



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

AGBU NEWS

1. AGBU PRESIDENT CONGRATULATES THE NEWLY-APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER [Hayastani Hanrapetutium, 04/22/08]

President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Berge Setrakian has sent a congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Tigran Sarkissian, which says;

"On behalf of the Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and on my personal behalf I congratulate You on the occasion of being appointed in the position of RA Prime Minister.

Knowing Your contribution and experience in the development of the economic and banking spheres of the Republic of Armenia, we believe that in the new position as well You will maintain and enrich with new initiatives the difficult but certain way of Armenia's development.

AGBU will continue its projects and investments in various spheres in Armenia aiming at strengthening the connection of the new Diasporan generation with their Homeland.

We convey our sincere support to You and wish You strength, enthusiasm and peace to maintain the achievements of our country and realize new programs".

POLITICS

2. FIRST AUTHORIZED RALLY AFTER MARCH 1 HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

The first rally authorized by the authorities was held in Yerevan after the March 1 events on April 19. The supporters of Levon Ter-Petrosian, the first President of the Republic of Armenia, and the representatives of the political non-governmental organizations supporting him this time gathered in the circular square of the main children's park of Yerevan (after Kirov) and the territory in its vicinity. As Vardan Grigorian, the Deputy Chairman of the "Democratic Way" party, mentioned in his speech, it is characteristic that the municipality has allowed to hold the regular rally of the opposition in one of the places of the March 1 tragic events. That, according to him, proves the thought expressed by Levon Ter-Petrosian recently, according to which nothing ends with April 9 (the day of the inauguration of the President Serge Sargsian - NT), on the contrary, it starts.

Reminding and summarizing the events of March 1 and the days after, Hrachia Sargsian, a member of the Nor Zhamanakner (New Times) party administration, who was conducting the rally, stated that Armenia had 10 victims, over 130 political prisoners, over 500 people, who were brought to police stations, 200-300 people, who were beaten and subjected to acts of violence during the past 50 days. "All this, however, cannot weaken the wave the Armenian people is feeling," H. Sargsian mentioned.

Suren Sureniants, a member of the political board of the Hanrapetutium (Republic) party, as well delivered a speech, the precautionary measure towards whom was substituted for a signature on not leaving the country. He stated that he and his detained friends are political prisoners, the spirit of whom continues to be high due to the people. The current was switched off in the square during his speech and those standing on the platform were not able to continue their speeches for about half an hour. Instead, thousands of people gathered there started to cry "Levon President", "Sergik, go away, scoundrel", "Struggle, struggle up to the end", and "Freedom."

3. APRIL 19 RALLY TURNS INTO SPONTANEOUS MARCH [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Arshavir Bozinian, a participant of the Artsakh war, who has been on a hunger strike for already 26 days, stated during the April 19 rally organized in Yerevan that he will continue his action of protest started in the village as a sit-down strike in the capital. At the same time he declared that in case he is subjected to acts of violence by the RA authorities, he will continue the action of protest in the Embassy of the United States of America in Armenia, with the representatives of which he already has a corresponding arrangement.

Levon Zurabian, a member of the Central Headquarters of Levon Ter-Petrosian, the first President of the Republic of Armenia, stated that according to his observations, the struggle of the Armenian opposition is more severe than it was in Georgia and the Ukraine. The former Presidents of those



countries, in the words of Levon Zurabian, had so much political culture so as to leave, seeing the anger of the people, whereas "the RA authorities are ready for any crime only to preserve their posts."

During the speech of Levon Zurabian policemen approached the organizers of the rally and demanded they they should disperse, reminding that the municipality has authorized the rally until 17:00. The organizers told the law enforcement bodies that since the current was switched off for half an hour in the square, they will end the action at 17:30. The policemen left the square under the whistles of the crowd.

However, the current was again switched off on the platform and a call was made for those gathered to move to the Northern avenue. Thousands of people directed their steps towards the given place and thus, the rally turned into a spontaneous march.

4. NIKOL PASHINIAN: OUR STRUGGLE IS IRREPRESSIBLE, OUR VICTORY IS INEVITABLE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Wives of arrested opposition politicians and activists considering themselves political prisoners also spoke at the first authorized rally after the March 1 events held in Yerevan on April 19.

Anna Hakobian, the wife of Nikol Pashinian, the editor of the Haykakan Zhamanak newspaper, who is searched at present, word for word conveyed the speech of her husband addressed to the people. "If the authorities think that they can break the people's soul by imprisoning the people, they are sadly mistaken. The struggle continues both in prisons and in underground. Serge Sargsian should understand that he took out fear from the people for ever by the March 1 events. Our struggle is irrepressible, our victory is inevitable," N. Pashinian had asked to convey. It should be mentioned that the three children of the latter were also present at the rally, the youngest of which is eight months old.

The wife of former RA Foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanian, Melisa Brown, told the rally participants about the daily schedule of imprisoned person's wives. "We get up in the morning, feed our children, run to work, hold a small rally there, then go to actions of protest near different Embassies and the Council of Europe office, then we again return to work. In the evening we visit the prisons, where we see our husbands after waiting for nearly seven hours," M. Brown said.

