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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

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THEMA



JANUARY 28 MARKS THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN ARMED FORCES

January 28 marks the 19th anniversary of the Armenian Armed Forces. Traditionally, the Armenian leadership – President Serzh Sargsyan, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Speaker of the RA National Assembly Hovik Abrahamyan, Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan – visits Yerablur Pantheon. In 1991, the RA State Defense Committee was established as per a governmental decision. On December 5, Vazgen Sargsyan was appointed as Defense Minister. On January 28, 1992, a historical decision on Defense of the Republic of Armenia, i.e. establishment of the Armenian National Army, was adopted.

January 28, 2011
www.panarmenian.net

On the occasion of Army Day, as well as for valor and personal courage in defending the Motherland and for the consid-

erable contribution to the enforcement of the combat readiness of the troops, President Serzh Sargsyan issued an order to award a group of servicemen and freedom fighters with medals of the Republic of Armenia. On January 27, at the Presidential Palace President Serzh Sargsyan congratulated and handed state high awards to the servicemen and freedom fighters. President Sargsyan said that our nation's trust and respect toward the RA Armed Forces are well deserved. "To put on shoulder straps and serve the country is a task for a real man: to put on shoulder straps and serve the country with distinction is a honorable task," stressed the President of Armenia. He said that to be awarded the state's high honors is a great reason for pride, and expressed confidence that the servicemen who were awarded today have also become a source of pride for their commanders, subordinates, friends, parents and children.

January 21-22, 2011
www.president.am

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"TURKEY'S POSITION IS NON-CONSTRUCTIVE ON BOTH THE KARABAKH CONFLICT SETTLEMENT AND THE NORMALIZATION OF THE ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS"

EDWARD NALBANDYAN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF RA

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 11-13: Armenian wrestling team wil participate in Grand Prix Wrestling Championship in Istanbul

USEFUL LINKS

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

PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARGSYAN'S CONGRATULATIONS ON INDIA'S NATIONAL DAY

On January 26, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan attended a reception held on India's National Day at the Embassy of India in Armenia.

On behalf of the Armenian government, the Prime Minister congratulated those present on the holiday wishing peace, prosperity, well-being and progress to the people of India.

According to Tigran Sargsyan, as the cradle of ancient civilizations India has made a valuable spiritual, intellectual, historical and cultural contribution to the global cultural heritage. Today's India continues taking an important share in the global developments. The head of government said to be convinced that the preservation and development of ties of friendship between the Armenian and Indian peoples is the duty of the two governments. Tigran Sargsyan thanked the government of India for the joint projects implemented in Armenia, especially in the cultural and educational spheres. "We are convinced that President Serzh Sargsyan's upcoming visit to India will help strengthen bonds between the two States," the Prime Minister noted and expressed hope that the years ahead will be fruitful in terms of expanded bilateral relations. Stressing that the two heads of State are intent on furthering trade and economic exchanges, Indian Ambassador to Armenia Achal Kumar Malhotra noticed in turn that Indian-Armenian ties have a 2000-year-long history. He further pointed out that the economy of India boasted a great deal of flexibility throughout the global crisis with a 9 % growth index. "India is a democratic country which seeks to ensure harmonious development and prosperity," Achal Kumar Malhotra stated in part. The reception was attended by intellectuals and representatives of diplomatic corps.



January 27, 2011 www.gov.am

EDWARD NALBANDIAN: TURKEY'S POLICY IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE

"Turkey's position is non-constructive on both the Karabakh conflict settlement and the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations," Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said in an interview with Russia Today. "You know that the Armenian President initiated the process of normalization of relations with Turkey. Yes, we started the process, held talks and signed two protocols, having agreed with the Turkish side that we were taking the step without any preconditions. However, after signing the protocols, Turkey did not find enough strength to remain committed to one of the basic principles of international law, the principle of pacta sunt servanda, which means that if there is an agreement it should be followed. We signed the documents in presence of witnesses – Switzerland, Russia, the United States, France, representatives of the European Union and the Council of Europe. After that Turkey practically returned to the preconditions it had been suggesting at the beginning of the process. "These preconditions included the attempts to link the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations to the settlement of the Karabakh con-

