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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

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THEMA



SERJ TANKIAN: I'D LIKE TO PLAY A CONCERT WITH SYSTEM OF A DOWN IN YEREVAN

Having a System of a Down concert in Yerevan may be a good idea, former SOAD frontman, American rock musician of Armenian origin Serj Tankian believes. As he noted during the August 12 news conference in Yerevan, after the SOAD collapse, the band was offered to reunite on multiple occasions, yet there are no certain plans to that end. "Everything's possible, as we're still good friends. Should we decide to reunite or play a concert in Armenia, the information will by all means be provided on our website," Serj Tankian said. Well-known rock musician, former lead singer of System of a Down Serj Tankian said he is happy to be in Armenia. "I was planning to give a concert in Yerevan for a long time and I am happy that it was finally organized," he told a press conference on August 12 prior to his solo concert.

"I was so excited that I couldn't sleep. I would like to stay longer in Armenia," Tankian said. World-known musician of Armenian origin, former SOAD frontman Serj Tankian favors the idea of rock festival to support Armenian Genocide recognition. "I can't foretell where I'll be and what I'll do in 2015 (100th anniversary of Armenian Genocide). I like the idea of organizing a rock festival to support Armenian Genocide recognition, yet don't know if I'll participate," the singer told a news conference on August 12. Serj Tankian characterized his rock-actions aimed to increase Genocide awareness as successful, noting however, that there are other means to express one's position on the issue. Dwelling on problems covered in his songs, the singer pointed out, "I prefer to refer to universal issues. However, words of freedom and national identity can be responded anywhere in the world, regardless of song author's nationality," he concluded.

August 12, 2010 www.panarmenian.net..

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"THE MAIN DIRECTIONS ARE THE EXPANSION OF OUR LONG-RANGE STRIKE CAPACITY AND THE INTRODUCTION OF EXTREMELY PRECISE SYSTEMS, WHICH WILL ALLOW US TO MINIMIZE THE ENEMY'S CIVILIAN CASUALTIES DURING CONFLICTS."

SEYRAN OHANYAN
DEFENSE MINISTER OF RA

Upcoming Events

August 19: President of RF arrives Yerevan

August 20-22: CSTO non-official summit

USEFUL LINKS

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

ARMENIA SENDS HUMANITARIAN AID TO RUSSIA



400 boxes with humanitarian aid for the people who suffered from forest fires in Russia were officially

conveyed to Rossotrudnichestvo office in Yerevan. Besides clothes, shoes and bedclothes, the money collected on the initiative of Armenian Youth Center will be transferred by Nizhny Novgorod and Voronezh regions. During the ceremony, Center president Andranik Nikoghosyan noted that the forest fires “are a calamity for Russia and Armenia can’t remain indifferent.” Armenian Youth Center was created in 2008 with a purpose to unite Armenian youngpeople. It also highlights strengthening of Armenian-Russian relations.

August 12 2010 www.panarmenian.net

EIB TO ASSIGN 5MLN EUROS FOR YEREVAN METRO REHABILITATION PROJECT

The European Investment Bank signed a 5mln euros loan agreement with Armenia for implementation of Yerevan Metro Rehabilitation project. As reported by the press office of the RA Ministry of Finance, the sum is a part of a 15mln euros project envisaged for implementation of the first stage of the project. The loan will be provided for 15 years with 4 year grace period. According to an agreement concluded on March 10, 2010, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will allocate another 5mln euros in the framework of Neighborhood Investment Program. The project consists of the addressing the problem of the water ingress into the metro tunnels, modernization of the infrastructure and refurbishment of the rolling stock.

August 10, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIA DEFEATED BY IRAN IN A FRIENDLY

Armenia suffered a 1:3 defeat in a friendly against Iran on August 11. In a game with many blunders and unforced errors on either side, both teams had a couple of chances, mostly with shots from outside the area, persian-football.com reports. Armenia took the lead slightly against the run of play five minutes before halftime, thanks to a mishit cross from the left side by Aghvan Mkrtychyan which found it's way into the net via the goalpost.

