



ARMENIA TO ALLOCATE \$500,000 TO JAPAN FOR ELIMINATION OF QUAKE AFTERMATH PAGE 3



IRAN PLANS TO BOOST GAS EXPORTS TO ARMENIA PAGE 4

ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

April 5-11, 2011

THEMA



OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN TO SERBIA

At the invitation of President Boris Tadic, President Serzh Sargsyan arrived today to the Republic of Serbia on a two-day official visit. After the official welcoming ceremony for the Presidential delegation, the Presidents of Armenia and Serbia held a private meeting which was followed by the meeting in the extended format with the participation of the delegations. After the talks, there took place the document signing ceremony. In particular, signed were two intergovernmental agreements - the Agreement on Air Transportation and the Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for the Holders of Diplomatic/Official Passports. The two sides signed also a Plan of Action of the Ministries of Culture of Armenia and Serbia on Cooperation in Cultural Area for 2011-2013. Later, Presidents Sargsyan and Tadic summarized the results of the negotiations at the meeting with the representatives of mass media. The Presidents assessed the working agenda as inclusive, and the negotiations as produc-

tive. They reiterated their will and determination to further strengthen bilateral relations and noted that recently reciprocal high-level visits and meetings in multilateral formats invigorated the political dialogue between Armenia and Serbia. Presidents Sargsyan and Tadic underscored that political dialogue between the two states, as well as cooperation in the economic, trade and cultural areas have significant potential. They agreed to put additional efforts in filling the agenda of cooperation with new content and making it more active. President Serzh Sargsyan said that at his Serb colleague's request he presented the details of the current stage of the NK peace process. The two Presidents concurred that there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution and that use of force or threat to use force are unacceptable from the point of view of international law. In the framework of the official visit, President Serzh Sargsyan met today with the Prime Minister of Serbia Mirko Cvetkovic and the Speaker of the National Assembly Slavica Djukic Dejanovic. .

April 4-5, full story 2011 www.president.am

“QUOTE OF THE WEEK”

“...WE HAVE A LOT TO DO IN THE SPHERE OF CONSTRUCTION. I AM SURE “CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION EXPO 2011” WILL HAVE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ENSURING DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPHERE.“

TIGRAN SARGSYAN
PRIME MINISTER OF RA

Upcoming Events

APRIL 12: Yerevan to host Armenian-Chinese business forum

APRIL 24: Armenia marks the day of Armenian Genocide

JUNE 4: St. Petersburg's Petrovsky stadium will host EURO 2012 Russia vs. Armenia

NOVEMBER 28-30: Catholicos Karekin II, Grand Mufti Allahshukur Pashazadeh may meet in Etchmiadzin

USEFUL LINKS

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

STILL MUCH WORK TO DO IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Artsakh, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Iran, Turkey... The geography of "Construction and Reconstruction EXPO 2011" 8th international specialized exhibition which launched yesterday at Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex in Yerevan is large. Together with more than 100 local and foreign leading companies still not well-known companies also are participating in the exhibition with their brands, sometimes innovatory.

"We have a lot to do in the sphere of construction. I am sure this event will have its contribution to ensuring development in the sphere," RA Prime Minister noted. According to him there is still much work to do in the construction sector in terms of improving quality, services and economic indicators. "This exhibition certainly will make a contribution to development of the construction sector," the head of the government said when he toured, accompanied with other high-ranking officials, in the pavilions, and got acquainted with the brands presented by the companies.



April 9, 2011 www.hhpress.am

EDWARD NALBANDIAN ATTENDS THE SITTING OF CIS FOREIGN MINISTERS IN KIEV



Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian participated in the sitting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of

the Commonwealth of independent States in Kiev. The Ministers were hosted by the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich. During the sitting the diplomats considered 13 questions touching upon preparation for the 20th anniversary of the CIS in December, the 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War and cooperation in the fields of science, culture and security. While in Kiev, Minister Nalbandian had short meetings with his counterparts from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

April 9, 2011 www.armradio.am

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION CEREMONY TO BE HELD ON CAPITOL HILL

Armenian Genocide commemoration ceremony will be held on Capitol Hill April 13. Armenian Assembly of America told Armenpress it is organized by the co-chairs of the Armenian Caucus at the US Congress. Assembly Board Member Annie Totah and Executive Director Bryan Ardouny discussed Armenian issues in a series of meetings with House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Congresswoman Shelley Berkley (D-NV) and participated in a special roundtable session with Representative John Sarbanes (D-

MD). They discussed U.S. assistance to Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh as well as the importance of U.S. affirmation of the Armenian Genocide. "The upcoming Armenian Genocide Commemoration on Capitol Hill taking place on April 13th under the auspices of the Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs presents an opportunity for us to educate Members of Congress about the importance of genocide affirmation and prevention," Annie Totah said.