flict. The United States, France and Russia have declared many times that the two are completely different processes and the attempts to tie the two would harm both. The Turkish side pretends not to notice and hear what the international community is saying. The second precondition was the Armenian Genocide recognition. When we started the process, we said the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was not a precondition for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. We stressed that Armenia would never question either the fact of genocide, or the importance of its international recognition. We told this the Turkish side, the mediators, and all the countries involved in the normalization process. However, unfortunately Turkey returned to the language of preconditions it had been using before the start of the process, thus taking a non-constructive position on both the process of normalization of the Armenian Turkish relations and the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, since, as I have already mentioned, the attempts to tie the two processes harms both," Minister Nalbandian said.

January 29, 2011 www.armradio.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **JANUARY 24:** RA MFA: there are not Armenian citizens among victims at Domodedovo AH
- **JANUARY 25:** Armenian, Georgian military authorities to establish cooperation AH
- **JANUARY 26:** RA government to allocate AMD 4bln to Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in 2011 AH
- **JANUARY 27:** Preservation of cultural heritage among Armenian Culture Ministry priority tasks in 2011 AH
- **JANUARY 28:** Armenian Ministry of Social Affairs, Ardshin-investbank agree on pension payment through credit cards AH
- **JANUARY 29:** Robert Arzumanyan signs contract with Jagiellonia FC AH
- **JANUARY 31:** Tigran Petrosyan wins Armenia's rapid chess championship AH

THE MINISTER SUGGESTS CHANGES THAT WILL SOLVE MANY PROBLEMS



And the model of management of "Haypost" surely to be changed Armenian Transport and Communication Ministry intended implementation of 15 events for the 2011 (the number of events in 2010 was 8) of which 7 in the transport field, and 8 in communication. And 4 issues have been considered prior (no prior issues were set for 2010), RA Minister of Transport and Communication Manuk Vardanyan said at a press conference yesterday. According to him, 14 programs at the total amount of AMD 36.6bln will be implemented in 2011 due to funds of the state budget. Manuk Vardanyan specified the projects and events envisaged for the current year. Presenting tasks planned for the road-construction sphere he informed that 249km-long road sections and 6 bridges will be completely rehabilitated due to funds of the state budget and attracted investments. Besides, AMD 5.5bln will be spent for works on maintenance and exploitation of roads.

January 26 2011, www.hhpress.am

TIGRAN SARGSYAN: AGRICULTURE WILL BE PRIORITY FOR ARMENIA IN 2011



The Armenian government discussed a program on improvement of agriculture. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Minister of Agriculture Sergo Karapetyan and representa-

tives of the Ministry, as well as members of the Public Council and representatives of relevant structures participated in the meeting, the RA governmental press service reported. Opportunities for enlarging cultivated areas in spring of 2011 were presented during the sitting. Summarizing the results of discussion, Sargsyan gave relevant instructions to institutions, stressing the importance of permanent communication between heads of institutions and regional administrations. "Agriculture will be a priority field in 2011. And we should do our utmost to secure a growth in it," noted Sargsyan.

January 26, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMENIA'S IT FIELD DISCUSS TAX AND CUSTOMS MATTERS

On January 25, 2011, Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF) hosted a roundtable meeting of the members of Investment and Entrepreneurship Working Group of the IT Development Support Council of Armenia (IT DNC) to discuss legislative changes suggested by EIF and the Union of IT Enterprises of Armenia (UITE) targeting tax and customs-related laws and regulations.

In an effort to bring up tax and customs issues that cause concern among IT companies in Armenia, in October-December 2010, EIF and UITE had held a number of discussions with representatives of Armenian IT companies, and had developed suggestions on legislative changes. In

particular, suggested changes are to optimize customs relations and procedures for Armenian IT companies, and to make amendments in Resolution No. 753 of the RA Government (November 27, 1998) to reduce tax payments for IT companies through full calculation of expenses versus partial calculation.

