



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. TO SAVE THE CATHOLICOS [Haykakan Zhamanak, 04/16/08]

According to our information the authorities have decided to "save" the reputation of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, who devotedly serves and supports them. So they have organized a very interesting event. Students of higher educational institutions of Armenia will hold a march as a sign of protest against those who recently criticized the Catholicos and the Church. The march will start from St. Grikor Lusavorich Church and the crowd will walk to the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin.

All "republicanized" (Editor's Note: referring to the Republican Party of Armenia) Student Councils have been ordered to collect a descent number of students from their universities not to fail the event.

2. ARMENCHIK – DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER [Haykakan Zhamanak, 04/16/08]

There are rumors that President Serge Sarkissian has finally decided not to keep Hovik Abrahamian in the position of RA Deputy Prime Minister. Days ago several oligarchs, including Gagik Tsarukian, Mher Setrakian and Levon Sarkissian met President Sarkissian in Tsaghkadzor and tried to convince him to appoint Hovik Abrahamian in the position of RA Prime Minister, but the President not only did not appoint him Prime Minister, he also wants to dismiss him from the Deputy Prime Minister's position. Well, surely, Abrahamian will not remain without position. They will find something appropriate for him. Meanwhile, there are rumors that his position of Deputy Prime Minister will be given to Kocharian's favorite Armen Gevorkian, Chief of President's staff. Most probably, Hovik Abrahamian will replace Gevorkian as Chief of President's Staff.

The Finance and Economy Ministry will be divided. The "Economy" part of it will join the RA Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development and will be headed by current Minister Nerses Yeritsian.

President Sarkissian has offered Gagik Minassian, Head of the RA NA Finance and Budgetary Committee, to become RA Finance Minister, but the latter has rejected the offer. There are rumors that the post of Finance Minister will go to former Deputy Finance Minister Gagik Arzumianian.

It was said that the new Ministry of Diaspora will be given to Arkady Ghoukassian, ex-president of NKR, but considering the public concern and dissatisfaction around the Karabakhtsi figures, it has been decided that the position of Minister of Diaspora will be entrusted to Hranush Hagopian, RA Parliament member and Head of the NA Education, Culture, and Science Standing Committee.

Ex-President Kocharian's assistant Vigen Sarkissian will receive a post of Deputy Foreign Minister, instead of Armen Bayburtian, who was dismissed from his position by Vartan Oskanian on the day he announced his support to Levon Ter-Petrosian.

3. ACCORDING TO LEVON TER-PETROSIAN, THERE ARE 150 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

"I do not know any country - member of Council of Europe, which has political prisoners," first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian said in his interview to the Noviy Izvestiya Russian newspaper the day before mentioning that the number of political prisoners in Armenia reaches 150. According to him, all heads of his preelection headquarters and almost all his proxies have been arrested.

In connection with estimations of some international structures to the presidential elections held in Armenia in February L. Ter-Petrosian said that "pensioner diplomats and young careerists have gathered in these bureaucratic organizations." The latters, according to him, cannot record that everything is bad in one of the countries under their responsibility (in Armenia: NT). "In that case they will be asked: what have you been doing up to present?," L. Ter-Petrosian said. According to him, it were governments that usually complained of the above mentioned structures so far, while today already the societies, the opposition of these countries are dissatisfied with them.

Touching upon the further tasks of the opposition movement headed by him, L. Ter-Petrosian stated that he is going to form a certain public opinion aimed at non-recognition of the new authorities and intends to use all measures not prohibited by the law for that purpose.



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4. GOODBYE ALIK [Haykakan Zhamanak, 04/16/08]

There are rumors that Alexander Harutiunian will not maintain his position of Chairman of Public Television Council. He will be replaced by Ruben Jaghinian, President of "Sharm" Holding, who organized Serge Sarkissian's pre-electoral campaign.

5. TWO PERSONS ACCUSED OF COMMITTING VIOLENCE AGAINST POLICEMEN ON MARCH 1 SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT, ONE OF THEM GIVEN SUSPENDED SENTENCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities on April 14 made rulings on charge of committing violence against a representative of the authorities in Liberty Square of Yerevan on March 1. The court granted the petitions of the defendants Mesrop Zakarian and Raji Petrosian to conduct an accelerated court examination.

Based on the ruling of the court (chairman - Judge Ruben Apinian), Mesrop Zakarian, 46, of the city of Vanadzor, was given 2 years' suspended sentence with 2 years' probation. He was found guilty under the RA Criminal Code's Article 316 part 1: violence against a representative of the authorities. According to the indictment, the defendant did not obey the legal demand of policemen: to allow to check the information about existence of arms and ammunition in Liberty Square. Moreover, according to the indictment, by pushing, hitting and pulling the policemen, the defendant committed violence not threatening their health or lives. The defence lawyer Benjamin Minasian stated in his speech that the defendant admitted his guilt and repented saying that he "fell a victim to rallies of Levon Ter-Petrosian".

Based on the ruling of the court (chairwoman - Judge Gayane Karakhanian), Raji Petrosian, 30, of the city of Maralik, was sentenced to imprisonment of 2 years and 6 months. He was found guilty for committing violence against policemen in Liberty Square early March 1. R. Petrosian was not given suspended sentence as he was twice convicted in the past: for military service evasion and for obtaining and using drugs. The indicated article of the Criminal Code envisages imprisonment of a maximum of 5 years.

6. SEYRAN OHANIAN APPOINTED MINISTER OF DEFENCE, EDWARD NALBANDIAN - FOREIGN MINISTER [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 04/15/08]

Pursuant to Article 55 Point 4 of the RA Constitution, the Armenian president Serge Sargsian signed decrees on appointing Seyran Ohanian the minister of defence of the RA, Edward Nalbandian - the foreign minister of the RA.

Pursuant to Article 55 point 12 of the RA Constitution and based on the RA Constitution's Article 52 part 1 point 1 on military service, the Armenian president signed a decree on relieving Colonel General Seyran Ohanian of his post as first deputy minister - head of the General Staff of the RA Armed Forces based on the report of S. Ohanian.

By another decree of S. Sargsian, Edward Nalbandian was relieved of his duties as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to France, pluralistically - to the Vatican, Israel, and Andorra.

7. YURI KHACHATUROV APPOINTED HEAD OF RA ARMED FORCES GENERAL HEADQUARTERS [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 04/15/08]

By the April 15 decree of RA President Serge Sargsian Lieutenant-General Yuri Khachaturov has been appointed Head of the General Headquarters of the RA Armed Forces - First Deputy Minister of Defence, being relieved of the post of the RA Deputy Minister of Defence. According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, Yuri Khachaturov has been decorated with the military rank of a Colonel-General with another decree of the same day.

8. ACCORDING TO SERGE SARGSIAN, ARMY WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN CENTER OF SPECIAL ATTENTION OF STATE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, introduced Seyran Ohanian, the newly appointed Minister of Defence, to the higher levels of the officer corps of the army on April 15 and highly appreciated his active participation in the strengthening of the army.

Serge Sargsian mentioned that the army will continue to be in the center of the special attention of the state and that at present serious problems are set in front of the armed forces. He expressed



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confidence that the defence department will successfully carry out those problems and continue the steps and the process of reforms directed at the further increase in the fighting ability of the army under the leadership of Yuri Khachaturov, the newly-appointed Head of the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces, and the Minister of Defence.

According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, Serge Sargsian thanked former Minister Mikael Haroutiunian for the joint productive work and expressed conviction that his experience and knowledge will henceforth as well serve to the development of the army.

9. "I WOULD LIKE EUROPE NOT TO USE DOUBLE STANDARDS WITH REGARD TO ARMENIA," WIFE OF ALEXANDER ARZUMANIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The wives and relatives of the political figures, freedom fighters and activists put under arrest within the frameworks of the criminal case filed on the occasion of the March 1 events hold an action of protest at the Embassy of France in Armenia on April 15. In her interview with journalists Melisa Brown, the wife of Alexander Arzumian, the RA former Minister of Foreign Affairs and a member of the pre-electoral headquarters of RA first President Levon Ter-Petrosian, who is under arrest now, stated that the main objective of the action is to reach to the MPs of the European Parliament the dissatisfaction of the Armenian people and that they will fight until the political prisoners are set free and Armenia becomes a democratic country. In the words of Melisa Brown, it is a disgrace that irrespective of the fact that numerous electoral violations and the terrible post-election state are mentioned in the report of John Prescott, the Head of the PACE observation mission, it is concluded that the elections have been held in conformity with democratic standards.

