

*COOPERATION COUNCIL OF  
TURKIC SPEAKING STATES*



# **MONTHLY NEWS BULLETIN**

**FEBRUARY – MARCH 2012**

Prepared by Turkic Council Secretariat

## **AZERBAIJAN**

### **Azerbaijan`s President meets permanent representatives of NATO member states at North Atlantic Council in Brussels**

February 16 (AzerTAc). As part of his working visit to Belgium, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met Wednesday with permanent representatives of NATO member states at the North Atlantic Council. Addressing the meeting, President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the accomplishments Azerbaijan achieved over 20 years after the country regained independence. The Head of State drew the attention to the ongoing successful reforms in political, economic, social and other spheres. President Aliyev pointed out successful reforms in Azerbaijan, restoration of political and economic stability, strengthening of political system ensured rapid economic development in the country. He added the country received huge investments. The Head of State said energy-rich Azerbaijan plays a significant role in energy security of Europe. President Ilham Aliyev noted the dynamics of economic development testifies that Azerbaijan would achieve its goals. The Head of State said all achievements Azerbaijan had gained were based on deliberate policy. Touching upon successes of Azerbaijan`s foreign policy President Ilham Aliyev said the country`s positions had strengthened in the international arena. The Head of State noted today Azerbaijan enjoys great trust and confidence around the globe, adding the country`s election as member of the UN Security Council is important in this regard.

President Ilham Aliyev also underlined Azerbaijan`s cooperation with international organizations, including NATO. The Head of State also drew the attention to his country`s stance on the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He added the problem must be settled on the basis of norms and principles of international law, territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Permanent representatives of NATO member states said the countries they represent support Azerbaijan`s territorial integrity with respect to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. On the Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation, they highly appreciated the country`s participation in peacemaking operations in Afghanistan. They also said their countries attach `great` importance to relations with Azerbaijan. The permanent representatives also stressed Azerbaijan`s role in energy security of Europe. Then President Ilham Aliyev answered questions of permanent

representatives on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan's role in energy security of Europe and other matters.

### **State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan starts investing in gold**

February 16 (AzerTAc). The State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) has begun investing in gold. The investment aims to branch out the investment portfolio and increase income. According to the press service of SOFAZ, investment portfolio of SOFAZ can be invested in gold. SOFAZ has begun to purchase gold from the banks which are market-maker members of London Bullion Market Association (LBMA).

### **President Ilham Aliyev inspects construction of Shahdag Winter and Summer Tourism Complex in Gusar**

February 17 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva have today inspected the Shahdag Winter and Summer Tourism Complex as the first stage of its construction is nearing completion. The Head of State was informed about the construction work here. The construction of the Shahdag Winter and Summer Tourism Complex started in September 2009, and the foundation stone laying ceremony was attended by President Ilham Aliyev. The Complex is situated in the Shahdag National Park, 32 km from the center of Gusar. The facility is located 1300-2300 meters above sea level. The Shahdag Winter and Summer Tourism Complex is the first alpine skiing resort in the history of Azerbaijan. President Ilham Aliyev inspected construction work in the elevator base.

The Head of State viewed skiing equipment. The President was told 9 aerial cableways would open as part of the first stage. A hotel in the elevator base will have 40 rooms, restaurant, bar, cafe, shops, conference hall, medical point, 10 lifts and a parking lot. President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva were informed about infrastructure work to be carried out in the next stage, which will see the construction of additional aerial cableways, a golf course, clubs, hotels, Shahdag Youth Center, 900-room Relax hotel, a disco club and horse farm.

**Saakashvili: “Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev is an historical person for Georgia”**

February 17 (AzerTAc). “Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev is an historical person for Georgia,” said President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. The Georgian leader received Azerbaijan`s Economic Development Minister Shahin Mustafayev and Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Çağlayan who attended trilateral business forum in Tbilisi. The Georgian President stressed the special role of Azerbaijan in development of the regional cooperation. He also praised the Georgia-Azerbaijan relations. During the meeting, they discussed prospects for expanding economic relations even more.

**Over 100 thousand social network users support Khojaly Genocide campaign**

February 17 (AzerTAc). The Council for Governmental Support to NGOs, the NGO Cooperation Alliance and the National NGO Forum held a press-conference to provide information about results of the Internet campaign concerning Khojaly Genocide. Head of Council for Governmental Support to NGOs Farasat Gurbanov said one of the priorities of the Council is to raise awareness of the world community about Nagorno-Karabakh adding it promoted a number of projects last year. Mr. Gurbanov said dissemination of information about Khojaly in foreign countries must be the main policy. It will yield positive results if Azerbaijani NGOs will implement projects jointly with the mass media or NGOs of these states, said Mr. Gurbanov. Chief of the National NGO Forum Rauf Zeyni said a number of projects on Khojaly Genocide were and will be carried out in Azerbaijan and abroad.

A member of the NGO Cooperation Alliance Razi Nurullayev said the Internet action produced good results. More than 100 thousand users in social networks supported this action. This process will last till the end of 2012.

**Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan emergency ministries boost cooperation**

February 17 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijani ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Arif Agayev met with this country`s minister of emergencies Kubatbek Boronov to discuss cooperation in all spheres. Mr. Boronov briefed about

activity and sections of the Ministry of Emergencies. The sides discussed prospects of cooperation between the ministries of emergencies of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan and an agreement on mutual assistance. Mr. Boronov awarded Azerbaijani diplomat with a medal on the occasion of the 20th jubilee of Kyrgyzstan's ministry of emergencies.

### **Azerbaijani President receives French Minister for Transport and Presidential Advisor for Diplomatic Affairs**

February 18 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received French Minister for Transport Thierry Mariani and Diplomatic Advisor to the French President Damien Loras. Thierry Mariani handed over President Nicolas Sarkozy's letter to the Head of State. The French Minister expressed confidence partnership relations between the two countries would continue to develop. President Ilham Aliyev thanked for President Nicolas Sarkozy's sincere opinions about development of bilateral relations.

The Head of State expressed assurance bilateral ties between Azerbaijan and France would continue to expand. The Azerbaijani leader expressed hope a bill criminalizing the denial of the so-called Armenian genocide wouldn't come into force. During the meeting, they also discussed Azerbaijan-France relationship, regional and international issues.

### **Clinton says US works towards resolution of Karabakh conflict**

February 18 (AzerTAc). "The US is working in concert with the Minsk Group partners toward a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan," US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at FY 2013 International Affairs Executive Budget Summary and Congressional Budget Justification. She said the United States will continue to encourage peace, stability, democracy, human rights, and prosperity in the Caucasus next year.

### **International conference on 20th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide held in Hungary**

February 18 (AzerTAc). An international conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide in the context of the Western Balkans and South Caucasus held in Hungary. The event was organized by Azerbaijani embassy in Hungary and Budapest Foundation for International

Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. The conference brought together officials for international tribunals of the EU and Yugoslavia, former ambassadors of the UN and OSCE, heads of the diplomatic corps, political figures and journalists. The speeches were made by Azerbaijani ambassador to Hungary Vilayat Guliyev, the chief of the Foundation Dyord Tatar, Hungarian ombudsman Mate Sabo, Azeri and Hungarian MPs and others. The participants watched a documentary on Khojaly Genocide.

### **Azerbaijani President receives delegation of European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs**

February 20 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the delegation of European parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs led by Andrey Kovatchev. Discussions at the meeting revolved around development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and European Parliament, European Union in various spheres, settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well as energy, security and others issues. .

### **Azerbaijani FM holds several meetings in Mexico**

February 20 (AzerTAc). On the sidelines of the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Mexico, Azerbaijani top diplomat Elmar Mammadyarov has met Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy Marta Dassù. The talks focused on the opportunities for expansion of relationship between Azerbaijan and Italy. Marta Dassù said her country was interested in boosting energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, adding reciprocal visits of officials could contribute to it. Mammadyarov also met Special Envoy of the United States Secretary of State for Eurasian Energy Richard Morningstar to discuss the current state of and prospects for U.S.-Azerbaijan cooperation in political, economic and energy spheres. The Azerbaijani Foreign Minister met with his Spanish counterpart José Manuel García-Margallo. They exchanged views on the current state of bilateral relationship between the two countries. The sides also underscored the importance of cooperation in energy, tourism and trade spheres.

### **Turkey to host events on Khojaly genocide**

February 20 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijan's Embassy in Turkey plans to hold a series of events dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide in different cities of the country. Giresun University, Mustafa

Kemal University in Hatay, Firat University in Elazig as well as Gazi, Middle East Technical and Hacettepe Universities in Ankara will host conferences and exhibitions in connection with the Khojaly genocide on February 20-28.

The Bilkent University will hold a concert dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide on February 26 as well. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey will play host to the exhibition by Funda Iyce Tuncel on the occasion of the genocide.

The Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Istanbul will organize a conference in Bahcesehir University. A series of events will be held in Izmir, Bursa and Kocaeli. The events will also include a rally at the Taksim Square. The Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Kars will organize events in Kars, Igdirdir and Erzurum.

### **President Ilham Aliyev unveils monument to national hero Koroglu in Baku**

February 21 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva have today attended an opening ceremony of a monument to national hero Koroglu in the Koroglu park here. The Head of State unveiled the monument and laid flowers at it. President Ilham Aliyev met musicians and scientists. Author of the monument, Azerbaijan People`s Artist, member of the USSR Academy of Fine Arts, professor Tokay Mammadov, corresponding member of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, chairman of the Milli Majlis standing committee on culture, professor Nizami Jafarov and Chairman of the Union of Azerbaijani Writers, People`s Writer Anar thanked the Head of State. President Ilham Aliyev and Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva were informed about the monument and Koroglu Park. The monument with pedestal is 23 meters high. The bronze monument was made in Ukraine. The Koroglu park occupies a total area of 1,3 hectares and has 20 light poles and 30 benches. President Ilham Aliyev, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva and participants of the event posed for photographs.

### **‘Pakistan will continue to support Azerbaijan`s territorial integrity in all international forums’**

February 21 (AzerTAc). Pakistan will continue to support Azerbaijan`s territorial integrity in all international forums, Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Khalid Wynne, said at a meeting with Azerbaijani ambassador Dashqin Shikarov. Wynne added Pakistan would not establish relations with aggressive Armenia until this country leaves the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Touching upon bilateral relations, Wynne said "Pakistan is interested in deepening and strengthening relations with Azerbaijan, which is an important country for us". Shikarov, in turn, thanked the Pakistani government and people for the resolution adopted at the country's Senate which condemns the Khojaly genocide and the occupation of the Azerbaijani territories.

### **Grand National Assembly of Turkey releases statement on Khojaly genocide**

February 22 (AzerTAc). The Committee on Foreign Relations of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey made a statement on Khojaly tragedy. According to Volkan Bozkir, Chairman of the Committee, the statement was unanimously signed by all members of the committee. The statement reads: "Khojaly is the black page in the history of the mankind, written by Armenia. As a result of the planned massacre committed by the Armenians in the town of Khojaly located in Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, 613 Azerbaijanis including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderly people were killed, some 1275 were captured by the Armenians and 150 people went missing on the night from 25 to 26 February, 1992. The Khojaly event is a crime against humanity. The Turkish nation feels a very deep sadness for the victims of the massacre committed against the Azerbaijanis, and strongly condemns it. People around the world should feel the torment suffered by the victims of this carnage. Turkey will continue to support the just fight of Azerbaijan to scrutinize and achieve the punishment of those who have committed illegal acts contradicting the basic human rights and values.

