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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

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THEMA



IN MOSCOW PRESIDENT SARGSYAN MET WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION DMITRY MEDVEDEV

President Serzh Sargsyan, who is in Moscow on a working visit, met on November 17 with the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev. The President of Armenia stressed the importance of regular meetings, which according to him, present a good opportunity to discuss in time and coordinate key issues of the multi-faceted Armenian-Russian cooperation. "I note with satisfaction that our strategic partnership is developing vigorously, and political consultations continue at all levels. Agreements, signed during Your state visit, gave a new impetus to our relations. We agreed to meet in the late fall and recap the process of implementation of the reached agreements," President Sargsyan said, underscoring also that Armenia strives for peace and security in the Caucasus, and it makes for our country's efforts to find a lasting solution to the NK issue. President Sargsyan said that Russia has always played a positive role in the Caucasus and expressed gratitude to Dmitry Medvedev for his efforts. He expressed hope that these efforts would soon bring positive results.

The President of the Russian Federation also stressed the importance of regular meetings of the leaders of the two countries assessing them as essential. "In fact, we meet during almost every international event to discuss the current situation. We also maintain contact on the bilateral level – You visit us, I visited You. These are opportunities to synchronize our positions on a number of bilateral and regional issues, and of course, discuss the NK peace process and set guide-lines for the future," the President of the Russian Federation said. President Serzh Sargsyan met in Moscow with the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Noting that Russia has been Armenia's main trading partner, President Sargsyan said that this year the turnover between Armenia and Russia has increased by 12 percent. The President of Armenia spoke also about over half a billion US dollars invested by Russia into the Armenian economy last year and said that investments continue to be made this year as well. November 17, 2010 www.president.am

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"OUR STATE IS POWERFUL NOT WITH ITS GOLD OR OIL FIELDS, BUT INSTEAD WITH ITS INTELLECTUAL RESOURCE. "

TIGRAN SARGSYAN
PRIME-MINISTER OF RA

Upcoming Events

November 24-25: President Serzh Sargsyan will leave for official visit to Turkmenistan

USEFUL LINKS

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

THE PRIME MINISTER-LED GOVERNMENT DELEGATION IS ON A WORKING VISIT TO SAINT PETERSBURG

The Prime Minister-led government delegation is on a working visit to Saint Petersburg where the sitting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government was followed by the 28th EurasEC meeting which was attended by the heads of member-country governments. An extended meeting was held following the private talks of the heads of government.



Note that Armenia attends the EurasEC meetings in the capacity of observer. The Prime Minister-led government delegation attended today the meeting of CIS Council of Heads of Government in Saint Petersburg. The meeting agenda featured over twenty items. The meeting passed a decision on the preparative stage for the drafting of a free trade agreement which still has to be ratified by the heads of State. The heads of government discussed the level of competition in the sphere of telephonic communications and the interstate cooperation programs in field of innovations until the year 2020. They also looked at ways of developing, expanding and applying mutually compatible medical scanning systems in the CIS-member countries, as well as providing legal protection for intellectual property. The meeting next passed in review those humanitarian programs scheduled for the period 2010-2012 and discussed the possibility of holding an interstate exhibition dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the CIS. Armenia will join it next June. The heads of government made a point of implementing joint programs aimed at generating and using energy resources until 2020. They also discussed product security, macroeconomic performance and other issues. Armenia was said to have carried out a total of 32 projects under the interstate humanitarian cooperation program in 2008-2010, with 9 events held during this year alone, including the CIS youth games of last June 26-July 2 and the 4th congress of translators from CIS and Baltic States. The meeting discussed the development of a joint economic strategy to be pursued by the year 2020, as well as questions bearing on the single CIS budget. The heads of government took the time to look at some arrangements of mutual interest.