"The people of Armenia does not accept these elections. I would like Europe not to use double standards with regard to Armenia," Melisa Brown said.

The demonstrators stood in front of the Embassy for an hour and wanted to meet with any of its representatives, however, nobody came out to listen to the relatives of those detained.

Tomorrow a similar action will be held near the Embassy of Germany in Armenia.

10. SONA TRUZIAN: WE HAVE NEVER HAD 150 PEOPLE ARRESTED ON CASE OF MASS DISORDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

As of April 15, 78 people are under preliminary arrest within the framework of the criminal case on instigating and organizing mass disorders in the city of Yerevan examined by the RA Special Investigation Service. Sona Truzian, the Spokesperson of the RA Prosecutor General, in her interview to Noyan Tapan correspondent named the assertion of first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian on presence of 150 arrested people as "obvious misinformation:" she asserted that we have never had 150 arrested people. A signature on not leaving the country has been chosen as a preventive punishment to another 16 defendants and another three people have been arrested with the suspicion of taking an immediate part in the mass disorders that happened on March 1-2, 2008.

20 criminal cases on 20 people have been sent to the court as of April 15, and judicial enquiry on the part of three of them, David Hambartsumian, Mesrop Zakarian, and Raju Petrosian, by the signs of part 1, Article 316, RA Criminal Code, using violence to a power representative, has been finished by the order of speeded up investigation at the defendants' request.

Cases on another 4 defendants have been finished within the framework of the criminal case examined in the RA Special Investigation Service.

11. AAA TO CONTINUE SERVING ARMENIAN PEOPLE WITH ITS ACTIVITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

On April 15, RA President Serge Sargsian received Hrayr Hovnanian, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA). According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, the interlocutors spoke about the Armenia-Diaspora relations, Armenia-United States cooperation during the meeting.

H. Hovnanian said that the Armenian Assembly of America expects to continue cooperating with the newly elected President and to serve the Armenian people with its activity.



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12. DEFENDANTS IN MARALIK INCIDENT CASE SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT OF 1.5-2.5 YEARS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The regional court of Aragatsotn marz (chairman - Judge Manuk Margarian) on April 15 sentenced the defendants in the criminal case, which was opened in connection with the incident in Maralik square, to various terms of imprisonment from 1.5 to 2.5 years. NT was informed by spokeswoman for the RA Cassation Court Alina Yengoyan that Mkrtych Sapeyan was sentenced to two years in prison, Zhora Sapeyan - to 2.5 years in prison, Hayk Grigorian - to 1.5 years in prison, while Andranik Sapeyan was given suspended sentence of 2.5 years with 1.5 years' probation. All the defendants were found guilty under the RA Criminal Code's Article 258 Part 3 Point 1: hooliganism committed by a group of persons or an organized group. The Article 258 Part 3 envisages a fine in the amount of 200-500 minimal salaries or imprisonment for a maximum of 5 years.

To recap, the case was opened in the pre-election campaign stage of the RA presidential election, based on the fact of an incident that occurred during the pre-election meeting of Levon Ter-Petrosian in the square of the city of Talin on January 27.

According to NT's information, the defence intends to dispute the court decision in the Criminal Appeal Court.

13. CIS OFFICIAL CONGRATULATES NEW ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Mikhail Krotov, secretary general of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Council sent a message of congratulations to new Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, the government press office said.

It said the message reads as follows.

"Dear Mr. Sarkisian, on behalf of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Council I congratulate you on the occasion of being appointed prime minister of Armenia.

I am convinced that your work will be marked by success for the sake of Armenia's social-economic development and strengthening of ties within the CIS.

I wish you good health and peace and prosperity to the Republic of Armenia."

14. ARMENIAN NA MEMBER SAYS ISSUE OF INCOMPATIBILITY OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC MASSES MUST BE REVEALED IN KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION PROCESS [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

In the Karabakh conflict regulation process it is necessary to disclose and present to the international community with deep analysis the issue of incompatibility of different ethnic masses, the political secretary of "Heritage" party, member of its faction Vardan Khachatryan said today at a press conference.

Referring to the Karabakh conflict regulation process and particularly to the draft statement of the Armenian National Assembly over the conflict regulation process, the representative of the party said that it needs to be edited and more prominent points must be added for reaching better situation.

It is necessary to include in the document who first started the conflict and who provoked the war which is a very important circumstance from the point of view of international norm.

"In international chronological lists 1990 is marked as a year of elimination of Armenian Christians in Baku. So we have an objective ground to edit the statement from that point of view as well," V. Khachatryan said.

As to the possibility of continuation of negotiation process, V. Khachatryan said that Azerbaijan accentuates on the circumstance that if the negotiations be held within Minsk Group it will be only on the basis of document approved in UN.

15. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SIGNS A NUMBER OF LAWS [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed on April 12 laws approved by the NA on making additions in law on "Bankruptcy of Banks, Credit Organizations, Investment Companies and Insurance Companies", on making changes and additions in the Armenian code on "Administrative Violations" and in the law on "Guaranteeing Compensation of Bank Deposits of Natural Persons".

Presidential press service also informed that the president also signed a law on approving the 2006 annual report of implementation of the 2006-2007 program of state property privatization.



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16. WB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONGRATULATES TIGRAN SARGSIAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

The Executive Director of World Bank's Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Netherlands, Romania and Ukraine Office Herman Wijffels sent a congratulatory message to the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that in his message he particularly said,

"I have an honor to direct my true congratulations to You on being appointed prime minister of the Republic of Armenia. You have assumed very important duty and I am full of hope that during the work You will receive necessary support and assistance.

It is a time of crucial developments both for You and Armenia, and I am happy to be able to offer my personal support and cooperation on the moment when You are assuming the office of the prime minister.

I am convinced that the present excellent cooperation with the government of the Republic of Armenia will continue under Your leadership as well".

17. AZERBAIJANI DM CALLS ON INCREASING INFLUENCE ON ARMENIA BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Azerbaijani Defense Minister Safar Abiyev called on the international community to increase its influence on Armenia.

"Those countries and international organizations which are trying to regulate Karabakh conflict in a peaceful way must increase their influence on Armenia so that the situation will not bring to bad consequences," Abiyev said today in Baku at the meeting with the Colonel of Guardia of U.S. state of Oklahoma Harry Viyat.

18. NEW DEFENSE MINISTER INTRODUCED TO ARMY BRASS [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian met today with army brass to introduce the new defense minister Seyran Ohanian.

The presidential press service quoted Serzh Sarkisian as saying that he has known Seyran Ohanian for 20 years and can not remember an act on his part that would be unworthy of an army officer. The president commended the new minister's contribution to establishment and strengthening of Armenian armed forces.

According to Serzh Sarkisian, the army will continue to remain in the limelight of the government. He said the army has now serious tasks adding also that he is convicted that the army, spearheaded by new minister and new chief of the general staff, will fulfill all of them successfully.

President Serzh Sarkisian thanked the outgoing minister Mikael Harutyunian for effective work saying that he is sure that he will exploit his experience to help make the army further efficient.

Seyran Ohanian thanked the commander-in-chief for the trust saying he takes over by realizing very well the scale of responsibility of his new tenure. He said also he will direct his efforts and knowledge to raise the country's defense capacities and make the army more effective.

19. DATE OF MEETING OF AZERBAIJANI AND ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS NOT KNOWN YET [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Azerbaijani foreign affairs minister Elmar Mamedyarov could not say today in Baku when he would have the nearest chance to meet with Armenia's new foreign minister Edward Nalbandian.

He said their maiden meeting will be for both a familiarizing one. He explained it may happen only under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Speaking to reporters he described also visits by representatives of Azeri civil sector to Nagorno-Karabakh as 'useful.'

