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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

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THEMA



TIGRAN SARGSYAN: "ARMENIA IS INTERESTED IN EURASEC PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS"

On May 21 the Armenian delegation headed by Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan has left for Saint Petersburg to participate in the 26th session of the EurAsEc Interstate Council on level of heads of states, and in the session of the CIS Council of Heads of States. Press service of the Armenian government told Armenpress that Chief of the Armenian governmental working staff Davit Sargsyan, Armenian Finance Minister Tigran Davtyan, Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan, the deputy finance and economy ministers and other high-ranking officials comprised the delegation. Within the framework of the session of the heads of governments of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) states the face to face meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Armenia and Russian Federation -Tigran Sargsyan and Vladimir Putin was held in Saint Petersburg May

21. Armenian prime minister, wrapping up his working visit, told the reporters that opportunities of implementation of many big projects in Armenia and Russia were discussed. An arrangement has been reached to assign corresponding ministries to discuss these issues in the shortest period of time. The prime minister said one of them relates to the opportunities of financing the "North-South" railway construction and the other to the problems of construction of nuclear power station. He informed that the construction of the "North-South" railway (totally 400km) will take over a milliard euro. According to Tigran Sargsyan, important program of construction works in railway's Fioletovo-Vanadzor sector has been prepared which also has been agreed with the concessionaire - the managing company of Russian Railways. He said that this project will rise the efficiency of exploitation of railways in Armenia.

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"Quote of the week"

"While the crisis has passed, important medium-term challenges have emerged: boosting growth while reducing poverty, reversing the debt build-up, and maintaining financial stability"

MARK LEWIS
HEAD OF THE IMF
MISSION IN ARMENIA

Upcoming Events

May 25 - 26: Concert of "Deep Purple" in Yerevan

May 28: Armenia marks Republic day

June 26 - July 6: International Open Chess Tournament in Jermuk

July 11-18: The seventh annual Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival

USEFUL LINKS

- www.president.am
- www.gov.am
- www.parliament.am
- www.mfa.am
- www.panarmenian.net
- www.matenadaran.am

SERZH SARGSYAN: ARMENIA'S AND CZECH REPUBLIC'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAVE SERIOUS UNTAPPED POTENTIAL



Armenian President expressed hope for Czech Prime Minister's visit to trigger further development of bilateral collaboration. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met with Czech Prime Minister Jan Fischer on May 17. Welcoming his guest, Armenian President expressed hope for Czech Prime

Minister's visit to trigger further development of bilateral collaboration. Armenia-Czechia economic relations have serious untapped potential, RA leader added. Jan Fischer emphasized the importance of collaboration with South Caucasus states, giving high assessment to cooperation prospects with Armenia. The Prime Minister specifically noted the necessity of strengthening economic ties, with Armenia-Czech Republic business forum contributing to their further development. The parties also touched upon Karabakh conflict settlement issue, Jan Fischer emphasizing Czech Republic's support for its peaceful settlement within OSCE MG framework, presidential press service reported..

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ARGENTINA IS FOR THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT

Argentina is for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Foreign Minister of Argentine Jorge Taiana said today at a joint press conference with Armenian minister Edward Nalbandyan that the NK conflict must be solved in a peaceful way. "It is the only way and Armenia is for it, agreeing that it is the only right way," Taiana said. According to him, it is also important that the peaceful settlement be implemented through peace talks. In response to the question of a reporter on how Edward Nalbandyan treats the circumstance that RF President Dmitry Medvedev during the visit to Turkey noted that Russia will use its influence for moving for-

ward Karabakh issue, said that being the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing country Russia contributes to the settlement of the NKR issue, has quite important and constructive role in the settlement of conflict. According to him, Russia, and particularly President Dmitry Medvedev, has personal contribution to the settlement of the Karabakh issue. On his initiative many meetings were conducted between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents. "At what moment the expression was made? and where? In respect of constructive stance nothing changes. It is natural that Russian president expresses his wish to continue the efforts to help parties regulate the issue," Armenian FM said.

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MARK LEWIS: RA GOVERNMENT ABLE TO SECURE STATE DEBT SERVICE

Head of the IMF mission in Armenia Mark Lewis said that the Armenian government will definitely be able to secure state debt service. Commenting on concerns expressed by IMF expert for South Caucasus and Middle Asia Veronica Bacalu that Armenia's state debt has doubled during the crisis, Lewis said that currently Armenia's state debt is stable. "However, it will be necessary to attach importance to programs on funds attraction in future," stressed Lewis.