April 8, 2011 www.armenpress.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **APRIL 5: DDoS attacks aimed against LiveJournal were carefully planned, Armenian blogger says**
AH
- **APRIL 6: Karabakh attaches importance to healthcare development**
AH
- **APRIL 7: War in Karabakh may cost too much for Aliyev's clan, expert says**
AH
- **APRIL 8: Stepanakert airport location won't allow Azerbaijan to shoot down civilian planes**
AH
- **APRIL 9: Emmy's Boom-Boom music video premieres in Yerevan**
AH
- **APRIL 10: April 10 marks 19th anniversary of civilians' massacre in Maraga settlement**
AH
- **APRIL 11: Jerusalem to host symposium on Armenian Genocide**
AH

ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER SEYRAN OHANYAN RECEIVED THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FORCE PLANNING OF NATO



On April 8, ARM Defense Minister received the Head of the Department of Force Planning of NATO Frank Boland. During the meeting Frank Boland presented the initial observations concerning the Individual Partnership Programme and the Planning and Review Process results between Armenia and NATO. They also discussed issues concerning the ARM defense strategy reevaluation. In the framework of the Individual Partnership programme and the Planning and Review Process assessment between Armenia and NATO, NATO assessment team held discussions with relevant department representatives of the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces General Staff involved in the defense reform process to assess the realization progress made in the defense-related objectives.

April 8, 2011 www.mil.am

PRESIDENT SARGSYAN VISITS THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDING FOR YOUNG UNIVERSITARIANS



President Serzh Sargsyan today attended the solemn opening ceremony of the newly constructed building in Avan administrative district under the Support to the Young Universitarians Apartment-Building Program. The President walked about the build-

ing and visited the apartments of the beneficiaries. The building is comprised of 315 apartments. The ground floor is meant for shops, offices and social services. It has an underground parking lot for 214 vehicles. Chairman of the Union of Alumnae of the Yerevan State University, Deputy Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs Arsen Karamyan noted that 1 sq. m. costs 170 thousand AMD, which is 2.5 times lower as compared to market prices. Upon the directive of President Sargsyan, an apartment was presented to killed soldier Vardan Hovhannisyan's family. The keys were handed to his brother Vahe Hovhannisyan, a lecturer at the Yerevan State University.

April 8, 2011 www.armradio.am

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS START IN AUSTRALIA APRIL 15

The Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee has released the schedule of events to commemorate the 96th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. Western Sydney Region Commemoration Evening will be held on April 15 at the Armenian Cultural Panoyan Centre, with Vache Kahramanian, ANC Australia Political Affairs Director as keynote speaker. Melbourne Region Commemoration Evening to be hosted on April 16 by Deakin University will feature Dr Donna Lee-Freize, the author book on the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust and Rafael Lemkin. Ryde Council Memorial will take place on



April 17. Sydney Commemoration Evening is scheduled for April 18. Keynote speaker is Prof. Robert Kaplan, University of Wollongong, who will also speak during the Wreath Laying Ceremony & Armenian Genocide Commemorative Lecture on April 19.

April 6, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

CHINA TO INCREASE IMPORT OF ARMENIAN BRANDY AND WINE

The 6th meeting of the Armenian-Chinese intergovernmental commission has completed in Yerevan. Armenian co-chairman of the commission, RA Deputy Minister of Economy Ara Petrosyan told journalists that agreements on cooperation and joint programs in various fields were reached – infrastructure construction (North-South highway, Armenia-Iran railway), silk production in Armenia, energy, mining industry, tourism and construction. Petrosyan added that around 20 investment projects were submitted to China for its consideration and response in the near future. Director-General of the Department of European Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic

of China, Sun Yongfu said for his part that the trade turnover between the two countries does not correspond to their existing opportunities, despite the stable growth in the trade turnover over the past years (from 2007 to 2011 – 120% growth per year). Yongfu added that the Chinese government is going to take actions to increase import, specifically, of brandy, wine and minerals from Armenia. Petrosyan and Yongfu also added that the visits of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan to China in 2010, as well as the agreements reached during them gave an impetus to the Armenian-Chinese relations.

April 7, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIA TO ALLOCATE \$500,000 TO JAPAN FOR ELIMINATION OF QUAKE AFTERMATH



The Armenian government decided to allocate \$500,000 to Japan for elimination of the disastrous earthquake and tsunami aftermath. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan said the government's decision is fulfillment of moral obligation of the Armenian people. Besides, a range of international agreements were approved during the governmental sitting – on technical cooperation with China, under which the People's Republic of China will allocate aid to Armenia at the amount of 40mln yuans; on visa regime relaxation with Korea for persons with diplomatic and service passports; on avoidance of double taxation of property and income with Great Britain. A 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami on March 11 knocked out the cooling systems of the Fukushima plant's six reactors - triggering explosions and fires, releasing radiation and sparking global fears of a widening disaster.