20. NEW PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES CONGRATULATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Dominique Straus-Kahn, director-manager of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sent a message of congratulations to Tigran Sarkisian on the occasion of being appointed as prime minister.

The government press office said IMF chief commended Sarkisian for his contribution to a long string of reforms in Armenia and developing a viable and effective banking system when he served for a decade as chairman of the Central Bank.



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He also said the IMF is committed to continue cooperation with Armenia.

The government press office said Tigran Sarkisian received also congratulatory messages from Archbishop Khazhak Barsamian, head of the North America Eastern Dioceses of the Armenian Church.

21. CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC LEADER SAYS ARMENIA ENTERS NEW STAGE [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Khosrov Harutyunian, chairman of a small Christian-Democratic Party, again repeated today that Armenia entered a new development stage. Speaking at a news conference he said the government should find its formula and try to combine all available capacities and know-how around that idea.

He spoke against making comparisons between the current and past periods because 'each of them solves its own tasks.'

He said the intellectual abilities of future government ministers are important because it must win the trust of the public at large.

"Every appointment will show whether the public trust in the government will grow or fall. It is important that the government be made up of professionals," he said.

He then praised new prime minister Tigran Sarkisian, new foreign minister Edward Nalbandian and defense minister Seyran Ohanian, who he said 'are trustworthy personalities.'

22. PARLIAMENT SPEAKER RECEIVES EXPERTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Tigran Torosian received today the experts of the Venice Commission Finola Flanagan and Simona Granata-Mengini as well as experts from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Dennis Petiti and Nil Jarman.

During the meeting the participants discussed the changes in the Armenian law on marches, rallies, meetings adopted on March 17.

Armenian Justice Minister Gevorg Danielian, Aide to the Armenian President Gevorg Mherian, Special Representative of the Council of Europe Secretary General Bojana Urumova and other officials were present at the meeting.

Armenian National Assembly press service told Armenpress that greeting the guests T. Torosian thanked for the discussion of the law and assured that Armenia respects the commitments assumed as a member of the Council of Europe.

Afterwards the speaker informed why the changes were made. He said the previous law was functioning without problems until one of presidential candidates, not agreeing with results of the elections, without informing 9 days conducted meetings which is a strict violation of law, afterwards, the speaker said, March 1 developments took place which are not often presented fully while only the complete information will give the full picture of what happened.

Torosian reminded that after nine days of illegal rallies the police addressed to the organizers saying that they had information about the existence of ammunition in the place of the meeting and they want to examine the place. As a result, Torosian noted, clashes occurred which expanded more in another place: buses and cars were burnt, shops were robbed, participants of the rallies had clashes with police officers.

The speaker also said that during the discussion of the law in the NA it was already noted that it will be sent for experts' conclusion which was done. He said that the discussion must be conducted over 4 points.

Finola Flanagan, expert of Venice Commission, expressed gratitude for the opportunity of discussion and underscored its necessity.

With the mutual agreement the discussions over the law will continue in the NA and after finding solution a draft memorandum will be prepared over it and the law will be sent to the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and after getting the response the draft law will be discussed in the NA and the changes will be approved.

23. PACE APPROVES A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

The session of the PACE monitoring commission approved today a draft resolution on the situation of democratic institutions in Armenia presented by rapporteur on Armenia Jorge Columbien and head of the PACE ad hoc observing Armenian presidential elections John Prescott.



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The head of the Armenian delegation to PACE David Harutyunian told Armenpress that it is only the first variant of the draft and the Armenian delegation and members of the PACE may present their suggestions. The voting will be conducted on April 17.

Overall, according to Harutyunian, the draft includes rough assessments connected with the recent developments in Armenia and situation of democratic institutions. It also includes suggestions concerning what prior issues must be solved in the country and particularly refers to the necessity of changes in law on meetings, rallies, marches.

D. Harutyunian noted that the Armenian delegation does not agree with all suggestions and definitions registered in the draft and considers that the document must include objective assessment which would be more favorable for this resolution and would promote further consolidation of democracy in Armenia.

The draft also has a point according to which PACE will refer to this issue in June to register the changes in Armenia.

24. ARMEN AVETISIAN DISMISSED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF ARMENIAN STATE CUSTOMS COMMITTEE [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree dismissing the head of the Armenian State Customs Committee Armen Avetisian from his office.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that Gagik Khachatryan, the deputy head of the customs committee, has been appointed in the place of A. Avetisian.

25. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO BE MARKED IN THE DUTCH CITY [ARMENPRESS, 04/16/08]

The 93-rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide will be marked on April 24 in the city of Assen in the Netherlands.

The remembrance ceremony will take place at the city's De Boskampe cemetery.

The 'April 24 Federation' of the Armenian organizations of the Netherlands told Armenpress that flowers will be put to a monument erected in memory of the genocide victims and a church service will be conducted for the repose of their souls.

Armenian consul in the Netherlands, a professor of the Leiden University and a Dutch parliament member will address the ceremony.

26. COUNCIL OF EUROPE SG SAYS ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN CLOSE TO HAMMERING OUT PEACE DEAL [ARMENPRESS, 04/16/08]

Council of Europe secretary general Terry Davis said Armenia and Azerbaijan are close to hammering out an agreement on the peaceful settlement of their dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh.

"I met with foreign ministers of both countries and discussed the issue at length and I have the impression that the sides are close to reaching an agreement. I think we can hope that the agreement may be reached in the near future," Terry Davis said during a news conference in Strasbourg.

Terry Davis expressed regret over the protracted conflict, adding that everyone realizes that no one can use force to make the sides agree to the option offered by the OSCE Minsk Group cochairmen.

He said the Minsk Group can only mediate reaching a peaceful agreement.

Council of Europe secretary general said a final and lasting solution will benefit the entire South Caucasian region. He also said that the belligerent spirit in the region subsided and this will help reach peace.

27. ORINATS YERKIR TO HAVE 2-3 GOVERNMENT PORTFOLIOS [ARMENPRESS, 04/16/08]

A parliament member from the Orinats Yerkir party, Artashes Avoyan, said today his party will have 2 or 3 portfolios in the new government and will control also two parliament committees.

He said talks between four coalition members were underway and the final make-up of the government will be clear at the end of the week.

Artashes Avoyan said his party emphasizes implementation of its programs and not the number of government portfolios. According to him, 90 percent of the party's programs are in the coalition agreement.

Avoyan continued by saying the party's ultimate objective is to carry out reforms. He stressed also system changes, restoration of the earthquake zone, elimination of poverty.



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He praised president Sarkisian's choice of new prime minister singling out Tigran Sarkisian's professional skills.

28. FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER APPOINTED CHIEF MILITARY INSPECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/16/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian appointed today former defense minister Mikael Harutyunian as his chief military inspector for a term of three years.

The presidential press office said by another decree Serzh Sarkisian appointed Mikael Harutyunian as an aide to president of Armenia.

BUSINESS

29. ECONOMIC FORECASTING PLATFORM WEBSITE TO BE AVAILABLE FROM APRIL 15 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Economic forecasting platform website (www.efp.am) to be available starting from April 15 within the framework of a project of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA). Visitors of the website can get information on independent experts' forecasts about important macroeconomic developments in Armenia, the head of the CBA financial department Artur Nakhshikian announced on April 14.

In his words, the purpose of the project is to increase the interest of economists in the macroeconomic processes taking place in Armenia and the level of the society's awareness of these processes. Forecasts will be gathered each quarter and published on 12th of the next month after each quarter. It is on the indicated days that information is published about the directions of the CBA's monetary and credit policy within the next month and forecasts about expected economic developments. This information and the quarterly reports about implementation of the monetary and credit policy will be available at the above mentioned website.

According to A. Nakhshikian, experts will present their personal opinions which do not necessarily coincide with those of the organization they represent. Experts will not be responsible for a third side's using these opinions.