August 12, 2010
full story www.panarmenian.net

JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PRESENTS 61 TRACTORS TO ARMENIAN FARMERS



Farming machines were imported to Armenia through the courtesy of Japanese government, providing 170 million Japanese yen grant within the framework of development aid program. 61 tractors were delivered to Kotayk's Nurnus community to be distributed among Armenian regions. Since 1997, Japanese government has provided 63 grain combines and 366 tractors complete with farming tools to Armenia within Aid to Low-income Farmers program framework.

August 13, 2010, www.panarmenian.net

Armenia vs. Georgia 2:3

Georgia kept alive their outside chance of sealing a play-off place with a 3-2 win away to Armenia in UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualifying Group 2, UEFA said on its website. Jano Ananidze, Mate Vatsadze and Nika Kvekveskiri got the goals for Georgia, who had to hang on for victory after substitute Valter Poghosyan pulled Armenia to within one with two minutes to play. The win takes Otar Gabelia's side above Armenia and Estonia into third, five points behind leaders Switzerland, who have played a game more, and within a point of second-placed Turkey, who they meet on 4 September.

August 12, 2010
full story www.panarmenian.net

HAGUE COURT RULING: A PRECEDENT TO BE USED IN KARABAKH ISSUE?

Hague court verdict on Kosovo independence is a moral and juridical assessment of the situation which may have an influence on Karabakh conflict settlement, according to Orinats Yerkir deputy chairman Mher Shahgeldyan. As he told July 24 news conference in Yerevan, Kosovo precedent consolidates juridical and diplomatic position of Armenian side in peace talks for Karabakh conflict settlement. “The ICJ ruling is legitimate and acceptable to international community. Kosovo verdict gives de jure confirmation of de facto situation with Karabakh, as well as other conflict zones.”

AH

Chairman of European Integration NGO Karen Bekaryan said on July 27 that the Hague court's ruling on lawfulness of Kosovo's secession from Serbia serves as a good reason for the Foreign Ministry of Artsakh to initiate a certain process on NKR's international recognition.

“The fact that Karabakh is not directly involved in the talks provides Stepanakert with the opportunity to be less constrained in similar initiatives,” the expert stated.

Bekaryan added that the civil sector of NKR also should be involved in the process of international recognition of NKR's independence.

As for Armenia's steps in this process, according to Bekaryan, it should stir up the parliamentary diplomacy. “Through international organizations and parliamentary friendship groups Armenia may initiate steps for recognition of NKR's independence by parliaments of friendly countries. In its turn, the Armenian Diaspora should assist Armenia and NKR in this process,” noted Bekaryan.

The expert said that the Hague court's ruling will definitely have an impact on the negotiation process on Karabakh.

AH

Vice-president of “Orinats Yerkir” party Mher Shahgeldyan pointed out that the statement of the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries once again accentuated the three principles of international law for the Karabakh conflict settlement: the people's right to self-determination, non-use of force and territorial integrity.

It is very important that the statement views these principles as something single and inter-related, Shahgeldyan stressed.

According to him, Armenia hails this approach of the Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries.

Shahgeldyan noted that Armenia's diplomatic positions have strengthened in the Karabakh issue.

August 14, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ARMENIA

International experts believe that Armenia has the potential to develop serious tourism infrastructure, although there need to be amendments made to certain parts of its legislation. Armenia currently offers holiday makers an attractive tourism product, secure and safe environment and hospitable people. Developing tourism will create many jobs for the locals. Thus the country has big potential to attract tourists while employing the local population in the business. A special project created with the support of USAID was offered to help develop Armenia's tourism sector. Particular attention is paid to the necessary legislation amendments and increasing the role of the private sector and local municipalities in facilitating tourism development. There are also a number of items specifying the planning of the development of the tourism sector, specifying different spheres, tourist routes and other necessary ingredients for its development.

