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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

October 29-November 8 2010

THEMA

TIGRAN SARGSYAN ATTENDS THE OPENING OF "DIGITECH - 2010"



Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan attended on October 29 the opening 6th annual international technological exposition "Digitech - 2010" held in the sports complex after Karen Demirchyan under the high patronage of the Armenian Prime Minister. Congratulating the participants and those present on the opening of this already traditional exhibition, Tigran Sargsyan stressed the importance of the forum as it enables the representatives of the IT sphere to showcase new products and services, progress and achievements. According to the head of government, Digitech is an exceptional opportunity to see what prospects are opened up before the IT sphere and what the government has to do to ensure progress. "From this point of view it is necessary to note, that actions of the Government are serious stimulus in sphere of development of information technologies. Today you will see in our pavilion as the Government renders the services to citizens and businessmen by way of use

of information technologies. I think that at this stage of succession of events the role of the Government has essential value as hundred thousand people become participants of this process and our citizens use information technologies. It raises productivity of cooperation and, on the other hand, it makes it convenient using state services." The Prime Minister noted that without information technologies it is impossible to enhance the efficiency of the economic system. The presence of foreign firms in Armenia may create new opportunities for information technologies as a priority direction. It is remarkable that the Government of Armenia is in attendance of the event with its [www.e - gov.am](http://www.e-gov.am) website. Tigran Sargsyan was introduced to the license, tax return and digital signature receipt and processing systems. Strong with some 68 local and international participants, the exposition makes display of new IT systems and equipments to be used in everyday and business activities.

October 29, 2010 www.gov.am

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"INSTEAD OF THREATENING WAR, AZERBAIJAN HAD BETTER CONTROL THE SITUATION AT THE FRONTLINE, OTHERWISE SUBVERSIVES WOULD HAVE NOT MADE ATTEMPTS TO PENETRATE INTO THE ARMENIAN TERRITORY "

SEYRAN OHANYAN
RA DEFENCE MINISTER

Upcoming Events

November 13: Concert of famous tenor Placido Domingo in Yerevan

November 15: Concert of Bosnian composer Goran Bregovich

November 19: PM Tigran Sargsyan wil participate in EvrAzes

USEFUL LINKS

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

WORKING VISIT OF PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN TO TAVUSH MARZ

On November 3 President Serzh Sargsyan conducted a working visit to Tavush marz. The President of Armenia visited the fully renovated and refurbished Ayrum-Jiliza checkpoint and administrative building of Ayrum train station. The President familiarized with the working conditions of the checkpoint, which allow to conduct cus-



toms procedures in accordance with modern high standards and to make monitoring of the checkpoint crossing more efficient.

During the tour of the premises, President Sargsyan was informed that until the recent renovation of the Ayrum-Jiliza checkpoint, customs officials were working in a small, one-story structure built in the middle of the last century, which was not in line with current standards. From now on, the customs procedures will be conducted in a modern, two-story and technically upgraded building which is almost two times bigger than the former one.

November 30 2010, full story www.president.am

FURTHERED ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROSTOV REGION

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan received today a delegation led by RF Rostov Region Governor Vasily Golubev.

Welcoming the guests, the Prime Minister said to be convinced that the present visit will give a boost Armenia-Russia interregional cooperation. The head of government further stressed that the strengthening of direct ties between individual territories was high on the agenda of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental commission's latest sitting which was held in Yekaterinburg October 23, 2010.

Pleased with the current pace of Armenia-Rostov Region cooperation, highly appreciative of the role played by Rostov Region's Armenian community in

the strengthening of traditional bonds of friendship, the parties looked at the possibility of deepening economic exchanges.

Asked so by the guests, Tigran Sargsyan outlined Armenia's economic status in the aftermath of the global financial and economic crisis and went on to state those key areas as in his opinion needed expanded cooperation, inclusive of agriculture, industry, education and research.

Mindful of boosting tourism, as well as developing humanitarian and cultural ties, both sides emphasized the importance of holding Rostov Region culture days in Armenia.

