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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

November 23-30 2010

THEMA



OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN TO TURKMENISTAN

On November 24, President Serzh Sargsyan left on a two-day official visit to Turkmenistan. After the official welcoming ceremony for the President of Armenia at the Saparmurat Niyazov International Airport, at the VIP Hall of the Airport Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov held a short meeting. Later, at the official residence of the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan and Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov held a private meeting which was followed by the extended negotiations of the official delegations of the two countries with the participation of the two Presidents. At the conclusion of the meeting, signed were documents aimed at the expansion of bilateral cooperation in different areas. The parties adopted also a Joint Declaration which assesses the current state of the Armenian-Turkmen relations and defines the prospects of developing relations in political, economic, social, and cultural areas. As a result of the negotiations, signed were, in particular, the Agreement between the Commerce Chambers of Armenia and Turkmenistan on cooperation, Agreement

on cooperation in the areas of education between the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia and the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan, Agreement on cooperation in the area of culture between the Ministry of Culture of Armenia and the Ministry of Culture and TV, Radio Communications of Turkmenistan, Agreement on the intergovernmental commission for economic, trade as well as technical and scientific cooperation, and the Program of cooperation for 2010-2015 between the Yerevan State University and Mahtumkuli University of Turkmenistan. After the ceremony, the Presidents of Armenia and Turkmenistan presented to the journalists the results of bilateral negotiations. In his remarks, the President of Armenia first expressed gratitude to the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov for warm welcome and underlined that Armenia highly values and attaches special importance to the relations between the two countries. According to the President, it is evidenced by his current official visit and by the negotiations which were conducted in the atmosphere of complete mutual trust.

November 24, 2010 full story www.president.am

“QUOTE OF THE WEEK”

“CIVIL SOCIETY IS MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO SEEK PERSONAL AND FAMILY WELL-BEING ON THEIR OWN “

TIGRAN SARGSYAN
PM OF ARMENIA

Upcoming Events

DECEMBER 3: *The concert of famous tenor Placido Domingo in Yerevan*

DECEMBER 9-10: *Sitting of the CSTO Collective Security Council*

USEFUL LINKS

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

CHRONICA

WORKSHOP ON RADICAL IMPROVEMENT OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN ARMENIA

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan-chaired consultative meeting was held in the Office of Government on business environment improvement in Armenia.

Prioritizing business environment improvement efforts, the Prime Minister said that all the agencies were directed to take steps in order to improve Armenia's Doing Business standing. The head of government reminded that the Presi-



pect. Our country is the 82nd for cross-border trade performance indicator (21 points up). We have problems with the protection of consumer rights with our 93rd standing on the list. Construction licensing index is 6 points down to the 78th standing. We are concerned about poor performance in terms of company closure, lending accessibility and business startup. As far as ownership registration is concerned, we are the 5th, a step down over last year's result. First Deputy Minister of Economy Karine Minasyan presented a draft action plan on improvement of business environment in Armenia after which opinions were exchanged on ways of simplifying business startup- and development-related procedures, boosting small and medium-size businesses, encouraging foreign trade, improving tax and customs administration and so on. Wrapping up the meeting, the Prime Minister ordered to set up task forces composed of concerned agency representatives in order to submit by next Friday proposals on radical improvement of business environment in Armenia.

November 24, 2010, www.gov.am

THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE ARMENIAN MINISTER OF DEFENCE SEYRAN OHANYAN TO SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY

On the 22nd of November the delegation headed by Armenian Defence Minister Seyran Ohanyan paid an official visit to Slovakia, following the invitation by the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic Lubomir Galko. During the visit the Defence Ministers of the two countries discussed matters of bilateral cooperation. ARM MoD Seyran Ohanyan and the SR MoD Lubomir Galko signed an agreement on "Mili-



tary Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of the Slovak Republic", which anticipates a cooperation in the following main areas – Professional Military Education and Training of the

personnel, military medicine, peace-keeping, exchange of experience in the sphere of Strategic Defence Review, etc. Seyran Ohanyan also visited the memorial of Armenian Genocide in Bratislava and put a wreath there. On the 23rd of November the delegation headed by the ARM MoD left for Hungary, where the matters of bilateral military cooperation are also to be discussed.

On the 23rd of November Seyran Ohanyan met Minister of Defence of the Republic of Hungary Dr. Csaba Hende. Taking into consideration the fact that in 2011 Hungary took the presidency of the European Union the discussions of the meeting were mainly focused on regional security matters. ARM MoD Seyran Ohanyan and Hungarian MoD Dr. Csaba Hende signed an agreement on "Military Cooperation between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Hungary".

The two ministers agreed upon enhancing the relations in the spheres of defence reforms, military education and training, military history, and developing relations between military museums of the two countries.