30. ACCORDING TO CBA FORECAST, INFLATION TO MAKE 7.4% IN ARMENIA IN 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has presented forecasts about inflation for the next 12 months. According to the CBA press service, by the forecasts of the inflation model by commodity types, under conditions of the unchanged level of market interest rates, 12-month inflation will make 6.9% at the end of the 1st quarter of 2009 and 7.4% at the end of 4th quarter of 2008. The current forecasts have been specified as compared with the previous ones in the direction of a growth, taking into account the inflation developments in the 1st quarter of 2008. In particular, starting from 2nd quarter of 2008, international prices of raw material and food commodities will decline somewhat, while real GDP growth rates will maintain in Armenia, under conditions of the gross demand a little exceeding its balanced level.

The CBA considers it possible that actual inflation in the country may exceed the forecast index due to a higher than forecast growth of international prices of oil and food commodities (including grain), with the growth of oil prices depending on both geopolitical and foreign economic developments. A higher than expected growth in crediting of the economy, which may result in additional encouragement of the overall demand, may contribute to higher than forecast inflation in Armenia.

It is indicated that depending on the volume of agricultural production, food prices may affect the overall inflation in the direction of either a growth or a decline.

Taking into account the developments in the 1st quarter of 2008 and the forecasts for the next 12 months, the CBA Board registered that the inflation pressures continued to increase at the end of the 1st quarter, notably affecting the domestic prices of foodstuffs. The high inflation pressures from the external environment are expected to continue in the 2nd quarter of 2008 and will start declining at best in the second half of 2008 - only in case of a favorable course of events. The degree of uncertainty of further developments in the external environment has also grown. Deflation risks are possible but in all likelihood the risks of increasing inflation pressures will prevail. At the same time, the secondary impact of the above mentioned developments - combined with the impact of the surplus demand from the previous period - starts to become obvious, leading to a growth of non-food commodity prices and service tariffs.



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Gradual tightening of the monetary and credit conditions in this situation aims to mitigate the inflation expectations conditioned by the indicated developments, as well as the secondary impact. At the same time, the CBA Board pointed out that the tendency of the monetary base to grow should always be in the center of attention.

In conditions of different opinions on measures to reduce the inflation pressures from the external environment, on the amount of secondary inflation impact and on the intensity of inflationary inertia, the Board discussed the options of raising the interest rates of repo transactions by 0.25% or 0.5%.

As a result, at the sitting held on April 2, 2008, the CBA Board made a decision to raise refinancing interest rate by 0.25% and fix it at 6.50%. The interest rates of lombard credit and deposit were fixed at 9.5% and 3.5% respectively.

31. HSBC ARMENIA BANK OPENS ITS SIXTH BRANCH [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

HSBC Armenia Bank opened the Garegin Nzhdeh branch on April 14. It is located at 14 Bagratuniats Street in Yerevan, in the area of Garegin Nzhdeh Square and is the sixth branch of the bank in Armenia. In addition to it, the bank has four branches that provide limited services.

The CEO of the bank Tim Slater said that Garegin Nzhdeh branch is the first one to be located far from downtown Yerevan. The branch has two cash machines, as a result of which the total number of the bank's cash machines has made 39. The bank plans to open another two branches by late 2008.

Besides, in late 2008 all customers of the bank will have the opportunity to make use of online banking services.

The deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) Artur Javadian welcomed the fact that HSBC Armenia Bank has opened its fourth branch in two years - despite HSBC Bank's considerable losses last year due to the global financial crisis. "It shows that Armenia, in which there is macroeconomic stability and a two-digit economic growth, is a favorable country for investments". A. Javadian expressed a hope that Armenian banks will continue their regional expansion, while HSBC Armenia Bank will carry out its program on creation of an insurance company.

Tim Slater told NT correspondent that the two branches to be opened will also be located in Yerevan. The bank also envisages to open branches outside the capital city - probably in Vanadzor or Gyumri next year.

HSBC Armenia Bank was founded in 1996. 70% of its shares are owned by HSBC Bank, 30% - by Diasporan Armenians. In 2007, the bank's profit grew by 5.6% as compared with 2006 and amounted to 4.46 bln drams (about 14 mln USD). The bank's assets made 104.2 bln drams in late 2007, increasing by 23.9 bln drams in a year. The bank has more than 41 thousand customers, whose deposits made 82.6 bln drams in late 2007.

32. 7th NATIONAL EXHIBITION "OUR HOUSE 2008" TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN ON APRIL 25-27 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

"Our House" 7th national exhibition of construction, design and repair will be held in the session hall of the RA government on April 25-27. The event is organized by Expomedia center of exhibition projects.

NT was informed by Expomedia that the purpose of the exhibition is to establish business links among local and foreign companies of the sector, expand the markets and introduce new technologies in the construction sector. The exhibition will have the following sections: "Construction, Design and Repair", "Furniture", "Doors and Windows", "Production and Technologies of Exterior and Interior Decoration", "Exterior and Interior Design of Houses and Apartments", "Gas, Heat and Water Supply Systems", "Heating and Air Conditioning Systems", "Domestic Appliances", "Paints, Protective Coatings and Household Chemical Goods", and "Real Estate, Insurance and Credit Organizations".

The exhibition is being organized with the assistance of the RA ministry of trade and economic development, the Armenian Development Agency, Yerevan mayor's office and the Union of Builders of Armenia.

33. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT TO STOP SUBSIDIZING THE RISE OF GAS TARIFFS ON MAY 1 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

On May 1st the Armenian government will stop subsidizing the rise of gas tariffs. Tariffs to be established by the RA Public Services Regulatory Commission will be valid. Meanwhile, by instruction of the Armenian president, the government is developing a program of complex measures aimed at



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preparing for the 2008-2009 winter season of gas consumption, the prime minister Tigran Sargsian stated at the April 15 briefing.

He reminded that in April 2006, the government made a decision, by which the executive body subsidizes gas tariffs, the purpose of which was to reduce the negative consequences of the increase in prices of gas supplied by Russia and to provide the enterprises and households with the opportunity to prepare for the use of new tariffs. ArmRusgazprom company allocated 188.8 mln USD to the government for this purpose.

According to the prime minister, the indicated program of complex measures aims to protect the vulnerable groups of the population from the consequences of the rise in gas tariffs during the period when gas and electricity consumption grows. First of all, attention will be focused on 130 thousand families that receive social benefits. The Armenian government prepared for such steps as early as two years ago. In particular, the 2008 state budget envisages allocating additional 1.2 bln drams (about 3 mln 871 thousand USD) for mitigation of the negative consequences of the rise in gas tariffs for the vulnerable groups, and these allocations have been provided since January 2008. This sum exceeds almost twofold the losses of the beneficiary families.

T. Sargsian said that in preparing for the 2008-2009 winter season, the rise in both gas tariffs and food prices will be taken into consideration. The respective funds will be envisaged by the 2009 state budget.

In his words, the rise in the price of gas imported from Russia is conditioned by the tendencies in global market and Russia's policy in this market. In particular, Russia is liberalizing the activities in this sector, and gas prices will reach international prices stage by stage. "The chairman of Gazprom company's board Alexey Miller will visit Armenia in May. During negotiations with him, we will try to clarify the strategy of our cooperation in the next three years," the Armenian prime minister said, adding that "our goal will be to implement such a tariff policy in Armenia that will allow us not to lose our relative advantage in competition with the region and the countries like Armenia". It was explained that in Armenia the gas tariffs are lower than in neighboring countries and "those comparable with Armenia".

To recap, thanks to subsidizing, the users - households paid 59 thousand drams instead of 84 thousand drams for 1,000 cubic meters. As a result of the unprecedented growth of gas consumption, the subsidies have ended in late January of this year, and the Armenian government took steps to continue subsidizing until the end of the heating season.

DIASPORA

34. ARMENIAN ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY OF ONE OF MOSCOW'S REGIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Aram Manukian, a deputy of Municipal Assembly of intra-town municipal formation of Yakimanka in the city of Moscow, was unanimously reelected for the new term during the regular election of the Municipal Assembly.

According to the Yerkramas newspaper of Armenians in Russia, Aram Manukian is a well-known entrepreneur, patron, and public figure. He has been awarded the higher public award of Russia For Work in Favor of the Homeland, the badge of St Alexander Nevski Order, the orders Patron of Russia and Peter the Great, the medal of the 850th anniversary of Moscow for construction of social institutions of the region of Yakimanka, many official documents of military and public organizations of Russia. Aram Manukian also takes an active part in the life of the Armenian Diaspora of Moscow. In particular, he contributes to development of various educational and youth programs.