### **AZAL changes new baggage norms on international flights**

February 22 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan Airlines Closed Joint Stock Company (JSC) introduced a new simplified system of calculating the norm of registered baggage's carriage on a number of seats. Now, business class passengers will get two seats for baggage, each of which will not exceed 32 kg. Passengers of economy class will receive one free place for baggage not exceeding 23 kg.



**Message to the people of Azerbaijan on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide (AzerTAc)**

It has been 20 years since the Khojaly genocide, one of the most terrible and bloodiest tragedies in the 20th century. On the night of 25-26 February 1992, the Armenian armed forces, with participation of the Khankendi-based 366th motorized infantry regiment, attacked and ruined, in one night, the town of Khojaly, which had been encircled during months. In this bloody act, they brutally slaughtered civilians, murdering 613 people, abusing corpses, taking 1275 hostages. Of them, the fate of 150 remains unknown. Of the killed, 63 are children, 106 are women and 70 are elders. The military invasion completely wiped out 8 families. For the past two centuries Armenian nationalists have repeatedly committed such outrages on humanity as terror, mass atrocities, deportation and ethnic purge in order to realize the mythic idea of “the Great Armenia” at the expense of historical Azerbaijani lands. The Khojaly genocide, which happened in the late 20th century before the eyes of the world and was marked by cruelty and brutality, was the bloodiest page of this aggressive policy. The political and legal responsibility for this grave crime directly rests with the then and present leadership of Armenia, separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh. The government of Azerbaijan has carried out systematic and purposeful work for nearly 20 years in order to raise the world community’s awareness about the Khojaly tragedy perpetrated by Armenian fascists, and have the genocide recognized internationally. During recent years, numerous civil society institutions, youth organizations and Diaspora structures, which represent our compatriots, have done the effective work together with the governmental bodies in this field as part of the Justice for Khojaly campaign. The true face of the Armenian propaganda machine based on lies and falsifications is being exposed and the international public opinion begins to comprehend the truth on Khojaly. The Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation recognized this fact as the “mass crime against humanity” and called on the member countries to give the relevant political and legal assessment to this tragedy. The parliaments of Pakistan and Mexico adopted resolutions recognizing this massacre as an act of genocide.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is playing an important role in the world security system and in the fight against international terrorism. We consider any racial discrimination, ethnic and religious hatred a crime against the whole humanity regardless of where it takes place. Our state will continue efforts towards ensuring objective assessment of the Khojaly

genocide, the occupation of Azerbaijan's lands by Armenia, restoration of historical and legal justice, and carry out an uncompromising struggle against such phenomena with all political and legal means. Although by committing the Khojaly genocide the enemy aimed to crush the Azerbaijani people, prevent them from their struggle for sovereignty and territorial integrity and annex our lands, this appalling tragedy made our people only stronger and mobilized our heroic sons and daughters for a resolute and organized struggle for the holy motherland and national statehood. On this nationwide day of mourning, I once again honor the memory of the innocent victims of the Khojaly genocide. May Allah rest the souls of all our martyrs in peace! I want to assure you that sooner or later the perpetrators of the Khojaly genocide will be brought to justice and get the punishment they deserve, and the blood of our martyrs will be avenged.

Ilham Aliyev,

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Baku, 23 February, 2012

### **President Ilham Aliyev receives delegation led by Turkey's interior minister**

February 23 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on February 23 received delegation led by the interior minister of Turkey Idris Naim Shahin. Turkish official conveyed greetings of the Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the Azerbaijani leader. The meeting highlighted successful relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey in all areas. Shahin said that the current visit will give renewed impetus to the expansion of bilateral relations. The meeting also focused on common fight against crime, interaction and exchange of experience in this area. President Ilham Aliyev expressed gratitude to the minister and asked to deliver his greetings to the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

### **Azerbaijani President: I want to assure you that sooner or later the perpetrators of the Khojaly genocide will be brought to justice**

February 23 (AzerTAc). "I want to assure you that sooner or later the perpetrators of the Khojaly genocide will be brought to justice and get the punishment they deserve, and the blood of our martyrs will be avenged", President Ilham Aliyev said. In his message to the people of Azerbaijan on

the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide, the Head of State noted: “Although by committing the Khojaly genocide the enemy aimed to crush the Azerbaijani people, prevent them from their struggle for sovereignty and territorial integrity and annex our lands, this appalling tragedy made our people only stronger and mobilized our heroic sons and daughters for a resolute and organized struggle for the holy motherland and national statehood.”

### **Azerbaijan`s industrial production in non-oil sector grows 14.4%**

February 23 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s industrial production in the non-oil sector saw 14.4% increase in January, the country`s State Statistical Committee said. According to the official figures, the industrial production fell 2.7% last month. The Committee said the industrial production made 81.9% in the private sector in January.

### **President Ilham Aliyev receives Latvian Foreign Minister**

February 24 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Foreign Minister of Latvia Edgars Rinkevics. During the conversation, Edgars Rinkevics conveyed greetings of the Latvian President Andris Berzins and former President Valdis Zatlers to the Azerbaijani leader. The sides stressed successful development of relations between Azerbaijan and Latvia in various spheres, highlighted importance of the bilateral ties as part of the Azerbaijan-European Union cooperation, and exchanged views on cooperation between Caspian littoral and Baltic states and other issues. The Head of State asked the Minister to pass on his greetings to the Latvian President Andris Berzins and former President Valdis Zatlers.

### **German Bundestag adopts new document on Khojaly genocide and Nagorno-Karabakh conflict**

February 24 (AzerTAc). Petitions Committee of the German Bundestag has adopted a document on the Khojaly genocide and Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Press service of Azerbaijan`s Ministry of Foreign Affairs says the document was adopted according to the petition, presented to the German Bundestag by Society for the Promotion of German-Azerbaijani Relations on the eve of the 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide.

The document says: “This bloody event perpetrated in Khojaly by Armenian armed forces on February 26, 1992 must be recognized as the fact of massacre resulted in the death of more than 600 people. Armenia, which claims that its people faced genocide, must understand this issue of the Azerbaijani people. The sustainable reconciliation could be achieved only on the basis of historical truths.” The petition also focuses on settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict on the basis of international law. The document urged Armenia to withdraw its forces from seven regions around Nagorno Karabakh and to create condition for the IDPs to return to their homes. Bundestag said that as the first step in settlement of the conflict, international law must be observed unambiguously and problems of IDPs must be settled in accordance with right of deported people to return to their homes. The document also says that the German Bundestag must give its contribution to the new efforts for settlement of the Nagorno- Karabakh problem. Taking the German Foreign Ministry’s opinion into account, the result of parliamentary investigation was described in the document as follows: Germany’s position on settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is that the occupation of seven Azerbaijani regions around Nagorno Karabakh must be ended and IDPs must return to their homes.

The document underlined that the German Bundestag’s resolution named “Security, Stability and Promoting Democracy in South Caucasus” adopted on May 14, 2009 was still in force. The document demands all conflict sides to make special efforts for fulfillment of UN Security Council’s resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, relevant resolutions and decisions of the Council of Europe and OSCE. The concern on unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is underlined in the newly-adopted document as well. According to the document, the unsettled regional conflicts can be used anytime for increasing the tension and lead to armed confrontation in the extreme situations: “Diplomatic efforts taken for settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and meetings of significant politicians, as well as Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents especially within the Minsk Group didn’t lead to the expected progress. That’s why the threat of sudden war exists in the region”.

The Petition committee recommends sending the petition as a material to the German government - Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Turkey-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group makes statement on Khojaly genocide**

February 24 (AzerTAc). The Turkey-Azerbaijan Interparliamentary Friendship group made a statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Khojaly Genocide.

The chairman of the group Necdet Unuvar said the Khojaly massacre was planned and those, who committed this vandalism, have not been yet punished. The statement says: "At night from February 25 to 26 the Armenian armed forces occupied the town of Khojaly. The occupation was carried out with active support of several units of the Russian Army's 366th regiment. Occupation of Khojaly was followed with unprecedented brutalities against the civilian population. In a few hours the aggressors killed 613 innocent and unarmed people. Among them were 106 women, 83 children. 56 people were killed with special brutality. 8 families were totally exterminated. 25 children were totally, and 130 children were partly orphaned. 476 people became disabled persons (of them 76 were minors). 1275 people were taken into hostage and even though afterwards most of the hostages were released from captivity, the fates of 150 of them are still unknown." The Turkey-Azerbaijan Interparliamentary Friendship group supports Azerbaijan in resolution of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Armenia must release all occupied territories of Azerbaijan and fulfill all resolutions of the UN and other international organizations.

## **Nationwide march with participation of more than 85 thousand people held in Baku on the occasion of 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide**

February 26 (AzerTAc). A nationwide march has been held today in Baku with participation of more than 85 thousand people on the occasion of the Khojaly genocide - one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th century. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev participated in the march. The march began from the Azadlyg square in the capital. From here they proceeded to the monument to the Khojaly genocide victims mounted in the Khatai district of Baku. Young people who stood along the avenues and streets the tremendous march proceeded had in their hands portraits of innocents victims of the bloody massacre - children, women and elders killed with extreme cruelty - photos depicting abominable scenes of events, which happened 20 years ago, banners demanding to

bring to account and punish perpetrators of the tragic events, give an objective political and legal assessment to the massacre at an international level, placards with names and surnames of victims of genocide, saying “The world must recognize the Khojaly genocide”, “Justice for Khojaly”, “Do not forget Khojaly” “No to Armenian fascism!”. Participants of the march had in their hands similar placards as well. A ceremonial guard of honor was lined up at the monument to the Khojaly genocide victims. President Ilham Aliyev laid a wreath at the monument to the Khojaly genocide victims and paid respect to the tragedy victims.

Flowers at the monument were laid by Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Speaker of the Milli Majlis Ogtay Asadov, Head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev, First Lady of Azerbaijan Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mrs. Leyla Aliyeva. Flowers at the monument were also placed by state and government officials, members of the Milli Majlis, ministers, heads of committees and companies, representatives of the diplomatic corps, heads of religious confessions as well as residents of Khojaly who escaped the bloody massacre. Participants of the nationwide march revered with sorrow the memory of victims of the genocide. They chanted slogans “Justice for Khojaly”, “Do not forget Khojaly”, “Khojaly – genocide of the century”. The atrocity committed by Armenians on the night of February 25-26, 1992 in the town of Khojaly in Nagorno-Karabakh will go down forever in history of Azerbaijan with bloody letters. That night, Armenian armed groups with the assistance of the Khankendi-based 366th motorized infantry regiment of the former Soviet army attacked this ancient Azerbaijani town and committed merciless massacre against civilians. Khojaly was weakened by the months-long blockade, and few defenders of the town failed to repulse the attack of heavily-armed Armenian militants. The bloody statistics of the Khojaly genocide is as follows: of three thousand people who were in the town at the moment of assault 613 were killed, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elders; 487 people were severely wounded, including 76 children; 1275 persons were taken hostage and subjected to outrageous torture; the fate of 150 people still remains unknown. Eight families were totally exterminated. Even impartial figures are horrifying. These people were mercilessly murdered, tortured and disabled solely because of their ethnic background, only for being Azerbaijanis.