November 23-24, 2010 www.mil.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **NOVEMBER 24:** *Cher: my first visit to Armenia helped me feel an Armenian*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 25:** *PACE President doesn't abandon the idea to form subcommittee for Karabakh issues*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 26:** *Fishing in Lake Sevan should be forbidden year-round, expert says*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 27:** *Non-Standard photo exhibition opens in Yerevan*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 28:** *OSCE chairman-in-office, Armenian Foreign Minister have telephone conversation*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 29:** *Silent Witnesses exhibition opens in Yerevan*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 30:** *15mln euro to be allocated for second stage of Yerevan metro modernization in 2011*
AH
- **NOVEMBER 30:** *Nerses Yerytsyan: Armenia successfully attracts foreign investments*
AH

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA EDWARD NALBANDIAN RECEIVED THE OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS

On November 26, the Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Edward Nalbandian received the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs Bernard Fassier (France), Robert Bradtke (USA), Igor Popov (Russia) and Andrzej Kasprzyk, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office who arrived in Yerevan within the frameworks of a regional visit.

The Co-Chairs presented the Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister the results of discussions they held in Azerbaijan the day before.

The sides also discussed the preparatory works of the meetings to be held in Astana.

November 26, 2010 www.mfa.am

RES PUBLICA

MINAS AVETISYAN'S FRESCOS MOVED TO RA GOVERNMENT BUILDING



On November 24, two frescos by Minas Avetisyan were moved to the Armenian government premises. "This is the case when history evaluates the works of great painter Minas Avetisyan," Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan told a press conference in Yerevan. According to him, with placing the

masterpieces in this building, the government expresses its attitude towards art values and, specifically, Minas. "While creating these works in the canteen of electro-technical plant of Leninkan (now Gyumri), he could hardly expect that they will be moved to the governmental building of Armenia with the lapse of time and become real masterpieces," the Prime Minister said. He added that, possibly, the frescos will be moved to another place, but "it should be chosen diligently to deserve acceptance of these wonderful works." "Till then they will stay here and we will make them available for the public," PM Sargsyan said.

November 24, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

INTRODUCTION OF E-PAYMENTS IN ARMENIA'S PASPORT DEPARTMENTS TO HELP TACKLE CORRUPTION

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan participated in opening of a repaired and modernized pasport and visa department of Nor Nork administrative district of Yerevan. The Prime Minister attached importance to application of modern technologies in the field of pasport servicing. "The innovations will provide citizens with the opportunity to get more detailed information, have options, as well as use other sources. Payments will be done electronically, thus, excluding corruption risks," Mr. Sargsyan said. Commenting on importance of the reforms, the Prime Minister stressed that maximum



efforts will be exerted to provide similar services in all pasport and visa departments of the RA Police.

November 26, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

HRIPSIME KHURSHUDYAN WINS EUROPEAN U23 WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS GOLD

Armenian weightlifter Hripsime Khurshudyan (+75kg) won gold at the European U23 Weightlifting Championships in Limassol, Cyprus. Khurshudyan showed the best result, lifting the total of 250 kg in snatch and clean & jerk (110 and 140 kg respectively). Arman Andrikyan and Norayr Vardanyan (both 94kg) enter the competition on

November 26, 2010, www.panarmenian.net

HAYK HAKOBYAN WINS GOLD AT U23 WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Armenia's Hayk Hakobyan (+105kg) won gold at U23 Weightlifting Championships which finished in Limassol, Cyprus. Hakobyan lifted 180kg in the snatch and 210kg in the clean & jerk, fixing the total of 390kg. In all, Armenian national team has won 9 medals, with

FACEBOOK USERS INCREASE BY 12 400 OVER THE LAST MONTH IN ARMENIA

Facebookers statistics reported over 100 880 Facebook users in Armenia, with their number increased by 12 400 over the last month. As of October 2010, user increase for the 6 months amounted to only 5 750. Thus, Armenia gained 2 points in Facebook user rating, to be placed in 122nd position (among 213 states worldwide). According to statistical data, Facebook penetration among Armenian users is 48.45%.

November 28, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

Araik Mirzoyan (77kg), Rubik Mamoyan (62kg), Hripsime Khurshudyan and Hayk Hakobyan winning gold; Elen Grigoryan (53kg), Afgasi Aghasyan (77kg) winning silver; Aghvan Melikyan (85kg) and Vanik Avetisyan (69kg) winning bronze medals.