April 7, 2011, www.panarmenian.net

JEAN-PAUL SCHINTU: I LEARNT ABOUT ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AT 14

A well-known French actor and stage director Jean-Paul Schintu is a participant of Yerevan-hosted Arm-Mono international festival. In a conversation with PanARMENIAN.Net reporter, the actor shared memories of his first learning about the Armenian Genocide.

"In my college years in Lyons, I had a mischievous classmate named Ives Palanjan. So one day, our teacher, exasperated by his pranks, said she'll send him to Turkey in a small box. I asked him during a break, "Why would she pick Turkey to send you to?", and this is when he told me about the Genocide." "I learnt about it at 14, when many of my peers knew nothing about the tragedy," Schintu said, adding that his native city is Lyons, with Armenians comprising 50% of population.

April 6, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

GAZPROM STILL SILENT ABOUT GAS PRICE FOR ARMENIA



Russian gas monopoly Gazprom did not say yet how much it is going to charge for one 1000 cubic meters of gas it sells to Armenia, Armenia's Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisyan said in 4 April, local press reported. He reminded that after the talks in St Petersburg last month Armenian and Russian presidents reached an agreement that the price for Armenian households will not change this year even if Gazprom raises the price for its subsidiary ArmRosGazprom (ARG). The parliament discussed on 4 April a proposal to set up an ad hoc commission to make an inquiry into the gas deliveries to Armenia.

Robert Nazarian, head of the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC), said it did not receive any application from ARG operator regarding price change. "I can say with certainty that gas is delivered to Armenian border now at \$180 per one thousand cubic meters and if a change happens it must be registered by PSRC and only then it can be enforced," he said. Nazarian said Armenia enjoys one of the lowest prices of gas in Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) apart from Russia. The cost of Russian gas shipped to Armenia rose by 14% in 2009 and by another 17% in 2001 April to \$180 per thousand cubic meters. Following this the PSRC approved a 37.5% surge in the gas price for households requested by ARG. Gazprom announced in September last year plans to gradually bring its gas fees for Armenia, Moldova and Belarus up to "market-based" international levels in the coming years. Gazprom currently sells gas to western and central European countries for over \$300 per thousand cubic meters. ArmRosGazprom (ARG), Armenia's national gas distribution company is mostly owned by Gazprom.

April 6, 2011 www.neurope.eu

GRANNY CUTS OFF GEORGIA'S INTERNET DURING SCRAP HUNT



Usually when there are internet problems in former Soviet countries, people suspect nefarious government interference. This time, though, it was a granny on the hunt for scrap metal who damaged fibre-optic cables leading from Georgia to Armenia and knocked the entire country's internet out for several hours. The 75-year-old woman was hunting for copper in rural Georgia when she dug up the cable that is part of a network providing internet to much of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. "She found the cable while collecting scrap metal and cut it to with a view to stealing it," Georgian interior minister spokesman Zura Gvenetadze told Agence

France Presse. The woman was arrested in the village of Ksani and charged with damaging property. "Taking into account her advancing years, she has been released pending the end of the investigation and subsequent trial," said Mr Gvenetadze. Georgia provides Armenia with around 90 per cent of its internet capacity, and the damaged cable meant that the whole country was without properly functioning internet for more than 12 hours one day last week. Thousands of homes and businesses in Georgia also found themselves disconnected. It was late in the night before services were got back to normal. Giorgi Ionatamishvili, a spokesman for Georgian Railway Telecom, told Bloomberg the cable belonged to the company and said customers suffered "massive and catastrophic" damage. "We don't how she found the optic cable, which was secure," he said, adding that bad weather and mudslides may have made the cables more vulnerable.

April 7, 2011 www.independent.co.uk

IRAN PLANS TO BOOST GAS EXPORTS TO ARMENIA



The director of Iran National Gas Company said numerous negotiations have taken place with Armenia on boosting exports of natural gas from the Islamic republic to that country. The Mehr News Agency quoted Javad Oji as saying that gas exports to that neighboring country may reach 2.3 billion cubic meters annually. Six years ago the two countries signed an agreement to swap gas for electricity, and according to the contract Iran agreed to send one billion cubic meters of gas annually by 2010. Currently Iran is exporting over one million cubic meters of gas to Armenia per day and a 30 inch pipeline running 113 kilometers has been mounted from Tabriz to the Armenian border for this purpose. The Iranian gas and Armenian electricity barter contract is for 20 years. It is a quadrilateral contract between Iran's National Gas Exporting Company and Tavanir Company and Armenia's Erevan TPP and its Electric Company

