



“BAZE - 2011” YEARLY YOUTH ROUNDUP KICKS OFF PAGE 2



AGAIN, ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION CONFRONTS A PRESIDENT PAGE 4

ARMENIA HIGHLIGHTS

Weekly Digest of the Government of Armenia

August 17-22, 2011

THEMA



ARMENIAN PRESIDENT AWARDS PARTICIPANTS IN 5TH PAN-ARMENIAN GAMES

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan attended the closing ceremony of the 5th Pan-Armenian Games in Liberty Square in Yerevan. In his speech, he addressed the participants and congratulated them on the high-level organization of the 5th Pan-Armenian Games. He thanked all the winners and said that “there have been no losers during these excellent sporting events because we have gathered in the capital, Yerevan, to complete, but also to make new friends.” “Living in different parts of the world we have a major common feature – we are all Armenians,” President Sargsyan said. The Armenian leader is happy about numerous participants’ wish to hold the next Pan-Armenian Games sooner than in four years. He wished all the participants to return to their homes safely. “Be sure that each of you is a welcome guest for us. We want you to come to Armenia not only to take part in Pan-Armenian Games, but also to do so at eve-

ry opportunity,” the Armenian leader said. President Serzh Sargsyan presented the awards instituted by the World Committee of Pan-Armenian Games. The Best Delegation award was presented to the Buenos Aires team (Argentina); the Fair Game award was presented to the Urmia team (Iran); the Sports Spirit and Patience award was presented to the Chaldir team (Russia); the 5th Pan-Armenian Games Revelation award was presented to the Sasun team and the 5th Pan-Armenian Games Beauty award was presented to Kristine Nazaryan (Jerusalem). President Serzh Sargsyan also attended a concert. Before the closing ceremony, the Armenian leader attended a final basketball game of the 5th Pan-Armenian Games. The Armenian leader awarded the three winner teams, Los Angeles, Sochi and Glendale. Last week, President Serzh Sargsyan also held meetings with the members of the World Committee of Pan-Armenian Games.

August 21, 2011 www.tert.am

“QUOTE OF THE WEEK”

“IT HAS NEVER SERVED OUR NATIONAL INTEREST TO BECOME COMPLICIT IN THE DENIAL OF GENOCIDE, AND IT NEVER WILL,”

ADAM SCHIFF
US SENATOR FROM
REPUBLICAN PARTY

Upcoming Events

AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 3: *St. Petersburg State Orchestra will perform concerts in Armenia*

SEPTEMBER 21: *Armenia Marks Independence day*

SEPTEMBER 29: *World famous Cesnria Evora will give a concert in Yerevan*

USEFUL LINKS

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

“BAZE - 2011” YEARLY YOUTH ROUNDUP KICKS OFF

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan took part in the opening ceremony of the Armenian Youth Foundation-hosted “Baze” annual youth roundup in Tsakhkadzor as attended by over 350 young people between 18-30 Armenia, Javakhk, Artsakh and Diaspora Armenia. Welcoming the participants, Tigran Sargsyan said the roundup has a goal of unification, inviting Armenians from all over the world to participate in this event held at home. This assembly will give you more strength and energy, and together with us you will be able to confront all the challenges facing our nation,” the Prime Minister stated. Tigran Sargsyan was present in the tennis and “Brain-Ring” tournaments. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Ministry of Education and Science Armen Ashotyan, Head of State Property Management Department by the Government Arman Sahakyan and Kotayk marz governor Kovalenko Shahgeldyan. Note that the roundup will be held in a traditional format, rich in sporting, cultural and intellectual events. Meetings with top-level Armenian public officials, political and public figures are scheduled. By the way, a new tradition has been developed this year: 7 key national figures whose anniversaries will be celebrated this year (Mesrop Mashtots, Misaq Metsarents, Grigor Zohrap, Alexander Spendaryan, Garegin Nzhdeh, Arno Babajanyan and Metaxya Simonyan) were depicted on the participants’ T-shirts. On August 24, Liberty Square will host the final event of Baze – 2011 at which the winners will get the awards due to them.



