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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

February 22-28, 2011

THEMA



**RUSSIA-ARMENIA PRESIDENTIAL MEETINGS
PROMOTE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

On February 25, St. Petersburg hosted a meeting of Russian and Armenian Presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Serzh Sargsyan. The leaders of the two countries refused to make a statement before the start of negotiations. "It's actions, not words, that matter," Medvedev said. The meeting continued behind closed doors, probably, focusing on bilateral relations and current international issues, Russian media reports. Armenian and Russian Presidents mixed their places during a ceremonial photo session in Saint Petersburg. Journalists noted that Serzh Sargsyan stood at the Russian flag, while Dmitry Medvedev was at the Armenian one. Replying to journalists' remarks, Medvedev said jokingly that this is the "evidence of strategic relations" between the two countries. During a meeting in Saint Petersburg, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and his Russian counterpart Dmitry

Medvedev said they praise the two countries' cooperation based on strategic partnership. The Presidents discussed collaboration of the two countries in various fields, referring also to regional and international problems, the RA presidential press service reported. Regular meetings of Russian and Armenian Presidents promote the development of partnership between the two countries, according to the head of the Administration of the President of Russia. "Frequency of meetings and in-depth discussion of urgent issues increase our focus on active work," Sergei Naryshkin said. 10 Medvedev-Sargsyan meetings have been organized over the year of 2010, ITAR-TASS reported. The oncoming meeting will take place on the threshold of direct Sargsyan-Aliyev talks on Karabakh conflict settlement due March 5 in Sochi. On February 25, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan arrived in St. Petersburg on a working visit. **February 25, 2011 www.panarmenian.net**

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"FORUMS, LIKE BRIDGE" ECONOMIC FORUM, BRING TOGETHER INTELLECTUALS WHO TRY TO ANTICIPATE AND DEFY CHALLENGES IN THE MODERN WORLD."

TIGRAN SARGSYAN
PRIME MINISTER OF RA

Upcoming Events

MARCH 5: President Serzh Sargsyan will meet with Ilham Aliyev in Sochi

MARCH 8: International Women's Day to be marked in Armenia

USEFUL LINKS

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

PRESIDENT SARGSYAN RECEIVED THE EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS PETER SEMNEBY



President Serzh Sargsyan received today the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby who has arrived to Armenia to bid farewell. President Sargsyan praised Semneby's input to the strengthening of the relations between Armenia and European Union. "I believe our relations and political dialogue with the EU started to strengthen

thanks also to your efforts, the moment you assumed the post of the EU Representative for the South Caucasus," said the President of Armenia. Peter Semneby thanked President Sargsyan for appreciating his work and noted that during five years of his tenure he held numerous productive meetings with Serzh Sargsyan. From the viewpoint of the works accomplished by him in this period, Peter Semneby stressed primarily the importance of the decision to start in May 2009 negotiations with the three South Caucasus states over the Association agreement, which according to the EU Special Representative, is a future-defining document for Armenia which has chosen the road of Eurointegration.

February 24, 2011 www.hhpress.am

SOCIALLY-ORIENTED DECISIONS PREVAIL

A cabinet sitting was held today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan. The cabinet backed the procedure to follow in extending treasury loans to citizens for customs clearance purposes for such means of transportation imported under the temporary import regime. To this end, the Ministry of Finance was allocated AMD 300mn to be supplemented if necessary. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan advised to have received