Armenians` punitive action was deliberately planned and its only objective was to partially or completely wipe out peaceful people because

of their nationality. These actions are defined as “genocide” under international law, which must be recognized by the world community.

### **Tremendous march on occasion of 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide held in Taksim Square in Istanbul**

February 26 (AzerTAc). A tremendous march under the motto of “All of us are from Khojaly” has been held today in Taksim Square in Istanbul on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. Ten thousands of people have gathered in the square to protest against the genocide committed by Armenians against Azerbaijanis 20 years ago. The participants of the march had in their hands state flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey and placards demanding to punish perpetrators of the tragic events and to give an objective political and legal assessment to the massacre at an international level. They also chanted slogans “All of us are from Khojaly”, “Justice for Khojaly”, “One nation, two states”, “No to Armenian lies”. Azerbaijani and Turkish MPs, state and government officials, representatives from Turkey’s 35 cities participated in the march. The march demonstrates that the world community recognizes the truth on Khojaly and fully realizes that indifference to barbarism committed in late 20th century before the eyes of the civilized humanity, impunity of those guilty of the death of hundreds of civilians may lead to repetition of such tragedies in any place on the planet. Several countries and international organizations have adopted decisions and resolutions recognizing the Khojaly tragedy as genocide. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation assessed the Khojaly genocide as a crime against humanity in its 6th session. Parliaments of Pakistan and Mexico recognized this massacre as genocide. Several states and cities of U.S. and Canada have adopted resolutions and proclamations recognizing Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan.

### **Azerbaijan becomes member of World Post Union’s Board of Guardians**

February 26 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan has been elected a member of the Board of Guardians of the World Post Union (WPU) for Eastern Europe and North Asian region. By a majority of votes employee of Azerbaijan’s Communication and Information Technologies Ministry Nasir Hamidov won a membership bid against Georgian and Romanian candidates. The voting involving participation of representatives of 40 countries of WPU’s Postal

Operations Council was undisclosed. Three countries did not participate in the voting. The Board of Guardians considers and controls implementation of projects, developed by postal administrations within WPU's service quality Fund. Membership at WPU gives Azerbaijan a good opportunity to develop and ensure financing of reforms aimed at improving the country postal system.

**President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev receives delegation led by Romania's Presidential Advisor for National Security Julian Fota**

February 27 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on February 27 received Romania's Presidential Advisor for National Security Julian Fota. The Head of State emphasized bilateral ties between Azerbaijan and Romania are developing successfully.

President Aliyev reminded his visit to Romania and Romania's President Traian Basescu's visit to Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani leader underscored the importance of Azerbaijan-Romania relations in various areas, including economic, political, security and cooperation with NATO. Julian Fota passed on Romanian President Traian Basescu's greetings to the Head of Azerbaijani state. "Azerbaijan achieved much progress over the recent years," he emphasized. The Head of State thanked the Romanian official and asked him to convey his best greetings to the Romanian leader Traian Basescu.

**Special edition of Argentina's "Historia" book-magazine dedicated to Azerbaijan goes on sale**

February 27 (AzerTAc). A special edition of the Argentina's "Historia" journal dedicated to Azerbaijan was published. The edition was prepared jointly with "Historia" book-magazine's editorial office, Center for Strategic Studies under the President of Azerbaijan (SAM) and Azerbaijan's Embassy in Argentina. Preface to the edition was written by the well-known Argentine historian and founder of "Historia" Armando Alonso Pineiro. The scientist pointed out that he witnessed ancient history, rich cultural heritage, and rapid development in Azerbaijan during his visit to this country last year. He stressed the aim is to deliver all these facts to the Argentine and South American society. The edition also features articles by Azerbaijani scientists and writers.



### **President Ilham Aliyev receives Deputy Chairman of Pakistan`s Senate**

February 28 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the Pakistan`s parliamentary delegation led by the deputy chairman of Pakistan`s Senate Mir Jan Jamali. The Head of State underlined the friendly and partnership ties between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are developing successfully. President Ilham Aliyev thanked the Pakistani government for its supporting Azerbaijan in settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and recognizing the Khojaly events as genocide. President Aliyev emphasized importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation in all spheres including interparliamentary ties. The Head of State touched on the economic cooperation between the two countries, and highlighted necessity to intensify activity of Joint Intergovernmental Economic Commission. President Ilham Aliyev described as an `example` the support both sides provide to each other within international organizations. In turn, the Deputy Chairman recalled his first visit to Azerbaijan in 1993 and national leader Heydar Aliyev`s important steps towards strengthening the Azerbaijan`s statehood. Mir Jan Jamali said he witnessed great development in Azerbaijan over the period. Pakistani official pointed out that his country would continue to support Azerbaijan`s position in the settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Jamali emphasized importance of expanding cooperation between the sides in various fields including economic and interparliamentary ties.

### **Hungarian Parliament Members issue statement on 20th anniversary of Khojaly tragedy**

February 28 (AzerTAc). A group of deputies of Hungarian Parliament issued a statement on the 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide. Head of Hungary-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group, deputy chairman of the parliament`s commission on foreign affairs Márton Gyöngyösi signed the statement. The statement included information about Armenia`s aggression against Azerbaijan, the massacre perpetrated by Armenians in Khojaly. "According to the international law norms, ethnic cleansing carried out against Azerbaijanis by Armenians is a crime. The UN Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding an unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from Azerbaijan`s occupied lands. The world media demonstrated the crime committed by Armenians. This is unjust that the world community does not consider importance of remembering the tragedy of the Azerbaijanis, unlike other genocides, does

not pay attention to the problems of more than one million Azerbaijanis. We require just attitude for Azerbaijan,” statement said.

### **Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks about Khojaly genocide at Turkish Parliament**

February 28 (AzerTAc). Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke of the Khojaly genocide at a group meeting of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) held at the Grand National Assembly. Erdogan stressed “we mourned the anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy on February 26 as Armenians brutally killed 613 civilians, including 63 children, 106 women, and 70 elders. Erdogan added that the anniversary of the massacre was marked in a number of cities including Istanbul. “All must know that we will never forget Khojaly massacre. We will continue to honour memory of innocent people who were killed there. But we will be the side who supports peace, justice and law,” he added.

### **OIC Secretary General makes statement on 20th anniversary of Khojaly genocide**

February 28 (AzerTAc). Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu has made a statement on the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. Noting unforgettable memory of the Khojaly victims, Ihsanoglu stated that on February 26, 1992, the Armenian armed forces have massacred peaceful people of this Azerbaijani town. The Secretary General underlined that in the meeting of the OIC foreign ministers passed in Kazakhstan in 2011, it was adopted a decision on this crime committed against the civilians in the Azerbaijani lands under occupation. The Organization will continue making efforts to put an end to occupation of the Azerbaijani lands, Ihsanoglu emphasized.

### **Azerbaijan, Jordan discuss mutual investment opportunities**

February 28 (AzerTAc). The delegation of Azerbaijan led by Minister of Economic Development of Azerbaijan, co-chairman of the Azerbaijan-Jordan intergovernmental commission Shahin Mustafayev has paid a visit to Jordan. According to the Azerbaijani embassy in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, he has met Jordanian Prime Minister Awn Khasawneh. The Prime minister recalled his meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Davos last month, and expressed pride over the fact that Azerbaijani

President pays special attention to the relations with Jordan. The sides discussed the economic cooperation and mutual investment opportunities between the two countries. Prime Minister Khasawneh emphasized that Jordan has a favourable investment climate. He underlined the importance of development of the cultural relations. Khasawneh was briefed about Nagorno-Karabakh problem, Khojaly genocide. Azerbaijani Minister spoke about the intergovernmental joint commission's activity to develop economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Jordan. Industry and Trade Minister Sami Gammoh and Planning and International Cooperation Minister Jafar Hassan were present at the meeting. Mustafayev also met with Jordan King's Office Director Imad Fakhoury, Chief Economic Advisor of the Royal Hashemite Court Hadidi. Azerbaijani ambassador to Jordan Elman Arasly also attended the meeting.

### **Azerbaijan and EU begin negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission**

March 1 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan and the EU have started negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation agreements. The sides will exchange views on the simplification documentary evidence to be submitted in support of the visa application, the possibility of issuing multiple-entry visas with a long period of validity. At the same time, the Commission proposes to combine the easing of visa requirements for travellers from Azerbaijan with agreed mechanisms for the readmission of irregular migrants. Deputy Head of International Affairs Unit Rob Rozenburg and Deputy Head of Visa Policy Unit Diederik Paalman are co-chairs of the mission.

### **Argentinean president signs decree to open embassy in Azerbaijan**

March 1 (AzerTAc). President of Argentina Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and head of the foreign policy department Ektor Timerman signed a decree to open the embassy in Azerbaijan. The document says the embassy, which is to be opened in Baku will serve strengthening of the friendly relations between the two nations.

### **Hungarian press covers Khojaly genocide**

March 1 (AzerTAc). The Hungarian press widely covered the 20th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. The media outlets informed about Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno Karabakh conflict and terrible crimes

committed by Armenians against peaceful people of Azerbaijan. The newspapers also covered the nationwide march with 60 thousand people held in Baku on the occasion of the Khojaly genocide.

### **Turkish Grand National Assembly held discussions on Khojaly genocide**

March 1 (AzerTAc). The Turkish parliament discussed the Khojaly genocide. The meeting was attended by vice-primer of Turkey Bulent Arinc, ministers. Member of the Turkish-Azerbaijani parliamentary friendship group, MP Sinan Ogan said the largest genocide of the last century was committed in Khojaly. Ogan said it is time for the Turkish Parliament to adopt a statement on the Khojaly genocide. Minister of Industry and Technology Nihat Ergun, representing ruling AKP, who spoke on behalf of the Government, said massacre committed against civilians of Khojaly 20 years ago is a shameful chapter in the history of mankind. Member of the Republican People's Party (CHP) Ali Ozgunduz said the Khojaly events must be qualified as genocide. Chairman of the Turkish-Azerbaijani parliamentary friendship group Necdet Univar and others unanimously noted that the Khojaly crime should be qualified as genocide and an appropriate bill should be submitted to the Parliament of Turkey. The Armenian military forces committed genocide in Khojaly on Feb. 26, 1992. Some 613 people were killed, including 63 children, 106 women and 70 old men. A total of 1,000 civilians were disabled during the genocide. Eight families were annihilated, 130 children lost one parent, and 25 lost both. Additionally, 1,275 peaceful residents were taken hostage, while the fate of 150 remains unknown.

### **President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev meets Emir of Qatar**

March 2 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Friday met with Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, who arrived in Baku today with a working visit. The meeting focused on cooperation between Azerbaijan and Qatar in various areas, cooperation within the international organizations and joint economic initiatives.

