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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

SEPTEMBER 16-23 2010

THEMA



SHANGHAI EXPO 2010 CELEBRATES NATIONAL PAVILION DAY OF ARMENIA

The Armenian flag was hoisted September 21 – the Independence Day of Armenia – in the Chinese city of Shanghai, where the National Pavilion Day of the Republic of Armenia has been declared at Shanghai Expo 2010 International Exposition, which kicked off 5 months ago. A number of solemn festivities have started early morning since the arrival of the Armenian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, to the Shanghai expository center, where Liu Jiayi, auditor general of the National Audit Office of the People's Republic of China, received them. The anthem of Armenia was played, the Armenian flag was hoisted and the National Pavilion Day of the Republic of Armenia kicked off. After the conversation of Tigran Sargsyan and Liu Jiayi at the hall of official receptions, the Armenian Prime Minister made a note in the guests' memoir book, where he expressed gratitude to the Chinese side for warm reception and for holding such a beautiful exposition in a high level. During the opening ceremony of the National Day for the Republic of Armenia at Shanghai Expo, Liu Jiayi congratulated on behalf of the

Chinese Government and the organizing committee of the expo on the National Day of Armenia, greeted the participation of the Armenian Prime Minister in the festivity of the National Day and expressed gratitude to the Armenian side for excellent participation in exposition. According to Liu Jiayi, Armenia is in the crossroad, which connects Europe with Asia, and Armenia's pavilion proves that Armenia endeavors to build light future. 'An old and wise nation lives in Armenia; the unique Armenian culture is flourishing. The country gave to the world a number of world-known names, who had their unique investment in the development of universal culture by presenting its City of the World project,' Liu Jiayi said. He said he appreciates the virtual presentation of the project and considers it one of the best such performances of the expo. As to the Armenian-Chinese age-long relations, he said the bilateral cooperation is being developed in the cultural, economic and other spheres. Liu Jiayi expressed hope that Armenia's participation in the exposition and Armenian Prime Minister's visit will transmit a new impetus to the strengthening of the Armenian-Chinese relations.

September 21, 2010
full story www.armenpress.am

“QUOTE OF THE WEEK”

“EDUCATED AND WELL-TO-DO YOUNG PEOPLE WILL GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY”

SERZH SARGSYAN
PRESIDENT OF ARMENIA

Upcoming Events

September 16-17: Yerevan to host Fruitfull Armenia winemaking forum

September 19-23: PM tigran Sargsyan pays an official visit to China

September 21: Armenia celebrates the Independence day

USEFUL LINKS

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



On September 21, on the occasion of Independence Day, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and President of the Republic of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan visited Yerablur Pantheon to lay wreaths to the memorial of the Karabakh war heroes. A PanARMENIAN.Net correspondent reported that the Presidents were accompanied by Speaker of the RA National Assembly Hovik Abrahamyan,

FRUITFULL ARMENIA VI AGROFORUM KICKS OFF IN YEREVAN



The FruitFull Armenia VI AgroForum dedicated to development of viticulture and winemaking kicked off in Yerevan on September 16, with participation of viticulturists, winemakers, oenologists and wine market experts from France, Italy, Austria, etc. The forum offers an incentive to make Armenian wine a recognizable brand. It will focus in three main aspects: vine cultivation, wine production and export planning. Discussions will also be held on Free Economic Zone and Cold Storage Facility projects as well.

September 16, 2010
www.panarmenian.net

Chairman of the RA Constitutional Court Gagik Harutyunyan, head of the National Security Council Arthur Baghdasaryan and Chief of Staff of the RA President Karen Karapetyan. Armenia held a referendum on independence on September 21, 1991. 94.39% of the eligible voters said “Yes” to the question whether Armenia should be an independent state. Announcing the results of the referendum on September 23, 1991, the Supreme Council declared the Republic of Armenia independent. On occasion of the 19th anniversary of independence, Armenia’s President Serzh Sargsyan signed decrees on awarding servicemen for combat readiness and courage. Some heroes of Artsakh war were honored posthumously.
September 21 2010 www.panarmenian.net