November 19, 2010, www.gov.am

THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE ATTENDED THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL'S MEETING OF HEADS OF STATES AND GOVERNMENTS DEDICATED TO AFGHANISTAN



On November 20, the meeting of Heads of States and Governments of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) dedicated to Afghanistan took place. The Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministers of the Republic of Armenia Edward Nalbandian and Seyran Ohanyan attended the meeting. The Heads of the United States, Portugal, Afghanistan, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and other states who par-

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ticipate in the international security forces in Afghanistan, as well as the General Secretaries of the UN and the NATO and the President of the EU European Commission attended the meeting and delivered a speech. The Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian also delivered a speech at the summit and mentioned that the situation in Afghanistan is of common concern to many states in spite of how geographically far or close they are to Afghanistan. Minister Nalbandian underlined, "The meeting of the representatives of 49 states who gathered around one table to elaborate collective steps for finding solutions to that country's problems proves this fact. With this concern in mind Armenia joined the international forces maintaining security in Afghanistan and expressed its willingness to expand its presence."

November 20, 2010, full story www.mfa.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **NOVEMBER 16:** Open markets need to be established in Armenia for sale of agricultural products
AH
- **NOVEMBER 16:** Armenian government to promote pharmaceutical market development
AH
- **NOVEMBER 17:** Internet in Armenia is a platform for civil society formation, expert says
AH
- **NOVEMBER 17:** Vanadzor to host rock-concerts in the framework of UN International Year of Youth
AH
- **NOVEMBER 18:** Armenian President confers Order of Honor on Armen Jigarkhanyan
AH
- **NOVEMBER 19:** Armenian businessmen to construct a spa center in Akhtamar premises
AH
- **NOVEMBER 20:** NKR President meets LA city council members
AH
- **NOVEMBER 21:** Marseilles to host Third Congress of Armenian National Council of Western Armenians
AH

THE MEETING OF THE ARMENIAN DEFENCE MINISTER WITH THE YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY (YSU) GRADUATE CONSCRIPTS

On the 17th of November, 2010 Minister Ohanyan met with the YSU graduate conscripts. During the meeting they discussed a variety of issues ranging from the pre-call up readiness to the integration in the civilian life after their military service. Answering to the questions of the conscripts Mr. Ohanyan stated that during military service young men gain skills and knowledge that will be useful for their future achievements in the civilian life. Minister stated that in the pre-call up period it is necessary to do relevant work so that conscripts bring only positive aspects of the society to the Army. Underlining the necessity of exceeding the opponent with combat readiness Minister Ohanyan stated that only through excellent service one can achieve this. Wishing the conscripts a good service Minister stated that the security and the peace of our country depend only on their service.

November 17, 2010 www.mil.am

THEY ARE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY



On the occasion of the International Day of Students, RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met yesterday at the Yerevan State Architecture and Construction University (YSACU) with students. In response to the question “How do you picture the struggle against corruption in higher educational establishments?” the Prime Minister answered: “Corruption must be abolished by averting it, by liquidating its reasons”. He mentioned several directions of that struggle: “The first is the RA draft Law on Public service which

is already submitted for discussion at RA National Assembly. According to the draft Law the activity of 500 high officials will be under the control of the society. These officials have to submit according to the order established by the legislative body public declarations to the society which will be included in the Internet site of the new committee on ethics and will be open for the society. These declarations will include also declarations of inter-related persons of these high officials. “New committee on ethics will be established in Armenia which should follow that the activity of these 500 high officials correspond the requirements of Armenian legislation. Information on detection of any violation, abuse of power for personal business or other purposes, will be subject of public discussions in the committee on ethics,” the Prime Minister said.

November 17, 2010 www.hhpress.am

KAREKIN II, HENRI REYNAUD DISCUSS ISSUES OF THE CHURCH AND WAYS TOWARD THEIR RESOLUTION

Catholicos of All Armenians His Holiness Karekin II met with the newly-appointed Ambassador of France to Armenia Henri Reynaud.

At the meeting, the parties focused on the issues of the church and ways toward their resolution, as well as the life of the Armenian community and Armenian Apostolic Church Diocese in France.

His Holiness Karekin II pointed out the special attitude of France toward the Ar-



menian nation, emphasizing the country’s position on recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, Holy Etchmiadzin’s information service reported.