### **President Ilham Aliyev receives Argentine Foreign Minister**

March 2 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Foreign Minister of Argentina Hector Timerman. The sides

underlined existence of `good` relations between Azerbaijan and Argentina, importance of cooperation within international organizations, and existence of `good` opportunities for development of bilateral ties in the fields of energy, tourism, agriculture and others.

### **Azerbaijan proud of being a part of Islamic world, President Aliyev**

March 2 (AzerTAc). The Islamic civilization has promoted peace and tolerance, humanistic ideas, humanism and mercy along centuries, uniting millions of peoples around this superior values, and Azerbaijan is proud of being a part of the Islamic world, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev emphasized in his congratulatory letter to the participants of the Third Think Tanks forum of the OIC countries kicked off today in Azerbaijan`s capital.

“Along with the Islam and Islamic culture, the people of Azerbaijan has respect for all religions, tolerance, and upholds peaceful coexistence and cooperation of peoples of various faiths”, the head of state said.

### **Implementation of social infrastructure projects is state priority**

March 2 (AzerTAc). Implementation of the social infrastructure projects are funded by the Azerbaijan state. This statement came from the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on February 28 at the conference on results of third year into State Program on socio-economic development of regions for 2009-2013. The head of State said: “When talking about infrastructure, we mean everything – roads, electricity, gas and water supply. Issues of social infrastructure are also very important. All these issues are reflected in our program, i.e. the current program. Of course, one direction is associated with infrastructure projects. We have developed this sector using the funds invested by the state. Another direction is related to social infrastructure. The first program led to the construction of more than 2,300 new schools. Last year we built and repaired over 200 schools. This year we will build or renovate more than 400 schools.”

### **President Ilham Aliyev receives World Bank`s delegation**

March 5 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the World Bank`s delegation led by Theodore Ahlers, Director for Regional Strategy and Operations. Ahlers expressed satisfaction with his participation in discussions as part of the second High-Level Economic Policy Forum co-organized by the Azerbaijani Government and the World

Bank in Baku. President Ilham Aliyev underlined the importance of the second High-Level Economic Policy Forum. The Head of State noted development of non-oil sector in Azerbaijan would be one of the main priorities in the future when the country completes the first stage of its economic development. They praised long-term successful cooperation between Azerbaijan and the World Bank in banking sector, expressed confidence it would further develop.

### **Azerbaijan`s President receives OSCE Minsk group co-chairs and personal representative of OSCE Chairman-in-Office**

March 5 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received OSCE Minsk group co-chairs Robert Bradtke of the United States, Igor Popov of Russia and Jacques Faure of France as well as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk. During the meeting, they discussed the current state of and prospects for the peace talks on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

### **President Ilham Aliyev receives Tatar Prime Minister**

March 5 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received Prime Minister of Tatarstan, Russian Federation Ildar Khalikov. The Head of State congratulated the Tatar Prime Minister and the people of Russia on successful completion of the presidential elections. President Ilham Aliyev said the cooperation between Azerbaijan and subjects of Russia, including the Republic of Tatarstan is rapidly developing. The Head of State underlined there were good opportunities to expand these relations even more. On importance of reciprocal visits in strengthening of the relations, the Head of State expressed his hope that the visit of the Tatar Prime Minister would help widen these ties. The Prime Minister of Tatarsan said he has arrived in Azerbaijan with a large delegation comprising the representatives of government structures, business, finance and banking sectors. Mr. Khalikov stressed the importance of boosting cooperation.

### **Azerbaijan`s President meets Polish counterpart in Baku**

March 5 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has met today Polish counterpart Bronisław Komorowski who made a stopover in Baku en route to Afghanistan. The sides praised development of relationship between the two countries in various spheres, as well as

political, economic, energy ones. They also expressed assurance that bilateral relations would continue to expand.

**Congratulation to Azerbaijani women on the occasion of 8 March, International Women`s Day**

Dear ladies!

Dear mothers and sisters!

I congratulate you wholeheartedly on 8 March – International Women`s Day. In all periods of our history, our women were the invincible moral support to the society and showed great dedication to form the present appearance of the country. Thanks to the right to vote and to be elected gained before women in many leading countries of the world did, they got an opportunity to take an active part in the social life. Our women who use their inexhaustible energy and intelligence for the people and homeland have achieved many accomplishments for the past time. Harmonic combination of national identity and modernity is an integral feature of their rich morality. I am proud to note that Azerbaijani women were pioneers among the Eastern women in the fields of art and culture, science and technology.

Rallying around the idea of independence of our people and being active participants of nation-building processes, socio-political events, Azerbaijani women make an invaluable contribution to building socio-economic and scientific-technological capacity of our country. With their intense activity, in particular in the spheres of education and health, they successfully realize the ideas of our female enlighteners. The constantly increasing authority of a woman in our society and her current high social status are a noteworthy phenomenon in the modern life of Azerbaijan. In the present time when the system of values is experiencing rapid changes in the globalizing world, our mothers become true guarantors of preserving national-cultural values and moral wealth. Paying a special attention to bringing up the young generation committed to our ancient customs and traditions, national ideology and ideals of statehood, they again honorably cope with the tasks they face. I believe an Azerbaijani woman will continue to make every effort for the dynamic development and progress of our country. I wish you good health, happiness and new achievements. Congratulations!

Ilham Aliyev  
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
The city of Baku, March 5, 2012

### **Azerbaijan, Ukraine discuss cooperation issues**

March 5 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov has today met his Ukrainian counterpart Konstantin Grishenko. They discussed relations between the two countries. The two FMs explored ways of expanding the cooperation within international organizations, and exchanged views on regional processes.

### **Azerbaijani, Georgian presidents meet one-on-one**

March 6 (AzerTAc). Presidents Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia have today met in private. During the meeting, the Presidents expressed satisfaction with development of relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia in a variety of fields. The presidents stressed the importance of high-level reciprocal visits. They added these visits contribute to strengthening bilateral cooperation even more. The two leader expressed confidence that relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia would continue to develop.

They also discussed bilateral, regional and international issues.

### **Azerbaijani President receives BP chairman**

March 7 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan`s President Ilham Aliyev has today received BP chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg. They stressed the importance of BP`s long-term activity in Azerbaijan, and discussed the issues related to the implementation of joint projects.

They also explored prospects for Azerbaijan-BP cooperation.

### **Azerbaijani President receives Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment**

March 7 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today received the Netherlands` Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment Melanie Henriette Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus. Melanie Henriette



Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus conveyed the Dutch Prime Minister's greetings to the Azerbaijani President.

She stressed the role of the Dutch embassy in Baku and the Azerbaijani embassy in Hague in expanding the relations between the two countries. Melanie Henriette Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus said she is leading a large delegation of businessmen to Azerbaijan.

President Ilham Aliyev stressed the importance of the Dutch delegation's visit to Azerbaijan, saying they will have a good opportunity to familiarize themselves with the country.

The Azerbaijani leader recalled his meetings with the Dutch Premier, saying they had fruitful discussions on development of the bilateral cooperation. President Ilham Aliyev said the reciprocal opening of the embassies contributed to developing the Azerbaijani-Dutch relations even more. The Azerbaijani leader and the Dutch Minister explored prospects for the bilateral cooperation in a variety of fields, including water industry, infrastructure, environment and transport. President Ilham Aliyev thanked for the Dutch Prime Minister's greetings, and asked Melanie Henriette Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus to reciprocate his greetings to the country's Premier.

### **Trilateral meeting of Azerbaijani, Turkish and Iranian FMs culminates with adoption of Nakhchivan Statement**

March 7 (AzerTAc). A trilateral meeting between foreign ministers Elmar Mammadyarov of Azerbaijan, Ahmet Davutoglu of Turkey and Ali Akbar Salehi of Iran has today ended with the adoption of the Nakhchivan Statement. Azerbaijan's FM Elmar Mammadyarov expressed assurance the meeting would lay foundation for development of cooperation between the three countries even more. Mammadyarov said the next meeting would be held in Van in September, 2012. Davutoglu and Salehi underlined the necessity of continuing such meetings in future.

### **Azerbaijan, Latin American countries enjoy steady development of relations**

March 6 (AzerTAc). The relations between Azerbaijan and Latin America countries are steady developing. According to the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the first Azerbaijan's embassy in Latin

America was opened in Argentina in late 2010. An official statement on opening of Argentinean embassy to Azerbaijan came during the Azerbaijan visit of Argentinean Foreign Minister. The Venezuelan government also made a decision on opening the diplomatic mission in Azerbaijan at the level of charge d'affairs.

### **Japanese parliament hosts presentation on “Azerbaijan – Land of Fires”**

March 8 (AzerTAc). A presentation “Azerbaijan – Land of Fires” has been held in the Japanese parliament at the initiative of Central Asia and Caucasus Research Institute. The event, organized by Azerbaijan’s Embassy in the country, brought together member of Japanese parliament, diplomats, businessmen and researchers on Caucasus countries. Tetsuji Tanaka, Executive Director of the Central Asia and Caucasus Research Institute said the purpose of the presentation is to get more information about Azerbaijan which is the leader of the region. Azerbaijani ambassador to Japan Gursel Ismayilzade spoke of the accomplishments made in Azerbaijan in all spheres since the country regained independence 20 years ago. The ambassador recalled national leader Heydar Aliyev’s visit to Japan in 1998. He also added President Ilham Aliyev’s official visit to Japan in 2006 had opened new pages in cooperation between the two countries. Ismayilzade also highlighted the role of Azerbaijan in energy security of Europe. The ambassador said Azerbaijan is recognized a reliable partner in the world, adding the country’s election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council proves this. The diplomat also spoke of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, saying Armenia does not honor documents adopted by international organizations. The event participants also saw a documentary on Azerbaijan’s history, culture and tourism potential. President of Central Asia and Caucasus Research Institute, MP Mrs. Koike Yuriko thanked the ambassador for detailed information. Mrs. Yuriko also spoke of Azerbaijan’s great achievements. She noted Azerbaijan is a strategic partner of Japan.

### **Azerbaijani President allocates AZN 3m for construction of highway in Jalilabad**

March 9 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has signed an Executive Order allocating AZN3 million for the construction of the Jalilabad-Hamargishlag-Sadatlı highway in Jalilabad. Under the presidential order, the funds will be allocated from the President’s Reserve Fund for

2012. The highway links 14 villages with the total population of 24,000 people.

### **Presidents of Azerbaijan and Croatia meet one-on-one**

March 12 (AzerTAc). Following the official welcoming ceremony, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his spouse Mehriban Aliyeva had a joint meeting with visiting President of Croatia Ivo Josipovic and his spouse Tatiana Josipovic. Then, Presidents Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Ivo Josipovic of Croatia met in private. Both leaders expressed satisfaction with development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Croatia in a variety of fields. Good potential for strengthening the relationship was underlined at the meeting. The importance of Croatian President Josipovic's official visit to Azerbaijan for expanding cooperation between the two countries was highlighted at the meeting. The meeting also discussed bilateral, regional and international issues.