November 3, 2010 www.gov.am

THE PRIME MINISTER VISITS KOTAYK MARZ

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan traveled to Kotaik marz to attend the opening of Dzoraghbyur community kindergarten. Dzorakhbyur lacked in a village kindergarten. Under construction from 2008, the new building is due to host 60 children, with the number of pupils expected to rise to 70-80 in the years ahead. The pre-school establishment is provided with all modern amenities. AMD 113mn was contributed by the community, with the balance of 20 million earmarked on the part of the government. First, the Prime Minister toured the premises to get acquainted with the new-built facility. Next, he headed to Garni where he attended the opening of Yotnakhbyur-Garni gravity water-main of vital importance to the community which had been under construction since 2008.



Tigran Sargsyan's visit was wrapped up with a briefing at which the journalists were told in part "Our infrastructure projects imply continued larger-scale activities: North-South Road Corridor investment program is on with the first tenders out already. We are convinced that a new road building culture is going to be introduced in our country. Sizeable projects are scheduled in the energy sector. New infrastructures will be set up for power transmission purposes."

November 5, 2010, www.gov.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **NOVEMBER 1:** 7.1% unemployment rate recorded in Armenia in January-September 2010 **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 1:** Levon Aronian retains 3rd position in FIDE ranking **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 1:** YSU opens center for retraining of public servants **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 2:** Bako Sahakyan: Diaspora Armenians should visit Artsakh more often **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 3:** Reconstruction of Noyemberyan booster station to be completed by March 2011 **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 4:** Tigran Sargsyan announced as Honorary President of Armenian Volleyball Federation **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 6:** Water level of Lake Sevan to reach 1903,5m by 2030 **AH**
- **NOVEMBER 9:** RA Finance Minister paying working visit to Switzerland
- **NOVEMBER** **AH** Religious challenges discussed in Yerevan

THE ARMENIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER RECEIVED THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On October 29, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Edward Nalbandian received the delegation led by the deputies of the European Parliament Michele Rivazi (Green Party of France) and Damien Abad (the fraction of the European People Party of France). Minister Nalbandian welcomed the guests and stressed the importance of the role of the inter-parliamentary cooperation in deepening the relations between Armenian and the EU. The interlocutors touched upon the relations between Armenia and the EU and the prospects of their development. The Armenian Foreign Minister underlined the importance of the visits of the European Parliament's delegation to Armenia, especially to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) that provides an possibility to closely acquaint with the existing situation, problems and the rational perspectives of their solution. Upon the request of the guests, Edward Nalbandian presented the recent developments in the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) settlement process. The sides discussed other regional issues..

October 29, 2010 www.mfa.am

RES PUBLICA

PRESIDENTIAL IT AWARD GRANTED TO 37 UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



On October 29, presidential residence hosted the Students IT Award ceremony, where 25 university and 12 high school students were granted with diplomas and cash bonuses. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan expressed hope for the awards to signal further professional growth of the nominees.

ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER BRIEFES EUROPEAN MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met with European media representatives on a visit to Armenia. At the meeting, the Prime Minister briefed the journalists on Armenia's economic and social policy, economic development prospects, as well as bilateral relations with other regional states, ministerial press service reported.

November 2, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

TIGRAN SARGSYAN: FUND IS FORMED IN ARMENIA TO DEVELOP SEED GROWING



During the November 4 sitting, the Armenian government approved the procedure for servicing the special account for implementation of the Program on Development of Wheat Seed Growing and Seed Production for 2010-2014.

The grand-prix was awarded to the graduate student of Yerevan Engineering University Armen Gharibyan. To encourage young engineers Synopsys Armenia CJSC has teamed with Hayastan All-Armenian Fund to support the Armenian President's annual awards of the IT sector's best and brightest students. The annual Presidential awards for IT are given to the top students showing excellent achievements in their studies and research work and serve as a strong incentive for the Armenian youth to further enhance their expertise and keep the long lasting traditions of engineering excellence.

October 29, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIAN, RUSSIAN AND AZERBAIJANI FOREIGN MINISTERS FULFILL ASTRAKHAN AGREEMENT

On November 6, Moscow hosted a working meeting between Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers Edward Nalbandian, Sergei Lavrov and Elmar Mammadyarov. In accordance with the agreement reached between Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani Presidents in Astrakhan, a number of issues on Karabakh conflict settlement was included into the meeting agenda, ministerial press service reported.