The wives of arrested Arshak Banuchian, Matenadaran Deputy Director, and of late academician Rafael Ghazarian also spoke. The wife of first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian was also present at the rally.

5. IN RA PRIME MINISTER'S OPINION, DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SPHERE IS CONDITIONED BY SUCCESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

On April 21, RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian introduced reappointed Minister of Environmental Protection Aram Haroutiunian to the Ministry's personnel. In Prime Minister's opinion, the Minister's capabilities and organization abilities can serve for solution of the problems faced by the sphere.

Touching upon environmental protection problems, T. Sargsian did not consider right the approach that they should be considered secondary in countries being at the stage of poverty reduction. According to him, it is much easier to prevent a natural calamity than to struggle against its consequences later. In that respect T. Sargsian attached importance to introduction of the best standards in the Armenia's environmental protection sphere.

The Prime Minister considered environmental education as the sphere's strategic problem. In his words, it is very important that citizens be bearers of environmental protection culture. "Otherwise we will not succeed in any sphere. The solution of the rest important problems set before the Ministry depends on this," T. Sargsian said.

6. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDES NAGORNO-KARABAKH VISIT [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian foreign ministry said today minister Edward Nalbandian met on April 19 during his first visit to Nagorno-Karabakh with chairman of its parliament Ashot Ghulian, prime minister Ara Harutyunian and his Nagorno-Karabakh counterpart Georgy Petrosian.

The ministry said Ashot Ghulian congratulated Edward Nalbandian on his appointment to the post saying he is sure that such a seasoned diplomat as Mr. Nalbandian will give a new incentive to Armenia's foreign policy.



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At Nalbandian's request Ashot Ghulian spoke about the joint session of the Armenian-Nagorno-Karabakh inter-parliamentary commission that took place the day before his visit.

Minister Nalbandian was said to emphasize the cooperation between Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh parliaments pointing out the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the context of Armenia-Nagorno-Karabakh partnership.

During the meeting with prime minister Ara Harutyunian the latter spoke at the request of the Armenian foreign minister on major economic development prospects with reference to introduction of new technologies.

The main subject of Edward Nalbandian's meeting with his counterpart Georgy Petrosian was the current situation around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They also spoke about making their cooperation more close and reached an agreement on holding regular consultations.

On his way back to Armenia minister Nalbandian visited the town of Shushi to meet with Archbishop Pargev Martirosian, head of the Nagorno-Karabakh Diocese of the Armenian Church, who gave his blessing to the minister wishing him strength to overcome successfully all challenges.

7. AZERI DIPLOMAT SAYS NO PLACE FOR FOURTH STATE IN SOUTH CAUCASUS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Khazar Ibrahim, a spokesman for Azerbaijani foreign ministry, said today there are three countries in the South Caucasus and there is no place for the fourth one.

"Armenia's new leadership, including its new foreign minister Edward Nalbandian are clinging to created stereotypes repeating the mistakes of the previous Armenian leadership. They have to realize that there are three countries in the South Caucasus and there is no place for the fourth one," he said at a press briefing.

According to him, the status of Nagorno-Karabakh can be established only within the frameworks of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

8. ARMENIAN PM CONTINUES RECEIVING CONGRATULATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian continues receiving warm congratulations and good wishes on his new appointment.

Governmental press service told Armenpress the chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Ven Tzyabao sent a message to T. Sargsian in which he particularly said, "During the recent years the Armenian government is focusing all its efforts towards the development of its economy, improvement of people's life, social stability and has reached notable success. I am sure the Armenian people will reach greater success in building their country.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations Armenian-Chinese cooperation is developing stably: political understanding is being consolidated, trade-economic ties are boosting, bilateral cooperation in humanitarian sphere is developing. The prospects of development of Armenian-Chinese relations are very wide and I am ready, together with You, deepen the friendship between the two peoples, exert efforts towards promoting business partnership. I wish You health, and great success in Your high position."

The Chairman of the Administration of the Belarus National Bank Pyotr Prokopevich also congratulated Tigran Sargsian on his appointment. In his message he wished the Armenian prime minister health, happiness and further success in his activity.

The President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Berge Setrakian also sent a congratulating message to Tigran Sargsian. In his message he congratulated the Armenian prime minister on behalf of the central board of the AGBU and on his personal. "Knowing about Your important role in the development of Armenia's economy we are sure that in Your current office You will promote the prosperity of our country with Your new initiatives.

AGBU will continue its various activity and investments in Armenia aiming at strengthening the ties of new generations of Diaspora Armenians with their homeland".



9. ARMENIAN PM PRESENTS RE-APPOINTED MINISTERS TO STAFF OF MINISTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian presented today Armenian Health Minister Harutyun Kushkian to the staff of the ministry.

Noting that there is no need to present H. Kushkian, the prime minister said that he has the trust of specialists and expressed assurance that with the participation of the staff of the ministry he is able to solve the issues the ministry is facing. He reminded that the sphere has an issue to create such a health system which will make the country a health center.

A health center first of all, according to the minister, means providing high-quality services, applying best standards in the health center and not by copying the experience of developed countries but looking forward and applying such standards which the developed countries are seeking to apply.