### **Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan discuss bilateral relations**

March 12 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan's foreign minister Elmar Mammadyarov has met Kazakh deputy minister of foreign affairs Amangeldy Zhumabayev to discuss prospects for boosting the relations between the two countries. Zhumabayev congratulated the Azeri FM on his country's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. The Kazakh deputy FM said his country was interested in cooperation with Azerbaijan in all fields. He stressed the two countries' support for each other within international organizations, adding "it is very important that we expand our work on this front". Zhumabayev said Kazakhstan was interested in stability and development in the region. The Deputy FM also praised Azerbaijan's contribution to delivering Kazakhstan's products to world markets.

### **AZAL ups number of flights**

March 12 (AzerTAc). AZAL has decided to increase the number of flights concerned with 2012 Eurovision Song Contest in Baku from April 20-May 31. AZAL's spokesman Maharram Safarli reported that, from April 21-May 31, the Baku-Paris-Baku and Baku-Prague-Baku flights will be carried out daily, while from April 25-May 31 Baku-Milan-Baku flight will be realized 3 times a week. From May 10 Baku-Istanbul-Baku flight will be implemented 3 times per day as well as from April 20-May 31 Baku-Dubai-

Baku flight will be carried out twice per day. Baku-Astrakhan-Baku flight will be carried out 2 times per day and Baku-Rostov-Baku once per day from April 20. Safarli also noted that AZAL intended to extend the geography of the flights. Baku-Rome-Baku flight will be carried out 3 times per day from April 17. AZAL is planning to launch new flights to Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen International Airport (SAW) every day from April 10. AZAL will receive state-of-the-art Boeing-787 Dreamliner on April 6.

### **Azerbaijani Parliament's Speaker meets Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister**

March 13 (AzerTAc). Speaker of Azerbaijan's parliament Ogtay Asadov has met Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag. Asadov pointed out Azerbaijan's hosting a centennial celebration of "Turk Ocaglari" Association. He said reciprocal visits strengthen the unity of Turkic states. Bozdag said the aim of his visit is to expand the unity of Turkic-speaking nations. He pointed out that Azerbaijan and Turkey are "brotherly countries with common religion, language and culture". He also praised Azerbaijan's progress over 20 years of independence. Bozdag stressed the importance of cooperation within Turkic-Speaking Countries Parliamentary Assembly (TurkPA). He thanked Azerbaijani supporting Turkey against the adoption of a bill criminalizing the denial of so-called Armenian genocide.

### **Annual Crans Montana Forum due in Baku in 2012**

March 13 (AzerTAc). The 23rd annual Crans Montana Forum (CMF) is to be held in Baku from 28 June to 1 July 2012, as it was decided at the regular annual forum in the Brussels, the Accounting Chamber of Azerbaijan said. Chairman of Azerbaijan's Accounting Chamber Heydar Asadov took part at the event on invitation of Mr. Jean-Paul Carteron, Chairman of the Crans Montana Forum. The Forum's Baku gathering will focus on the topic "Which energy for which world?", the forum announced on its website. The Crans Montana Forum is a Swiss international organization created in Crans Montana in 1986. With the motto "Committed to a more humane world", it brings together business and international leaders at a range of forums throughout the year. Participation of Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva at the previous session of Forum was praised by the co-chairs.

Azerbaijan has been selected as the guest country at the 22nd annual 2011 Crans Montana Forum, which was held in the evening of 22 June in

Brussels. The Special Meeting of “New leaders for tomorrow” was held as part of the 22nd annual session of Crans Montana Forum in Brussels, Belgium. The government officials, businesses and international organizations will hold debates about future of the world at the meeting. Founded in 1989, the forum is held in June every year. Over 1,000 high-rank officials attend this meeting annually. The key theme of this year’s forum is “A Major Revolution has Started - Which World for Tomorrow.”

### **Azerbaijan will continue peace talks, says Azerbaijani FM**

March 14 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan will continue peace talks on the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict’s settlement though no results have yet been reported, Azerbaijan’s minister Elmar Mammadyarov said in an interview to Germany’s “Die Welt” daily. “I hope that the leadership of Armenia at last will show political wisdom to solve the conflict,” Mammadyarov said. The minister also emphasized that over 20 years Armenia exercises control over the Nagorno-Karabakh, which is the integral part of Azerbaijan. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Armenian armed forces have occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan since 1992, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group - Russia, France, and the U.S. - are currently holding the peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented the U.N. Security Council’s four resolutions on the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions.

### **‘Nearly 150 million people in the United States were informed on the truths about Khojaly genocide’**

March 13 (AzerTAg). Thanks to the awareness-raising campaign on the Khojaly genocide, nearly 150 million people in the US have been informed about the tragedy, chairman of American-Azerbaijan Alliance Anar Mammadov said. Commenting on mass actions held in many countries on the 20th anniversary of the genocide, Mammadov said American-Azerbaijan Alliance in turn held a number of events on the occasion. The US influential papers “New York Times” and “Washington Post” have published articles about the Khojaly genocide, as well as posters were placed on about 400 subway trains and buses. Brochures were also distributed among the people in some airports of the US.

### **President of Azerbaijan receives foreign minister of Germany**

March 15 (AzerTAc). President Ilham Aliyev of the Republic of Azerbaijan today received the foreign minister of the Federative Republic of Germany Guido Westerwelle.

Noting wide existing relations between the two countries, President Aliyev expressed confidence that the current visit of the Germany's foreign minister would boost strengthening of partnership between the states even more. Foreign minister of the Germany Guido Westerwelle informed about the meetings he held in the country, stressing the 20th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Germany. He also underlined the importance of Azerbaijan's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and future cooperation in this frame. The Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh conflict, energy cooperation and other questions were also focused on in the meetnig.

## **KAZAKHSTAN**

### **Global crisis may bring benefits to Kazakhstan**

**CA-NEWS (KZ)** - Investors, operating in the countries suffering from the financial crisis, could re-direct their investments into another region, Kazakhstan in particular, Interfax-Kazakhstan agency reported citing Head of the Investment Promotion Technical Assistance Program of the Islamic Development Bank (ITAP IDB) Khalid Khalafalla.

"The crisis may be used as a benefit in Kazakhstan. The investors, who are used to investing in such countries as the U.S., are currently considering other places for investments because of the crisis. Kazakhstan in such situation can attract them into its economy," he told to Interfax-Kazakhstan.

Meanwhile, head of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) Carlos Bronzatto noted that with the coming crisis Kazakhstan will probably have to review its plans to achieve a 15-percent increase in investments into non-energy sector by 2015.

According to Kairat Karmanov, deputy chairman of the National Agency of Export and Investments KAZNEX INVEST of Kazakhstan Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, last year for the first time Kazakhstan attracted more direct foreign investments to the non-energy sector than to its energy sector. This is over 58-percent growth in non-energy sector.

### **TURKSOY Secretary-General awarded Azerbaijan President's Dostlug Order**



BAKU. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed a decree to award Duisen Kaseinov a Dostlug Order for contributions to strengthening relations between Azerbaijan and Turkic-speaking countries.

### **Non-oil exports reach record level of 22.2 billion dollars in Kazakhstan**

**CA-NEWS (KZ)** - Kazakhstan's non-oil exports reached the record level of 22.2 billion dollars in 2011, business portal Kapital.kz said with reference to the press service of KAZNEX INVEST company.

### **Kazakhs are interested in real estate abroad**

**CA-NEWS (KZ)** - The rise in demand for real estate abroad is noted since 2011, after global crisis, CEO of Invest Realty and Vice-President of "Kazakhstan Real Estate Federation" Aida Esmagambetova said to Business Portal Kapital.kz.

The cost of real estate depends on the country. Prices range from 50 thousand to 200 thousand euros in Bulgaria, the average transaction costs 500-700 thousand pounds in London, in Dubai - 150-200 thousand dollars. Property abroad is seen primarily as the capital investment.

### **Kazakhstan To Tap Shale Gas Potential**



At a government session on March 13, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Karim Masimov ordered geological exploration to seek deposits of shale gas in the country as soon as possible.

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Industry and New Technologies Aset Isekeshev told the session his Ministry was already considering use of shale gas as an energy supply for the country.

Isekeshev noted shale gas "is a promising innovation that is developing in



the U.S." and added Kazakhstan would "study these technologies to see what effect they can have on the development of the Kazakh energy industry."

But Isekeshev was cautious, predicting coal would remain the primary source of fuel for the country's main power stations until at least 2030 due to the large coal reserves in Kazakhstan. Isekeshev said Kazakhstan would be using some 150 million tons of coal per year until then to keep power stations working.

### **Results after accession into Customs Union - Statistics Agency**

**CA-NEWS (KZ)** - Mutual trade turnover of Kazakhstan with countries of the Customs Union amounted to \$ 1,475.5 million in January 2012, or what is 12.9% more than in January 2011, according to the Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan.

Exports with countries of the Customs Union decreased by 4.5% or \$487.5 million, imports grew by 24.1% or \$988 million.

Export structure is dominated by Kazakh mineral products (43.4% of total exports to the Customs Union), metals and articles(31.8%), chemical products (12.0%).

Total foreign trade turnover of Kazakhstan with all countries totaled \$10.9 billion in January 2012, it increased by 97.8% comparing with January 2011. Exports increased by 2.1 times or \$8.2 billion, and imports by 1.5 times (\$ 2.7 billion).

Kazakh Minister of Industry and New Technologies Aset Issekeshev presented a **new concept of electric power industry development till 2020** with the perspective to 2030 at the Government meeting in Astana. According to him, this concept provides for increase in coal production up to 150 million tons a year, annual electricity generation up to 150.2 billion kW/h in 2030.

For the development of electric power industry till 2030 it is necessary to invest KZT 9.5 trillion, (1USD – 145 KZT / 66 billion USD)" he said. According to him, KZT 5.5 trillion is necessary for generation, KZT 1.4 trillion for national electrical networks and KZT 2.5 trillion for the country's electricity distribution companies.

At the said Government meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Premier of Kazakhstan Serik Akhmetov suggested settling this year all issues concerning the construction of an atomic power plant. "According to the electrical power system development program the atomic power plant energy should make 4.5% of the total electric power generated in the country. Therefore, we have to settle this issue this year," Akhmetov said.

### **All macroeconomic and financial indicators of Kazakhstan are at a good level - Marchenko**



The Chairman of the National Bank of Kazakhstan Grigory Marchenko said that the economy grew by 7.5% last year, and continues to grow. Last year, after three-year pause loans to real sector began to grow - grew by 15.7%. Deposits in the banking system have increased during the peak of the crisis. The National Fund has more than USD 47 billion, foreign exchange assets of the National Bank amount to USD 34.5 billion, Marchenko said.

### **OECD presented Kazakhstan's investment policy review**



Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development presented Kazakhstan's investment policy review. Kazakhstan progressed in attraction of investments. We see the increasing diversification of

Kazakhstan's economy and that is one of the Government's initiatives within the framework of the economic policy," Director of OECD Investment Division Stephen Thomsen noted at a press conference in Astana. According to him, Kazakhstan has less restrictions on foreign direct investments than Russia, but more than it is envisaged by the OECD standards. Kazakhstan has a good position in the Cost-of-Doing-Business Index which is measured by the World Bank annually.