In result of the roundtable discussion slight modifications were made to the proposed legislative changes. It was decided to include these issues in the agenda of the next meeting of IT DNC which will be chaired by Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan.

26 January 2011, www.panarmenian.net

AL PACINO WINS SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARD



Al Pacino won the Screen Actors Guild Award for outstanding performance by a male actor in a TV movie or miniseries for his role playing the controversial Jack Kevor-

kian in "You Don't Know Jack." It marked a trifecta for Pacino: He had already won the Emmy and the Golden Globe for the HBO movie. He was not present to accept the award. He was competing in this category against John Goodman, also in "You Don't Know Jack," Dennis Quaid for "The Special Relationship," Patrick Stewart for "Macbeth" and Edgar Ramirez for "Carlos." The awards - which dole out honors in both TV and film - are being held at the Shrine Exhibition Hall and telecast live simultaneously on TNT and TBS. A win in the feature film categories is especially coveted: It can be a precursor to Oscar gold.

January 31, 2011, www.panarmenian.net

RA PRESIDENT: REFERENDUM ONLY WAY TO SETTLE KARABAKH CONFLICT



"I am sure the only way to settle the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is the conduction of referendum there or recognition of the results of the 1991 referendum conducted in full compliance with the USSR legislation and international right," Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan stated in an interview to Echo Moskvi radio station. "The issue may be regulated only through mutual concessions. I think I am not saying anything new as in 2007 the OSCE Minsk group co-chairs suggested us a document named "Madrid principles" and these principles suppose that the settlement of the conflict is possible through mutual concessions," Serzh Sargsyan said, explaining that the first one of the principles is the territorial integrity, the second one the self-determination of the people and the third one non-usage of force and threat of force. According to him, in 2007 after long thinking Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed over these principles. "But gradually Azerbaijan started commenting these principles on its own way and when it was spoken about the right to self-determination, they were saying - yes, but as part of Azerbaijan. It is understandable that such self-determination may be called not only incomplete self-determination if it is possible to say so. And secondly as if the non-usage of force functions in case when a state does not have occupied territories," the president pointed out, adding that in such cases every time he wants to remind that in 1994 a treaty on ceasefire was signed the goal of which was the establishment of peace and the solution of the issue. "No one has yet annulled the provisions of the treaty," Serzh Sargsyan said. He also rated high the commitments of the parties on not resuming the military actions as during the recent 1,5-2 years the talks about resuming the military actions have become common. "It is very bad, as when a leader or a common person is speaking about an issue for a long time at a certain moment he gets convinced in his words. And if there are opportunities a big temptation rises. But I am sure that it is possible to avoid war," the president pointed out.

January, 27 2011 www.armenpress.am

ARMENIA WILL NOT HAVE PROBLEMS SERVICING EXTERNAL LOANS

Armenia's Finance Minister Vache Gabrielian thinks that his country has no problems in servicing its external loans. In 2010, the country's external debt reached USD 3.795 bln. This is 44.4% of the GDP. In the coming years the proportion will not increase and will not reach the critical boundary of 50% of GDP. According to the minister, from 2013 the level of foreign debt will start to decrease. The Armenian government has announced huge infrastructural projects being financed from abroad. These include a nuclear power station and the construction of the Iran-Armenian railway line. However, the Minister

claimed that there are different ways of financing these projects and they will not necessarily consider the increase of foreign debt. In 2013, Armenia will have to pay USD 500 mln for to service its foreign debts. The Minister insists that the country will not have any problems in doing so. Meanwhile, inflation by the end of 2010 came to 9.4%. The minister predicts that by the end of this year inflation will not be more than 5.5%. Concerning the budget of last year, the budgetary revenues slightly exceeded the amount forecast.

