for Sustainable Development” was organised on the second day. The initiator of the Caspian Innovation Conference was the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The event covered such topics as “Broadband Communication,” “Artificial Intelligence,” “Internet of Things,” “Electronic Services,” “ICT-Oriented Start-ups and Innovative Entrepreneurship,” “Fourth Industrial Revolution,” “High-Tech Production,” and “Cyber training.” The first Caspian Innovation Conference brought together representatives of government, industry leaders, and officials of regulatory structures and international organisations, including the heads of the largest regional telecommunications and satellite operators. The conference played the role of regional platform for discussing opportunities for effective cooperation between all participants in the ICT sector, and also contributed to solving problems in this field. In the future, this conference is projected to be held annually at the international Bakutel exhibition.

Starting last year, B2B meetings were held as part of the exhibition; this year’s meetings were held on the first day an even larger scale by attracting representatives of companies from vertical markets to whom exhibitors offered their digital solutions.

Special attention was paid to women and their role in ICT. Bakutel, together with the Azerbaijan Women’s ICT Club (Femmes Digitales), featured an AWITA 2018 – Azerbaijan – the Women in IT Award awards ceremony on the second day of the event to recognise the most successful women working in the field of information and communication technologies in Azerbaijan. The Evening reception sponsor was Pasha Bank, and the floristic partner was Lilac Flower Boutique.

This year’s Bakutel exhibition supported children with psychological developmental issues. As part of Bakutel 2018, a charity auction of clip art done during start-up tours in eight regions of the country was held within the framework of the project “From Idea to Business.” Funds raised at the auction went to supporting children on the autism spectrums that are undergoing rehabilitation in the public association “Together and Healthy.” Note that the paintings were the work of the famous graphic designer Mahir Gafarov. The ministry organised an excursion for pupils of orphanages in Baku to visit the Bakutel exhibition. They were able to get acquainted with the functioning pavilions of the exhibition and had fun in the zone of innovative games.

BAKUTEL TECH TALKS



In addition to annual meetings and conferences, the exhibition announced Bakutel Tech Talks, a new dynamic discussion platform created by exhibition organisers. Tech Talks was opened by ITV's famous TV presenter Vusala Said, who kicked off the Bizimkiler session. The name of the session came from the fact that our compatriots working abroad in world-renowned IT companies were the speakers. The purpose of the session was to convey to the audience the experiences of large international IT-companies, and to acquaint them with the latest industry know-how. Zaur Fataliyev, Senior Engineer, LG Electronics, Korea –

“Deep Learning for Computer Vision”, Elchin Asgarli, Software Engineer, Google, USA – “Modern Full Stack Software Engineering”, Maral Gurbanzade, Researcher at Leiden Institute of Advanced Computer Science, Netherlands – “Social Robots and Design Trends in Social Robotics, as well as Probable Consequences of their Introduction into the Global Market”, Taghi Aliyev, Full time Doctoral Student at CERN, Switzerland – “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare and Science: Known and Unknown Facts; Limits and Potential Reach of Artificial Intelligence” made reports and Rustam Hashimov – Senior Software Engineer, Facebook, USA – “Personalized Recommender Systems in Online Platforms: A Case Study of Modern Era Software Development and its Implications”, who completed this session.

Then, Bakutel Tech Talks continued with panel discussions under the slogan "IT-emize your perspective." The main idea was that IT and solutions were in great demand in certain industries (TV & Radio broadcasting, transport, education, tourism). The purpose of the event was to establish a dialogue between consumers and suppliers of digital innovations, and the first topic touched vectors of development of television technologies. The session was moderated by Tural Yusifov – Author of “AvtoStop” Project and Ismail Aliyev – Advisor to Director General, İctimai Television, Fikret Azimov – Deputy Technical Director, Azad Azerbaijan TV and Ali Aliyev, – Head of New Projects Development Department, KATV1 joined the discussion.

Further discussions included the panel "IT in Transport" with the participation of the following speakers: Ramin Bayramov – Head of Information Analysis and Information Technologies Department, State Road Transport Service, Samir Karimov – Executive Director, 189 Taxi Service and moderator was Tural Yusifov – Author of “AvtoStop” Project.

The moderator of the next panel "IT in Education" was Jahid Ismayilov, PhD in Philology, researcher, Institute of Linguistics named after Nasimi, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. The main speakers were Vusal Khanlarov – Head of the Bureau on ICT for Education, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Tatyana Mikayilova – Co-Founder, Edutainment.az, and Anar Mammadov – Deputy Director, MEC International School.

The panel ended with the discussion on "IT in Tourism," in which Nigar Arpadarai – Head of marketing and communications, F1 Azerbaijan GP was the moderator, and the speakers were Ildirim Gambarov – Deputy CEO, Pasha Travel, Mahammad Muradov – Head of Tourism Policy Department, Azerbaijan Tourism Board, Rufat Baghirov – Director, Baku Tourism Information Center.