April 10, 2010 www.tehrantimes.com

ARMENIA DISCUSSING CONSTRUCTION OF NORTH-SOUTH MOTORWAY ON ITS TERRITORY

Armenia's Minister for Transport and Communications Manuk Vardanian stated that his country is considering the construction of a north-south motorway which would most probably take about 7 years. The project was publicly announced in 2009 when Armenia's government and Asian development bank concluded the agreement on allotting loan for USD 500 mln for constructing the motorway. However until today only USD 300 000 has been allotted and only a small part of the planning has been concluded.

April 8, 2011 www.messenger.com.ge

EU PARLIAMENT'S RESOLUTION CALLS FOR INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH KARABAKH



New resolution adopted by the European Parliament provides for informal contacts and consultations with the societies and de facto authorities of the breakaway territories, including those in the South Caucasus. The European Parliament adopted resolution on Thursday on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The resolution calls on the EU's stronger engagement in security issues in the Eastern Neighbourhood. It also calls to step up EU's involvement in find-

ing a solution to the protracted conflicts in Transnistria and the South Caucasus based on the principles of international law – in particular non-use of force, self-determination and territorial integrity – through more active policy stances, more active participation and a more prominent role in permanent and ad hoc conflict resolution structures, including already existing negotiating formats, particularly those of the OSCE. The parliamentarians also call to develop more confidence-building measures and programmes, including the launching of new missions and public communication strategies and the consideration of pragmatic initiatives and innovative approaches such as informal contacts and consultations with the societies and de facto authorities of the breakaway territories, while conserving the EU's non-recognition policy, in order to support civic culture and community dialogue.

April 7, 2011 www.massispost.com

MAKING A PITCH FOR VIGILANCE ON APRIL 24



As Armenian Martyrs' Day approaches for the 96th time, let's not be complacent. Instead, let us use the occasion to become vigilant. For what it's worth, let us use the anniversary to branch out and promote awareness in each of our communities across America and other places. At a time when apathy replaces sympathy, let's make it a point to tell our genocide story to those who remain ignorant by it. Ask any casual Armenian why they do not get involved with April 24th and the answer is usually rehearsed. "Same old story," they'll tell you. "I've heard it a hundred times.

Why do we keep mourning? Instead, let's focus on the future." I may tend to agree. Preaching to the choir doesn't necessarily get us anywhere. It becomes an exercise in futility. But show me a youngster delivering a recitation on where we've come since the genocide and I'm listening. All the human rights scholars in the world cannot compensate for the insight of a child articulating our history and culture. A world history student in one of my neighboring high schools threw up a hand when I asked for questions following a genocide presentation. He posed a rather rhetorical question. "Did any good come out of the Armenian Genocide?" he wondered. Is there anything positive to say about the loss of 1.5 million martyrs that left our nation bruised, battered and bewildered in 1915? Well, every dark cloud has a silver lining, I told him. "On the contrary, yes," I replied. "It made us more resilient as a people. The genocide instilled in us the principles of democracy and patriotism.

April 5, 2011

full story www.armenianweekly.com

DINK SHOOTER BLAMES TURKISH MEDIA FOR HIS ACTIONS



Ogun Samast, the confessed triggerman in the assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, has claimed he committed the act under the influence of media labeling of Dink as a "traitor." Samast's case was separated from the main trial because he was under 18 years of age on Jan. 19, 2007, the day of the murder. Samast attended the second hearing of his trial in juvenile court in Istanbul on Monday. He blamed the media for the assassination. Samast shot Dink in the back outside the Istanbul offices of the Turkish-Armenian weekly Agos, of which Dink was the chief editor. Samast offered a letter to the court in which he had written: "I am not guilty. The headlines that portrayed Dink as if he was a traitor were guilty. I have [opened my] eyes, now, let the ones who wrote those headlines think about it. Where are the people who have brought me to this process? I did not even know what Agos was." Samast also stated he could just have thrown a punch at Dink and left, but there were "people who had convinced" him. For the last four years, the "Friends of Hrant Dink" platform has decried the lack of investigation into any involvement beyond the triggerman. Dink was the target of a media lynching campaign regarding a story he published in Agos. The story claimed Sabiha Gokcen, the first Turkish woman pilot and the foster daughter of Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was actually of Armenian origin.

April 5, 2011 www.asbarez.com

"Armenia Highlights" is compiled in association with [PanArmenianNetwork.org](http://www.PanArmenianNetwork.org)

DISCLAIMER: Views expressed in "Armenia Highlights" do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Armenia.