January 28, 2011 www.messenger.com.ge

LEGAL BATTLE OVER ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MUSEUM ENDS IN PHILANTHROPIST'S FAVOR

A nasty, long-running legal battle over a proposed Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum has ended for now, with a judge returning the valuable downtown Washington, D.C., property to a wealthy philanthropist who said he was wronged. The 190-page ruling by U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly is a blow to the Armenian Assembly of America and a victory for retired businessman Gerard L. Cafesjian. Precisely what it means for the proposed museum's future, though, remains unclear. "The museum will be built," Cafesjian's attorney, John Williams, said Thursday, adding that Cafesjian is "going to reach out to the Armenian community and present a plan for moving forward." But in a sign of the difficulties ahead, the attorney for the Armenian Assembly of America said he was "disappointed" and stressed that "we have to consider what the net effect" might be on the museum's future. "We're not ruling anything out," attorney Michael DeMarco said Thursday. Under the ruling, the museum site several blocks from the White House will be returned to the Cafesjian Family Foundation. A World War II veteran who turns 86 this year, Cafesjian built the foundation with a fortune made by selling West Publishing, a Minnesota-based legal publishing firm. Cafesjian will also gain control of a seat on the museum board, which must now figure out a new game plan amid sharp disagreements. The 50,000-square-foot Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum is supposed to commemorate the horrific events of 1915 to 1923 when, by some accounts, more than 1 million Armenians died

at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Cafesjian and his foundation had helped buy the former National Bank of Washington site and nearby properties for museum purposes. "While the court hopes that the properties can be used for (the museum), the court recognizes that the (foundation) is not legally obligated to use the properties to build a museum," Kollar-Kotelly noted. Kollar-Kotelly quietly issued her opinion Tuesday night, addressing the complexity of a case that began nearly four years ago and required a 12-day trial and more than 450 exhibits to resolve. In sometimes pointed terms, Kollar-Kotelly questioned the veracity of some Armenian Assembly trial witnesses, including some, she said, whose "lack of memory seems to be driven more by convenience than cognition." DeMarco stressed Thursday that the voluminous decision is still being reviewed. "The decision requires a great deal of thought and analysis," DeMarco said, adding that "everybody wants the museum to be built." The proposed museum got its start in the mid-1990s with several large donations and pledges. In 2000, the Armenian Assembly bought the former National Bank of Washington building for \$7.25 million. The Cafesjian Family Foundation provided a \$2.5 million grant, and additional help with a loan. Cafesjian also began buying property near the bank, suggesting he might build an art museum. Instead, he donated these properties as well to the Armenian Assembly.

January 21, 2011

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

IRAN TO BOOST EXPORTS OF ENERGY TO ARMENIA VIA NEW PIPELINE



Iran and Armenia plan to construct a new oil pipeline to increase energy supply to the Caucasian state, Iranian Oil Minister Massoud Mir-Kazsemi announced. Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting with visiting Armenian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Armen Movsisian here in Tehran on Saturday evening, Mir-Kazsemi said that the pipeline will begin from Iran's Northwestern city of Tabriz and stretch toward the Armenian border. The minister added that the pipeline can help Armenia meet parts of its needs for oil products from the Islamic Republic. He added that the two sides will finalize the volume and the value of the exports of oil products during a meeting in the near future. Iran and Armenia have expanded cooperation in power and gas swap in recent years. Iran mainly exports natural gas to Armenia and imports power supplies from the Caucasian state through two transfer lines with a total power transfer capacity of 220kw/ph at present. In October, the two sides agreed to form a joint working group to explore way of expanding their mutual cooperation in grounds of water and renewable energy resources. The agreement was made in a meeting between Iranian Minister of Energy Majid Namjou and Movsisian here in Tehran.

January 30, 2011 www.englishfarsnews.com

Iran's caretaker Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi met with Armenian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Armen Movsisian, Salehi stressed the importance of transit and said, "If regional countries are connected by railway, we can have a vast railway network, and our priority is neighboring countries." "Iran and Armenia do not have any political problems and this provides good grounds for expanding ties in different fields," Movsisian said, calling for the strengthening of relations between the private sectors of the two countries.