November, 22, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

ARTHUR ABRAHAM: I CAN’T WAIT TO FINALLY GET INTO RING



King Arthur Abraham (31-1, 25 KOs) will travel to Helsinki, Finland on November 21 night to continue his preparation for the eagerly anticipated Super Six World Boxing Classic showdown with Carl “The Cobra” Froch (26-1, 20 KOs) at the famous Hartwall Arena on November 27, fightnews.com reported. “It has been a very long training camp. I can’t wait to finally get into the ring with Carl Froch. I have been waiting for this mo-

ment for a very long time. My coach Ulli Wegner knows how to adjust training. He made the right adjustments and I will be in perfect shape on November 27,” said Abraham. The Armenian boxer said that Froch is a good boxer. “Froch is a strong, tough guy with a good jab. He is a good puncher but so am I. He will definitely not beat me, because I want to accomplish my goal of winning a world title in a second weight class. And I need to make up for my last fight. Only a victory in Helsinki can put my mind at rest,” he said. Abraham added that only one person has ever gotten under his skin and that is Edison Miranda. “It did not do him any good. I defeated him with a broken jaw and then knocked him out in the rematch. I think Froch will meet a similar fate,” he said.

November 20, 2010

SERZH SARGSYAN: THE SOONER AZERBAIJAN REALIZES THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO RECOGNITION OF NKR’S RIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION, THE SOONER NEGOTIATIONS WILL CONCLUDE



Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, currently in Moscow on a working visit, participated in the annual gala night of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, also attended by the NKR President Bako Sahakyan, members of the Board of Trustees of the Fund, Armenian businessmen residing in Russia. In his address, the President of Armenia, President of the Board of Trustees of the Fund spoke about the activities of the Fund, emphasizing that Hayastan All-Armenian Fund was one of those unique structures which being all-national in scope has been able for years to implement vital projects, and particularly to carry the mission of uniting people around an idea. According to the President, the Fund heightens our trust and confidence toward our own strength and, in a larger sense, toward our future. “We have to thoroughly build and rebuild our home. The residents of that home must have military, legal and social protection. We must continue to get stronger, manifesting solidarity of ten million Armenians. There is no other way to manifest national dignity,” the President of Armenia said. Serzh Sargsyan mentioned also the NK issue and spoke about maturing of Nagorno Karabakh as a state, about belligerent calls from the neighbouring country and our defence capabilities, noting that participants of the event often ask the President to address these questions. “My message to you is very clear-cut: Nagorno Karabakh is a consummate state which is getting stronger day by day. Moreover, it’s a much more democratic state than neighbouring Azerbaijan. The negotiations over the peaceful resolution of the issue go on and the sooner Azerbaijan realizes that there is no alternative to the recognition of the NK’s right for self-determination, the sooner negotiations will conclude. As for our defence capabilities, it is obvious: we are strong, we are stronger than ever, and grow stronger day by day,” President Serzh Sargsyan stressed.

November 16 2010, www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIA WIN 2010 JUNIOR EUROVISION SONG CONTEST



Vladimir and his dancers gave a great stage performance. In a close and exciting voting it was down to the FYR Macedonia vote to confirm the winning song as Russia were leading up until the last set of votes were cast. The junior version of the Eurovision Song Contest featuring 14 participating countries was a spectacular suc-

cess at the Minsk Arena, Belarus. All the artists made an amazing show in front of the watching millions at home and in the arena. All acts were well received but there extra special applause for the songs from Russia, Latvia, Belgium, Malta and of the course the home nation, Belarus. Alexander Rybak performed his recent release, Europe Skies, as part of the interval act. Dmitry Koldun performed a special song, A Day Without War, for the UNICEF charity along with all the 14 participating acts. All the previous winners of the Junior Eurovision then performed an impressive medley of their winning songs. Congratulations to Armenia on their great success. [November 20, 2010 www.eurovisionary.com](http://www.eurovisionary.com)

IRAN TO HELP RESOLVE KARABAKH ISSUE



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has offered Tehran's assistance in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, saying the issue should be resolved through dialogue.

"We believe that the Karabakh issue will be resolved through dialogue and the commitment of both sides to justice, and Tehran is ready to negotiate with them within this framework," Ahmadinejad said in a joint press conference with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday.

Ethnic Armenian forces took control over 16 percent of Azerbaijan during a war with the country in the early 1990s.