November 6, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan noted that a fund is formed for the first time in the country to develop seed growing. During the first stage, seed growing enterprises will be formed to provide reproduced wheat seeds to farmers in future, he said.

Armenia has already received 1,000t of high-quality Russian wheat as part of the program.

"We aim to have enterprises producing high-quality seeds in a couple of years," Sargsyan said, adding that the program will allow Armenia to reach the level of self-sufficiency in 4-5 years.

November 4, 2010, www.panarmenian.net

IMF ADVISES ARMENIA TO START WINDING DOWN ANTI-CRISIS POLICY

The economic upturn in the Caucasus and Central Asia is gathering momentum, with growth for the region projected to increase to 5 percent in 2010, up from 3q percent in 2009, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its Regional Economic Outlook for Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA). Among the oil and gas importers, Armenia and Georgia are forecast to grow at 4 percent and 5 percent, respectively, in 2010, compared with negative growth in 2009. In Tajikistan, growth is estimated at 5q percent for 2010—about 2 percentage points higher than in 2009. Buoyed by Russia's recovery, all three countries are projected to grow at 4–5 percent in 2011. With regard to the policy response, the report recommends that countries across the region use the current recovery to start winding down policies that were implemented in response to the crisis. When unwinding, the authorities should first exit from fiscal stimulus, in light of fiscal sustainability considerations, the report adds. This is particularly true for oil and gas importers, which are facing rising public debt as a result of their policy response to the crisis and declining donor support.

November 2 2010, [full story www.panarmenian.net](http://fullstory.panarmenian.net)

SEYRAN OHANYAN: ARMENIAN ARMED FORCES WILL CONTINUE COERCING AZERBAIJAN INTO PEACE



Belliose statements constantly made by the Azerbaijani leadership are not new for Armenia, RA Defense Minister said.

"Instead of threatening war, Azerbaijan had better control the situation at the frontline, otherwise subversives would have not made attempts to penetrate into the Armenian territory. Moreover, it's extremely strange when the Azerbaijani leaders present the subversives as heroes," Seyran Ohanyan stated when commenting on the recent threats of the Azerbaijani President. "Nevertheless, Armenian armed forces will continue coercing Azerbaijan into peace," the Minister stated.

Delivering a speech at the funeral of a raider, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said Baku is ready for a new war, not only against Karabakh but against Armenia as well.

November 9, 2010, www.panarmenian.net

PRO PATRIA

SYRIA'S ARMENIAN QUARTER



When Hrant Manolian, a respected officer, was appointed Commander of Syrian Police in the 1940s, Syrian newspapers gloated, using “Hrant Bey’s” appointment to prove just how diverse Syrian society was and how accommodating and respectful it was of the Armenian community in Syria. Hrant was an Armenian — clearly from the “ian” in his family name — while the prime minister back then, Fares Al Khoury, was a Protestant Christian. Since then Syria has had a colourful array of prominent officers, businessmen, and members of parliament from the Armenian community, while Syria’s current parliament was constructed by Armenians back in the 1930s. Armenians famously came to Syria during the First World War, fleeing the Ottoman dragnet, to settle as refugees in the homes of Damascus and Aleppo. Under the Ottoman Empire, they had a common destiny with their Arab counterparts; both were struggling — each in a different way — for freedom. A few of them married into Syrian families — some even wedding Muslims — while the majority of the community continued to live in a very tightly-knit community that has survived, with all upheavals that rocked Syria, over the past 90-years.

ARABIC-SPEAKING SCHOOLS

Many Armenians, however, are still ‘rough’ when it comes to speaking the Arabic language fluently, although they have lived among Arabs for decades and studied at Arabic-speaking schools throughout Syria. They currently number approximately 200,000 and most of them reside in Aleppo, Damascus, Der ez Zour and the Hassake province in Eastern Syria. Between the years 1918-1978, for example, no less than 115 Armenian periodicals were published in Aleppo, specialised in politics, economics, and even child education. That shows just how serious the community was about contributing to Syrian society and refusing to live the life of refugees. They were naturalised as Syrian citizens when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918.

