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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

February 8-14, 2011

THEMA



PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN RECEIVED THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF UKRAINE KONSTANTIN GRISHCHENKO

President Serzh Sargsyan received today the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Konstantin Grishchenko who has arrived to Armenia on official visit. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presented to Serzh Sargsyan the results of the meeting with his Armenian counterpart and negotiations aimed at the development of bilateral cooperation in different areas. He assessed them as comprehensive and efficient. "We hope that the Armenian-Ukrainian dialogue will intensify at all levels, starting from the highest. We have reached agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia to meet often since it is necessary to understand how the situation in our two regions

evolves. In our global world everything is interconnected, and we need to consult over the most commanding issues," Konstantin Grishchenko said. The parties noted that positive developments in the bilateral political relations registered last year brought also developments in the economic, cultural and some other areas, as well as in the cooperation of the two states in the framework of international organizations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine conveyed to President Serzh Sargsyan greetings from the President of Ukraine and said that Victor Yanukovich recalls warmly his last year meetings with the President of Armenia and is looking forward to President Sargsyan's visit to Ukraine. [February 11, 2011 www.president.am](http://www.president.am)

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"THE GOVERNMENT
WILL TAKE EVERY
EFFORT TO DECREASE
INFLATIONARY RISKS
IN ARMENIA"

VACHE GABRIELYAN
MINISTER OF FINANCE OF RA

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 16: Working visit of
PM of Georgia to Armenia

FEBRUARY 25-28: "Bridge 2011"
" economic forum to be hosted in
Tsaghkadzor

USEFUL LINKS

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

IN CASE OF MULFUNCTIONING THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE COMPELLED FINES AND PENALTIES

A cabinet sitting was held, chaired by Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan. The government approved the procedure to follow in paying fines and penalties for delays in the refund of overpayments and/



or other amounts. A first-ever estimate of penalties due for the period up to January 1, 2011 will be out by May, 1, 2011. Stating that the government is thereby going to apply stricter sanctions for VAT refund arrears, Ti-

gran Sargsyan noted that no incidences of VAT refund delays or non-payments have been recorded over the last two years and added that they will be ruled out ahead. The Executive passed the rules to be complied with in conducting procurement transactions specifying that cross-country procurements inferior to AMD 50mn will be made according to the procedure prescribed by the head of the ordering organization,

with the ones exceeding the stated amount having to be made under the government-backed procedure. This was said to be a transitional measure necessitated by the fact that PIUs are currently being integrated with the ministries. The government amended a previous decree to bring the medical services provided in Armenia into conformity with international standards as much as possible. This is supposed to provide better conditions for the early warning, effective prevention and care of various diseases, as well as for the delivery of specialized health services to the population. The government authorized Armenian NPP CJSC to use the NPP-owned apartment house in Medzamor town of Armavir marz as a means of payment for the purchase of State-owned shares with its subsequent handover to the local community on condition that the latter should donate the building to NPP staff as accommodation for 50 employees. Whereas the population of wolves has seen a sharp growth in Armenia recently, the government passed an order to keep it under control and implement corresponding actions. For each killed wolf hunters will henceforth get a bonus of AMD100 thousand from the proceeds of the AMD 10000.0 thousand worth of allocation available to the Ministry of Nature Protection. A similar measure was said to have been applied in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic leading to a sharp decrease in the number of wolves over a short span of time. In a bid to ease the cross-country traffic of goods, vehicles and passengers, the cabinet backed the proposal on the signing of a government-to-government arrangement between Armenia and Georgia on the joint use of Bagratashen-Sadakhlo, Airum-Sadakhlo, Gogavan-Guguti and Bavra-Ninotsminda inland checkpoints.

February 10, 2011 full story www.gov.am

THE NEGOTIATION FORMAT STILL KEPT THE SAME



Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan are the most unstable countries of the post-Soviet region. Any unstable situation in Armenia can impact on both the internal and foreign policy, Alexander Margarov, political scientist, head of the Institute of CIS States said yesterday at a meeting with journalists stressing that according to many international experts, Azerbai-

jan and Kyrgyzstan are the most unstable countries of the post-Soviet region. According to A. Margarov, the regional visit of the OSCE Minsk group co-chairs is positive, as it proved once again that the talks will go on with that formats. The fact the parties tend to keep the negotiation format and partake in the process of talks is positive as well and it will bring to some positive results. In his words the subject for negotiations is certain, and the sides are not making arrangements for military operations at least at present moment. "Actually, the negative side is that we do not have a document, drafted by mutual consent of the parties," he said noting that it is necessary to draft a basic document, in which the points and principles, about which the parties have reached an agreement, will be involved.