calculating and paying out such benefits. The Prime Minister reminded that the government had promised to look into the matter once again with the stakeholders, and that the problem would be settled definitively under the new bill. The Ministry of Agriculture was allocated AMD 538295.4 thousand to be transferred to Seed Agency SNCO for the procurement of elite spring hybrid barley-corn seeds of first reproduction from abroad. The cabinet next approved a corn production development program which implies import of 63 tons of high-grade corn seeds from abroad for transfer to specialized entities in Armenia. Either the above two decisions were described as socially-oriented by Tigran Sargsyan considering that at this point of time there are some 18,000 program beneficiaries nationwide. The government invalidated a previous decree to call off the mandatory overhaul requirement for agricultural machinery. According to Tigran Sargsyan, either this decision will be viewed favorably in the countryside because the farmers will no longer have to spend extra time and money on overhaul purposes. The government decided to recognize as bad and write off such outstanding amounts in irrigation fees as have been accumulated with the water users over time. An order has been established to that effect. In the words of the Prime Minister, this is a strong support for our water users and may address a serious welfare problem. However, the decision will not affect the running arrears. The government decided to set up a spiritual-cultural public TV company closed joint stock company with 100,000 dram statutory capital corresponding to 100 ordinary shares of AMD 1000 nominal value. The Public TV and Radio Company Board will be entrusted with the management of the public stake.

February 24, 2011 full story www.gov.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- FEBRUARY 22: Armenian Ambassador to Lebanon meets with representatives of Armenian parties AH
- FEBRUARY 23: Fortune Oil to invest \$500mln in Armenia's mining industry AH
- FEBRUARY 24: Sergei Mikaelyan makes it to World Ski Championship finals AH
- FEBRUARY 25: Rally to commemorate Sumgait massacre to be held at Azerbaijani embassy in Athens AH
- FEBRUARY 26: PanARMENIAN Photo exhibit opens in Yerevan AH
- FEBRUARY 28: Case on Sumgait massacre resumed in Baku AH
- FEBRUARY 28: Azerbaijan uses large-caliber weapons to fire upon Karabakh positions AH

CEASEFIRE VIOLATED ABOUT 170 TIMES OVER THE WEEK



About 170 cases of ceasefire violation were registered at the line of contact between the armed forces of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan on February 21-26. According to the Information and Propaganda Department of the NKR Ministry of Defense, the rival shot more than 1,400 times in the direction of the Armenian positions from weapons of different calibers. The front troops of the Defense Army took appropriate measures to pressure the activeness of the enemy.

February 28, 2011 www.armradio.am

ARMENIAN ECONOMY MINISTER FORECASTS SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN EXPORT VOLUME IN 2011



Armenian Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan forecasts significant increase in export volume and economy stabilization in 2011. As the Minister stated at Tsaghkadzor-hosed economic forum, January 2011 results, as well as positive expectations of foreign investors and Armenian entrepreneurs testify to the fact. "Currently, the Ministry is cooperating with local entrepreneurs in about 50 projects. Should even the 2/3 of them be launched within a year, we won't be waiting long for positive changes," he said.

February 26, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

WEATHER CONDITIONS IN 2011 FAVORABLE FOR ARMENIA'S AGRICULTURE

Chairman of the Agrarian Peasant Union of Armenia (APUA) Hrachya Berberyan said that weather conditions in 2011 are favorable for Armenia's agriculture compared to last year, when 14.5% drop was recorded in the field.

Prices for fruits should be lower this year, depending on other factors as well, Berberyan told a PanARMENIAN.Net reporter.

Berberyan noted that prices for tomato will be twice cheaper in 2011 in Armenia compared to 2010, as tomato seeds for 500ha were distributed by APUA among farmers.

According to him, prices for cucumber



will also decrease in 2011, due to the same reason.

February 25, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

BAKU.AM WEBSITE ON BAKU'S ARMENIAN COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESENTED IN YEREVAN

Armenian Genocide Museum hosted www.baku.am website presentation on February 23.

As Museum director Hayk Demoyan stated at the presentation, the trilingual website covers the social, political, cultural and business life of the Armenian community in Baku.

"The website aims at providing Azerbaijan's youth with alternative information on the history of Baku, where anti-Armenian agitation forbids mention of the role of Armenians in the history of Azerbaijan," he stressed.