VARDAN ARAMYAN: PENSIONS ARE INCREASED IN ARMENIA IN COMPLIANCE WITH VOLUME OF BASKET OF GOODS

Armenian Deputy Minister of Finance Vardan Aramyan said that the Armenian government’s social policy envisages annual increase of pensions in compliance with the volume of basket of goods. As for fixation of the volume of basket of goods in Armenia’s legislation, Aramyan noted that there is a provision on basket of goods in the legislation. “The volume of basket of goods is defined by the RA Statistical Service,” Aramyan said during parliamentary hearings on a package of bills on state pensions. The hearings were organized by the RA NA Standing Commission on Social Affairs with participation of parliament members, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Artem Asatryan and representatives of the public sector. On June 24, the Armenian parliament adopted in the first reading the bill on introduction of amendments to the RA Law on State Pensions, envisaging transfer to the funded pension scheme. The transfer to the new system is regulated by five laws and 49 amendments to laws. Under them, the volunteer funded pension scheme will be introduced in Armenia on January 1, 2011. The transfer to the compulsory scheme (for citizens under 40) will be implemented from January 1, 2014.
September 22, 2010, www.panarmenian.net

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **SEPTEMBER 17:** U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discusses Armenian-Turkish relations in Near East
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 18:** Vic Darchinyan calls Showtime ‘The Darchinyan tournament’
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 18:** Venezuelan ex-minister of finance advises Armenia to focus on export
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 19:** Protest rally against liturgy at Holy Cross on Aktamar held in Yerevan
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 20:** Armenia marks anniversary of Musa Ler defense
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 21:** 16 vans with Armenia-bound wheat arrived in Kavkaz port
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 21:** Azerbaijan tries to destabilize region by spreading lies
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 22:** Russian-Armenian friendly ties strengthening, RF President says
AH
- **SEPTEMBER 22:** Edward Nalbandian: Azerbaijan is a threat to peace and stability in South Caucasus

QARAHUNGE THE OLDEST OBSERVATORY IN THE WORLD

The Oxford University Stars and Stones Expedition to Qarahunge (Zorats Qar, dating 7500 years back), which started on September 6, 2010, aimed to describe and raise awareness of the site and investigate astronomical significance of the stones and the mysterious holes in the megaliths. Expedition leader Mihran Vardanyan said that the stone circles are highly controversial with some scholars highly skeptical of the astronomical designation of the site. “The most commonly accepted theory about Qarahunge is that it is an ancient burial ground, or necropolis – a place to act as a bridge between the earth and the heaven in the cyclical journey of the soul involving life, death and rebirth. The necropolis thesis is certainly true, but after our initial investigations of the central circle, it is clear the site was aligned to the sun, most likely aligned to the moon and – what is really exciting, possibly to some stars or planets – owing to the placement of small holes drilled through the monoliths and aimed to the horizon.

September 17, 2010
[full story www.panarmenian.net](http://fullstory.panarmenian.net)

ARMENIA, CHINA PLAN TO SET UP DIRECT AIR COMMUNICATION



During his visit to China, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya to discuss the potential of bilateral cooperation, specifically noting sectors of basalt processing, agriculture and tourism. The two men also referred to the possibility of setting

up direct air communication between the two countries and formation of joint enterprises. PM Sargsyan thanked the Chinese government for provision of agricultural machinery and ambulances as well as technical assistance to Armenia. He also briefed on latest developments in Armenia-Turkey relations, as well as Armenia's initiatives in the issue. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan described the visit of Armenian delegation to China as well as attendance of Shanghai Expo 2010 as fruitful and interesting. He said Armenia and China are planning implementation of a number of projects. PM Sargsyan also informed that China was offered to join Iran-Armenia railway construction.

September 20, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

RA MINISTRY OF FINANCE FORECASTS 3-4% GDP GROWTH BY YEAREND

Head of the Department on Macroeconomic Policy Development at the Armenian Ministry of Finance Armen Hayrapetyan said that 3-4% economic growth will be recorded by the end of 2010, exceeding 1.2% index envisaged by the budget. As for the inflation rate, it will exceed 4% 1.5% target envisaged by the budget, Hayrapetyan told a press conference in Yerevan.