goal of gatherings like this is to promote patriotic upbringing of the rising generation. “The gathering has a special objective: we will be marking soon the 20th anniversary of our young State. Our State is just young like you, filled with a strong belief in the future, and you will be the potential of strengthening of our statehood. The roundup has a goal of unification, inviting Armenians from all over the world to participate in this event held at home. This assembly will give you more strength and energy, and together with us you will be able to confront all the challenges facing our nation,” the Prime Minister stated. Tigran Sargsyan was present in the tennis and “Brain-Ring” tournaments. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Ministry of Education and Science Armen Ashotyan, Head of State Property Management Department by the Government Arman Sahakyan and Kotayk marz governor Kovalenko Shahgeldyan. Note that the roundup will be held in a traditional format, rich in sporting, cultural and intellectual events. Meetings with top-level Armenian public officials, political and public figures are scheduled. By the way, a new tradition has been developed this year: 7 key national figures whose anniversaries will be celebrated this year (Mesrop Mashtots, Misaq Metsarents, Grigor Zohrap, Alexander Spendaryan, Garegin Nzhdeh, Arno Babajanyan and Metaxya Simonyan) were depicted on the participants’ T-shirts. On August 24, Liberty Square will host the final event of Baze – 2011 at which the winners will get the awards due to them.

August 20, 2011 www.gov.am

SEYRAN OHANYAN: WE CAN PROVIDE ADVANTAGE OVER ARMIES OF OUR NEIGHBORS ONLY THROUGH OUR FIGHTING CAPACITY



On August 21, Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan hosted the participants of “Baze-2011” pan-Armenian youth assembly. Public Relations Department of Armenian Youth Federation told Armenpress that welcoming the participants, the Defense Minister particularly noted that there is a healthy competition, as a result of which everybody wins. According to Mr. Ohanyan, suchlike events first of all increase the patriotic and military-patriotic upbringing level. He expressed confidence that our young people with their mental capacities, knowledge, physical qualities and moral faculties are ready to defend the homeland from encroachments at any moment. Mr. Ohanyan presented to the participants of the assembly the defense policy conducted by

the Armenian Defense Ministry, as well as the development prospects of the armed forces. Referring to preparedness of the Armenian armed forces, Mr. Ohanyan particularly noted, “We must never be concerned about the quantitative advantage of our neighbors, as we have already seen that quantitative advantage still after 1988 and during 1992-1994 large-scale war, and have taken victory over it thanks to our fighting spirit, moral high characteristic features and high-quality preparedness of our soldiers. We can provide our advantage over the armies of our neighbors only through our fighting capacity. Today the armed forces have the task of reaching superiority not by “satisfactory” or “good”, but by “excellent” service”. The Minister also presented the works carried out in the armed forces. To remind, this year a detachment representing the Military Institute after Vazgen Sargsyan participates in “Baze” pan-Armenian assembly. The latter has already registered achievements in cultural and sport competitions.

August 22 2011,

full story www.armenpress.am

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

- AUGUST 17: Participants of Pan-Armenian Games visit Tsitsernakaberd, Tsaghkadzor
- AH
- AUGUST 18: California Center for Arts to host concert featuring Armenian dances
- AH
- AUGUST 19: Composer Karen Grigoryan to perform in London
- AH
- AUGUST 20: Armenian soldier deadly wounds himself
- AH
- AUGUST 22: Next generation may resolve Karabakh conflict - expert: Jose Melkonyan wins swimming races at Pan-Armenian Games
- AH

ON AUGUST 19 “MASHTOTS” EXPEDITION LED BY ZORI BALAYAN IS BACK HOME FROM ITS WORLD JOURNEY



At the “international” airport the expedition was welcomed by the Minister of Diaspora Hakobyan, other officials, NGO representatives, expedition members, relatives, friends and compatriots. May 28 2009. - Valencia started the “Mashtots” expedition traveling over the world and ending their journey on 20 th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia. On the ceremony dedicated to the end of boating in Cypriot port city Limasol head of the expedition “Mashtots” Zori Balayan said, that the expedition of St. Mesrop Mashtots started the journey from the Mediterranean waters, sailing through the Gibraltar Strait, in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. The head of expedition’s staff members in all the five continents where Armenians has lived for centuries and there are millions of our compatriots have carried out all their tasks. August 19, 2011 www.armradio.am

5TH PAN-ARMENIAN GAMES STAMP ISSUED



20 thousand stamps dedicated to the 5th Pan-Armenian Games were issued on August 20, 2011. The

stamps will be sold for AMD 380. "I am glad to take part in this ceremony. Sports stamps have always been appreciated by philatelists," Minister of Transport and Communication Manuk Vardanyan said, hailing the sportsmen who arrived in Yerevan to participate in the Games. Pan-Armenian Games stamps were first issued in 1999, and then in 2001, 2003 and 2007.

August 20, 2011 www.panarmenian.am

HOW DID WE LIVE WITHOUT FACEBOOK?



