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ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

April 26-May 2, 2011

THEMA



OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN TO THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

At the invitation of the President of the Swiss Confederation Micheline Calmy-Rey, President Serzh Sargsyan arrived today to Geneva on a working visit. In the framework of the visit, the President of Armenia visited the 25th International Book and Press Fair. After touring the Fair, President Sargsyan spoke about his impressions, noting that the Fair is a significant event on the eve of the 500th anniversary of Armenian book printing and celebrations in Yerevan which has been declared the 2012 Book Capital of the World. Serzh Sargsyan noted with satisfaction that at the 25th Geneva Fair Armenia is honorary guest. "We have the deepest reverence for books which goes back centuries and comes from the times when the first Armenian book had been written in the newly created Armenian alphabet – it was the translation of the Bible. Almost simultaneously created were the masterpieces of the Armenian literature, which in many ways are perfect didactical materials even today. In general, that feat of the 5th century, accomplished by our great forefathers, had become the

starting point for the advancement of the Armenian nation, for all subsequent ascents. As you know, next year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Armenian book printing. I believe, in those times the idea of book printing was as revolutionary in its scope as computers today. Each epoch sets forward its own demands; however for Armenians, Europe has always been the standard of book printing culture, and it is emblematic and quite natural that we are present here, today. UNESCO has declared Yerevan the world Book Capital for 2012; numerous events will be conducted, concerts and exhibitions. We consider such great jubilees and undertakings an excellent opportunity, particularly, for connecting younger generations to book reading. For us, a reading society is a vital necessity. Armenia which is not reading just cannot be. We also take this opportunity to put our libraries in order, to renovate them and open new book-stores, book centers. Construction works of the new unit of the Matenadaran – museum and institute – are almost completed. And the dimensions, scale of that structure is three times bigger than the Matenadaran familiar to you. [May 2, 2011 full story www.president.am](http://www.president.am)

"QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"ARMENIA NEEDS A NEW POLICY AGENDA WHICH WOULD RULE OUT ANY IMPEDIMENT TO THE SHAPING OF A MIDDLE CLASS IN THE COUNTRY."

TIGRAN SARGSYAN
PRIME MINISTER OF RA

Upcoming Events

MAY 9: 66-th anniversary of the victory against Nasizm

MAY 9: Armenia marks the 19-th anniversary of the liberation of Shushi

MAY 28: Armenia marks Republic day

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

USEFUL LINKS

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

JOINT RPA-EPP SEMINAR: "THE ROLE OF VALUES IN TRANSITION SOCIETIES"

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan joined today Jaime Mayor Oreja, European People's Party Group deputy chairman in the European Parliament, to attend a seminar in Yerevan entitled "The role of values in transition societies." The seminar was also attended by Head of EU delegation in Armenia, Ambassador Raul Lutzenberger, Armenian MPs, RPA members and experts.



Addressing the seminar, the head of government noted in part: "I am glad to greet European People's Party Group deputy chairman Jaime Mayor Oreja. You may be aware that the Republican Party of Armenia has been cooperating with European People's Party for some time now. Several meetings have been held with the EPP leadership on the sidelines of our cooperation. Today's meeting is important, on the one hand, because we want to see through the problems of concern to our European partners and, on the other hand, because would like to give an idea of our vision of the system of values adopted by the RPA. Apart from providing a closer perspective of the problems discussed, the exchange of views may create a stronger basis for our cooperation with the EPP." Thankful for a warm welcome, Jaime Mayor Oreja delivered a report entitled "Politics as a tool for serving society." The ability of forming adequate ideas of reality and giving accurate diagnostics was singled out as a political figure's key asset. Down to the crisis of values, he pointed out that Europe faces the threat of relativism which is proliferating rapidly across European countries. According to Mr. Oreja, the above is mainly caused by the weakening impact of those values which were at the heart of all European projects and social-political models. He dwelt on the peculiarities of Spanish transition underscoring that the new system of values and the new social-political model was behind Spain's successful transition. In this context, family, education, ethnic identity and the system of national values were singled out as key assets. Experience sharing was said to be crucial in terms of coming to useful conclusions. In his report, entitled "The shaping of middle class as a pledge for successful reform," Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan presented different understandings of the notion of "middle class." Speaking about the system of values inherent in democratic societies, the head of government said that the emergence of middle class is the key to building civil society. Two converging paths were singled out on the way to shaping the institutions of civil society: natural development and reforms when the State sets the rules of the game amid transition from a totalitarian system to a democratic one. Armenia's model implies first of all defense of private ownership rights.