August 11, 2010 www.messenger.com.ge

IRAN BEATS ARMENIA IN FRIENDLY

Iran's national football team has defeated Armenia 3-1 in an international friendly in the Armenian capital Yerevan. According to Press TV, in the game, which was played on Wednesday, Armenia had the upper hand in the first half and took the lead six minutes before the break, taking advantage of a blunder by Iranian keeper Mehdi Rahmati. But in the second half, Iran reversed the course of the game, scoring two goals in the span of two minutes. Hadi Aghily neatly headed the ball in to level the score. And two minutes later Mohammad Nosrati scored the second for Iran. The Iranian team sealed the win in injury time when Aghily scored from the penalty spot.

August 12, 2010 english.irib.ir

ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN COMPETE TO BUY GEORGIAN GAS PIPELINE.



Serious competition has begun over the issue as to who will buy the south-north gas pipeline connecting Russia and Armenia and passing through Georgia. The Georgian government has recently put this strategic asset up for sale. Different sources claim there is a 99% chance that the Azerbaijani state oil company SOCAR will purchase the asset; Yerevan is totally against this option. Another possibility is that it will be bought by Russia's Gazprom – this has caused concern for the Georgians as well as the Azeris. There is also a third possible player – Kazakhstan's Kazmunaigaz, although some think that the Kazakhs will protect Russian interests.

August 6, 2010 [full story www.messenger.com.ge](http://www.messenger.com.ge)

DEFENSE MINISTER: ARMENIA TO ACQUIRE "LONG-RANGE" WEAPONS

Armenia's defense minister, Seyran Ohanian, says that Armenia plans to buy "long-range, precision-guided weapons," though it hasn't specified of what sort and from whom. Reports RFE/RL: Ohanian's announcement today followed a meeting of an Armenian government commission on national security that approved two programs envisaging a modernization of the country's armed forces. One of the documents deals with army weaponry, while the other details measures to develop the domestic defense industry. Ohanian said the programs "will qualitatively improve the level of the armed forces in the short and medium terms." "The two programs envisage both the acquisition of state-of-the-art weapons and their partial manufacturing by the local defense industry," Ohanian said.

August 11, 2010 www.eurasianet.org

JULLIARD & LE COZ: EMISSARY ENTANGLEMENTS

Last month, Washington Times reporter James Morrison wrote an item in his Embassy Row column about the nomination of Matthew Bryza as U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan. As Mr. Morrison noted, several human rights groups had previously questioned Mr. Bryza's close ties to Azerbaijani leadership, and tough questions about his possible bias again surfaced during his recent confirmation hearing. During the hearings, Mr. Bryza stated: "If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the government of Azerbaijan to move forward on key issues such as media freedom, freedom of expression, political pluralism, rule of law and civic participation." Obviously, these are noble goals often repeated by U.S. ambassadors who are stationed in authoritarian countries, but Mr. Bryza's past in Azerbaijan raises important doubts about his promises. In 2007, the editor of the opposition newspaper Azadlig, Ganimat Zahid, and correspondent Agil Khalil were sued over an article titled "Azerbaijanis Paid for Matthew Bryza's Wedding." The article states that Azeri Economic Development Minister Haydar Babayev paid for a significant portion of Mr. Bryza's wedding, which took place in Istanbul the same year. At the time, Mr. Bryza was the U.S. co-chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group, the body tasked with mediating a peace deal for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Both countries claim sovereignty over the region, and although a cease-fire has been observed since 1994, no agreement has ever been signed between the two governments. In the year after the article was published, Azadlig correspondent Agil Khalil was the target of four murder attempts, and in July 2008 - no longer able to deal with the constant threats against him - he fled to France, where he remains to this day. Mr. Khalil cannot return to Azerbaijan because he fears for his life. There is no doubt that Mr. Bryza's experience in the region could be valuable for improving relations between the United States and Azerbaijan, but we think that because he has been involved in a complaint and suit against a newspaper, his credibility within Azerbaijani civil society and his stated commitment to press freedom can easily be questioned. Moreover, Mr. Bryza was very much criticized and questioned about his position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, an extremely sensitive and taboo subject in Azerbaijan. Reporter and editor Eynulla Fatullayev remains in jail for writing about the subject in a way that displeased Azerbaijani officials.

August 11, 2010, [full story www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com)

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