October 29, 2010 www.gulfnews.com

AL-QASSIMI, ARMENIAN PM DISCUSS TRADE COOPERATION

UAE Minister of Foreign Trade Sheikha Lubna Al Qassimi and Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan have discussed trade and investments relations between their two countries. Sheikha Lubna conveyed to Sargsyan greetings from Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Sheikha Lubna is leading a delegation of around 50 business leaders and officials to Armenia to participate in the UAE- Armenia business forum which started today in Yerevan. She said the meetings with Armenian officials will discuss ways to further promote trade and investment relations with Armenia as well as to realize the outcome of her previous visit to Armenia into joint investments by the private sectors in both countries. For his part, the Armenia official expressed his government’s interest in providing all facilities and incentives for UAE companies and investors willing to tap investment potentials and tens of



projects in infrastructure, agricultural reclamation, water and food industry. Later, Sheikha Lubna met with Armenian deputy prime minister Armen Kevorkian. In remarks at the meeting, Kevorkian said the UAE is prioritized by the Armenian government’s plans to expand cooperation with the Arabian Gulf region. He further urged UAE companies to tap opportunities provided by the Armenian economy in renewable energy and technology as well as the logistic hub set up by the government to support agriculture. The UAE-Armenia Business Forum was opened today in Yerevan by Sheikha Lubna Al Qassimi and Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan in presence of senior officials and business leaders from both countries.

November 7, 2010 www.moft.gov.az

KARABAKH CONFLICT STAYS FROZEN

Nagorny Karabakh is an Armenian-backed and Armenian-populated self-governing enclave inside Azerbaijan. In the period since 1994, when its latest truce came about, it has been catching breath after a six-year armed conflict in which it defended an independence bid. The conflict is frozen, but with a possible re-eruption around the corner. To prevent this from happening, the



Russian, Armenian and Azeri presidents, Dmitry Medvedev, Serge Sargsian and Ilham Aliiev sat down for a discussion on Karabakh at a meeting in the Russian Caspian port of Astrakhan on October 27th. We have the details from the leading analyst of the Russian ‘Regnum’ portal Dr Stanislav Tarasov: The summit produced agreements to swap the bodies and the POWs from the Karabakh conflict. It also appeared to have opened the way to even deeper Azeri-Armenian reconciliation. Unfortunately, this was not to be. A decision by Karabakh to rename the city of Agdam to Aknu prompted a thinly-veiled threat of force from the Azeri president. The American political scientist Dr Ariel Cohensuspects domestic politics at work: Apparent intransigence on both sides and unwillingness to compromise are consequences of strong domestic opposition to reconciliation. The hopes are pinned on Russia. As an age-old presence in the South Caucasus, it is interested in lasting peace in this troubled area. Indeed, as America shows considerable indifference, the strongest peace influences on the conflicting sides are now Russia and Turkey. The former is now on good terms with Azerbaijan as well as Armenia, and the latter, on the path towards neighbourhood with Armenia, as well as Azerbaijan.

November 8, 2010 english.ruvr.ru

MEKHITARIST CONGREGATION IN VIENNA PUBLISHES FACSIMILE OF CODEX 543

The Mekhitarist congregation will be celebrating the bicentenary of its foundation in Vienna in 2011. To mark the occasion, the Vienna monastery - one of the largest centres of Armenian culture outside of Armenia - will present the facsimile of an invaluable manuscript: Codex 543 from the monastery's own library. The small-format manuscript - one of the finest and most beautiful of Armenian manuscripts dating back to the 15th century - measures 135x85 mm, has 240 pages and was set down in 1432 at the Armenian Monastery of Saint Anthony near Caffa on the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea. The manuscript contains several writings by Catholicos Nerses IV Shnorhali (1102-1173), including his opus magnum "Jesus, Son Only-Begotten of the Father", a sublime elegiac poem. Nerses Shnorhali (the Gracious) descended, on his mother's side, from the noted princely Armenian family of Pahlavuni which had given the country several statesmen but also 7 catholicos who succeeded each other from 1065 to 1202. Catholicos Nerses Shnorhali -theologian, poet and musician- became an industrious writer in the field of theology, poetry, hymn, homily, prayers, sacred music, letters, educational writings, parables, riddles, etc. He