February 14, 2011 www.hypress.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **FEBRUARY 8:** *Armenian basilica dated 5th or 6th century discovered on Mount Ararat*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 9:** *Bako Sahakyan names tobacco production in Artsakh successful initiative*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 10:** *Lithuanian parliamentarians to adopt resolution on Karabakh conflict*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 11:** *Armenian GMs successful at Aeroflot Open*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 12:** *Whom is Aliyev trying to deceive when saying he seeks peaceful resolution to Karabakh conflict?*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 13:** *Iran to export 1.5mln liters of gasoline, diesel oil to Armenia on daily basis*
- **AH**
- **FEBRUARY 14:** *Armenian wrestlers win three medals at Istanbul-hosted Grand Prix*

ANOTHER TWO MANUSCRIPTS DONATED TO MATENADARAN



"All our cultural values should finally return to the Motherland," said Avo Hovhannisyan from Nor Jugha, who gifted two manuscripts to Matenadaran today. Avo Hovhannisyan has received a number of letters of thanks from different organizations for his donations. In 1981 he was awarded a "Mesrop Mashrots" medal for contributing to the enrichment of the Metenadaran Fund. In 2001 he was elected honorable member of "Matenadaran's Friends" Charity Organization. On the occasion of Avo Hovhannisyan's 70th birthday, Matenadaran's Director Hrachya Tamrazyan awarded him with a medal of Matenadaran and presented him the copy of Grigor Narekatsi's "Book of Lamentations" dated 1173.

February 10 2011, www.armradio.am

VACHE GABRIELYAN: ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROMOTE IMPORT OF CHEAP PRODUCTS



Armenian government does not promote the import of cheap products, Armenian Minister of Finance said, commenting on inflationary policy of the government. As Vache Gabrielyan stated at parliamentary sitting, “the government never mentioned the need to stimulate cheap production import. Rather, steps on curbing the growth of prices for existing goods were indicated.” “The government will take every effort to decrease inflationary risks in Armenia,” Gabrielyan noted in conclusion.

February 9, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

FOREIGN MINISTER: ICG EXPERT ASSESSMENTS NOT ALWAYS TRUE TO FACT

Expert assessments of the International Crisis Group are not always true to fact, Armenian Foreign Minister said.

“I have read the ICG latest report on Nagorno Karabakh, presented as an expert view. But it should not be forgotten that experts can have different opinions,” Edward Nalbandian told a news conference in Yerevan.

“Prior to making assessments, the experts should think whether their opinion can pour oil on the flames,” he emphasized. “It’s the OSCE Minsk Group dealing with the conflict. The Co-chairs are aware not only of the history of the conflict but also of the current stage of talks.”

February 11, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

AZERI BLOCKADE COSTS KARABAKH A LOT

According to Artsakh Republic statistics, 13% economic growth was reported in NKR in 2009, NKR Permanent Representative to Germany stated.

As Harutyun Grigoryan stated in an interview with Eurasisches Magazin, economic difficulties Artsakh is facing are caused by Azerbaijan’s blockade, as well as non-recognition of Karabakh, preventing attraction of foreign investments.

The Permanent Representative characterized tourism as one of the main sectors in country’s economy

February 11, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

ROBERT SAHAKYANTS PRODUCTION PLANS TO CREATE 3D ANIMATED FILM ABOUT COUNT DRACULA



“Currently, we have got the script by Robert and Hayk Sahakyants,” filmmaker David Sahakyants told a Pan-ARMENIAN.Net reporter.

According to him, the authors prepared two options of the scripts.

“It will depend on the market that we would like to access. We have got one script for the Armenian market and another – for the international market,” he said.

“We are looking for sponsors to implement the project, but have not succeeded in it yet,” said Sahakyants.

He noted that it is difficult to implement such a project in a 3D graphics, that’s why it is being delayed.

February 14, 2011, www.panarmenian.net

Robert Sahakyants Production studio plans to create a 3D animated film about famous Count Dracula.

ARMENIA INTENDS TO IMPROVE DOING BUSINESS RANKING BY 5 POINTS IN 2011



Armenian Minister of Economy Tigran Davtyan said the country intends to improve its position in Doing Business ranking by 5 points during the current year. “This is a minimum level, but we’ll try to do more,” the Minister noted. “Last year, Armenia took action to improve business environment in the country. However, we were outrun by other regional states. We’ll improve Armenia’s Doing Business ranking by acting more intensively,” Davtyan stressed. In the past year, governments in 117 economies carried out 216 regulatory reforms aimed at making it easier to start and operate a business, strengthening transparency and property rights, and improving the efficiency of commercial dispute resolution and bankruptcy procedures. This is a finding of Doing Business 2011: Making a Difference for Entrepreneurs, the eighth in a series of annual reports published by IFC and the World Bank. The report ranks 183 economies on key aspects of business regulation for domestic firms. Armenia dropped 4 points in current ranking, with the country appearing in 48th position. Armenian Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan believes that the country’s economic growth will exceed 4,6% in 2011. “4,6% is a realistic figure. It’s the minimum we should achieve if there is no force majeure,” he told journalists on February 12. The national budget envisages 4,6% economic growth and 4^q1,5% inflation. Creation of two free trade zones in Armenia will start in 2011. “The government has already approved a relevant legislative initiative, which is submitted to the parliament,” Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan said. According to him, the zones will be located in Mars plant and Zvartnots Airport. “Works will kick off in summer or autumn. Besides, the technopark in Gyumri may host free IT trade zone. Investments will be private while the government will create favorable conditions.” The initiative supposes increase in job opportunities and export-bound high-quality production.