### **Necessary to improve grain market state regulation, 1st Vice Premier of Kazakhstan**



ASTANA. "Promotion of Kazakhstan's grain and flour to the world market and, particular, to Central Asia and Southeast Asia countries demands the improvement of grain market state regulation," said Kazakh 1st Vice Premier Serik Akhmetov at the V Kazakh Grain Forum. The forum brought together 250 Kazakhstani and foreign companies, grain industry experts and business circles from more than 20 countries of the world.

High yield of grain and quantitative characteristics of Kazakhstan wheat advance Kazakhstan's positions as the one of the leading grain and flour exporters. More than 70 world countries buy Kazakh grain. 2011 country harvested record 27 mln tons of grain in the history of independent Kazakhstan. It will allow to bring export capacity up to 15 mln tons.

For further development of grain industry and promotion of grain exports it is necessary to develop grain storage and transportation infrastructure, including construction and renovation of granaries, construction of port terminals and acquisition of dry-cargo ships and grain wagons.

On the instruction of the Kazakh President N. Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan works on the creation of the Single Grain Holding.

**Kazakhstan needs to export 1.5 mln tons of grain to vacate elevators for next harvest**



Kazakhstan has to export 1.5 mln tons of grain to vacate grain elevators for further yield," Agriculture Minister Asylzhan Mamytbekov told before the opening of the V KazGrain 2012 grain forum in Astana.

**Kazakhstan plans to export 15 mln tons of grain in 2011-2012 marketing year**



"Kazakhstan is expected to export up to 15 mln tons of grain this marketing year," executive secretary of the Kazakh Agriculture Ministry Eugenie Aman told a press conference following the media tour for Astana journalists.

"I would like to specify the marketing year is July 2011 - July 2012. We plan to ship another 6-7 mln tons until the next harvest. This marketing year we expect to export up to 15 mln tons of grain, Aman said. Since the beginning of the marketing new year, since July 1, 2011 up to present Kazakhstan has already shipped about 7.5 mln tons of grain," he added.

## **KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

### **Kyrgyzstan to open a web site for investors**

16/02-2012

Kyrgyzstan will open a web site for investors as the director of Strategic Studies Institute Genghis Shamshiev said at a round table conference on investment climate improving.

According him, the web site will contain a database on Kyrgyzstan. "It will contain information about investment projects including 40 national projects worked out by the Government in 2011. It will also provide information about Kyrgyzstan legal framework, infrastructure and projects' presentation. It is planned to publish booklets about Kyrgyzstan. The site will be in Russian then it is planned to introduce little by little basic foreign languages," Genghis Shamshiev said.

### **The arrival of Turkish seed growers in Kyrgyzstan**

16/02-2012

"The arrival of Turkish seed growers in Kyrgyzstan is the result of the first official visit of President Almazbek Atambayev," Taalaibek Aidaraliyev, chairman of the Kyrgyz Seed Growers Association, stated at today's press conference.

According to him, bilateral meeting of two countries' agriculture workers is being held in Bishkek. "10 years ago the Turkey's legal framework of seed growing industry was in the same situation as Kyrgyzstan's today. The Turkish authorities managed to adopt the laws that became the basis of seed growing farms development. Our guests intend to share experience so that Kyrgyzstan adopts the laws aimed at the industry development. Kyrgyzstan has all conditions for this, since the republic has signed all international documents in the sphere of seed growing farms development," Taalaibek Aidaraliyev said.

He also emphasized that the Turkish delegation began its visit with attending the Ata-Beyit Memorial Complex, where prayers for the heroes of the April revolution in 2010, victims of political repression in the Soviet period and the great writer Chingiz Aitmatov were read.

### **Turkey intends to help Kyrgyzstan in seed industry**

16/02-2012

“Turkey intends to help Kyrgyzstan in seed industry,” Ilkham Ozdzhayun, head of the Industrialists, Seed Growers and Producers Union of Turkey stated at today’s press conference.

According to him, they want to fulfill their duty to Turkic-speaking countries with which Turkey has a common past. “The export of Turkish seeds hasn’t been made for 10 years. But today we have 520 firms engaged in it, and get \$120 million per year as a profit. Unfortunately, Turkey doesn’t export seeds to Kyrgyzstan. The Presidents of our countries agreed on bilateral trade, including in seed industry,” Ilkham Ozdzhayun said.

Top trade advisor of the Turkish Embassy in the KRG Bekhzat Erten noted that the members of the Industrialists, Seed Growers and Producers Union arrived in Kyrgyzstan to conduct negotiations on collaboration in agriculture, in particular in seed-growing industry development.

16/02-2012

**“Kyrgyzstan has all makings to become a world center for religious tourism,” Asel Begaliyeva, author of the book “Religious tourism in the Kyrgyz Republic” told 24.kg news agency.**

According to her, for ages Kyrgyzstan was located at the intersection of trade routes and cultural exchange, where there were pilgrims from all over the world. “The idea of religious tourism in the KRG existed before, but there were no people who would develop it,” Asel Begaliyeva said.

“Our republic has sacred places and relics worshiped by the representatives of different faiths. We should give impetus to the development of the tourism industry,” the writer added.

She also noted that the sacred Sulaiman-Too mountain in Osh city relates to the world's holy sites, as well as the relics of Matthew at the bottom of Lake Issyk-Kul. "In Kyrgyzstan there are places, where people acquire physical and spiritual healing, such as the district of 40 springs in Talas or Manas bowl in Barskoon," she stressed.

"We want to create a spiritually-oriented tourism, along with other areas of the tourism industry," Asel Begaliyeva concluded.

### **Foreign military contingent should not be in Manas Civil Airport after the summer of 2014 - The President of Kyrgyzstan**

20/02-2012

The President of Kyrgyzstan told the U.S. Department of State representatives that "foreign military contingent should not be in Manas Civil Airport after the summer of 2014". Today Almazbek Atambayev received the delegation headed by Deputy Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Susan Elliott.

The Deputy Assistant U.S. Secretary of State expressed gratitude to the Kyrgyz Republic for its contribution to the Manas Transit Center for security assurance in Afghanistan and in the region as a whole.

According to the Spokesperson's Office, Almazbek Atambayev noted that future cooperation with the U.S.A. will be built on the basis of national interests of Kyrgyzstan, and democratic development will serve as a factor in strengthening bilateral relations between two countries.

### **Islamic Development Bank to assist in building of switching stations in Bishkek and Osh cities**

20/02-2012

Islamic Development Bank will assist in building of switching stations in Bishkek and Osh cities. It was announced on International Relations and Interparliamentary Cooperation Committee.

IDB will give more than \$14M: \$9M will be spent for building switching stations in Bishkek, \$4M - in Osh city.

Contractor General is National Electric Nets of Kyrgyzstan OJSC.

**The Kyrgyz Seed Growers Association and the Turkish Manufacturers and Seed Producers Union sign a Memorandum of Cooperation**

20/02-2012

The Kyrgyz Seed Growers Association and the Turkish Manufacturers and Seed Producers Union signed a Memorandum of Cooperation. The Advisor on Trade of the Turkish Embassy to Kyrgyzstan Behzat Erten told 24.kg news agency.

According to him, the cooperation in the field of agriculture is expected under the memorandum. "We plan to conduct selection works and also to introduce modern technologies for the production of seeds and breeding of new varieties," Behzat Erten said.

Besides, he reported they had signed a cooperation agreement with the Faculty of Agriculture of Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University.

01/03-2012

**EU has started to develop a new project of technical assistance in Fergana valley delimitation process. EU office in Kyrgyzstan press service reports.**

According the press service, in framework of the project EU will give satellite images of border areas to Kyrgyzstan and other participants of demarcation process. Also they will be provided with free photo and computer equipment including necessary software for working with images of remote probing. Besides, European Union will give GPS-receiver for tracking exact coordinates and heights in border territories.

The received data can be used during bilateral commissions meetings on demarcation and delimitation, and border control in the region. The project will take 1.5 year and have budget in 1.31M euro. EU is ready to assist any interested countries of the region.



## **2B euro will be spent for railroad building in Kyrgyzstan**

05/03-2012

2B euro will be spent for railroad building in Kyrgyzstan. Such project was presented by vice president of Kyrgyz-German Company Temir Royal Nurlan Kurmanbekov on today's Ar Namys faction meeting.

According a railroad will connect the South and the North of Kyrgyzstan with further railway route to China: Arpa – Kara-Keche – Torugart (China) – Kara-Suu. Building will be realized in 3 stages. “German side is the main investor. Kyrgyzstan will rent a territory for a future railroad for 49 years. An agreement draft is ready. Invested money will return in 15-20 years. Kyrgyzstan will have basic benefits from cargo transit,” said Nurlan Kurmanbekov.

He added that the project was ready in 2005 but because of instability the realization was delayed. “I offer to support the project and to be against the Chinese-Kyrgyz road project under Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov who said that we can't give our natural resources in exchange of some “iron thing,” noted deputy Dastan Bekeshev.

## **TURKEY**

### **ODTÜ among top universities**

Ankara's Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) is the 96th best university of 100 top universities worldwide, according to a new ranking released by the London-based Times Higher Education magazine, the BBC has reported.

Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are at the top the list of world universities enjoying the best reputation, the survey said.

Cambridge and Oxford made the top 10, but other U.K. universities have slipped, while Asian institutions have risen in the rankings, said Phil Baty, editor of the Times Higher Education rankings. "This is uncomfortable news for the U.K."

The rankings are based on the perceptions of 17,000 academics. The list is an attempt to quantify the elusive but important quality of "reputation" in higher education, with findings based on the opinions of academics around the world. 15/03/2012

### **Turkey to Sue Iran at International Arbitration to cut Price for Gas**

The price for Iranian gas supplied to Turkey is much higher than the market price, that's why Turkey intends to dispute it after March 16 in the International Court of Arbitration, Anadolu Agency quoted Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yildiz as saying on Wednesday.

"Turkey will not delay an address to the International Court of Arbitration. We will sue Iran after March 16," he said.

Earlier Turkey sued Iran at the International Court of Arbitration over short supply of Iranian gas to Turkey.

In 1996, Iran and Turkey signed an agreement to supply 10 billion cubic metres of gas to Turkey annually (30 million cubic metres per day).

According to the statistical data of the Turkish State Pipeline Corporation

Botas, Turkey imported 39.7 billion cubic meters of gas in 2011. Among the exporters of gas to Turkey Russia ranks first, Iran and Azerbaijani follow Russia. 14/03/2012

### **Somalis Welcome First Turkish Airlines Flight to Mogadishu**

Amid a celebratory atmosphere and an official welcome, Turkish Airlines landed at Mogadishu Airport on Tuesday (March 6th).

It is the first major international airline outside of East Africa to operate regular commercial flights to Somalia in more than 20 years, a move analysts say is a sign of the improved security situation in Mogadishu.

Welcoming the first Turkish Airlines flight at Mogadishu Airport, Somali President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed said "We thank our Turkish brothers for the assistance and we receive it with an open heart."

A delegation of other Somali officials was on hand, as was the UN Special Representative to Somalia, foreign ambassadors to Somalia and Somali citizens.