The conflict left an estimated 30,000 people dead and one million displaced before the two sides agreed to a ceasefire in 1994. However, a peace accord has never been signed and the dispute still remains unsettled. Ahmadinejad said the Iran and Azerbaijan share the same views regarding all regional and international issues, adding that the "role of the two countries in maintaining the stability of the region is unique," Mehr News Agency reported. The Iranian president referred to issues

concerning the Caspian Sea and said, "We believe that all the littoral states should benefit from this sea fairly and justly."

Pointed to the great political relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, Aliyev called for the expansion of economic relations and said, "We believe we can use existing capacities to increase the volume of trade transactions."

The Iranian chief executive arrived in the Azeri capital of Baku on Wednesday to attend the third meeting of the leaders of Caspian littoral states in order to negotiate the legal regime of the sea and to discuss relations with Azeri officials.

The Caspian Sea is the largest enclosed body of water on earth by area, variously classed as the world's largest lake or a full-fledged sea.

The maritime and seabed boundaries of the Caspian Sea have yet to be demarcated among Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan -- the five countries bordering the sea.

Despite extensive negotiations, the legal status of the Caspian Sea has been unclear since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Caspian Sea legal regime is based on two agreements signed between Iran and the Soviet Union in 1921 and 1940.

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan -- the three new littoral states, established after the collapse of Soviet Russia -- do not recognize the prior treaties, triggering a debate on the future status of the sea.

[November 17, 2010 www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)

ARMENIAN PRESIDENT TO SKIP NATO SUMMIT



Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan decided not to attend the NATO summit in Lisbon because a draft summit declaration has retained the previous generalized position on the resolution of conflicts in the South Caucasus. "The Armenian side has many times stressed that the general wordings on conflict resolution are unacceptable," he said. Sargsyan was apparently referring to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict between his country and Azerbaijan. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict erupted in 1988, when the ethnic Armenian region claimed independence from Azerbaijan and sought support from Armenia. It has been de facto independent since a 1991-94 war that killed more than 30,000 people on both sides. The dispute is mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group comprising the United States, Russia and France. [November 19, 2010 www.en.rian.ru](http://www.en.rian.ru)

SARGSYAN HOPES RF MEDIATION ON KARABAKH YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS

I would like to thank you for your efforts. Russia has always played an important role in the Caucasus. I hope your efforts will soon be concluded with positive results," Sargsyan said. "We also want this very much," Medvedev answered. Sargsyan assured the Russian president that "Armenia is striving for peace and stability in the Caucasus, and this precisely is the reason for its efforts in the quest for a peaceful and lasting solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem." Regarding bilateral relations, the presidents agreed that they have a privileged character, which applies also to contacts of the leaders of the two states. Medvedev pointed out that he meets very often with his Armenian counterpart, so that they have an opportunity to "synchronize watches on bilateral questions, on regional problems, to talk on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement and outline guides for the future." Sargsyan recalled that a number of important arrangements had been made during Medvedev's state visit in August. "We have then agreed to meet in late autumn to sum up the implementation of these arrangements," Sargsyan said.

[November 17, 2010 www.itar-tass.com](http://www.itar-tass.com)

ECOLOGISTS SLAM 'INADEQUATE' WORK ON TOXIC WASTE SITE IN YEREVAN

The Armenian government has failed to properly restore and isolate a toxic waste burial site near Yerevan that was left dangerously exposed earlier this year, environment protection groups claimed on Wednesday. The Soviet-era industrial grave located near the city's southern Nubarashen suburb contains more than 500 metric tons of DDT and other poisonous substances that had been used by Armenian chemical enterprises. An Armenian investigative journalist and several environmentalists discovered in April that unknown individuals had broken into the site, tearing down its fencing and flattening a mound of land covering the waste with bulldozers or other heavy machinery. The precise circumstances of the intrusion were never clarified. Ecologists warned of an environmental disaster at the time, saying the toxic waste is being washed away by rainwater and is threatening to pollute the whole area. Responding to that warning, the government approved in early May 31.6 million drams (\$87,000) in emergency funding for restoration work conducted at the site in the following months. The chemical dump was covered with thick layers of soil and surrounded by new concrete walls. In addition, it was placed under