April 26, 2011 full story www.gov.am

FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER EDWARD NALBANDIAN RECEIVED TINA KAIDANOW, THE US DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS



On April 28, the Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Edward Nalbandian met with Tina Kaidanow, the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Welcoming the guest, Edward Nalbandian expressed satisfaction with the rapprochement of the Armenian-American friendly partnership, stressing that the dynamics registered in recent years in bilateral rela-

tions between Armenia and the United States create a great opportunity for the further strengthening of the interaction. In her turn, Tina Kaidanow said that the United States highly commends the partnership relations with Armenia and is interested in further deepening of them. In the course of meeting, the sides had a thorough talk on a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues. Edward Nalbandian and Tina Kaidanow discussed the recent developments in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State mentioned that the United States will continue to cooperate with Armenia in establishing stability in the region, promoting economic development and implementing reforms.

April 28, 2011 www.mfa.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- **APRIL 26:** *Armenian Dioceses of Iran host events to commemorate Genocide victims* AH
- **APRIL 27:** *Defense Ministry discusses expansion of air defense opportunities* AH
- **APRIL 28:** *CBA: 25% growth recorded in remittances to Armenia in Q1 2011* AH
- **APRIL 29:** *Edward Nalbandian: Armenia doesn't see positive impulses from Turkey* AH
- **APRIL 30:** *Vic Darchinyan wins IBO bantamweight world title back* AH
- **MAY 1:** *Artsakh President congratulates compatriots on International Workers Day* AH
- **MAY 2:** *Bryan Fall expects positive results in Karabakh issue by June* AH

JOINT DECLARATION SIGNED BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy Stefan Füle signed a Joint Declaration between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the European Commission. In the declaration the parties welcome the good progress made in the negotiations of the EU-Armenia Association Agreement launched and stress the importance of taking further steps by the Republic of Armenia towards meeting the conditions to launch negotiations for the establishing of a bilateral Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area in the framework of the future Association Agreement. The parties also express commitment to pursue the political orientations of the European Neighborhood Policy through a reinvigorated engagement, to be set forth in a partnership for reform which will be developed jointly by the Government of Armenia and the European Commission. This will identify areas of cooperation that could be the focus of our relations, with support of the EU tools and instruments. stantially promote people to people contacts.

April 29, 2011 full story www.armradio.am

THE NEXT MEANINGLESS HYSTERIA BY AZERBAIJANIS

The International Book and Press Exhibition is held in Geneva on April 29 – May 3. Armenian President has also visited Switzerland and will participate in the event. Azerbaijan expresses its ill attitude towards the Armenian presentation in the book exhibition and makes another hysteric announcement on the case. "According to the Azerbaijani embassy in Switzerland and Lichtenstein, at the opening ceremony of the exhibition on April 29, Armenia demonstrated materials distorting territorial integrity of Azerbaijan", press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan has announced. According to the source, the embassy of Azerbaijan immediately informed the Federal Department



ment of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and organizers of the exhibition and expressed its concern and protest. Note, Armenian side presented books only about Republic of Armenia and NKR and nothing about Azerbaijan. The embassy sent a note of protest to the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs.

May 2, 2011 www.times.am

"ARAB SYNDROME" HAMPERS ARMENIAN COMPANY'S EXPORT



CEO of ARPIMED LLC Vachagan Ghazaryan said that 15% growth was recorded in the company's production in Q1 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. The company expects to record increase both in internal market's consumption and export (30%) in Q2 2011. "The paces of growth are maintained in the company; they would have been higher, if it were not for the events

in the Arab states, with which we established cooperation," Ghazaryan told a press conference in Yerevan. 8 Armenian companies, including ARPIMED LLC, were awarded by a medal of Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan for contribution to the country's economy. ARPIMED LLC invested USD 1.5mln in 2010, due to which the company will produce 30 new medicines in 2011. "Currently, they undergo the procedure of registration, after which they will be exported to Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia," said Ghazaryan. ARPIMED LLC is the only pharmaceutical company, which has the French GMP standard that facilitates the company's export to European countries. Ghazaryan also reported that over half of the company's output (147 different products) is exported.

April 19, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIA'S "RETURN OF THE POET" BEST DOCUMENTARY AT IRAN FESTIVAL

"Return of the Poet" by Harutyun Khachatryan won the best documentary award in the international cinema competition section of the Kish International Film Festival in Iran. The list of winners in the section also includes: Best Research: Sahra Karimi "Afghan Women Behind the Wheel" (Afghanistan/Slovakia); Best Director: Mehdi Moniri "Tinar" (Iran); Jury Special Award: "Asku" by Mohammad-Ali Hashem Zehi, Best Short film: "Mesopotamia" by Fenar Ahmed (Iraq). "The Maritime Silk Road", centering on the

first sailor who crossed the Indian Ocean to China, grabbed the best film award in the Iranian section, Tehran Times reports. Over 2000 titles found ways into the Iranian competition section, out of which 266 went on screen in the different sections of feature, video, short, and documentary. A total of 29 foreign films were screened at the international section coming from India, Turkey, Azerbaijan Republic, Armenian Republic, Russia, Great Britain, Canada, South Korea, Japan, France and several other countries.