November 28, 2010 www.panarmenian.net

WATER IS LIFE HAYASTAN ALL-ARMENIAN FUNDS' TELETHON LAUNCHED IN LOS ANGELES



Raising funds for drinking water and irrigation projects in Artsakh, Armenia Fund's "Water is Life" International Thanksgiving Day Telethon was launched. The Telethon will air live from Hollywood today, November 25 from 8am to 8pm PST coast-to-coast and around the world. Airing for 12 hours, Telethon 2010 will reach every continent, entering Armenian homes through satellite, cable and the internet. The Telethon will bring together Armenians from all walks of life regardless of their political or religious views and affiliations around one purpose: to bring life to Artsakh villages by giving them round-the-clock access to clean drinking and irrigation water. The shortage of water is a serious problem in Artsakh affecting more than 70,000 people living in 200 villages. On average, each family spends 40% of their daily lives carrying water from a source 2-5 miles away. That water is not always clean - 88% of all diseases are related to tainted drinking water. Today, more than 100,000 acres of agricultural lands are dry due to the lack of irrigation water and people in the villages are unable to grow crops and have incomes. Water is a serious economic engine and the driving force behind agriculture. Armenia Fund's pilot projects in the Tavush region of Armenia have proven that every \$1 invested in improved water access yields an average of \$12 in economic returns. The General Sponsor of Telethon 2010 is VivaCell MTS and the Los Angeles Major Partner is Karoun Dairies USA. Official Sponsors of Telethon 2010 Armenia Fund, Inc., is a non-profit 501 tax-exempt corporation established in 1994 to facilitate large-scale humanitarian and infrastructure development assistance to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. Since 1991, Armenia Fund has rendered more than \$200 million in development aid to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. Armenia Fund, Inc. is the U.S. Western Region affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.

November 25 2010,

full story www.panarmenian.net

TURKISH LEADER'S LEBANON VISIT SPARKS CLASHES



Protesters have clashed with police over Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Lebanon. The demonstrators are from Lebanon's Armenian minority and they are furious at the presence of the Turkish premier. During the First World War, up to one and a half million Armenians were allegedly

murdered by the Ottoman Turks, but Turkey has so far refused to acknowledge this. Former Lebanese Telecommunications Minister Alain Tabourian said: "We also have a big grief with Turkey in that they are not recognising the Armenian genocide, something which is unacceptable after almost 100 years of its occurrence." During his two day visit, Turkey has already signed a partnership agreement with Lebanon in a bid to promote free trade between the two countries. Erdogan praised the commitment and said it would strengthen bilateral relations. Turkey maintains that the body count in the alleged genocide was exaggerated and that the dead were victims of civil unrest.

November 25, 2010 www.euronews.net

VS NAIPAUL'S ABSENCE HAS COST THIS PARLIAMENT CREDIBILITY

I'm writing from the first commission session of the European Writers' Parliament in Istanbul, while one of my colleagues expounds on his relationship to the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. When I was first invited, my imagination conjured a series of occupation-specific European institutions – a doctor's parliament, a parliament for firemen, for painters ... Sadly, it seems we're the only such institution in existence. The EWP was started on the initiative of Jose Saramago and Orhan Pamuk, as a way for writers to come together and discuss our shared prob-

lems and concerns. Or talk about ourselves. One or the other. Which of the two paths we will choose remains in doubt right now. I'm hoping we manage to get down to business. Even before we started this morning, the EWP had generated its first controversy. VS Naipaul had been invited, and was due to give one of the opening speeches. A number of Turkish writers complained that his presence would be offensive, on the basis of his past statements about Islam, which have been (how to put this delicately) less than positive.

November 25, 2010 www.guardian.co.uk

OSCE SECRETARY GENERAL: CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH IS NECESSARY FOR NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT

A constructive approach and spirit from both sides are necessary for a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in order to achieve peace in the region, and this is the target of the Minsk Group and the OSCE Chairman, Secretary General of the OSCE Marc Perrin de Brichambaut told a press conference in Astana on Sunday, Trend reports. "It is time to turn the page, so that the two neighbouring countries can live in an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation. It is necessary to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," De Brichambaut said.

November 28, 2010, www.vestnikkavkaza.net



RUSSIAN-ARMENIAN RELATIONS DEVELOP WELL—SERZH SARGSIAN



Russian-Armenian relations have been developing very intensively, quite well and are currently at a very high level, says President Serge Sargsyan of Armenia. He was speaking during a reception of the Russian presidential staff head Sergei Naryshkin in Yerevan earlier today.

Sargsyan said that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's state visit to Armenia in August this year provided a fresh impulse for the two countries' relations. The Armenian leader pointed out that Russia has been and remains Armenia's main economic partner.

November 29, 2010
www.english.ruvr.ru

RUSSIA APPRECIATES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH ARMENIA

The head of the Administration of the Russian President Sergey Naryshkin. Russia appreciates the strategic partnership with Armenia and highly values the development of economic and humanitarian relations, the head of the Administration of the Russian President Sergey Naryshkin said in Yerevan on Monday after having talks with the Armenian president Serge Sargsyan.

"Russia and Armenia share the same views on key international issues," Naryshkin noted. He added that frequent meetings between the Russian and Armenian presidents set a positive tone and incentive for the development of further relations.