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ARMENIA HOLDS A SERIES OF EVENTS TO MARK VAN RESISTANCE 95TH ANNIVERSARY

A series of events are held in Armenia to mark the 95th anniversary of Van resistance. The events started in April, when the Folk Art Museum hosted an event titled "We lost Van, but not its culture".

"Trees will be planted in Vaspurakan Park in Yerevan on May 22 morning," chairman of Vaspurakan compatriotic union Gagik Baghdasaryan said. "On the same day, a meeting will be held in Arno Babajanyan concert hall".

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HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **MAY 17:** Yerevan to host 2011 Pan-Armenian Games **AH**
- **MAY 18:** RA Ministry of Finance establishes working group to deal with accusation of WTO rules violations **AH**
- **MAY 18:** 137 283 passengers left Armenia in January-April 2010 **AH**
- **MAY 19:** Inflation control will persist as one of the major problems of Armenia's economic policy in 2010 **AH**
- **MAY 20:** The government of Armenia declares May 15 a Family Day
- **MAY 20:** 8% drop recorded in software piracy in Armenia over four years **AH**
- **MAY 20:** France supports efforts of Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents **AH**
- **MAY 20:** Slovakia parliament member to observe NKR elections **AH**
- **MAY 21:** European Union hails political dialogue with Armenia **AH**
- **MAY 21:** Jorge Taiana: Argentina stands for Karabakh conflict peaceful resolution **AH**

THE GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA DECLARES MAY 15 A FAMILY DAY

The government of Armenia decided today to declare May 15 a Family Day. In connection with it few parliament members came forth with a legislative initiative on making amendments in the law "About RA Holidays and Memory Days". "We join this initiative giving a positive opinion. A decision has been made by the UN calling on the international community to mark May 15 as an international Family Day. Afterwards Armenia will also mark it," the prime minister said.

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CONGRESSMEN REQUEST U.S. ASSISTANCE TO HELP RESETTLE IRAQI ARMENIAN REFUGEES

Representatives Betty McCollum, Frank Pallone, Adam Schiff, and Tim Walz spearheaded a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, urging action to ensure the well-being of Iraqi Armenian Christian refugees in Jordan and Syria.

The letter, which 16 other Members of Congress have signed, urgently requests U.S. assistance to help resettle Iraqi Armenian Christian refugees to Armenia. Additional resources from the United States will allow Armenia to reach more Iraqi Armenian Christians with essential resources as well as the opportunity to begin a new life in a safe and secure environment.

“It is in the interest of the U.S. that Iraqi Armenian Christian refugees be provided the opportunity to start a new life in safety and peace,” said Representative

McCollum, who traveled to Syria and met with Iraqi refugees in 2006. “The Armenian government’s offer to receive refugees is very generous, and I believe the U.S. should provide the humanitarian support necessary to ensure their successful relocation and integration into Armenian society.”

“Conditions for Iraqi Armenian Christian refugees are becoming increasingly desperate at the same time that international support for the vulnerable population is dwindling,” said Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA). “We urge the Obama Administration to commit additional funds to UNHCR to sustain the momentum we have built to help these refugees resettle and rebuild their lives in Armenia, providing a cost-effective and regional solution for families who might otherwise seek resettlement within our borders.”

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CABLE RAILROAD OPERATING ON TATEV MONASTERY PREMISES TO OPEN OCTOBER 16



On May 20 sitting, Armenian government resolved to provide AMD 80 million to RA Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources to tackle infrastructure issues linked to construction of aerial ropeway operating on Tatev monastery premises. As Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan noted, infrastructure-related issues should be resolved before the opening of the longest cable railroad in the world scheduled for October 16.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR YOUNG FAMILIES PROGRAM TO OFFER BETTER CONDITIONS

Armenian Deputy Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs Arsen Karamyan said that the Affordable Housing for Young Families program will offer better conditions within a month.

Specifically, they will refer to age restrictions, initial payment and loan terms, Mr. Karamyan told a press conference in Yerevan.

“The program has faced some problems in practice, and the Armenian government voiced willingness to amend it to make it more flexible and affordable,” he said.

According to the Deputy Minister, the changes will make the mortgage loan more affordable; however, the state cannot imperatively make various suggestions at the real estate and financial markets, as it would be an incorrect step under market economy. “But one should understand that we deal with vulnerable groups of population, and the state should secure some assistance to them,” said Karamyan, adding that this is also a task of demographic security.

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RA GOVERNMENT TO REVISE MACROECONOMIC FORECAST FOR 2010

The Armenian government will revise its macroeconomic forecast for 2010, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said.

“With the anti-crisis measures producing positive results, we should take further action to maintain the pace of economic growth in 2011-2012,” he said. “We should be consistent in all our initiatives. The outcomes will be available on the government’s website to ensure transparency of all programs implemented.”