In no way does the website mean to promote interethnic hatred, being the reflection of true facts proved by verified foreign sources, Demoyan said. Separate section is dedicated to photographs and documents covering the Armenian massacres of 1905, 1918 and 1990 in Baku.

Creation of the website is a special tribute of respect to the memory of Armenians in Baku who fell victim to state orchestrated policy of intolerance and xenophobia provoked against Armenians in Azerbaijan.

February 23, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIAN PM SUGGEST TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY



Armenia's Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan hailed the idea of creating 'Armenian Davos'. Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the 8th international Bridge 2011 economic forum in Tsaghkadzor, the PM said that the forum focuses on ideas which can receive future development. "It's important, as the participants can share their experience and vision of measures to be taken to overcome the global economic recession," he said, adding that the goal of the event is not only attraction of investments and organization of discussions. Justifying its name – 'Armenian Davos', the 8th international Bridge 2011 economic forum serves as a place for meeting and open dialogue of politicians, authorities' representatives, industrialists and entrepreneurs, scientists and public activists from Armenia and foreign countries. The participants discuss possible scenarios of Armenia's economic development and elaboration of a united economic strategy for development. This year the forum focuses on Macroeconomic Stability in Post-crisis World. The event is organized through the official support of the RA Ministry of Economy and Foreign Ministry. The global crisis is not only economic, it's also a crisis of transformation of the old society into a new one, according to Armenian Prime Minister. In his opening remarks at the 8th international Bridge 2011 economic forum in Tsaghkadzor, Tigran Sargsyan said, "We can't state that the economic crisis has been overcome, what is proved by various international experts." He informed that the government examines the experience of other countries to draw up a program for the next 10-15 years. "I would like to witness knowledge-based economy in Armenia. To this end, the government should promptly react to all what's happening around and develop a new scheme to keep in contact with the public," the PM said. For his part, chairman of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia Arsen Ghazaryan said that this year's forum hosts more guests, including delegations from Poland, Ukraine, Russia and Austria. "We have to understand how economy should in the post-crisis period," he said.

February 12 2011, www.panarmenian.net

OSCE SUPPORTS PUBLICATIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN ARMENIA

OSCE-supported publications to promote civil society development in Armenia, titled Armenian Civil Society: from Transition to Consolidation, were launched in Yerevan on February 22. "An analytical country report and a policy brief were prepared by non-governmental organization Counterpart International with support from the OSCE Office in Yerevan and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The publications were produced as part of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index project to analyze the socio-political and cultural environment of civil society development, ways of self-governance, mechanisms of interaction and the impact non-governmental sector has on

citizens' lives in Armenia," OSCE said. The publications provide a comprehensive assessment of the main dimensions, key actors, strengths and weaknesses of civil society, and offer ways to strengthen it further. The survey looks at the environment civil society organizations operate in, the extent and diversity of their engagement, internal structures, resources, communication and networks between various civil society actors, and their impact. "Civil society has an increased role in democratic governance and development," said Ambassador Sergey Kapinos, the Head of the OSCE Office in Yerevan.

February 23, 2011 www.finchannel.com

FORTUNE OIL TO INVEST \$500 MLN IN ARMENIA'S MINING

China-focused Fortune Oil (FOOIL: Quote) plans to invest \$500 million in Armenia's iron mining industry, the Armenian prime minister's press service said in a statement. The statement was released on Wednesday after a meeting between Armenia's prime minister and the company's executive vice-president. There were no other details in the statement. The company, which manages operations in oil and gas supply and infrastructure projects in China, reported in January 2011 that it had acquired a 35 percent stake in Armenian iron ore miner Bounty Resources Armenia, which controls three iron mines, for \$24 million. It plans to increase its stake to 50 percent, paying an additional \$16 million. The three iron ore mines are located in the Armenian towns of Hrazdan and Abovyan and the village of Svarants. The mine is Hrazdan, which is planned to be developed first, contains high quality iron ore with 40 percent iron concentration. It's estimated to contain 77 million tonnes of iron ore and is expected to be developed over 15 years, starting production from 2014. The mine in Abovyan is estimated to contain 255 million tonnes of iron ore, while Svarants mine is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes. (Reporting by Hasmik Mkrtchyan; writing by Margarita Antidze in Tbilisi; Editing by Will Waterman)