September 18, 2010 www.panarmenian.net



AZERBAIJAN DOESN'T LOSE HOPE TO TRANSFER KARABAKH PROBLEM DISCUSSIONS TO UN



Mr. Walter Fust, Director of the Global Humanitarian Forum and Chairman of UNESCO's International Program for the Development of Communication, has stated that it's time to resolve the Karabakh

problem. He said he supports the initiative on appointment of a UN special representative for Nagorno Karabakh.

"It's an interesting idea and I think it may contribute to the conflict settlement," Fust said, quoted by SalamNews. The idea to appoint a special representative for Nagorno Karabakh was suggested by Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Vice-president of the Reflection Group on the long-term future of the European Union, and Anne-Marie Lizin, President of the Senate of Belgium.

September 18, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

INTELLECT IS ONE OF ARMENIA'S STRATEGIC RESOURCES, SARGSYAN SAYS

As a small country with insufficient natural resources, Armenia considers intellect as one of the main assets, RA President said. "Educated and well-to-do young people will guarantee sustainable development of our country," Serzh Sargsyan said in an interview with Profile Ukrainian magazine. "It happened that two thirds of our nation live beyond Armenia but many of them achieved success in various fields and we are proud of them," he said. Armenia does not seek to benefit from contradictions between other countries, President Serzh Sargsyan stated, commenting on Armenia's cooperation with NATO and CSTO. "Armenia pursues a policy of sincerity, allowing to collaborate with the U.S., Russia on one side and Iran, Georgia on the other," he told Profile Ukrainian magazine. "NATO and CSTO are not rivals. Cooperation with NATO within Individual Partnership Action Plan program gives Armenia a chance to modernize the army, conduct reforms, and form modern mechanisms for security system creation. However, CSTO membership can't prevent us from seeing positive sides of collaboration with the Alliance," President Sargsyan said.

Armenia's position on the Karabakh conflict bases on the international law, RA President said. "Nagorno Karabakh was included into Azerbaijan's map by decision of the Communist Party in 1921. So, the liberation movement with the following referendum was a legal initiative of the population of Artsakh," Serzh Sargsyan told Profile Ukrainian magazine. "After the Hague International Court of Justice resolved that unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence doesn't conflict with the norms of international law and that the right of nations to self-determination does not go contrary to the principle of territorial integrity, all clicked into place," he said. "The three principles - the right of nations to self-determination, territorial integrity and non-use of force - were fixed during the OSCE summit in Almaty. We are hopeful that a fair decision will be finally adopted," President Sargsyan reminded. "Anyway, a lean compromise is better than a fat lawsuit," he said. Establishment of diplomatic relations and opening of the border with Turkey will be of benefit not only to Armenia and Turkey but the entire region, Armenian President said. "The decision to launch a process of normalization of relations with Turkey was one of the hardest ones I have ever taken. Yes, Turks committed Genocide and continue denying this fact even 100 years later. Denial of a crime is the worst crime. But, on the other hand, almost all countries across the globe experienced historical problems. Civilized response to such problems is cooperation without preconditions," Serzh Sargsyan said in an interview with Profile Ukrainian magazine.

September 10, 2010 full interview www.panarmenian.net

PRO PATRIA

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW NPP POWER UNIT IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIAN ECONOMY

Russia and Armenia have agreed to deepen their already close military ties, signing a deal that will strengthen Russian influence in the South Caucasus and could have profound implications for the unresolved Karabakh conflict. Amendments to a bilateral 1995 defense treaty were signed during Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev's, visit to Yerevan on August 19-20. The amendments, publicized by both sides, extended Russia's lease on a Soviet-era military base headquartered in the northwestern Armenian city of Gyumri by 24 years, until 2044, and enhanced its role in the South Caucasus state's security. The approximately 4,000 troops stationed there will now not only protect the "interests of the Russian Federation," but also "ensure the security of the Republic of Armenia" jointly with the Armenian army. According to Armenian President, Serzh Sargsyan, this agreement will expand their "sphere of geographical and strategic responsibility." "The activity of the Russian military base was until now confined to the external border of the former USSR. That restriction has now been removed from the treaty's text," Sargsyan told a joint news conference with Medvedev (Hayastani Hanrapetutyun, August 21).