November 29, 2010
www.english.ruvr.ru

SEMINAR DEVOTED TO ARMENIAN LITURGICAL CHANT TO BE HELD IN VENICE



The Giorgio Cini Foundation at Intercultural Institute of Comparative Music Studies in Venice, Italy, with the collaboration of the Venice Armenian Cultural Studies and Documentation Centre, and with contributions from several Italian and foreign scholars, has organized a day-long seminar devoted to Armenian Liturgical Chant which will be held on December 2, 2010. The study day will also provide the opportunity to commemorate Father Vartan Oulouhadjian from the Monastery of the Mekhitarist Fathers of San Lazzaro, who died on 24 May 2010. He was not only a sublime singer but also an expert on the liturgical repertoire and the modal system of mediaeval Armenian music. To end the study day there will be a concert by the AKN Choir, Paris, conducted by Aram Kerovpyan. In addition to giving perform-

ances, this choir also founded the Centre for Armenian Liturgical Chant Studies in 1998. Aram Kerovpyan is an authoritative performer and expert on Armenian liturgical chant. For years he has been devoted to rediscovering traditional repertoires, in particular sharagan (hymns or tropes) which, together with melismatic and recitative psalmody, form the largest Armenian musical liturgy.¹⁷ For some time now there has been growing renewed interest in the ways in which man manifests through music his relationship with faith, the religious dimension and the sphere of the sacred. This interest has emerged not only in the work of musicologists, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists but also in historical-religious studies and theology. The idea is to promote an annual study day on a specific topic related to the relationship between "voice" and "prayer". An integral part of the event will be a concert with world-class performers to illustrate the repertoires being discussed. Each meeting will thus probably deal with a different individual liturgical tradition, a given geographical area, or a specific European or non-European repertoire.

November 27, Lousapatz N 862

COMMENTARY: JERUSALEM SAGA: LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

Since time immemorial Armenians and Greeks in Jerusalem have challenged each other to win the competition to bring out the light of the Holy Sepulchre Church on the eve of the Easter Feast (Jrakalooydz). Most of the time, Armenian monks have been the champions. But in recent years the Greeks have become more assertive, if not more belligerent, pushing the Armenians to the background. Along with losing the symbolic Holy Sepulchre light, the Armenian Patriarchate itself has fallen on hard times because of the encroachment of the Israeli government, incessant feud with the Greek Patriarchate, internal corruption and the dwindling Armenian population in the Holy City. [Christ descended into Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace, yet ironically, the Holy land has been the most tortured piece of real estate on earth. And Armenians, with their propensity to adversity, have kept their presence on that tortured land since the pre-Christian era, and beginning in the sixth century AD, they have built their churches and established the Patriarchate.

Over many centuries, Jerusalem and the Holy places have changed hands between many conquerors and Armenians have learned to survive throughout those tumultuous upheavals. News emanating from the Armenian Patriarchate has often been more disheartening than positive. Many of the problems have been created by the successive ruling powers, but also by the hands of the Armenian clergy jaded to abuse and conspiracy. But it looks like there is a light at the end of the tunnel as evidenced by the news release sent by the Patriarchate, following a conclave of the St. James Brotherhood, which took place November 15 to 18. The release gives a positive spin to the developments in Jerusalem. One of the major changes is the request by the aging and ailing Patriarch, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, to elect a coadjutor patriarch to assist him in running the affairs of the patriarchate, which have become overwhelming for the 93-year-old.

November 24, 2010 www.mirrorspectator.com

KOSOVO IMPORTANT PRECEDENT FOR KARABAKH CONFLICT



Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Artsakh) President Bako Sahakian said Friday the Kosovo precedent was important for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict and rebuffed Azeri attempts to poison his appearance at a gathering hosted by Orange County World Affairs Council at the Pacific Club, where Sahakian was the keynote speaker. Sahakian spoke to an audience of about 250 guests, mainly members of the Armenian community and the WAC, but peppered with members of the Azeri community, who asked biased questions during the Q & A session at the end of president's speech. Another group of 15 to 20 Azeris was protesting outside of the venue. In his opening remarks, President Sahakian talked about some of the domestic and foreign policy objectives of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and the progress that has been made in those areas over the past few years. In reference to the parallels between Karabakh and Kosovo, which was brought up in one of the questions, the President said that "Kosovo is an important precedent of the implementation of international law, where the principle of self-determination prevailed" and stated that the International Court of Justice confirmed Kosovo's independence. Just like in Kosovo, the people in Karabakh made their choice to live independently, and that decision is "not subject to speculation and interpretation." Sahakian said that Karabakh must return to negotiation table because "no settlement of the conflict is going to be possible without the agreement of Stepanakert." of the country has increased fivefold from 2003,

November 24, 2010 full story www.asbarez.com

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