February 23, 2010,
www.af.reuters.com

ENVOY SAYS U.S. SEEKS SOLUTION OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH DISPUTE

A senior U.S. State Department official said Thursday that the United States is interested in the rapid settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. "We hope for certain progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," said James B. Steinberg, first deputy secretary of state, "We think that both countries are interested in promoting this issue. Steinberg said he plans to learn the opinion of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on how the process can be moved forward by common efforts, according to reports after the envoy's arrival in Baku, Azerbaijan. Steinberg already has been in Yerevan, capital of Armenia, the other side of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He said it was important to maintain a diplomatic solution to the conflict as it is in the interests of all countries in the region. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh region began in 1988. Though a ceasefire was signed by the two countries in 1994, the issue hasn't been settled, despite the mediation by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States.

February 25, 2011,
www.english.peopledaily.com.cn

NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT CAN BE RESOLVED BY REFERENDUM



The issue of border demarcation among countries separated from the Soviet Union has created many problems. In fact, Central Asia and the Caucasus are encountering regional predicaments to this end. One good case in point is the dispute between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. In the past few years, border and ethnic conflicts have emerged quite seriously in the Caucasus. Today, the rift between Azerbaijan and Armenia stems from such border and ethnic disputes and has made the two neighbors hostile to each other. At present the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is important for both countries. Armenia's Ambassador in Tehran Grigor Arakelian said in an interview with Iran Daily that the conflict is a crucial consideration for his country and expressed hope that it would be settled through peaceful methods and holding negotiations. He also said Iran, as a regional power can play an influential role in resolving the conflict. "We want the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to determine their own fate through holding a referendum at the presence of international observers," he noted. What follows is the full text of the interview. Iran Daily: What is Armenia's viewpoint regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to what extent is this issue important for your country? Arakelian: This issue is always discussed in Armenian conferences and circles and has attracted a great deal of attention. Nagorno-Karabakh is a very important issue for the Armenian nation, be it inside Armenia or outside the country. We hope that the problem will go away through peaceful means and holding talks. How do you assess Iran's role in resolving the dispute as a regional power? Iran has perpetually played a positive role in relation to this conflict. As a regional power, Iran can have a significant impact on settling this problem. At the beginning, Iran acted as a good mediator in this respect although this mediatory role only lasted for a short period of time.

February 22, 2010 www.iran-daily.com

12TH ANNUAL ARMENIAN FILM FESTIVAL AT FRESNO STATE



The Armenian Students Organization and Armenian Studies Program of California State University, Fresno are co-sponsoring the 12th Annual Armenian Film Festival, from 7:00-10:00 PM on Friday, March 4, 2011. The Film Festival will take place in the Industrial Technology Building, Room 101 (at the southwest corner of Barstow Ave and Campus Drive) on the Fresno State campus. One of the featured films for the Festival is Akhtamar. The film is about a mysterious taxi driver who is hailed by a handsome young Muscovite, who has traveled to Armenian to meet his girlfriend. The driver senses his fare's troubled state of mind and recounts the Legend of Akhtamar,

offering the ancient wisdom of its heart-felt message. The film stars Armen Dzigarkhanyan and is written and directed by the Shammasian Brothers of London. Director Serge Avedikian's Chienne d'Histoire [Barking Island] is a winner of the Best Short Film award at the Cannes Film Festival. The short movie, highlights an event from the history of Constantinople in 1910, where the newly established Turkish government decides to deport stray dogs to a deserted island away from the city. Fifth Column is directed by Vatche Boulgourdjian. The film chronicles desperation and mourning in the Armenian quarter of Beirut through a weave of allegorical narratives. In a panic, Hrag has stolen his father's gun and fled home. As father searches for son, both discover paths to personal freedom in a city that offers no escape. The films, in English or Armenian, are all directed and produced by a new generation of Armenian film-makers. This program is supported, in part, by the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