was a pioneer of church union. After many years of preparation (correspondence and meeting with Byzantine Emperor Manuel I, Patriarch Michael and Prince Alex), he hoped to accomplish the union with the Greek Church, but did not have the time to carry it through. Codex 543 comprises "11 full-page miniatures, 11 text-inserted miniatures, 24 border miniatures, 3 decorated pages, 3 title bars, zoomorphous and vegetal border decoration as well as swash letters... Taken as a whole, the small codex presents itself as an illuminated manuscript of delicate, meticulous beauty. Two versions of the Codex 543 facsimile will be published as limited edition: 1. Complete facsimile - limited to a numbered edition of only 300 copies, printed on parchment with manually retraced ornaments, gilding. Hand bound in sheepskin on wooden boards, with blind embossing and two metal fasteners, packed in a casket made of cherry wood and accompanied by a digital edition on CD and the commentary. 2. Partial facsimile - colour print with added gold on parchment, hand bound in imitation leather, together with the digital edition. The facsimile manuscript is accompanied by a commentary in German and English. [November 6, 2010 Lousabats N 859](#)

REPORT FROM TURKEY: HRANT DINK'S SPIRIT LIVES

I had been motivated to travel to Turkey as a result of my association with the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, where I worked as the assistant editor for eight years and where I continue to work as a freelance writer. I had been to Armenia back in 2001 and in the meantime had read countless articles about Turkey in the Armenian and American press, and had met some of the Turkish scholars, writers and intellectuals who have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide — people like Taner Akcam, Hassan Cemal, Orhan Pamuk and Fatma Muge Gocek. I had reviewed books by Turkish writers such as Pamuk and journalist Ece Temelkuran. It was time, I thought, to see Turkey for myself. I arrived in Istanbul on September 19, the day that the Armenian community held a mass at Akhtamar. I did not arrive in time to attend the ceremony, but it was written about the next day in the English-language Hurriyet daily and people in Istanbul seemed

to know all about it. The young concierge at my small hotel in the Sultan Ahmet district in Istanbul chatted quite cheerfully with me about the occasion, without expressing any particular opinion about it. And the newspaper reported that the reason the cross had not been raised was that it was too heavy. This seemed like more than a bit of spin. A week or so later, another article in the English-language daily noted that local Turkish residents in Akhtamar had been fearful that the gathering of some thousand Armenians who attended the ceremony would turn on them and demand their houses and lands back. My first impression of Istanbul, driving in from the airport, was of a massive blanket of low rise buildings stretching as far as the eye could see on both sides of the Bosphorus. Today, Istanbul is home to more than 15 million people and the city is continuing to grow. I wondered if I would be able to make any sense of this vast metropolis in a few days. [November 8, 2010 www.mirrorspectator.com](#)

RECONSTRUCTION OF DIYARBAKIR'S ST. GIRAGOS ARMENIAN CHURCH NEARLY COMPLETE



The \$2.5 million reconstruction of the St. Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir (Dikranagerd), Turkey is nearly complete. Restored by the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, St. Giragos is the largest Armenian church in the Middle East and one of the most important works of Armenian architecture. Seriously damaged and in ruins for decades, the first church at this site was built in 1515-1518. It was then repaired in 1722 by Armenian Patriarch Bedros Vartabed. In 1729, it was rebuilt with an expanded plan by three Armenian architects Shahin, Sarukhan and Yarem. It was completely burnt down during the great fire of 1881 and reconstructed again in 1883 to its present plan, with seven 'khorans' and a huge footprint of more than 15,000 square feet, to serve a large Armenian population in the region. Its 100 feet high bell tower, with a bell molded by the famed Zildjians and a large golden cross at the top, was bombarded and toppled by German/Ottoman cannon fire in 1915 because it was deemed to be higher than the mosque minarets in the region. After the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, it was used as a state warehouse for canvas and fabrics, and then, despite sporadic efforts by the dwindling Armenian community in Diyarbakir, it had been left to deteriorate and decay until 2009, when a few Armenians born in Diyarbakir but living in Istanbul, formed a Foundation Board under the auspices of the Armenian Istanbul Patriarchate, with the goal of reconstructing the church, as well as to start a legal process to reclaim title to the significant land holdings originally belonging to the church. [October 29, 2010 www.asbarez.com](#)

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