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ARMENIA TO OVERCOME CRISIS IN 2010



French Minister of Economic Recovery Plan and President of the General Council of Hauts-de-Seine department Patrick Devedjian said that although the global crisis has affected Armenia’s economy, the republic will overcome the depression in 2010.

“Today, Armenia is still affected by the crisis, which resulted in suspension of a range of construction projects. However, I believe that Armenia will start recovering in 2010,” Devedjian told a press conference in Yerevan on May 21.

“Armenia has recorded a considerable progress as compared with my first visit in 1991,” Devedjian said, adding that some activation is observed in economy, as the Armenian nation has always been remarkable for its spirit of enterprise and diligence.

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FROM ARARAT TO ZION VIA SWANSEA FILM FESTIVAL



Far from the glamour of Cannes, a film about how a small nation has preserved spiritual traditions has won plaudits at the Swansea Bay Film Festival.

Four years in the making, and narrated by Hollywood actor Aidan Quinn, *From Ararat to Zion*, won the award for best European documentary. Written and produced by Father Mesrop Aramian, it looks at the role of Armenians in the Holy Land. Edited in New York, it was filmed in Egypt, Turkey, and Israel. A landlocked country with Turkey to the west and Georgia to the north, Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity as its official religion.

It has a population of 3.1 million, but it has a much larger diaspora, many of whom live in Russia, France, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, the United States and Israel.

Holy Sepulchre

In Jerusalem's old city, the Armenians are among the primary custodians of a site venerated by some Christians as the place of the

death and resurrection of Jesus - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The film *From Ararat to Zion* follows the paths taken by Armenian pilgrims between two focal points in history, from Mount Ararat to Zion, from A to Z.

head and shoulders picture of Fr Aramian on location. Father Mesrop Aramian got the idea for the film while on a pilgrimage. See more pictures of the film being made on location in the Middle East

Mr Aramian said: "It's really a film to help people understand the Armenian identity and their unique aspects of history in the Holy Land."

"Pilgrims were described as the ones who saw death," he said, "they knew that there was a 50 percent chance that they would die on the way." The film shows the Holy Sepulchre at night, as well as Mount Sinai in Egypt, the Monasteries of the Judean Desert, and the summit of Mount Ararat.

Mr Aramian trained as a theoretical physicist and engineer in Moscow before becoming a priest, but sees nothing unusual about his change of direction.

"My scientific interest is always with me," he said, "history, science and religion have run parallel, it's only in the 20th century that a mythology has built up that there is a contradiction - personally I find no contradiction." The film will now be shown in Moscow, but he hopes that ultimately it will reach a larger audience and be screened on a mainstream television channel.

news.bbc.co.uk

PRIME MINISTER VLADIMIR PUTIN GIVES AN INTERVIEW TO THE MIR INTERGOVERNMENTAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

Mir: During today's EurAsEC meeting, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan announced the Armenian initiative for the construction of a Russian-Iranian railway. Will Russia participate in this project?

Vladimir Putin: It is not about linking Russia with Iran, but about giving Armenians rail access to Iran. Though this is an economically complex project, Armenia has applied for a loan exceeding a billion dollars



from a common fund established in the EurAsEC. Its application is being considered.

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CIS PRIME MINISTERS SIGN 19 DOCUMENTS IN ST. PETERSBURG



The Russian and Armenian prime ministers discussed joint projects on Friday, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said.

Putin and Tigran Sargsyan "discussed bilateral cooperation, trade, economic contacts and a number of joint projects," he said.

CIS prime ministers signed 19 documents, among them a protocol on the formation of a common electric power market, a resolution on the CIS Games in Kyrgyzstan's Cholpon-Ata in 2010 and economic, education and security agreements, at the Friday meeting in St. Petersburg.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani First Vice-Premier Yagub Eyubov, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Belarusian Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky, Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat, Tajik Prime Minister Akil Akilov, Ukrainian Prime Minister Nikolai Azarov, Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov and Turkmen Ambassador to Russia Khalnazar Agakhanov attended the meeting. Kyrgyzstan abstained.

The premiers approved an action plan for implementing the CIS energy cooperation concept, an agreement on training personnel to use natural and liquefied natural gas as motor fuel, an agreement on the development of interstate information and marketing centers to promote commodities and services on the national market, an interstate radio navigation program for the period until 2012, and a document on the assistance to CIS war veteran organizations.

The premiers made the Moscow State University of Geodesy and Cartography the CIS leading trainer of geodesy, cartography, cadaster and remote Earth monitoring personnel.

Full story www.itar-tass.com