35. POPE TO GREET ARMENIAN CHURCH AMERICAN DIOCESES LEADERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

During his upcoming visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI will lead an ecumenical prayer service at St. Joseph's Church in New York City on April 18. At the end of the service, Pope Benedict XVI will greet ecumenical leaders, including Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan legate and president of the National Council of Churches.



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36. ARMENIAN CHURCH OF MINNESOTA TO CELEBRATE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF CONSECRATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

St. Sahag Church of Minnesota will mark the fifth anniversary of consecration on April 13. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Primate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), will celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Following the Divine Liturgy, the Primate will preside at a banquet, which will feature musical performances by students of the St. Sahag School of Music.

37. CATHOLICOS ARAM I STRESSES ROLE OF RELIGION IN ESTABLISHING PEACE IN CONFERENCE BEING HELD IN BARCELONA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The interreligious meeting taking place on the initiative of the international organization "Office of Cultures for Peace" has launched its proceedings in Barcelona on April 9. Different religious high-ranking officials, as well as the representatives of the non-governmental organizations operating in the sphere of the human rights and peace are taking part in the meeting. The meeting is also attended by Khatami, the former President of Iran, Pondevik, the former Prime Minister of Norway, Federico Meyer, the former Director of UNESCO and other people enjoying international reputation.

Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great Cilician House, has had a number of meetings with high-ranking officials, discussing, in particular, the role of religion in establishing peace, the necessity for changing dialogue into cooperation, as well as the role of religions as regards the human rights. The statement to be made by the conference was also discussed at the discussion.

Grigor Chiftchian, the Head of the Information Department of the Catholicosate, and Tenny Piri-Simonian, the vice-Chairman of the Commission of Inter-church relations of the Catholicosate, are included in the delegation headed by His Holiness.

38. CATHOLICOS ARAM I INVITED TO PAN-ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CENTER IN MOROCCO [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great Cilician House, and Abdullaziz Osman Altujari, the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, had a meeting within the framework of the proceedings of the inter-religious international conference taking place in Barcelona on April 10.

The organization is a separate structure of the union of Islamic countries, the center of which is in Rabat. During the meeting Altujari welcomed a number of suggestions made by His Holiness Patriarch at the conference. They also spoke about the opportunities for developing the educational and cultural sphere of Lebanon, as well as about the necessity for giving a new impulse to the dialogue of the Islamic world. His Holiness Patriarch welcomed the initiatives taken by a number of Islamic countries and suggested that a common border should be prepared by the initiative of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization to facilitate the work connected with the dialogue. On this occasion Dr. Altujari invited His Holiness Patriarch to visit the center of the Pan-Islamic Organization headed by him in the spring of 2009 in order to participate at a high level and speak about the process of the inter-religious dialogue and cooperation started in Barcelona at the same time.

39. AUTHORITIES OF ISRAEL, IN SPITE OF DEMAND FROM TURKISH SIDE, DO NOT PROMISE THAT ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ISSUE WILL BE REMOVED FROM KNESSET AGENDA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The representatives of the authorities of Israel, in spite of the demand of the Turkish delegation on removing the issue on the Armenian Genocide from the agenda of Knesset (the parliament of Israel), have declared that the initiative of the parliamentarians has nothing to do with them. This information was reported by Jihan agency quoting the Haaretz newspaper published in Israel.

The newspaper, touching upon the meetings of the Turkish parliamentary delegation being in Israel on an official visit this week, writes that the members of the delegation mainly discussed the opportunities for removing the discussion of the issue of the Armenian Genocide from the agenda of Knesset during the meeting with Yoram Turbovich and Shalom Turgeman, the assistants of Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel.

Hasan Murad Merjan, the Head of the Turkish delegation and the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, declared that the discussion of the issue of



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the Armenian Genocide will greatly damage the Turkish-Israeli relations and persuaded the Israeli side to remove that issue from the agenda of Knesset.

In response to the persuasions of the Turkish parliamentarian, Turbovich mentioned that it is necessary that the given issue is settled between Turkey and Armenia, at the same time not giving a positive answer to the demand of the Turkish delegation on removing the discussion of the issue of the Armenian Genocide from the agenda of Knesset.

"Israel fully realizes the strategic significance of the existing relations with Turkey. However, certain initiatives of the parliament have nothing to do with the government," the assistant of the Prime Minister of Israel stressed.

The Haaretz newspaper also writes that the discussion of the issue of the Armenian Genocide in Knesset may take place on April 24.

Knesset made a decision on discussing the issue of the Armenian Genocide on March 26. Hajim Oron, the Leader of the Meretz socialist party, came up with the initiative for discussing the issue.

It should also be mentioned that Hasan Murad Merjan, the Head of the Turkish delegation, which is in Israel on a visit, announced a few days ago that "all those Israeli officials, we have met with, including Shimon Peres, the Chairman of Israel, have assured us that the initiative of the discussion of the issue of the Armenian Genocide in Knesset will remain without result."

40. BISHOP ANOUSHAVAN'S BOOK TO BE PRESENTED IN NEW YORK [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Archbishop Oshagan is hosting a book presentation and celebration of the recently published book, "Archbishop Nerses Labronaci: Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon," by Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, on May 2, at 7 at St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, New York.

It is also mentioned that Bishop Anoushavan will travel to Armenia next week where he will participate in the Committee for Canonizing the Armenian Saints, which will take place at Holy Etchmiadzin on April 15 to 18.

41. REQUIEM SERVICE IN MEMORY OF GENOCIDE VICTIMS TO TAKE PLACE IN CHURCH OF VENTURA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

A requiem service and candlelightening will take place in the church of Ventura in the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The church was built last year by the efforts of Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Northern America.

42. "THE LARK FARM" TO BE SCREENED IN LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The film "Farm of Larks" of Paulo and Vitorio Taviani brothers will be screened in the galleries of Lebanon since April 17. The author of the film is Antonia Arslan. The film is dedicated to the Armenian Genocide and has already received a wide response in the world, bringing forth the indignation of Turkey in this direction.

43. DUE TO MEANS RAISED BY TELETHON STEM CELL HARVESTING CENTER TO OPEN IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The Bone Marrow Donor Registry Armenian charity company will organize a telethon titled "Be an Angel, Save a Life" on April 13. The objective of this event is to raise enough money to open a Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

44. "MARCO PAPIKIAN" PIANO COMPETITION HELD IN LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The concert and the award-giving ceremony of the prize winners of the "Marco Papikian" piano competition took place in the Sen Joseph University of Lebanon on April 12. The competition was organized by the "Marco Papikian" music fund, the state conservatory of Lebanon and the "B. Kanachian" music college of the Hamazgayin.



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45. PUPILS OF ARMENIAN COLLEGE TAKE PART IN PROCESSION ORGANIZED ON OCCASION OF ANNIVERSARY OF CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Levon and Sofia Hakobian National College took part in a procession of peace in Lebanon calling for solidary co-existence of communities. The procession was organized on April 13, on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the Civil War in Lebanon.

The representatives of the only Armenian college taking part in the procession carried a placard in the Arab language, which read: Our Salvation is in Our Unity. More than 50 pupils of the college together with hundreds of other pupils and demonstrators representing various unions walked with large Lebanese flags, by expressing their refusal in a peaceful and civilized way against attempts to one more set Lebanon before the danger of a war.

46. 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF MELGONIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION CELEBRATED IN LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

A jubilee evening dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Melgonian educational institution took place in the Demirchian center of the Armenian General Benevolent Union on April 13.

At the beginning of the evening photos representing the activities of the past of the Melgonian educational institution were demonstrated. Then Angel Misisian welcomed those present. She mentioned in her speech that the Melgonian educational institution was founded in Cyprus in 1926 in order to heal the wounds of the Armenian people after the Armenian Genocide.

47. ARMENIAN YOUNG MAN, PARTICIPANT OF APRIL 6 BRAWL, DIES IN RUSSIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

One of the people, who suffered during the brawl that happened on April 6 in the village of Muravyovo, Rzhevsk subregion, Tver region, 26-year-old Karen Aghajanian died the day before. Radio Liberty reports this.