February 12 2011, www.panarmenian.net

OSCE MINSK GROUP TO RESUME TALKS ON NAGORNY KARABAKH

Co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group will arrive in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, on Thursday to resume talks on the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry reported. The Minsk Group, comprising Russia, France and the United States, mediates the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over breakaway Nagorny Karabakh. Russia's Igor Popov, the United States' Robert Bradtke and France's Bernard Fassier will meet with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mamedyarov, the Azerbaijani ministry said. The issue of Nagorny Karabakh, a breakaway region on Azerbaijani territory with a predominantly eth-

nic Armenian population, has been a sticking point in relations between the two former Soviet states. Ways to peacefully settle the conflict were last discussed January 24 at a meeting of the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian foreign ministers in Moscow. The conflict first erupted in 1988, when the region claimed independence from Azerbaijan to join Armenia. More than 30,000 people are estimated to have died on both sides between 1988 and 1994. Nagorny Karabakh has remained in Armenian control since then. The Caucasus neighbors continue to accuse each other of violating the ceasefire agreed in 1994.

February 11, 2011 www.en.rian.ru

IRAN TO SUPPLY ARMENIA WITH GASOLINE, DIESEL OIL

Based on the agreement, Iran will export 750,000 liters of gasoline and 750,000 liters of diesel oil to Yerevan on daily basis," Iranian Deputy Oil Minister and Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) Alireza Zeiqami stated. Late in January, Iranian Oil Minister Massoud Mir-Kazzemi announced that Iran and Armenia plan to construct a new oil pipeline to increase energy supply to the Caucasian state. Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting with visiting Armenian Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Armen Movsisian here in Tehran, Mir-Kazzemi 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. By 2014, the 365 kilometer, 8 inch pipeline will transfer oil products from Tabriz to Yerevan. Iran and Armenia have also 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.

February 13, 2010,
www.english.farsnews.com

IRAN TO TIGHTEN BORDER SECURITY

Iran's interior minister says the government has devised a new comprehensive plan for enhancing control and security along the country's borders. Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar told IRNA late on Sunday that the new plan has been implemented along the eastern and northwestern borders of the country, and will be put in practice along the entire borders of the Islamic Republic in the near future. The official noted that the ninth government has increased the credits allocated to border security 17-fold compared with those of the previous administrations. He added that the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic and the provincial governors' offices are executing the plan throughout the country. Earlier in January, Mohammad-Najjar went to Muscat for a two-day visit to hold talks with senior Omani officials on ways to tighten security and improve bilateral cooperation. In addition, Iran and Iraq signed a memorandum of understanding on improving border cooperation in October to step up the campaign against terrorism and prevent illegal border crossings. Iran has 5,440 kilometers of total land borders. The country shares its northern borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan which extend for more than 2,000 kilometers, including about 650 kilometers of water along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. Iran's western borders are with Turkey in the north and Iraq in the south, and to the east with Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman littoral states form the country's 1,770 kilometers of southern border.

February 14, 2011, www.presstv.ir

ARMENIA AND GEORGIA TO USE JOINT CUSTOMS POSTS



Armenia and Georgia are going to sign an agreement on the joint use of several land customs posts. The agreement refers to the posts of Bagratashen-Sadakhlo, Ayrum-Sadakhlo, Gogavan-Guguti and Bavra-Ninotsminda, Armenia Today reports. Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan believes that this agreement is very important for both countries. The agreement should be signed during the visit of Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri to Yerevan on February, 15.

www.vestnikkavkaza.net

MORALE AND COMBAT READINESS IN ARMENIA'S ARMY HIGHER THAN IN AZERBAIJAN'S

One of the most interesting parts of the recent International Crisis Group report, was its speculation about what would happen in a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh, according to a publication in EurasiaNet. "It concluded that, while Azerbaijan has an obvious advantage in military spending, a variety of other factors could give Armenia an edge. A premeditated resumption of hostilities by Armenian forces is not likely, but cannot be ruled out, as Yerevan commentators and some military officials, notably in Nagorno Karabakh, warn of a "preventive war" if the entity comes under imminent threat," the article says. "Morale and combat readiness in Armenia's army is also generally considered to be higher than in Azerbaijan's, which suffers from past defeats, extensive corruption and a rigid chain of command. Armenian analysts point to the greater number of Azerbaijani casualties in most front-line skirmishes. Suicides and hazing in the Azerbaijani forces are also regularly reported. However, a recent spate of fatal hazing and other non-combat-related deaths, particularly in units in Nagorno Karabakh, signal that Armenian superiority in morale may be exaggerated. If war started, Azerbaijan civilians would be the more vulnerable, as cities, towns and new IDP settlements are close to the Nagorno Karabakh line of contact. Major Karabakh Armenian settlements are deeper within territory the entity controls, and its troops are mostly deployed in sparsely populated zones," it says.