February 24 2011, www.massispost.com

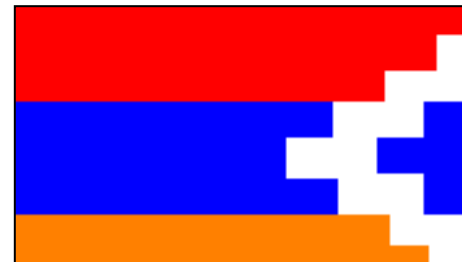
'GREEDY SPARROW: AN ARMENIAN TALE' CONVEYS LESSONS FOR ALL AGES

An Armenian folktale retold by Armenian American writer Lucine Kasbarian and illustrated by Moscow-based artist Maria Zaikina debuts with Marshall Cavendish Children's Publishers in April 2011. An Armenian folktale retold by Armenian American writer Lucine Kasbarian and illustrated by Moscow-based artist Maria Zaikina debuts with Marshall Cavendish Children's Publishers in April 2011. The Greedy Sparrow: An Armenian Tale is from the ancient Armenian oral tradition and culture, which was nearly obliterated during the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks in 1915. The author learned the tale from her father, editor and columnist C.K. Garabed, who would recite it to her at bedtime. He had learned it from his own grandmother, a celebrated storyteller from the Old Country. The tale was first put to paper by Armenian poet Hovhannes Tou-

manian at the turn of the 20th century. The Greedy Sparrow is the first time this tale has been presented in the English language as a children's picture book. The story begins in old Armenia with a sparrow who catches a thorn in his foot. As he asks for help, he sets off an intriguing cycle of action that transports him through the Armenian countryside, encountering people engaged in traditional folkways. The Greedy Sparrow ends with a surprising twist and conveys moral messages about greed, selfishness, and using one's judgment. To address the ethical and human components of the tale, a discussion and activity guide will be available on the author's website, www.lucinekasbarian.com. Though intended for readers ages 4 through 8, noted Sesame Street host and storyteller Bob McGrath says that "The Greedy Sparrow is actually for everyone."

February 22, 2011

www.armeniaweekly.com

KARABAKH
INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT
VIOLATE AZERI
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Representative to the reiterated his country's commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict and noted that recognition of the Karabakh's independence neither violates territorial the integrity of Azerbaijan, nor threatens its existence. As part of the 23rd anniversary of the Karabakh national-liberation movement, Robert Avetisyan delivered lectures at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution of George Mason University and New York University. "Karabakh and Azerbaijan can be good neighbors, but their coexistence in a common political-administrative entity is impossible," said Avetisyan said, adding that the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is open for a constructive dialogue with Azerbaijan and expressed hope that official Baku will finally take a constructive stand, thus making a resolution to the conflict possible. In his speeches, Avetisyan touched upon the history of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict, legal and humanitarian aspects of the formulation of the Nargorno-Karabakh Republic, the war unleashed by Azerbaijan, the negotiation process, as well as the current situation in Karabakh and in the region in general. "Since proclaiming independence in 1991, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic continues building a stable, open and democratic society; a state, which can protect its population and provide them with the universal rights and freedoms. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan keeps on increasing its military rhetoric, constantly stating of its plans to solve the problem by force," said Avetisyan. At the same time, he considered it necessary to revert to the original negotiation format with Artsakh's direct participation. "Only a civilized, just and comprehensive settlement of the Karabakh conflict will promote the stability in the whole region and prevent new hostilities," Robert Avetisyan noted.

February 25, 2011 www.asbarez.com

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