September 10, 2010 www.minatom.ru

UKRAINE REQUESTS WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION TO SETTLE TOBACCO DISPUTE WITH ARMENIA

According to the WTO, Ukraine asks that this request be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body that will take place on September 21, 2010.

According to Ukraine, it was impossible to resolve the dispute through consultations. "In case a country refuses from consultations or does not start them, a WTO member that has placed a request for the consultations has the right, under Article 4.3 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes, to immediately request the establishment of a panel to settle a dispute," Andrii Zablotskyi, an associate from the Volkov Koziakov & Partners law firm, old Interfax-Ukraine.

September 21, 2010 www.kyivpost.com

OFFICIALS VISIT THE ARMENIA PAVILION



Armenia celebrates its National Pavilion Day today with a show titled "Armenia — the Art of Creation." The pavilion titled "City of the World" invited architects around the world to submit designs for their ideal city. Models are exhibited in the center of the pavilion. Armenia calls itself the motherland of the apricot and the pavilion features an Apricot Garden. Visitors can taste various delicacies, while listening to music of a flute made from apricot wood. The "Gold and Silk" exhibition covers China-Armenia trading history.

September 21, 2010 www.cn.expo2010.cn

PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD: IRAN-ARMENIA RELATIONS DEVELOPING

President Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has emphasized that the relations between Iran and Armenia are following a logical trend and are expanding. According to IRNA, in a meeting in Tehran on Wednesday with the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, President Ahmadinejad pointed out that the two countries' relations are deep-rooted and historical, while adding that Islamic Republic of Iran supports development of ties with Armenia in different domains. He added that Iran and Armenia have appropriately drawn avenues for expansion of mutual and regional cooperation and are moving along this path. President emphasized on sustainable security in the region, while reminding that today the regional countries can solve their problems and issues of concern without the interference of others and if foreign powers would not intervene in the region, the regional nations do not have any insurmountable problem with each other. President reiterated that all the regional countries should be on the path to welfare, progress, and security. Meanwhile, the Armenian foreign minister, for his part, handed over the written message of the Armenian president to his Iranian counterpart, and noted that today Iran and Armenia mutually trust each other, which sets the stage for an upbeat horizon for development of bilateral relations in all fields.

September 16, 2010 www.english.irib.ir

ARMENIANS TO HOLD HISTORIC SERVICE IN ANCIENT TURKISH CHURCH

Muzbah Cunduz' small boat cuts a frothy wake through the strikingly blue, alkaline waters of Lake Van. This is a region of remarkable natural beauty: a lake ringed by craggy mountains that at the height of summer, are still dotted with patches of snow. And yet Cunduz' small boat appears to be the only vessel out on the water.

That may soon change.

For the first time in nearly a century, the Turkish government will allow Armenian Christians to hold a prayer service in one of the area's oldest and most famous churches. More than two months before the scheduled September 19th church service, nearby hotels were booked solid. Cunduz is hoping for a burst of new tourist business.



"I hear up to 10,000 Armenian visitors will be coming," he says, as he steers his boat towards a small island at one end of the lake.

Nestled amid the rocks, stands a stone church with a pointed dome. Armenian Christians built it 11 centuries ago. The only way to get to Akhtamar Church is by boat. Visitors have to climb up a steep pathway to reach the church's low entrance, where on a recent visit, chanting echoed from inside the building.

At least they cannot forbid me to pray silently

Inside, a man was seated barefoot in lotus position on the floor, singing. His voice echoed off vaulted ceilings decorated with hand-drawn icons painted cobalt blue and charcoal black.

An embarrassed Turkish security guard approached and interrupted.

"This is a museum. Prayer is illegal in here," the guard explained. "Even if someone comes and reads a poem out loud, even if a Muslim prays here, we have to stop them."