Ahmed described the flight as an indication of the return of stability, as well as a major historical event. 10/03/2012

### **Amphibious Warship Put to Sea**

Turkey has built the first of its eight fast amphibious military ships, model Ç-151, which complies with NATO standards. These assault ships are being built as part of the "Landing Craft Tank" (LCT) project.

Ç-151 was put to sea March 9, at the shipyard of Anadolu Tersanesi, the civil facility which has undertaken the LCT project.

"I believe wholeheartedly that these ships will be sold to the world with the reference of the Armed Forces," Deputy Defense Minister Kemal Yardımcı said at the launch ceremony.

“Our next target is to develop new projects, to export national technology to the world,” said Anadolu Tersanesi Chairman Faruk Ürkmez. 10/03/2012

### **Most Turks Happy, 75 Pct Hopeful, Survey Suggests**

Turkish people have become happier since 2010, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute’s (TÜİK) “Life Satisfaction Survey 2011” published yesterday.

The percentage of happy women exceeds that of happy men, while the number of debtors decreased even as savings eroded, the survey revealed.

Some 62.1 percent of individuals at 18 years of age or over said they were happy while 9.9 percent said they were unhappy in 2011. The figures were 61.2 and 10.7 percent, respectively, the year before. Happiness varies across age groups. While 69.5 percent of individuals between 18 and 24 are happy, the figure falls to 57.8 percent among individuals 65 years old and over.

The data suggests that more women are happy in comparison to men. The percentage of happiness is 64.6 percent in women, while it is 59.5 percent in men, TÜİK said.

The ratio of individuals hopeful about the future is 75.2 percent.

“The purpose of the Life Satisfaction Survey is to measure the subjective happiness perception of individuals and satisfactions from main components of life such as health, social security, formal education, work life, income, personal security and judicial services, individual improvement and determine the changes in them in time,” TÜİK said.

The survey, which was conducted in both urban and rural areas, is carried out in November of each year via face-to-face interviews with individuals.

The 2011 Life Satisfaction Survey was carried out at 3,551 households with 7,368 individuals 18 years of age and over. 10/03/2012

### **Turkish FM Meets UN Humanitarian Chief On Syria Crisis**

Turkey's foreign minister on Friday held a meeting with UN's top official for humanitarian affairs who has recently wrapped up a visit to Syria.

Ahmet Davutoglu met with Valerie Amos, UN under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, in Ankara, the Turkish capital.

Amos and a team from the Syrian Red Crescent were allowed Wednesday to enter and spend an hour in the Baba Amr neighborhood of Syria's restive city of Homs, the scene of fierce fighting between the Syrian army and rebel forces.

According to diplomatic sources, Amos briefed Davutoglu on his talks in Lebanon and Jordan and his impressions in Syria as well as his impressions in tent-sites in Turkish southern province of Hatay where Syrian people who fled from their country are staying.

Amos defined his impressions in Syria as shocking. Davutoglu, in his part, said Turkey would continue to be in contact with the UN and do everything it could to help Syrian people.

Minister Davutoglu reaffirmed that Turkey would go on helping Syrian people staying in tent-sites, and said Turkey had many times held talks with the Syrian administration but those talks did not bear any result.

Davutoglu also said Turkey was concerned about the humanitarian situation in Syria. 9/03/2012

### **Istanbul to Host Iran Nuclear Talks in April**

The expected meeting between Iran and the so-called P5+1 countries (the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany) will be held in Istanbul in early April, according to Turkey's top diplomat.

Speaking to daily Radikal on his way back from Nakhchivan to Ankara, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said the target should be for Iran to halt uranium enrichment. In this context, the May 2010 Tehran

Agreement between Turkey, Iran and Brazil, which was rejected by the West, was a huge “missed opportunity,” he said. Davutoğlu said this agreement would have allowed the international community to take 1,800 kg of enriched uranium from Iran, out of a total of 3,000 kg. “If that agreement was accepted, Iran would have taken the uranium it needed from abroad, halting the process of enrichment.” Regarding Iran’s oil exports, Davutoğlu said Turkey will take into consideration U.N. decisions. He also said Iran had to choose between “the gain and loss of sanctions and the gain and loss of nuclear power.”

Meanwhile, Davutoğlu also said Turkey and the region are bracing for “crucial” diplomacy traffic on Syria. He reminded Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s March 28 visit to Tehran, the March 29 Arab League summit, and finally, the Istanbul conference on Syria which will be held in early April. Davutoğlu said Turkey will continue to talk with Russia on the issue, regardless of the differences of opinion.

Commenting on Iran’s position, Davutoğlu said: “They still favor reforms under the Bashar al-Assad rule. But our trust has ended. We say that Assad should transfer his authorities. Both Iran and Russia were expecting that Assad would take back control. But now they are [looking for] alternatives, not standing behind Assad as they used to do in July. Both countries are concerned over the post-Assad [era].” 9/03/2012

### **Milestone Women Act Passed by Turkish Parliament**

Turkey’s parties cast aside their differences on International Women’s Day to unanimously pass a bill calling for increased protection for women from violence

Turkish lawmakers passed unanimously yesterday a landmark bill to curb violence against women in a rare show of cooperation between the ruling party and the opposition.

The adoption of the legislation, which introduces tough measures against abusers and significantly boosts state assistance for victims, coincided with International Women’s Day as the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) had planned.

Several changes were made to the draft during the two-day debate. Under the revised version, the authorities would not seek evidence or documents proving that the victim had been subjected to violence in order to enforce protective measures. A provision that would have enabled judges to enforce protection measures even if they are not requested by the victim was removed from the text.

The law provides protection for all women: married, divorced, engaged or in a relationship. In cases of life-threatening danger, security chiefs would be able to make urgent protection decisions or issue restraining orders without a court ruling. An array of technological means would be employed to enforce the law. 9/03/2012

### **Davutoglu: Format of Trilateral Meetings of Azerbaijani, Iranian and Turkish FMs Can Be Expanded**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu does not rule out expansion in the future of format of trilateral meetings of foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey.

"In the future, the region's other countries, I mean, Armenia, Georgia and Russia will be able to join such meetings," Davutoglu said on Wednesday in Nakhchivan at a press conference following the meeting of foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey.

He said good start was laid at the first meeting of the foreign ministers in Orumiyeh, Iran in April last year.

"We continued discussions, agreed to hold similar meetings in the fields of trade, energy, tourism and transport. We hope that the South Caucasus region will turn into a region of peace," the Turkish Foreign Minister said.

The minister noted it is necessary to discuss and resolve customs and border issues in order to achieve progress in this area. "Thus, we will be able to achieve prosperity in the Caucasus region," he added.

Davutoglu also expressed hope that regional conflicts will be resolved. "In

particular, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be resolved on the basis of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity," said Davutoglu.

The trilateral meeting of the three countries' FMs was held in Nakhchivan on Wednesday. 8/03/2012

### **New Turkish Lira Symbol Reflects Economy's Strength**

Bringing together the letters T and L to form the shape of an anchor, the new symbol for the Turkish lira signifies that the currency is a safe haven for investment. The upward parallel lines represent its rising stature on international markets.

"The Turkish lira has a symbol now, just like the US dollar, the euro and the yen," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at a ceremony to present the new design on Wednesday (March 1st). He added that the introduction of the symbol is not just a technicality, rather, signifies renewed prestige for the national currency, the reawakening of the nation and its re-emergence as a global actor. 8/03/2012

### **Gül Calls on Assad to Agree to Proposals**

Turkey has urged the Syrian administration to agree to settlement proposals made by the international community, President Abdullah Gül said yesterday.

"Very soon they may regret not having done so today," Gül told reporters in a press conference before his flight to Tunisia yesterday.

Incidents in a country became an issue of humanity and the international community if they exceeded a certain level, Gül said, stressing that assault in Syria was not a domestic issue as the number of casualties increased every day. "We have lost confidence in the administration in Syria," the president said, adding that the Syrian regime was behaving blindly.

The Syrian regime must pay attention to the international community's efforts, he said.



Recalling the proposals of the Arab League for the Syrian administration to hand power over to a national unity government, Gül said "If they don't accept those proposals today, it will be too late in the future." 8/03/2012

### **Turkish Trade Patterns Shift With Political Dynamics**

The shifting geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East -- most recently centred on Syria -- are redefining Turkish economic relations. Events in Syria are aligning Turkey's economic and political policies with the oil and gas rich Gulf states, while Iraq and its autonomous Kurdish region have moved to the forefront of Turkey's economic policy in the Middle East.

The conflict in neighbouring Syria has put a near halt to Turkey's cross-border trade after years of steady growth. Before the uprising, Turkey viewed Syria as the gateway to its economic expansion in the Middle East, going so far as to envision forming a customs union among Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Syria, the so-called "Shamgen" or the Levant Quartet.

"Turkey's trade might have slowed down with Syria, but still Iraq could well compensate for the loss," said Tarik Bozbey, head of the Mediterranean Exporters Union. Last year, Turkey's bilateral trade volume with Iraq reached 9 billion euros (21.2 billion lira). Turkey's total exports to Iraq rose to 6.4 billion euros (14.1 billion lira) by the end of last year, ranking Iraq as Turkey's second biggest export destination after Germany. 7/03/2012

### **Turkish premier says humanitarian corridor to Syria should be opened**

Turkey's prime minister said on Tuesday that humanitarian corridor to Syria should be opened.

"Arab League's plan should be implemented," Erdogan told a gathering of his Justice & Development (AK) Party at parliament. Erdogan said the world had not asked for an explanation from Bashar al-Assad's father's but it would ask for an explanation from Bashar al-Assad. "This time, bloodshed in Syrian cities will not remain unanswered," Erdogan said.

Erdogan said Syrian people were not alone, and would never be left alone.  
6/03/2012

### **Turkey Keeps France Sanctions despite Court Ruling on "Genocide" Bill**

Turkey has decided to keep sanctions on France it imposed after French assembly endorsed a bill making it a crime to deny the so-called "Armenian genocide", government spokesman said on Monday, Today's Zaman reported.

Bulent Arinc, who is also deputy prime minister, told reporters following a cabinet meeting on Monday that controversial French bill on "Armenian genocide" was brought to the agenda of the meeting. He welcomed the ruling of the French Constitutional Council which said last week that genocide-denial bill is "unconstitutional" and violates freedom of speech.  
6/03/2012

### **Use of Lira in Trade Boosts New Symbol**

The use of the Turkish Lira in foreign trade transactions has increased 21.3 times in the past 10 years, said Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Çağlayan, noting that foreign trade would be the biggest vehicle for promotion of the lira's new currency symbol.

"The total value of Turkish liras used in foreign trade transactions was only \$516.6 million in 2002, but this figure had risen 21.3 times to \$11.1 billion by the end of 2011. The rate of use of the Turkish lira in foreign transactions was 0.6 percent in 2002 and had risen to 3 percent in 2011," Çağlayan said. The value of the Turkish lira used in foreign trade in 2011 increased \$794 million in exports and \$1.8 billion in imports compared to 2010, he added.