During the recent years social networks gained extreme popularity among Armenians. When Internet began penetrating into the country, young people moved from mIRC, Hayastan and similar chats to Odnoklassniki.ru. Now, they prefer Facebook. Socialbaker.com website, which makes the official statistics of Facebook watches the changing number of users across the globe. According to statistics, Armenia is in the 117th place with 195 380 users. Three years ago few Armenians were

aware of Facebook while the registered users used the site only to communicate with friends or relatives living abroad. Now, social networks arouse a lot of talk, both positive and negative. On the one hand, they are a perfect source of information and communication. Besides, they provide a wonderful opportunity for online marketing. On the other hand, social networks may turn people into zombies, diverting them from the reality, live communication, walking or reading. They make the days too transparent both from the viewpoint of personal relations and psychological condition, mood or location. So, a question arouses: isn't our right to private life jeopardized? Do we use our time correctly? And finally, how did we live without Facebook?

August 20, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

BRITISH MISSION TO ARMENIA NICKNAMED 'LOVE EMBASSY'

The UK Foreign Office has been accused of making Britain a laughing stock by appointing a married couple to share a senior diplomatic appointment. Jonathan Aves and his wife Katherine Leach will take turns to be the ambassador to Armenia, each doing the job for four months while the other spends that time looking after their children. Critics Armenia say the unusual arrangement means Britain is displaying a 'lack of seriousness' towards the country. The controversy comes after current ambassador Charles Lonsdale, 46, married his Armenian press secretary two months ago, Daily Mail reports.

The two developments have led to local politicians nicknaming the British mission the 'love embassy'. Mr Aves, 51, and his 41-year-old wife will both have the title of ambassador when they move to the Armenian capital, Yerevan, next January with their children Maddie, seven, Mimi, four, and Joe, two. But the announcement has surprised many Armenians and there is concern that it could reduce Britain's standing in the country, an important ally in the strategically sensitive Caucasus region between Europe and Asia.

August 22, 2011 www.panarmenian.net

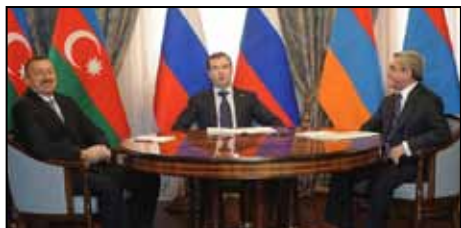
EXPERT: AZERBAIJAN APPLIES DIRTIEST PROPAGANDA WAR METHODS



It's not new that Azerbaijan accuses Armenia of training members of terrorist organizations, a political expert said. "With the world engaged in fierce struggle against terrorism, any country supporting terrorist organizations is labeled as rogue. That is why Azerbaijan applies the dirtiest propaganda war methods to accuse Armenia of supporting terror," the director of Yerevan branch of Institute CIS Studies, Alexander Markarov told a PanARMENIAN.Net reporter. He reminded that Turkey used to bring similar accusations against Armenia. "Our neighbors can't invent any new tools of information struggle," Markarov said. Several days ago, Iranian and Azerbaijani media circulated information that PJAK members are being trained in Armenia. Iranian Foreign Ministry has officially refuted reports on trainings the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) allegedly conducts in Armenia. "One should not rely on informal sources, whose information is not true to fact," the Ministry said. The Party of Free Life of Kurdistan is a militant Marxist Kurdish nationalist group with bases in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq, which has been carrying out numerous attacks in western Iran, southern Turkey and the northeastern parts of Syria where the Kurdish populations live. Most experts describe PJAK as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). In 2009, U.S. listed PJAK as a terrorist organization.

August 15 2011 www.panarmenian.net

MEDIATING THE CONFLICT OVER NAGHORNO-KARABAKH: GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY?



Last month Armenian President Serge Sarkisyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev came to Kazan, a Russian city lying on the Volga River, to negotiate under the auspices of the Russian president Dmitry Medvedev a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, different representatives of the international community have been making attempts to mediate this conflict. Before that, or at least until Gorbachev's perestroika, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh was latent, although it did exist even at that point; in fact, when the Bolsheviks came into power, the region was already quite troubled. When faced at the beginning of their rule with the task of organising the administrative-territorial structure, the Soviet leaders had several options for Nagorno-Karabakh, a region, populated primarily by Armenians, but surrounded by Azerbaijani territories: a) assign it to the Azerbaijan SSR b) assign it to the Armenian SSR c) grant it autonomy (from both of those SSRs). It is worth noting that in the Soviet Union, there had never existed a fundamental principle on which the administrative-territorial division was based. Beside rather obvious territorial, economic and ethnic factors, the decision-makers were often guided by various other reasons, which in some cases motivated

