



NEWSLETTER

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President Aliyev on Military Build-Up

Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan held a meeting on building-up of the army at the Defense Ministry on April. President Aliyev said that building up the armed forces has always been in spotlight. "It is a main issue for us because Azerbaijan territories have been under occupation for many years," said the Head of State, adding that Azerbaijan's intensively beefing up its military comes from the need. President Aliyev noted that Armenia's and its supporters' invasion of Azerbaijani lands was accompanied by brutalities. "Khojaly genocide is a striking example of this. Armenia grossly violates all legal norms". Though the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions on the liberation of occupied Azerbaijani lands, Armenia did not fulfill these decisions. The Azerbaijani leader noted that the updated Madrid principles could be a basis for preparation of final proposals. President Aliyev pointed out that Armenia does not want to leave occupied lands as it drags out peace talks. "Our biggest compromise is that Azerbaijan has been committed to the peace process for 20 years," he said. According to the President, the international community must respect its own decisions and no problem can be solved in the region without resolution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, as the conflict seriously affects the whole region.

Azerbaijan Signed Protocol with Georgia on WTO Admission

Georgia and Azerbaijan signed a protocol on bilateral negotiations on admission of goods and services of two countries to the markets within the framework of Azerbaijan's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). The protocol was signed by Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili Georgian Economic Minister and Mr. Shahin Mustafayev Azerbaijani Minister of Economic Development. The two sides expressed confidence that working out of the protocol will give a new impetus to the

intensification of trade relations between the two countries. The Georgian-Azerbaijani business forum was also held during the Azerbaijani delegation's visit. Since 1997, Azerbaijan has been represented at the World Trade Organization as an observer. At present, negotiations have been completed and protocols signed with Turkey, the Sultanate of Oman, United Arab Emirates and Georgia. The country is on the stage of signing the protocol with Moldova and Kyrgyzstan. Azerbaijan also carries negotiations with the United States, Japan, Brazil, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, European Union, Norway, India, South Korea, and Switzerland.

Azerbaijan and Turkey Agreed on Gas

According to Mr. Natiq Aliyev, Minister of Industry and Energy the talks on gas prices between Azerbaijan and Turkey have been completed. Mr. Aliyev pointed out that an agreement between the countries will be signed soon. The Minister said that Azerbaijani companies (about 500 in Turkey) increased their investments into Turkey's economy. The European Union welcomes Azerbaijan-Turkey agreement on gas transportation, said Mr. Guenther Oettinger, EU Energy Commissioner. "Turkey and Azerbaijan are our indispensable partners for the realization of the Southern Corridor. This agreement between such two important partners opens the way for a strategic allocation of gas that will underpin the Southern Corridor and provide energy security to Turkey and the EU". Under the current contract, Turkey must receive 6.6 billion cubic meters of gas from Shah Deniz in the first stage of the field's development. Shah Deniz reserves are estimated at 1.2 trillion cubic meters. The contract to develop the offshore Shah Deniz field was signed on June 4, 1996 and included: BP (operator), Statoil Hydro, NICO, Total, LukAgip, TPAO, and SOCAR.