April 30, 2011 full story www.panarmenian.net

ARMENIAN DIAMOND CUTTING INDUSTRY RECOVERING

Armenian diamond cutting industry recovering, according to Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan. "After the crisis, economy is recovering not so rapidly as we wish. However, the diamond cutting industry is among fields to be given special attention," the Minister said during a roundtable discussion with participation of representatives of ALROSA, Russia's largest diamond company. The discussion aimed to determine the future bilateral cooperation plans and strengthen partnership. 3,189 carats of diamond were produced in Armenia in January 2011 against 3,078 carats during the same period in 2010. 12.5kg of jewelry was produced during the reporting period against 17.2kg in 2010. The slump in the industry was 27.3% compared to January 2010.

April 20, 2011 full story www.panarmenian.net

DIASPORA MINISTRY SUGGESTS CREATION OF ARMENIAN TRADE NETWORK



On the initiative of the Armenian Diaspora Ministry, Yerevan hosts a constituent assembly of Armenian Trade Network organized through the assistance of Canada-Armenia Business Council and the Armenian Chamber of Commerce.

The event brought together 30 specialists from 9 countries as well as Armenian Primes Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Economy Minister Tigran Davtyan and other officials.

"In the course of the past 20 years, Diaspora representatives made a great contribution to Armenia's development," Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan said in her opening remarks. "Now, the time has come to unite approaches and form institutions that will help strengthen Armenia-Diaspora relations. Our goal is a strong, developed and powerful Armenia that can be built through the efforts of entire Armenianhood."

April 29, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

TURKEY-ARMENIA FRIENDSHIP SYMBOL BEING DEMOLISHED



The demolition of a huge Turkish statue devoted to reconciliation with Armenia has begun, months after the prime minister described it as a “freak”. The 30m-high statue - depicting two human figures facing each other - was erected on a mountain in the Turkish city of Kars, near the Armenian border. Local authorities commissioned it several years ago to symbolise an end to decades of enmity and suspicion. Artists had tried to save the statue, which could take 10 days to dismantle. The company carrying out the demolition has already cut down one of the figures using a crane, witnesses said. Rapprochement stalled. The work, called the Statue of Humanity, was the creation of well-known Turkish artist Mehmet Aksoy. When finished, it would have had one figure extending a hand to the other.

KARS ONCE HAD A LARGE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY, WHICH WAS ANNIHILATED IN 1915 AS PART OF MASS KILLINGS WHICH ARMENIANS AND MANY HISTORIANS CALL A GENOCIDE.

“I am really sorry, sorry on behalf of Turkey,” Anatolia news agency quoted the sculptor as saying. “They can demolish it, we will re-make it.” It was commissioned as a gesture of reconciliation, as Turkey and Armenia began attempts to repair relations after a century of hostility. But that process stalled last year and there were a number of objections to the monument. On a visit to Kars in January Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan reportedly described the monument as a “freak”, and an affront to a nearby 11th Century shrine. Critics say Mr Erdogan may have aimed his remarks at nationalists, who are strong in this part of Turkey, ahead of June’s parliamentary elections. Kars once had a large Armenian community, which was annihilated in 1915 as part of mass killings which Armenians and many historians call a genocide. Turkey rejects the term and says atrocities were committed on both sides in World War I. In 2009 the two countries agreed to normalise relations and, in that spirit, the former mayor of Kars commissioned the sculpture.

April 26, 2011 www.bbc.co.uk

U.S. SENIOR DIPLOMAT TO MEET WITH MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS

A senior U.S. diplomat will meet on Wednesday with the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, U.S. State Department said in a statement. The statement said State Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns will meet with the co-chairs, including Ambassadors Bernard Fassier of France, Igor Popov of Russia, and Robert Bradtke of the United States, and personal representative of the OSCE chairperson-in-office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. The statement said Burns will dis-

cuss with them their recent and upcoming activities as mediators of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Burns will reaffirm the United States’ “strong commitment” as a co-chair of the Minsk Group to helping the sides achieve “a lasting, peaceful settlement” of the conflict. The OSCE Minsk Group was created in 1992 to encourage a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

April 19, 2011

www.english.peopledaily.com.cn

GEORGIAN FM VISITS ARMENIA

Georgian Foreign Minister, Grigol Vashadze, is paying a working visit to Yerevan where he met with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian on April 26. The visit comes just a week after Georgian Defense Minister, Bacho Akhalaia, visited Armenia. President Saakashvili was in Armenian in January, followed by the visit to Yerevan by PM Nika Gilauri in February. “Frequency of high-level visits indicates not only on scale of substance of cooperation between Armenia and Georgia, but also on friendly nature of these relations,” Edward Nalbandian said during the meeting with his Georgian counterpart, according to the Armenian news agencies.