Whilst most of the newly established states were celebrating their not being a part of the USSR and having nothing to do with Russia any more, Nagorno-Karabakh was declaring its independence from Azerbaijan.

them to completely ignore certain traditional borders or to create artificial ones. As long as these were internal borders, it did not really matter, and, if it offers any kind of explanation as to the Soviet leaders' rationale for their decisions, the implications of certain territorial arrangements in the case of the country's untimely demise, are indeed not something politicians usually consider when making those arrangements. Be that as it may, what once had been internal borders in a country of 'fraternal' peoples turned to sources of interethnic conflict after the country collapsed. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh followed practically the same scenario. Under the Soviet rule, for reasons more speculated than actually known and to the Armenians' great displeasure Nagorno-Karabakh became a part of the Azerbaijan SSR. Since it was utterly and completely Moscow's decision, all that Armenians could do was try to make a special point of their dissatisfaction to Moscow, which in its turn made a point of ignoring it. With the begin of Gorbachev's era of Glasnost, which introduced much greater freedom of expression, the Armenian rhetoric became louder and fiercer, causing the conflict to escalate. When the Soviet Union collapsed, a wave of independence declarations swept over the territory of the former USSR. Whilst most of the newly established states were celebrating their not being a part of the USSR and having nothing to do with Russia any more, Nagorno-Karabakh was declaring its independence from Azerbaijan. *August, 2011 www.thewashingtonreview.org*

AGAIN, ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: RESOLUTION CONFRONTS A PRESIDENT



The perennial political battle over an Armenian genocide resolution is joined again, as lawmakers Tuesday introduced a symbolic measure that puts President Barack Obama in a bind. The resolution backed by lawmakers who represent large numbers of Armenian-American constituents calls on Obama to "accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide." The bill introduced with 77 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives largely tracks similar resolutions introduced in previous years. Its

fundamental point is to apply the term "genocide" to events that occurred between 1915 and 1923 during the Ottoman Empire's final years. The empire was based in what is now the Republic of Turkey. "It has never served our national interest to become complicit in the denial of genocide, and it never will," said Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif. "While there are still some survivors left, we have a compelling moral obligation to speak plainly about the past." But what some call a moral obligation strikes others as a diplomatic conundrum. Obama had one of the first telephone calls of his presidency with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan, with whom Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has met personally. Obama in early April will visit Turkey, where the genocide resolution is anathema.

August 17, 2011 www.newsobserver.com

IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH, PEACE ELUSIVE 20 YEARS AFTER SOVIET FALL

"Ladies and gentlemen please fasten your seat belts, make sure that your seats are in the full upright position and pay attention as our cabin crew demonstrate the safety features on this Superjet SSJ-100," said the captain's voice. Two dozen journalist-passengers, bleary eyed after rising early to make the two-hour journey to the airfield and another two hours spent in departure lounges, standing on hot tarmac and being ferried by buses, obediently took their seats and buckled up. The engines fired up, the cabin was filled with a whining like a distressed refrigerator, and the 100-seater plane hurtled down the runway and lunged into the air, very quickly for a passenger accustomed to larger, more lumbering jet aircraft. It was a mundane procedure and could have been an ordinary scene on any morning flight between Euro-



pean capitals. And that was the point. The Superjet 100 is the first new airliner Russia has built since the fall of the Soviet Union, and the flight from the Zhukovsky airfield over the Moscow region was an attempt to prove that the phoenix rising from the ashes of the post-Soviet aviation industry is as quiet, calm and comfortable as any regional aircraft that competitors like Canada's Bombardier and Brazil's Embraer can produce. The SSJ is meant to resurrect the domestic aviation industry. Manufacturer Sukhoi and Superjet International, the Russian-Italian joint venture that sells the planes internationally, has set a target of selling 1,000 planes over the next decade. It's a rare enough event to be a passenger on a Superjet. There are only two in service in the world: one with Armenia's Armavia and one with Aeroflot. The machine in use at the MAKS air show was delivered to the Yerevan-based carrier in April — the very first of the craft to enter service.