September 19, 2010 full story www.edition.cnn.com

SENATOR BOXER PLACES HOLD ON BRYZA NOMINATION

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) announced Tuesday evening that she has placed a “hold” on U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan nominee Matthew Bryza, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). The Senator’s decision followed a Senate Foreign Relations Committee vote earlier today to approve his nomination by voice vote, despite serious concerns regarding the Ambassador-designate’s unusually close ties to Azerbaijani government officials, his troubling track record as a senior diplomat dealing with the Caucasus, and persistent conflict of interest issues related to the Caspian energy industry. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Boxer both spoke and voted against the Bryza nomination. “Thanks to Senator Boxer, U.S. diplomacy dodged a bullet today,” said Aram Hamparian, Executive Director of the ANCA. “It would have been a serious mistake – both for U.S. strategic interests and for hopes of lasting peace in the Caucasus – to have sent Matt Bryza to Baku amid escalating threats of renewed war by Azerbaijan’s leaders. Given his track record, he clearly would have been the wrong diplomat, at

the wrong time, in exactly the wrong post. We are deeply grateful to Senator Boxer for preventing this grave diplomatic misstep and for all of Senator Menendez’s leadership and hard work on this issue.” Hamparian added, “Our nation’s important diplomatic work in Azerbaijan can now get off to a fresh start, one without the bias and baggage that Matt Bryza would have brought to this pivotal position. Our hope now is that the President will nominate a new candidate who will openly stand up to Azerbaijan’s aggression and forcefully deter its march toward renewed war against Nagorno Karabakh.” Sen. Boxer’s hold prevents fast-tracked Senate consideration of the Bryza nomination, effectively blocking his confirmation for this ambassadorial post. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) took a similar action in 2006, preventing the appointment of U.S. Ambassador to Armenia nominee Richard Hoagland, who denied the Armenian Genocide during his Senate confirmation process. Senators Express Reservations During Committee Consideration
September 21, 2010
[full story www.asbarez.com](http://www.asbarez.com)

THE CONSECRATION OF THE DIOCESAN CATHEDRAL IN LOS ANGELES

His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, visited the Western Diocese in order to conduct the consecration of the Diocesan Cathedral on September 10-12.

Thousands gathered both Saturday and Sunday to watch the Catholicos consecrate St. Leon Cathedral of the Western Diocese and dedicate a traditional cross stone in memory of the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

“We greet you with a joyous spirit, and with words of praise and song from the hymn, we offer our appeal to heaven, so that this holy sanctuary, crowned with the all-sustaining divine cross, which became for us salvation and a sign of victory, brings new light to the spiritual vibrancy and strength of the national life of our son and daugh-



ters in America,” he told congregants. Religious leaders representing various faiths, and state and local officials attended the long-awaited ceremony and official opening. On Sunday, September 12, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross the Pontifical Divine Liturgy took place in the newly consecrated Cathedral, and His Holiness offered his spiritual message to the faithful.

September 18, 2010, Lousabats N 852

EUROPEAN COURT FINDS TURKEY GUILTY OF FAILING TO PROTECT DINK

The European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday, September 14 ruled that Turkey was guilty of failing to protect ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink when authorities knew his assassination was imminent, and of then failing to adequately investigate his murder. Dink, the editor of the small, Istanbulbased Armenian-language daily Agos, was shot to death as he returned to the newspaper’s offices in January 2007. His murder became a cause celebre in Turkey and a symbol of the state’s alleged protection or even encouragement of nationalist extremists. “None of the three authorities informed of the planned assassination and its imminent realization had taken action to prevent it,” the court found, while “no effective investigation had been carried out” into those failures. The decision is an embarrassment for Turkey’s government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, which has pledged to improve the rights and treatment of Turkey’s ethnic minorities. The government recently sought to settle with the family, after withdrawing a defense of the state’s actions which had relied on a precedent that appeared to compare Dink’s comments aimed at reconciling Turkish and Armenian views on the 1915 slaughter of ethnic Armenians with hate speech by a neo-Nazi. A spokesman for the ministry of justice didn’t return calls requesting comment on the ruling. Dink’s family brought the case against the Turkish state at the European court in Strasbourg. Tuesday’s ruling found for the family on all counts, according to their lawyer Arzu Becerik, awarding Dink’s widow, Raket Dink, with 100,000 euros (\$128,760) in damages. Police launched an investigation into the young Turkish nationalist who allegedly carried out the murder. They investigated 17 others, though not the police chiefs and regional governors who the family believe were complicit, either in the assassination itself or in obstructing prosecution of those responsible, Becerik said in an interview. A video taken immediately after the assassination appeared to show police smiling and posing with the alleged killer, Ogun Samast, who was then 17.

September 13, 2010

[full story www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

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