Aghajanian had been taken to hospital after a brawl between local residents and a group of Armenian young men. The representatives of Armenian community affirm that the fight, as a result of which nearly 20 people suffered, happened on the ethnic ground. However, the Police excludes this version. According to the main version of law enforcement bodies, the conflict happened because of a hijacked car.

The investigation continues.

48. RYDE CITY COUNCIL TO ORGANIZE EVENT IN MEMORY OF VICTIMS OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

On April 27 the Ryde City Council is once again joining the Armenian-Australian Community in honouring the memory of the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide and organising a Commemoration at Meadowbank Armenian Genocide Memorial.

Various Armenian Genocide Commemoration Events will take place in Sydney and Melbourne during April and May 2008.

49. ODESA PREPARING TO OPEN ARMENIAN CONSULATE GENERAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Odesa is preparing to open a consulate general for Armenia in May. This information was provided by the head of the regional branch of Ukraine's Foreign Ministry Kostiantyn Rzhepyshevsky.

Odesa is also negotiating the creation of consulates for Italy, Austria and Germany.

50. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS TO BE COMMEMORATED IN BERLIN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

This year the Armenian community in Berlin is organizing a program for the day of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide victims. The Berlin commemoration event will be musically accompanied by the internationally renowned pianist Vardan Mamikonian.



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51. U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION TO HOLD HEARING ON "ARMENIA AFTER THE ELECTION" [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The U.S. Helsinki Commission is going to hold a hearing on Armenia. As the local press reports, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings, the Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission) and Co-Chairman Senator Benjamin L. Cardin will hold a hearing entitled "Armenia after the Election," on April 17.

52. CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO 63RD ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE STARTS IN ARTSAKH [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

A conference, entitled "Western Armenia: the past and the present" dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, has started in the State University of Artsakh.

The event is attended by the representatives of the Armenological Center of the State University of Artsakh, the State Historical-Geographical Museum of Artsakh, the Armenian Assembly of the Western Armenia and the RAA organization studying the Armenian architecture from Armenia, Syria and France.

The participants mentioned that the objective of the organization of the event is not only to condemn the genocide but also to introduce the current state of the Western Armenia.

53. MINNESOTA FEDERAL COURT CONFIRMS DISMISSAL OF CAFESJIAN LAWSUIT IN FAVOR OF THE ASSEMBLY AND THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MUSEUM [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

On March 31, the U.S. District Court in Minnesota dismissed the first lawsuit filed by Gerard Cafesjian and the Cafesjian Family Foundation against the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial in favour of the latter.

Thus rapid progress continues towards the opening of the museum, which is slated for 2010. It should be mentioned that the lawsuit filed by Cafesjian in April 2007 sought to rescind the grant agreement his Foundation had made with the Armenian Assembly with respect to the Armenian Genocide Museum project.

Despite additional lawsuits filed by Cafesjian in Minnesota and the District of Columbia in an effort to obstruct the museum project, no court to date has ruled in Cafesjian's favor.

54. PRIME-GODFATHER OF WESTERN DIOCESE OF ARMENIAN CHURCH MOTHER CATHEDRAL LEVON PARONYAN PASSES AWAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Mr. Levon Paronyan, the Prime-Godfather of the Mother Cathedral of the U.S. Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, passed away on April 6.

The funeral was held at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Pasadena. His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate, participated in the service.

The Primate made the important announcement regarding the designation of Mother Cathedral to be named after St. Ghevond (Levon) in honor of the great and beloved Prime-Godfather of the Mother Cathedral, Levon Paronyan.

His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, sent a letter of condolence to the family of the deceased.

55. ACTOR JIRAYR PAPAZIAN, WHO LIVES IN FRANCE, VISITS EDITORIAL OFFICE OF AZDAK [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Famous actor Jirayr Papazian, who lives in France, visited the editorial office of the Azdak newspaper on the previous day and talked to the editorial staff. As Azdak reports, Jirayr Papazian is in Lebanon for the purpose of taking part in the events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Melgonian educational institution.



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56. NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS OF RESOLUTION CONDEMNING ASSASSINATION OF HRANT DINK INCREASES BY FOUR [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Resolution 102 condemning the assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, the former editor-in-chief of the Agos weekly, gained additional support as Representatives Michelle Bachmann, Charles Gonzales, Zack Space and Tim Walberg signed on as the bill's latest cosponsors, bringing the current number of cosponsors to 59.

The Assembly-backed bill, introduced last January by Congressman Joseph Crowley, condemns Dink's murder and calls on Turkey to take appropriate action to protect freedom of speech by repealing Article 301 of the Turkish penal code.

57. LUXURIOUS WEDDING OF AUSTRALIAN-ARMENIANS SURPRISES LOCAL NEWSPAPERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Australian Armenian Sesil Bahar and Sasoon Arzadian were married at the Armenian Apostolic Church in Surrey Hills. The father of the bride Anton, founder of Anton's jewellery, made an exquisite heart-shaped diamond ring with a matching wedding band for his daughter. As the Herald Sun writes, after that big and unforgettable wedding, with 400 guests, the couple set off for their honeymoon in the United States.

58. "SCREAMERS" TO BE SCREENED IN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

There will be a free screening of Director Carla Garapedian and System of a Down's acclaimed movie "Screamers" at the James Bridges Theater of the University of California of Los Angeles. There will be a discussion immediately following the screening, then a reception will take place. The film "Screamers" introduces the band's efforts to persuade both the British and U.S. governments to recognize the Armenian genocide and also traces the history of modern-day genocide - and genocide denial.

59. HEAD OF TIGRANAKERT EXCAVATIONS EXPEDITION HOPES THAT THERE WILL BE PEOPLE WHO WILL ASSIST IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR PROGRAMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

A film under the title "Armenian Odyssey of Tigranakert" was shown in the Youth Palace of Stepanakert. It presents the first year's work of Tigranakert excavations. "A number of U.S. newspapers compared discovery of Tigranakert with discovery of Troya," archeologist Hamlet Petrosian, the head of Tigranakert excavations expedition, said mentioning that it is not only a scientific, an academic research, but also a research "containing some elements of adventure." "Tigranakert's greatest success will be that each of us create, build a new Tigranakert inside us, which can unite all of us," the archeologist said.

The expedition head thanked the NKR authorities for providing financial assistance and expressed the hope that there will be people who will assist ideas of implementation of other programs connected with Tigranakert.

60. KARKACH CHOIR TO HAVE GREAT CONCERT ON MAY 4 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Hamazgayin's Karkach children's and youth choir, when preparing for its future concerts, on April 13, had a working meeting with choir-master Zakar Keshishian in the Kchak center.

Karkach's pupil performances will start on April 29 and its public performance will take place on May 4 in the hall of the American University.

According to Azdak's report, this year's concerts of Karkach are dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Hamazgayin's foundation and to the 20th anniversary of Artsakh movement.

61. SECRETARY GENERAL AND CHAIRMAN OF WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ARRIVE IN ANTELIAS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The secretary general of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Sam Kobia and the WCC chairman from Indonesia the Rev. Soritua Nababan arrived at Armenian monastery of Mayravank in Lebanese Antelias on April 14.

The high-ranking guests will participate in the interchurch meetings to be held at Mayravank and consult the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I about some interchurch and interreligious issues and programs.



ARTS

62. FOURTH ALL ARMENIAN CONFERENCE OF WRITERS TO BE HELD IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH ON JULY 6-13 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

On July 6-13 the fourth All-Armenian Conference of Writers will be held in Armenia and Artsakh. More than seventy writers from different colonies of the Diaspora will take part in this conference. According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Levon Ananian, the Chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, the conference will be held under the "The Literary Young Generation: Challenges of the 21st Century" slogan this year. He mentioned that on the initiative of the RA Ministry of Culture this year the conference will be held within the frameworks of the "One Nation, One Culture" festival.

In the words of Levon Ananian, within the frameworks of the conference an exhibition-sale will be organized in the square after Sharle Aznavur together with the RA Ministry of Culture. A collection will be published, in which the works of the modern Armenian poets of Armenia and the Diaspora published in the press will be presented. In addition to this, a number of discussions dedicated to the problems of young writers, in particular, will be organized.