*August 19, 2011
full story www.themoscowtimes.com*

VAHAN SHIRKHANYAN: ONLY CHANGE OF SYSTEM WILL LEAD THE COUNTRY OUT OF THE CRITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION



Armenia's former Deputy Defense Minister and member of Social Democrat Hunchakian Party Central Committee Vahan Shirkhanyan answering questions of the press this week stated that Armenia faces a critical situation where a clash of political personalities is constant, as opposed to competing ideologies and programs which ultimately contribute to a country's political and economic health. The Hunchakian party sees the solutions to Armenia's problems not in the personalities change, but in the change of the whole system. Mr. Shirkhanyan thinks of two key tasks: first, the recognition of independence of the existing borders of the NKR, the second is to overcome the 20-year-old socio-economic crisis, through legal and economic reforms for the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the Armenia's populace. He underlined that to resolve social and economical problems; Armenia must reject the liberal formula and take up a social democrat model, entirely altering the government system.

This political deficiency has led to two wings of liberal ideology to negotiate not on the core issues of concern that need to be addressed for a better future of Armenia, but rather on who will take the helm and continue the current socio-economic policies of the past 20 years. "Political struggle is the struggle of ideas. There is, however, no struggle of ideas between authorities and Armenian National Congress (ANC), it's a battle of personalities," Shirkhanyan said. The current negotiations between the ANC and the authorities will not change the system, that is, lead the country out of the critical socio-economic situation which it faces today. Shirkhanyan also excluded the possibility of pre-term presidential election in Armenia. "There is no prerequisite, and the authorities do not face an immediate tangible "political crisis, which brings about resignations, the Armenian authorities' motives are obvious; they have actually strengthened their hand by being receptive to negotiations." The authorities entered into a dialogue because a segment of opposition that was struggling in the streets. The authorities were able to persuade this segment into negotiations, which is without a doubt politically beneficial to the authorities. Yet, he finds it difficult to explain the reasons for the ANC's consent to start and take part in these negotiations.

August 17, 2011 www.massispost.com

TANKIAN PERFORMS IN YEREVAN, CALLS FOR SEPARATION OF BUSINESS AND STATE



Singer and songwriter Serj Tankian was in Yerevan on Aug. 14 where he gave a free concert, making headlines for his calls to end corruption and for his support of civic activism. While in Yerevan, Tankian also met with President Serge Sarkisian, and received an award from Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian. Tankian performed before 10,000 fans during the inaugural celebration of the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, held in collaboration with Deem Communications and Fugitive Studios. The program included numbers from his "Elect the Dead" album, as well as

Armenian songs. He was accompanied on stage by an orchestra, conducted by Hamish McKeich from New Zealand. Dorians, an Armenian rock band, was the opening act. During the concert, Tankian took a moment to remind the audience of the importance of keeping the air, land, and water clean, adding that Armenia should be careful not to fall into the same troubles other countries have come across, and that citizens must care for one another.

Tankian calls out corruption

During a public discussion with non-governmental organizations and the media, organized by Kanachastan, the Civilitas Foundation, and the local office of Counterpart International, Tankian also spoke out against corruption in the country, saying there needs to be a separation between business and politics.

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

WORLD BANK INCREASES LENDING TO ARMENIA



The World Bank will disburse up to \$100 million in additional loans to Armenia next year to finance more infrastructure upgrades and public service and tax reforms, officials said on Thursday. Under its four-year Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) launched in 2009, the World Bank was to lend a total of over \$540 million to the country. More than half of this sum has already been made available to the Armenian government. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan told members of his government that the bank's governing board in Washington has decided to extend the lending program by one year, until 2013, and increase its monetary volume by \$55 million. "We are talking about the areas of drinking water, irrigation, healthcare, education, agriculture and the modernization of tax, customs and finance management," he said. Sargsyan ordered the heads of relevant government agencies to conclude ongoing negotiations with World Bank officials and submit detailed timetables for implementing further projects envisaged by the CPS. They must be ready for launch in July next year, he said. According to one World Bank official, Yerevan will in fact receive roughly \$100 million in extra loans by 2013. The official told RFE/RL's Armenian service that the total amount of the bank's existing lending package will thus reach \$640 million. The World Bank has provided almost \$1.5 billion worth of mainly low-interest and long-term loans to Armenia since 1992, making it the country's largest foreign donor. Armenia's overall foreign debt is on course to rise to \$3.8 billion by the end of this year. Speaking at a weekly session of his cabinet, Sargsyan said the multilateral institution has decided to boost lending because of the efficiency of Armenian programs already financed by it. "The World Bank has highly evaluated their implementation," he said. The bank approved its most recent single credit to Yerevan, worth \$39 million, last May. The money is due to be spent on the planned modernization of the Armenian electricity transmission network. The government is to spend \$13 million of its own funds for that purpose.

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