an around-the-clock police surveillance. Inga Zarafian of the Ecolur advocacy group and environmental news agency called the quality of that work "inadequate," saying that poisonous emissions can still be felt in the area. "The odor [of chemical waste] is still very heavy," she told RFE/RL's Armenian service. "Even the police, who are now supposed to protect the territory against various intruders, have moved their observation post away from the site because of the odor." "That means that the more 30 million drams allocated from the state budget have not been utilized properly," claimed Zarafian. Her claims were echoed by Lilik Simonian, one of several members of another environmental group who visited the site recently. She said they found deepening cracks in the fencing. "I think all the work was done properly," insisted Romik Chobanian, a senior official at the Armenian Ministry of Environment Protection. "The republic's prime minister also expressed a positive view about that work when he visited the site after it was completed." "The cracks emerged because it's an active landslide zone. There is no way we could have prevented the cracks," Chobanian told.

November 9, 2010

full story www.masispost.com

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LARGEST CHURCH IN MIDDLE EAST AND CHRISTIANITY IN DIYARBAKIR

Recently it was reported that the Armenian cathedral of Sourp Giragos in Dikranagerd, Turkey, will undergo major renovation. I thought that our readers might be interested to read a little about the history of this famous sanctuary. The exterior of Sourp Giragos with the new bell tower, 1914. Amid (alternatively, A-Mi-Da, Amida, Amith, Omid, and later Diyar-Bakir, Diyarbekir, and among the Armenian community, Dikranagerd or Dikrisagerd) is situated on the west bank of the Tigris River and is one of the oldest, continually inhabited cities in the world. Because of its strategic position, both commercially and militarily, Amid has boasted a cosmopolitan population, representing nearly every ethnic and religious group in the area. It is unknown when and by whom Christianity was introduced into the city of Amid. It is historically probable that early missionaries, either directly from Jerusalem (the seat of James) or by emissary from Antioch (the

seat of Peter) or from Edessa (the seat of Thomas) proclaimed Christianity there. The Armenians maintain that Thaddeus and Bartholomew preached in Amid on their way north into the Armenian highlands, while the Syrians credit Thomas, Addai, and Mari with the introduction of Christianity there. No one can be certain except to say that a church was established in Amid during the first century. It is also unclear who the first bishop of Amid may have been, and what type of persecution befell the community during the first three centuries of Christian formation. What is known is that in 325 AD, a bishop named Simon of Amid attended the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea. Whether he were ethnically Syrian, Greek, Armenian, or Assyrian remains unclear, and secondary to the importance of episcopal representation of Amid. Owing to its geographic location, Amid has been influenced and invaded from every direction.

November 22, 2010,


full story www.armenianweekly.com

UNESCO LISTS ARMENIAN KHACHKAR AS CULTURAL HERITAGE TO PROTECT



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared the Armenian Khachkar (cross-stone) an intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding, News.am reported. The decision to classify the unique Armenian artwork was made on Wednesday during the fifth session of an inter-governmental committee of states signed onto UNESCO's Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to News.am, forty-seven applications were submitted by twenty-nine countries seeking classification in the coveted list, which, according to the UNESCO website, helps to mobilize international cooperation and assistance to protect the cultural assets on its list. Armenia's application, the first submitted to the committee, presented the Armenian Khachkar as an ancient form of symbolism and craftsmanship unique and vital to Armenian national identity. Armenia's report, titled, "Armenian Cross-Stones Art: Symbolism and Craftsmanship of Khachkars," can be found on the UNESCO website here. The application details the history of the Khachkar and its spiritual role, detailing its roots and development through the centuries and into modern times. It describes Khachkars as "outdoor steles carved from stone" by craftspeople in Armenia and its Diaspora that are used as focal points for worship, memorial stones, and relics that "facilitate communication between the secular and divine." These hand-carved stones, it explains, are usually up to 1.5 meters in height with an ornamental cross carved on the symbol of a sun or the Armenian wheel of eternity and usually accompanied by carvings of saints, animals or other geometric designs.

November 18, 2010 full story www.asbarez.com

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