"Today the young generation is standing in front of the danger of alienation in the Diaspora. We have no young writers and literary reproduction any longer in many colonies, particularly in Europe and Turkey," Levon Ananian said. At the same time he mentioned that in a number of colonies: in Tehran, Beirut, Aleppo and Los Angeles, there is still a rising literary generation, the prospect of which, however, is rather misty.

Levon Ananian stated that the fifth All-Armenian Conference of Writers is envisaged to be held in Syria in 2010. It was also mentioned that the conference of the Armenian writers, who write in foreign languages, organized on the initiative of the Union of Armenian Writers, will be held in the United States of America next year.

63. MUSIC ART NEEDS GREAT STATE CARE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

A meeting that was held on April 14 in the Hayeli (Mirror) club was dedicated to the discussion of the problems in the sphere of classical and variety music. Pianist Armine Grigorian, the Director of Aram Khachatrian House-Museum, and singer Nune Yesayan took part in the meeting.

The speakers held the same opinion, according to which great state care is needed to have good results in any genre of music art, which should be started from music schools. Both of them consider that specialists regulating the sphere, producers, managers are needed for music art development and achieving good results, otherwise a musician is not able to pave a way in that sphere alone.

"For instance, I would very much like to have a producer and a manager, who would attend to organization issues of my activity, I and I would be engaged in singing," Nune Yesayan said. She expressed satisfaction with the fact that a producers class has been created in Yerevan Cinema and Theater State Institute lately.

The singer is also dissatisfied with the fact that in the variety sphere any young person aged above 17 can be called a singer and even a star after releasing one or two clips. "I myself have passed a great school for becoming a fully-fledged singer, but now everyone sings as he likes. Like representatives of any sphere, singers should also receive education, be educated by the proper specialists," she said. According to the singer, today there are both talented young people and proper funds, but we need elaboration and implementation of a correct program regulating and controlling the variety sphere for wealthy performers presenting tasteless art not to keep down the talented ones.

Armine Grigorian said that variety is presented to the public more than classical music. "Media also play a significant part in it by showing classical music concerts, for instance, in the midnight. Classical music cannot be promoted only by concerts, proper TV programs dedicated to classical music are also needed," she emphasized.

According to the pianist, young music specialists graduating from the Conservatory have no possibility of making their name in the homeland, therefore they leave for abroad to seek success there. "The competition field we have in the variety sphere should be also created in the sphere of classical music, for representatives of high music art also to have their competitors and appreciators there," she added.



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64. ON INITIATIVE OF WRITERS' UNION OF ARMENIA, TRADITIONAL GATHERING OF YOUNG WRITERS TO BE HELD IN ARTSAKH ON MAY 22-26 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Like every year, this year as well numerous events will be held on the initiative of the Writers' Union of Armenia. In particular, according to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Levon Ananian, the Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia, the traditional gathering of young writers will be held in Artsakh on May 22-26, and a festival of Armenian Poetry will take place in Georgia on May 24-30.

According to Levon Ananian, within the frameworks of the festival Armenian and Georgian writers will take part in the events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the "Vernatun" founded by Hovhannes Tumanian in Tbilisi, as well as in the annual Vardaton dedicated to the memory of Sayat-Nova to be held in the St. Gevorg Armenian church. It was also mentioned that the "Anthology of Modern Armenian Poetry" will be published in Georgian in Tbilisi at that time.

In the words of the Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia, most of the events will mainly be organized in autumn. The Union will celebrate the jubilees of a number of writers with a great solemnity, including the 100th anniversary of William Saroyan and the 150th anniversary of Alexander Shirvanzade.

65. BETWEEN APRIL 17 AND JUNE 15 FOURTH INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL FESTIVAL "NATIONAL GALLERY" TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

With the assistance of the RA Ministry of Culture and under the auspices of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, the fourth international musical festival "National Gallery" will be held in Yerevan between April 17 and June 15. According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the "Gallery of Arts" cultural fund, both Armenian and foreign best musicians and bands, including the State Chamber Orchestra of Armenia and Narekatsi orchestra, "Alliance" quintet (Germany), Mario Stephano Pietrodarki (Italy) and Alexander Chaushian (Great Britain) will take part in the festival.

66. UNION OF ARMENIAN WRITERS TO HOLD SERIES OF EVENTS THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

The Union of Armenian Writers will hold a series of events this year. Its chairman Levon Ananian told Armenpress that on May 22-26 a gathering of young Armenian authors will be held in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabakh.

He said a festival of Armenian poetry will be held in neighboring Georgia on May 24-30. As part of this event Armenian and Georgian writers and poets will mark the 100-th anniversary of a literary club, Vanatoon that was founded by prominent Armenian poet and writer Hovhaness Tumanian.

He said Armenian writes and poets will be in Georgia in May for participation in the traditional festival dedicated to famous Armenian poet and bard Sayat Nova. An anthology of Armenian poetry in Georgian will be released in Tbilisi next month.

Levon Ananian said the bulk of events will be held in autumn. He said the Union will mark the centenary of William Saroyan and the 150-th anniversary of playwright Alexander Shirvanzade.

67. ARAM ISABEKIAN REELECTED RECTOR OF FINE ARTS ACADEMY [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

A painter Aram Isabekian was reelected rector of Yerevan Fine Arts Academy. Svetlana Grigorian, pro-rector of the Academy, told Armenpress that out of 24 members of its governing board 21 participated in the election who voted unanimously to reelect Isabekian.

By the way, Aram Isabekian, was reelected unopposed as he was the only candidate.

RELIGION

68. "CHURCH AND SOCIETY" TASK GROUP OF CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES APPROVES ITS COMING PROGRAMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

At the invitation of Czech Churches the annual meeting of the "Church and Society" task group of the Conference of European Churches took place in Prague from April 10-13.

Catholicosate press service told Armenpress that the Armenian church has been represented by the head of the Inter-Church Relations Department Hovakim Manukian.



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During the meeting the participants discussed and approved the working program of the task group for the coming year which included European integration, regional security, role of religion, human rights protection, environment protection, climate changes issues.

They also referred to the work of the 13th assembly of the Conference of European Churches which will take place in Lyon in July 2009.

SOCIAL

69. HAYASTAN FUND GIVES FURNISHING ACCESSORIES OF OVER 27 MILLION DRAMS TO 8 SCHOOLS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund has finished the furnishing program of schools in the Art school of Parakar, School 10 of Abovian, Schools 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of Artik, the secondary school of Khndzoresk and School 78 of Yerevan. According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the Public Relations Department of the Fund, those programs have been initiated and financed by the local body of France of the fund. In general, furnishing accessories of 27 million 240 049 thousand drams (approximately 87.8 thousand U.S. dollars) have been given to those schools.

70. CIVIL APPEAL COURT REJECTS COMPLAINT OF CHAP LLC - OWNER OF GALA TELEVISION COMPANY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The RA Civil Appeal Court (chairman - Judge Tigran Sahakian) on April 14 rejected the complaint of Gala television company's representative Karen Tumanian against the decision on the case "Gyumri mayor's office against Chap LLC - the founder of Gala television company".

The representative of Chap LLL had petitioned to overturn the decision of the Shirak regional court and to send the case to the same court for re-examination. According to the complaint, in making the decision, the regional court committed violations of Substantive Law and Procedural Law, as well as a number of articles of the Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Civil Procedure Code.

To recap, the Shirak regional court (chairman - Judge A. Khachatryan) had sustained the claim of the mayor's office "on eliminating the violations of ownership rights" and ruled to oblige Chap LLC to dismantle its broadcasting antenna from the television tower representing the property of the mayor's office. By the same decision, Chap LLC' claim "to establish a servitude" on the mayor's office was rejected.

During a talk with NT correspondent, Levon Barseghian - coordinator of the headquarters on protection of speech freedom and Gala TV company, chairman of "Asparez" club of journalists said that in all likelihood the decision of the appeal court will be disputed in the Cassation Court and the European Court of Human Rights. The decision of the Appeal Court takes effect from the moment of its publication and may be disputed within 3 months.