The Bakutel Tech Talks programme was continued with the session “From Start-up to Business,” to which start-ups and business youth were invited. In this session, experienced speakers conveyed to the audience their confidence that all ideas could be implemented. The first outstanding presentation was delivered by Tal Catran, a business guru from Israel – a well-known expert in the field of building businesses and start-ups, a major investor, entrepreneur, founder and leader of several business accelerators and international innovation centres in Israel, and a member of the advisory board and chairman of several start-ups. He has extensive experience in managing large Hi-Tech companies and start-ups at the seed stage in a wide variety of technologies. Interesting speakers in this session were

Javid Mammadov – Director, Sumaks Technologies LLC, Farid Pardashunas – Founder, Technote Media & Hotbots Robotics, Magrur Rzayev – Software Developer, PictoFy.

The main idea of all the reports was to explain how a start-up system works and how to build start-ups correctly – from idea to running the business. This session was a godsend for those who want to know how to find, test and implement their ideas, why it is important to share an idea and how to prevent it from being stolen. Tech Talks addressed the most pressing issues of the industry and became a sought-after platform for discussions with opinion leaders. The organisers plan to hold Bakutel Tech Talks annually at the exhibition.

GAME ZONE

In addition to demonstrating and discussing technologies that form the digital environment, Bakutel is also a unique platform where entertainment utilising high-end technologies is presented. This year, the game zone was located in the lobby and presented the Digital Museum, robot tournament for First Lego League schoolchildren, the computer game “Yukseklük”, virtual fairy tales about national heroes – “Kulek – the first national heroes,” a digital museum project from 3D Productions, 3D printers that print out landmarks of Azerbaijan, and a drones show. Exhibits from the Hedef Lyceum Museum of Interactive Science also were presented.

For the first time, the fastest goalkeeper in the world, Robokeeper, demonstrated at Bakutel 2018. Robokeeper is an innovative invention of German scientists and has already stolen a way into hearts of all football fans around the world. At the exhibition, visitors and guests of the exhibition had the opportunity to test Robokeeper for its goal-saving ability.

In the lobby of the Baku Expo Center there was children's area, organized by the partner of the exhibitions, the network of kindergartens Bagcam.az. Professional educators and teachers from Bagcam.az took care of children with educational games, useful and exciting activities.

The exhibition was timed to coincide with the release of the official newspaper, “Bakutel Exhibition News 2018”, which told about the participants and events of the exhibition. This year the “Baku Convention Center” was sponsoring the “Bakutel Exhibition News”.

The organisers awarded certificates to sponsors, partners and exhibitors who stood out with their imaginative approaches to their work:

The Best Corporate Style – Azerfon

The Best Stand Design – Eurodesign

The Best Performance – Bakcell

The Best Shell Scheme – Sinam

The Best Customer Attraction – Hostimul

The Most Creative Stand – ADRA

The Most Attended Stand – Azercell

The Best Debut – Silk Way Business Aviation

The Best Product Presentation – ABV

The Best Country Presentation – IT Country Belarus

The Most Original Stand – Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan

For information support – TECHNOTE

The Best Companies Presentation – Small and Medium Business Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Best Service Presentation – AZQTEL

The Best Collective stands – USA NATIONAL PAVILION

The most attractive stand – Microsoft

For information support – InfoCity

Friend of “Bakutel” – Dmitriy Andrianov

For Supporting the Exhibitions – AMCHAM

During the 4 days of work, 8174 people visited the Bakutel exhibition, who were able to get acquainted with the novelties of the industry, hold fruitful meetings, as well as participate in quizzes and win prizes.



In 2019, the exhibition, having already passed the rebranding, will celebrate its 25th anniversary and will be held from 3 to 6 December at the Baku Expo Center. #Bakutel

References

Koray Kurhan, General Manager and Managing Partner, Zaxe (Turkey)

“I want to thank everyone who assisted us in participating in this exhibition. The event is perfectly organized and allows you to present products at the international level”.

Dmitriy Afanasenko, Head of the Technical Infrastructure Support Department at the National Centre for Electronic Services (Republic of Belarus)

“The exhibition is perfectly organised, with pleasant working environment reigning in its halls. An indicator of interest in our stand is that on the second day we almost ran out of booklets and information flyers”.

Gunel Gozalova, Head of PR Department at Azerpost

“As is always, the exhibition has been organized as a full-fledged event. The holding of this forum is very important, since the preparation for it imposes on the participants a certain responsibility, makes them implement new original ideas and products, thereby stimulating healthy competition. I wish that the Bakutel exhibition continues to please its participants and visitors for many years to come!”