April 26, 2011 www.civil.ge

SOME LOCALS DISMAYED ARMENIAN GENOCIDE NOT ACKNOWLEDGED



While they’re unhappy President Barack Obama hasn’t acknowledged genocide the Ottoman Empire committed against their ancestors nearly a century ago, members of a local Armenian congregation said Sunday they understand it’s a touchy political subject. About 175 people attended an annual liturgy and program at St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, 4605 Erie St., to remember more than 1.5 million Armenians who were killed between 1915 and 1923. The Easter holiday pushed the service back a week from the usual date. Among those attending the service were Racine native Ryan Weber, 34, and his wife, Lusia Kamberian, 28, who met in 2007 while doing volunteer work in Armenia and are preparing for a Peace Corps mission to Kenya. Like protesters in other parts of the country, they’re upset Obama has been no more willing to refer to the 20th-century atrocities as genocide than the predecessors he criticized.

*May 1, 2011 full story
www.journaltimes.com*

GARNI TO SHARE UNESCO "MELINA MERCOURI" PRIZE



UNESCO has decided that the Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes (UNESCO-Greece) will be shared by Armenia's "Garni Preserve-Museum" and the Batir site in Palestine. The official award

ceremony will take place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on May 24. Awarded every two years, Melina Mercouri International Prize is awarded for safeguarding and management of cultural landscapes. Garni is a pagan temple complex located in the Kotayk region of Armenia dating back to 1st century BC. The nomination papers had been prepared by the Historical and Cultural Monument Protection Agency of the Ministry of Culture and the Armenian National Committee for UNESCO. The award is named after famous Greek actress Melina Mercouri, who has also served as Minister of Culture of Greece.

April 28, 2011

www.massispost.com

ISTANBUL-ARMENIAN SOLDIER SHOT DEAD ON 96TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE



Three weeks before his service in the Turkish military ended, private Sevag Sahin Balikci was shot and killed in his army unit stationed in Gumusorgu, near the Kozluk district of Batman province in southeastern Turkey. The deadly incident happened on April 24, on the 96th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. The news about the death of the 25-year-old Istanbul-Armenian soldier was first reported by the semi-official Anadolu News Agency, which stated that the private was shot after a colleague's gun went off while they were kidding with each other. The private's friend—whose name has not been made public yet—was arrested and the unit commanders tried to reach the family of the victim to inform them about their son's death, but the family had changed their address a few weeks earlier, and they had already heard the bad news from websites that broke the news within a couple of hours. The next day, another statement issued by

the General Command of the Turkish Armed Forces contradicted the initial story. It read that private Sevag was shot by a stray bullet from his colleague's gun, while they were fixing the fences around their station. "I don't believe that my son died by an accident on April 24," said Sevag's mother Ani Balikci. "The statement about the accident doesn't mean anything to me, because preventing these accidents is the duty of those who are in charge there. I need an explanation from the Turkish Armed Forces," she added. Balikci family lawyer Cem Halavurt told reporters that even if it becomes clear that it was an accident and not a homicide, someone must be held responsible for this. "We are going to sue those who are in charge in the administration," he said. According to Radikal daily, the family of Sevag Sahin Balikci has requested a full investigation of his death and will get lawyers to inspect an autopsy report. However, later the same day of the incident, the family became more cautious in their statements. Murat Shant Ozdemir, the brother-in-law of Sevag, said that they believe that what happened was an accident. Ozdemir said that it is a very unfortunate coincidence that this happened on April 24. "We don't want to link this with anything and we don't want it to be manipulated by others," said Ozdemir, the Istanbul-based newspaper reported.

May 1, 2011

Full story www.armenianweekly.com

CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER ISSUES STATEMENT ON GENOCIDE




On April 23, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the following statement on the commemoration of the Armenian genocide: "I would like to extend my sincere greetings to all of those marking this somber anniversary of the Medz Yeghern. "Ninety-six years ago, the Armenian people experienced terrible suffering and loss of life. In recent years, the Senate of Canada adopted a motion acknowledging this period as 'the first genocide of the twentieth century,' while the House of Commons adopted a motion that 'acknowledges the Armenian genocide of 1915

We must never forget the lessons of history. Nor should we allow the enmities of history to divide us.

and condemns this act as a crime against humanity.' I and my party supported those resolutions, and continue to recognize them today. "We must never forget the lessons of history. Nor should we allow the enmities of history to divide us. The freedom, democracy and human rights enjoyed by all Canadians are rooted in our mutual respect for one another. "I join with you today in remembering the past, while I encourage you to continue honoring your forefathers by building a bright future for all in Canada."

April 28, 2011 www.asbarez.com

"Armenia Highlights" is compiled in association with 

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