71. POSTEUROP MANAGEMENT TO VISIT ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Bernard Damiens, the Chairman of PostEurop (European State Post Operators Association), and Ingemar Persson, PostEurop's Secretary General, will visit Armenia on April 15-16. As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by the Press Service of the Haypost company, during the two-day visit they will meet with the management of Haypost and members of the RA government. The main programs of cooperation with the Europe postal system and strategy, as well as reforms being implemented in Haypost will be discussed.

According to the same source, PostEurop's goal is to make optimal operation of postal services and to promote cooperation between country-members of PostEurop. And Haypost will improve the quality and standards of its services by using the Association's network as a new member of PostEurop.

On April 15, the guests will take part in the official opening ceremony of a training center founded for the purpose of improving the quality of Haypost's cadre resources.



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72. COMPILATION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ATLAS OF YEREVAN TO BE DONE THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

Yerevan mayor's office will implement the work on compilation of the Historical and Cultural Atlas of Yerevan this year. The chief architect of Yerevan Samvel Danielian said at the April 14 press conference that this work will be done by the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography.

The atlas will contain information on the geographical location of Yerevan, its climatic conditions, resources, history (starting from the city's foundation until our days), as well as prospects of its development. According to S. Danielian, the atlas will be published in 2009.

73. ZONING PROJECT OF SHENGAVIT COMMUNITY TO BE DEVELOPED THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

The zoning project of Yerevan's Shengavit community will be developed this year. The chief architect of Yerevan Samvel Danielian said at the April 14 press conference that private industrial facilities occupy considerable part of the 4,060-ha area of Shengavit community. An attempt will be made to involve the owners of these facilities in the urban development programs to be implemented in the community.

According to S. Danielian, this year zoning projects will also be developed for a 1,770-ha area in Avan community, the 264-ha Sari-Yagh district and adjacent areas in Erebuni community, and a 1,363-ha area in Malatia-Sebastia community. No urban development programs have been implemented in these areas so far. Some sections of Malatia-Sebastia community have already been zoned, and the community will be completely zoned by the end of the program.

The chief architect announced that design work is underway for urban development of the section adjacent to Grigor Lusavorich Church. Urban development has already begun in some parts of the 30th district. Urban development projects for Kond and Kozern districts are being worked out and will be publicly discussed in 2-3 months.

S. Danielian said that a tower to complete the architectural appearance of the mayor's office will be built at the Wine Plant by a renewed version of the sketches of architect Rafael Israelian. It was stated that Old Yerevan district with about 20 buildings of historical and cultural value will be founded in Main Avenue, behind Sil Plaza shop.

74. 3925 RA CITIZENS APPLY FOR RECEIVING REFUGE ABROAD IN 2007, WHICH DECREASES BY 6% COMPARED WITH 2006 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

338.3 thousand applications on granting a refuge were received in 51 countries of the world in 2007. This index has increased by about 10% compared with 2006, mainly due to the situation in Iraq. Gagik Yeghanyan, the Head of the Migration Agency of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration, said at the April 15 press conference adding that 8% growth falls to citizens of Iraq. He said that 3925 RA citizens applied for receiving a refuge abroad in 2007. This index has decreased by 6% compared with 2006. According to G. Yeghanyan, over the past three years RA citizens apply mainly to France to receive a refuge. The number of these citizens made 1924 in 2007, 400 RA citizens applied to Austria and 400 to Belgium.

According to the observation of the head of the agency, in the previous years RA citizens preferred Poland, Germany, Benelux countries, Czech Republic for a refuge. G. Yeghanyan also said that the prevailing part of RA citizens' applications of receiving a right of refuge is rejected.

75. BILL ON REFUGEES AND REFUGE TO BE SUBMITTED TO RA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SOON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/15/08]

With the assistance of the Danish Refugee Council, the Migration Agency of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration has worked out RA bill On Refugees and Refuge, which has been approved by the RA government lately. As Gagik Yeghanyan, the agency head, said at the April 15 press conference, the bill will be submitted to the RA National Assembly soon.

According to G. Yeghanyan, the law in force has a number of shortcomings, therefore the system of seeking a refuge has a number of problems in Armenia. He said that one of the system's problems is that the pivotal notions connected with granting a refuge are not legislatively determined. Besides, all necessary procedures necessary for granting a refuge are not clarified.



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G. Yeganian said that since 1999, more than 1000 foreigners, from Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Cuba, and other countries, have applied to Armenia for receiving a refuge. 800 out of them received the respective status in Armenia. Only in 2007, 289 applications were received from foreign citizens in the agency's Department of Seeking a Refuge, 271 out of them for a temporary refuge, 18 for receiving a status of a refugee. All people seeking a temporary refuge are citizens of Iraq, who have been given a right of a refuge for one year. And only one person applying for receiving a status of a refugee has been given that status.

It was also mentioned that people seeking a refuge are for one month accommodated at special dwellings created in 2000, for the purpose of passing medical examination and holding document checkings in a one-month term. Then, before the end of the discussion of applications on receiving a status of a refugee they are accommodated at temporary dwellings. People seeking a refuge receive a certificate of a seeker of refugee's status, a lump sum monetary assistance, 10 thousand drams (more than 30 USD), free translation and lawyer services.

76. REPUBLICAN STADIUM UNDER RECONSTRUCTION [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

The Republican Stadium in Yerevan is undergoing a major repair. The Armenian Football Federation (AFF) told Armenpress that it signed a contract earlier this year with an Israeli Green Diversified Ltd to carry out the job in line with international standards.

The AFF said all major infrastructures of the facility will be reconstructed. The reconstruction is expected to be over in late August. The Armenian sports and youth issue ministry received 150 million Drams of budget money to help the AFF reconstruct the stadium.

77. ELECTRICITY TARIFFS TO REMAIN UNCHANGED UNTIL 2009 [ARMENPRESS, 04/15/08]

Energy minister Armen Movsisyan said Tuesday electricity tariffs will remain unchanged until the end of the year. His remarks came after prime minister Tigran Sarkisian announced an end of government subsidy to population and enterprises for natural gas tariffs.

Speaking at a news conference energy minister said the president and the prime minister gave concrete instructions to develop such regimes within the power grid system that will keep electricity price unaffected by the imminent rise of natural gas price from next month.

ArmRosGazprom (ARG), the national gas operator, will enact new prices from May 1, which were approved by the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC). Armenian households and enterprises will not get compensations as they did since 2006 January when the government transferred \$188 million to ARG to cover higher gas price set by Russian supplier, which rose it from \$56 per one thousand cubic meter to \$110.

SPORTS

78. GRAND MASTER GABRIEL SARGSIAN SHARES 3-4th PLACES IN INTERNATIONAL CHESS FESTIVAL OF SPAIN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The great International Chess Festival finished on April 12 in the city of Merida, Spain. In the main tournament, Gabriel Sargsian in the last, 7th tour drew the game with Michael Adams (England), gained 4.5 points and shared the 3-4th places with Hampi Koneru (India). And M. Adams became the winner of the tournament with 5.5 points.

79. ARMENIA TO SEND 4 BOXERS TO TAKE PART IN BEIJING OLYMPIC GAMES [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

The last International Olympic Rating Tournament finished on April 13 in the capital city of Greece, Athens.

None of the 5 Armenian delegates was included in the rating three. Thus, Armenia will send four boxers, Hovhannes Danielian (48 kg, Yerevan), Hrachya Javakhian (60 kg, Vanadzor), Eduard Hambartsumian (64 kg, Yerevan), and Andranik Hakobian (75 kg, Etchmiadzin), to the Beijing Olympic Games.



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80. ARMENIAN RUGBY NATIONAL TEAM BEATS SPORTSMEN OF DENMARK WITH SCORE OF 23 TO 11 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/14/08]

Armenia-Denmark match took place by the elimination tour program of second subgroup of Europe Rugby Group A Championship on April 12 in Abovian's town playing field. The Armenian national team beat the team of Denmark with the score of 23 to 11.

It should be mentioned that in the first match of the same teams, in Copenhagen, the Armenian national team had also won with the score of 11 to 3. The Armenian team will receive the Serbian team on May 10 in Abovian.

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