In a written statement the minister said foreign trade would be the biggest source of support for making the national currency's new symbol known in international markets. Figures for the first month of this year are also encouraging. A total of \$820 million in trade was conducted in Turkish liras in January, Çağlayan said. 3/03/2012

### **Turkey Takes Interest in TAPI Gas Project**

Ankara has taken an interest in the project of construction of the Turkmenistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan - India (TAPI) gas pipeline, a joint declaration signed during Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammadov's visit to Turkey, says.

The document was signed after the talks and high-level meetings.

Turkmen leader's visit will run from Feb.28 to March 1, 2012.

"The parties confirmed the need for continuing work on the development of regional projects aimed at restoring and development of socio-economic spheres of Afghanistan. In this regard, the Turkish side expressed its interest in major projects, including the Turkmenistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan - India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, increasing supply of Turkmen electricity to Afghanistan, as well as projects of transport infrastructure development and expressed its support for these projects," the declaration said. 1/03/2012

### **Turkish firms called to 'rebuild' Turkmenistan**

Authorities in Ashgabat will resolve the payment difficulties of Turkish businessmen in Turkmenistan, the Central Asian country's president said yesterday while offering attractive business deals for Turkish businessmen who want to invest in Turkmenistan.

"Anything can happen in our lives, and we are ready to solve it all," Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said, addressing the difficulties some Turkish firms have had receiving payment for completed projects in Turkmen cities. Visiting for the first time since his re-election, Berdimuhamedov spoke at the Turkmen-Turkish Business Forum in Istanbul, which was organized by the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK).

"We have intense relations with Turkmenistan, it is inevitable we encounter some problems," Turkish President Abdullah Gül said, adding that both leaders had exchanged ideas to resolve the ongoing disputes. "The Turkmen leader has given instructions to officials regarding the issue."

“Turkmen authorities made such promises before, but they never came true,” Tarık Bozbey, head of the Mediterranean Exporters Union, told the Hürriyet Daily News on the sidelines of the meeting. Nearly 40 Turkish firms have been waiting for Turkmen authorities to pay nearly \$1.3 billion for completed construction projects, said Bozbey, who represents Turkish firms that have encountered payment difficulties in Turkmenistan.

*Opportunities for partnerships*

“There are great projects that we invite you to take part in ... There are new plants and facilities to construct and cities to build in Turkmenistan,” said Berdimuhamedov, noting Turkish firms would have priority in taking part in the giant projects.

Turkmenistan trades with more than 100 countries, the Turkmen president said, calling Turkey a strategic partner. He said Turkmenistan had agreed to 1,299 construction projects to be run by Turkish companies in 2010 and that Turkish firms had been active in Turkmenistan since its independence 20 years ago.

Berdimuhamedov said a recently explored natural gas field with a capacity of 26.2 trillion cubic meters in the southern part of the country presented opportunities for partnerships with Turkish firms.

“Turkey is also invited to take part in our gas pipeline projects with Pakistan and Afghanistan,” said the Turkmen leader. Ankara-based Lotus Energy has currently constructed two grids with a 254-megawatt capacity each to transfer electricity to Afghanistan, he said, adding that Turkish firms had been invited to participate in the expansion and connection of Turkmen ports with railroads, as well as energy projects.

“The world closely watches Turkmenistan as it plays an important role in the world’s energy market,” said Gül, noting that Turkey and Turkmenistan could enhance bilateral business bonds.

Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Çağlayan said Turkey and Turkmenistan should develop extensive cooperation not only in construction, but also energy, education, tourism, technology and agriculture. According to official

data, Turkey's bilateral trade volume rose to \$3.65 billion by the end of last year and had gone up 2.8 fold since 2007. 02/03/2012

**Turkey and Kazakhstan have Similar Approaches on a Wide Array of International and Regional Issues - Turkish Ambassador Lale Ülker**

This year is the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan.

The language, history and culture of Turkish and Kazakh people rest upon common roots. Our common values bind us strongly. In this respect, relations with Kazakhstan have always had a distinct place in Turkish foreign policy. Turkey, as the first country to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan, appraises the progress it had achieved in a relatively short period after its independence and the consolidation of its respectable position in the international stage.

Following the independence of Kazakhstan several treaties and protocols were signed which established the legal basis for the future bilateral cooperation in various fields. In line with the exemplary level of relations between the two countries Kazakhstan has become the most important political and economic partner of Turkey in the region.

Lale Ülker, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in the Republic of Kazakhstan tells about the essence of Turkish-Kazakh relations.

- How do you evaluate the current status of Turkish-Kazakh relations?

The relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan which gained a new dimension with the Strategic Cooperation Agreement signed during the visit of His Excellency President Mr. Nazarbayev to Turkey in 2009 follows an excellent course in all the fields. Frequent high level visits between the two countries pave the way for further deepening and diversifying of our relations. The economic and trade relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan continue to develop and diversify. Kazakhstan is Turkey's most important economic and trade partner in the region. The exemplary cooperation in the fields of education and culture constitutes another important dimension of our bilateral relations. The Kazakh students

receiving education in the Turkish universities both in Turkey and in Kazakhstan, in Kazakh-Turkish schools in Kazakhstan and the Turkish students studying in universities in Kazakhstan particularly in International Hodja Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University constitute the basis of our common future.

- How do you evaluate the cooperation between Turkey and Kazakhstan at the international stage?

The relations between Turkey and Kazakhstan develop not only on bilateral basis but also on regional and international stage. I would like to gladly note that Turkey and Kazakhstan have similar approaches on a wide array of international and regional issues. Both countries cooperate and exert combined efforts for the establishment of peace and stability in Eurasia. As a substantial result of these efforts, Turkic Speaking Countries Cooperation Council, whose founding father is President Nazarbayev, was institutionalized with the Summit organized in Istanbul on 15-16 September 2010. Cooperation Council's first Summit was successfully held in Almaty on 21 October 2011.

On the other hand in 2010 Turkey assumed the chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) which was founded by President Nazarbayev's initiative. In addition, Turkey and Kazakhstan actively cooperate within the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe and Economic Cooperation Organization.

29/02/2012

### **French Court Overturns French Genocide Denial Law; Turkey Welcomes Ruling**

France's Constitutional Council has ruled that a law concerning the mass killings of Armenians a century ago violates the country's constitution.

The law, passed in December, made it a crime to deny that the killings of some 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 constituted genocide. Punishment under the legislation was set at up to one year in prison and a fine of 45,000 euros.

But the French high court ruled that the law amounts to an "unconstitutional infringement of the exercise of freedom of expression and communication."

The court said: "It is legitimate for the Parliament to institute indictments on abuse of the exercise of freedom of expression and communication that violate public order and the rights of others. However, the infringement of the exercise of this freedom -- which is a prerequisite for democracy and a guarantee of respect for other rights and freedoms -- must be necessary, appropriate and proportionate to the aim pursued."

Turkey promptly welcomed the ruling. Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said the French court's decision "does not indulge political concerns" and that it "averted a potentially serious crisis" in Turkish-French ties.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the French court's ruling would prevent future attempts by French lawmakers to pass such laws, adding he hopes the French government will "respect the decision."  
29/02/2012

### **Turkey Not Considering Afghan Withdrawal Unlike UK, NATO**

NATO pulled all its staff out of Afghan government ministries Feb. 25, after two of its advisers in the interior ministry were shot dead. Britain also said its embassy was temporarily withdrawing all civilian mentors and advisers from Afghan government institutions in Kabul. Upon questioning, the Turkish Foreign Ministry told the Daily News that Turkey was not considering withdrawing any of its staff from Afghanistan.

Turkey, which has the second largest standing army in the alliance, currently has 1,600 soldiers serving in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Unlike other European members of ISAF, Turkey's mission is limited to patrols and its troops do not take part in combat operations. Afghanistan's interior ministry said yesterday one of its employees is suspected of shooting dead two U.S. officers. "An employee has been

identified as a suspect and he has now fled. The interior ministry is trying to arrest the suspected individual,” it said in a statement. 27/02/2012

### **Turkey, China Express Commitment to Boost Economic Ties**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping reiterated commitment to boost economic ties between the two countries.

In a behind-closed-doors meeting in Istanbul, Erdogan and Xi expressed willingness to improve cooperation, sources close to the meeting said, adding Chinese vice president told Erdogan that China was interested in projects in Turkey.

Sources also said Xi had invited Erdogan to China on a formal visit as the Turkish premier had said he planned to pay the visit in the coming months. 22/02/2012

### **Israel and Greek Cyprus Gas Push Disturbs Turkey**

The Israeli PM’s first visit to Greek Cyprus marked their cooperation on energy, amid Turkey’s warning of protecting its rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Greek Cyprus yesterday to discuss energy cooperation, right after Cypriots launched a second licensing round for offshore exploratory drilling that received Turkey’s condemnation. Netanyahu’s visit is the first by an Israeli prime minister to the eastern Mediterranean island. The blossoming of relations between Israel and Greek Cyprus is prompted by a mutual interest in gas and oil exploration and comes as their respective ties with Turkey deteriorate.

Netanyahu’s office said the one-day visit “was designed to strengthen the improving ties between the two nations.” The two sides will discuss cooperation in energy matters, agriculture, health and maritime research and sign a disaster relief and a search and rescue agreement, the office said.

*Turkey warns of fresh tensions*



The visit came a day after the Greek Cypriot Commerce Ministry announced a second licensing round to search for mineral deposits in 12 of the 13 sections that together make up the island's 51,000-square-km exclusive economic zone off its southern coast. Yesterday, Turkey denounced the new international tender and warned of a fresh escalation of tensions.

The designated exploration blocks overlap with Turkey's continental shelf areas in the eastern Mediterranean as well as the concession blocks Turkish Cyprus granted to the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPAO) last September, a Foreign Ministry statement said late Feb. 15.

The announcement shows that the Greek Cypriot side totally disregards the equal rights and legitimate interests of the Turkish Cypriots, the statement said.

"Certain sections of concession blocks – namely the so-called 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th blocks – overlap with Turkey's continental shelf areas [...] The concession blocks identified [...] not only violate Turkey's continental shelf, but also overlap, in the south of the island, with the concession blocks granted to TPAO by Turkish Cyprus on Sept. 22, 2011," the statement said.

It added that Turkey would not under any circumstances allow foreign oil companies to conduct unauthorized oil or natural gas exploration and would take all necessary measures to protect its rights and interests. The Foreign Ministry warned this situation would bring those international companies that might be interested in bidding for this illegal tender into confrontation with Turkish Cyprus and TPAO. 17/02/2012

### **Istanbul Hopeful, Rome Out of the Olympic Race**

Turkish National Olympic Committee presents Istanbul's bid for the 2020 Olympic Games hosting on the deadline day, with senior bid official Hasan Arat hopeful that it can end better than previous bids. The submission comes a day after Rome pulls out of the race with financial woes. A very hopeful Turkish National Olympic Committee submitted Istanbul's 2020 Olympic bid file to the International Olympic Committee yesterday, a day after Italy's Rome pulled out of the race.

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Istanbul joined Tokyo, Japan; Doha, Qatar; Madrid, Spain; and Baku, Azerbaijan as the candidates.

Istanbul is bidding for a fifth time after failed attempts for the Olympics in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012. 16/02/2012

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