January 29, 2011 [full story www.presstv.ir](http://www.presstv.ir)

ARMENIAN AMERICAN POETRY NEWLY TRANSLATED FOR ARMENIA ANTHOLOGY



Last year saw the publication of the Armenian-language book *Armenian American Poets Writing in English* translated, compiled and prepared for publication by David Gasparyan and Armenouhi Ghalachyan of Armenia. The subject matter is partly taken from David Kherdian's anthology *Forgotten Bread, First-Generation Armenian American Writers*, from Aram Saroyan's *Complete Minimal Poems* and also Internet sources. This book and others like it show the result of Armenia's new policy to explore literature written by Armenians in diaspora in the languages of countries in which they live. Hranush Hakobyan has been Minister of Diasporan Affairs since 2008 and works in the direction of welcoming books from the many countries settled throughout the difficult times of Armenian life. The translators provide an introduction with general background information on the migration of Armenians to the diaspora throughout their history and mentions the names of some outstanding poets in countries such as Romania and Russia as well as America. The first few Armenian-American poets and writers in America, such as Emmanuel Varandyan and Leon Surmelian, whose fame developed with their prose works, are characterized. The rest of the book describes the first generation of Armenian-American poets, most of them born in America with biographies and pictures along with some of their work. William Saroyan leads the list with a biography and a number of photographs and poems, though he attained fame with his

prose work. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the play *The Time of Your Life*. He rejected the prize. Leon Srabian Herald, born in historic Armenia, provides a number of poems for this collection, many of them reminiscent of his old country village and his nostalgia for it as he lived and wrote in America. Khachig (Archie) Minasian, William Saroyan's cousin, lived near his cousin in Fresno. His short poems show momentary life impressions. David Kherdian, born in Racine, Wisconsin, often writes poems about his childhood in that city and about his father. His prose work and his anthologies have also drawn much praise. Diana Der Hovanesian, born in Worcester, Massachusetts, has accomplished much with her translations of Armenian poetry into English and her many books of poetry. A few of her poems appear in this book. Harold Bond, who lived in Melrose, Massachusetts, taught poetry workshops at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education and published a few volumes of poetry. They are well represented in this book. Helene Pilibosian, born in Boston, Massachusetts, has explored her Armenian identity in several books of poems, some of which are presented in this anthology. In addition, Grady Harp's review of *Histories Twists: The Armenians* appears translated into Armenian. The title of Kherdian's book *Forgotten Bread* was taken from a line in one of her poems. Aram Saroyan, the son of William Saroyan, is very well represented in this book by many pages dedicated to his work from his *Complete Minimal Poems*. A poet and playwright, his work has drawn praise and awards for its inventiveness and originality of expression. The Armenian anthology has been privately printed in Armenia. *January 29, 2011 Lousapatz N 870,*

ONE LAPTOP PER CHILD IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH



The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic will provide one laptop per child as part of a new private-public effort to promote education in information technology. As part of a deal signed Thursday between Karabakh Prime Minister Ara Harutyunyan and Argentinian Armenian businessman Eduardo Eurnekian, every elementary school student in Karabakh will receive one laptop computer loaded with educational software. The One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) program, developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston (MIT), will furnish Karabakh's elementary schools with laptop computers and connect them to the Internet through wireless networks to be installed in their facilities. Karabakh's government welcomed the initiative, spearheaded by Eurnekian, and pledged to make telecommunications interconnection available in all schools to enhance the educational impact of the OLPC program. To realize the project, Eurnekian asked the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) to assist in the implementation by undertaking the responsibility of providing the necessary on-the-ground support to ensure its success. "The world community sees Nagorno Karabagh within the context of war and regional conflict. People fail to take note of the children who are born and live there," said Eurnekian, whose company manages Armenia's national postal service, Haypost, and the Zvartnots airport in Yerevan. "These children are entitled to the universal right of education and access to information." "Through OLPC, I intend to bridge the gap and give the children of Karabakh the opportunity to receive the best education the world has to offer" Eurnekian said. "The education of [Karabakh's] school age children is a priority for the Government and a significant part of the State's resources is directed towards building and renovating schools," Prime Minister Harutyunyan said.

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