February 14, 2011 www.eurasianet.org

TURKISH COURT REJECTS ARMENIANS' REQUEST TO ELECT PATRIARCH



Turkey's Council of State rejected an appeal of the "We want to elect our own patriarch" initiative group. The high court said the issue fell outside of its jurisdiction, Hurriyet Daily News & Economic Review reported. An initiating committee consisting of lay representatives of the Armenian community is at odds with the patriarchate over who should succeed the gravely ill Patriarch Mesrop II as spiritual leader of the community. The lay members have been seeking to annul the Istanbul Governor's Office's decision to name

Archbishop Aram Ateshian as "deputy patriarch" and give him administrative authority over the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul. The move, which was also supported by the Interior Ministry, has effectively split into two on the issue. Last December the initiative group calling itself "We want to elect our own patriarch" organized a press conference, saying they want to elect a religious leader who will represent Armenian community. Istanbul Armenians collected 5,359 signatures to oppose Turkish Government's decision to appoint a patriarch vicar. Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Mersrob Mutafyan is permanently ill suffering from frontal dementia. He was elected patriarch for life in 1998 by the Armenian community. One group within the Armenian community considers they should elect a new patriarch, whereas another group, objects to this, saying it is against traditions to elect a new patriarch while the elected one is still alive.

February 10 2011, www.massispost.com

AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY CAPTURES DYING ART IN ARMENIADREN TO ARMENIAN SCHOOLS - ECRI



Growing up in Soviet Armenia, one of the highlights of director Inna Sahakyan's childhood was watching tightrope dancing performances that would take place in her grandparents' village. She vividly remembers the vibrant colors of the costumes, the agile movements of the dancers, and the festive music enlivening the crowds. "These spectacles were filled with constant movement and dazzling colors. Musicians played traditional instruments, clowns mingled with the spectators providing doses of comedy to ease up the tension and suspense, and the tightrope dancers—suspended in mid-air—performed their incredible feats," said Sahakyan. While tightrope dancing was once a re-

vered and respected art form in Armenia, it has struggled to maintain its existence in more recent years. Three decades ago, there were 20 families involved in tightrope dancing who would perform in the capital city of Yerevan and in villages along Armenia's countryside. When Sahakyan began her research four years ago, there were only two individuals left. "After gaining our independence, we have lost not only the ideology behind the red flags and the parades, but the legends of the tightrope dancers as well," she said. Realizing the quick demise of this unique art form, Sahakyan, 33, and Arman Yeritsyan, 35, both of BARS Media in Armenia, teamed up to direct what would become their most recent documentary, "The Last Tightrope Dancer in Armenia," an international co-production with NHK, ITVS, YLE, SVT, and TVP. The film has won numerous awards since its release, including top prizes at the Russia Documentary Film Festival and the Golden Apricot International Film Festival.

February 9, 2011

www.armenianweekly.com

FRESNO TV STATION TO BROADCAST 10 NEWS REPORTS FROM ARMENIA



Central California's KSEE TV 24 will broadcast an exclusive travel series about Armenia starting Monday, February 21. The travel series was taped in December when KSEE veteran anchorwoman Stefani Booroojian was invited to her ancestral homeland by the Armenian Tourism Development Agency. The National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia (NCFA), its Tourism Development Agency, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized and funded the press tours to increase awareness about Armenia as a tourism destination. Groups of journalists from the Russian Federation, Great Britain, Italy, and France, as well as six media representatives from the United States, were invited to Armenia. Asbarez's Romina DerBedrossian was part of the group and has been sharing her photo essays in this newspaper and on our website. KSEE's travel series is titled Stefani's Armenia and it will feature Armenian city and village life, resort towns, historic and ancient cathedrals, as well as Armenian cuisine and wine tourism. The series also features Americans, including Fresno natives, who have repatriated to Armenia and living in its capital city. The series also includes non-tourism stories about the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, repatriation, the Genocide, and the Armenian cuisine. Stefani's Armenia will air Monday through Friday (February 21-25) at 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. The stories will also air on KSEE Sunrise at 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. Those living outside the KSEE broadcast area may watch the segments online at www.ksee24.com

February 11, 2011 www.asbarez.com

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