Expressing gratitude for the trust H. Kushkian said that as a result of 10-month activity some positive results have been achieved and a basis has been created for justifying the expectations of the president and prime minister.

Armenian Prime Minister presented today to the staff of Energy and Natural Resources Ministry the re-appointed minister Armen Movsisian.

The prime minister noted that A. Movsisian is the person who managed to reach a serious breakthrough in the energy sphere by his work. "At present we have stable, managing and developing system. The direct contribution of the minister to it cannot be left without relevant assessment," T. Sargsian said.

Hence, the ministry must also deal with the natural resources issues, the sphere will be one of the engines of the economy. The prime minister said that serious steps have been undertaken in the usage of the natural resources, serious investments are being made and the potential of the country is quite large.

A. Movsisian expressed gratitude to the Armenian president and prime minister for trust and assured that the ministry will carry out their programs.

Today Tigran Sargsian also presented Aghvan Vardanian, Labor and Social Affairs Minister, to the staff of the ministry.

The prime minister said that the staff of the ministry is working with A. Vardanian for already 5 years and knowing him and his skills well they can continue working with the minister towards the solution of the issues of the ministry. From the issues Tigran Sargsian underscored the issue on protection of the insecure class of the population.

"Together with you we must rightly disclose the insecure class so that the assistance to them be purposeful and reach the families which need it," the prime minister said.

He also underscored the reforms in pensions' sphere. He said that having the trust of the ministry staff Aghvan Vardanian will be able to take the responsibility and carry out reforms in the social sphere.

A. Vardanian on his turn said that he has a good staff with which they carried out a good work during the past 5 years and will continue doing it with new strength.

Another minister which was presented today by Tigran Sargsian was Aram Harutyunian, Nature Protection Minister.

When presenting him, the prime minister said that he worked as a minister for ten months but during this time his abilities and organizing skills have been notable and may serve the purpose.

The prime minister said that serious international nature protection standards must be applied in Armenia. "It is easier to prevent natural disasters then to fight for eliminating its consequences," he said.

Aram Harutyunian thanked the president and the prime minister for the trust and expressed assurance that the staff of the ministry will solve the issues on a high level.

10. NERSES YERITSIAN APPOINTED ECONOMY MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree on appointing Nerses Yeritsian as Minister of Economy of Armenia, presidential press service reported.

11. MHER SHAHGELDIAN APPOINTED EMERGENCY SITUATION MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree on appointing Mher Shahgeldian as Minister of Emergency Situations of Armenia.

M. Shahgeldian was born in 1967 in Yerevan. He graduated from the Yerevan State University, attended special classes of AUA and Armenian Management Center.



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From 2002-2003 was member of parliament, member of faction of the Orinats Yerkir faction.

From 2003-2007 member of parliament. Until May 25, 2006 he was the head of the NA's defense, national security and home affairs permanent commission, afterwards member of the same commission.

On May 12, 2007 has been elected member of the NA from Orinats Yerkir party. He is married has a child.

12. TIGRAN DAVTIAN APPOINTED MINISTER OF FINANCE [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree appointing Tigran Davtian Minister of Finance. Presidential press service reported.

Tigran Sargsian was born in 1961, in Yerevan. From 1978-1981 he studied in the Yerevan Institute of Economy, from 1981 continued his education in Moscow Lomonosov University majoring in economy.

From 1991-1997 he worked in the Armenian Economy Ministry as chief specialist, deputy head of a department, head of department.

From 1997 he worked in the Armenian Trade and Industry Ministry as deputy head and then head of department. In July 2000 was appointed the deputy trade and industry minister. From 2001-2007 worked as deputy trade and economic development minister.

In September 2007 was appointed the general director of the Armenian Development Agency. He is married has two children.

13. ARMEN GEVORGIAN APPOINTED TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE MINISTER, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree appointing Armen Gevorgian as Territorial Governance Minister of Armenia. Presidential press service told Armenpress that with another decree the president appointed Armen Gevorgian as deputy prime minister.

A. Gevorgian was born in 1973 in Yerevan. He studied in Orenburg State Pedagogical Institute majoring in history. Graduated from St. Petersburg state service institute.

From 1997 January to 1998 April was the aide to the Armenian prime minister. From April 13 1998 held the office of the aide to the president and first deputy of the president's staff.

From 2000-2006 was the first aide to the president. In February 2006 was appointed the head of staff of the president. From January 2007 is also holding office of the secretary of the National Security Council.

He is married has two sons.

14. GURGEN SARGSIAN APPOINTED TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree appointing Gurgen Sargsian transport and communication minister, presidential press service reported.

Gurgen Sargsian was born in 1964 in Yerevan. In 1986 he graduated from the Polytechnic institute. From 1986 to 1992 worked as an engineer.

From 2000-2006 was the deputy head of the Justice Ministry's State Register Department, then the head of the department, the head of the state register agency.

On May 12, 2007 has been elected parliament member from Orinats Yerkir party. He is married has two children.

15. CHANGES MADE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree on making changes and additions in March 16, 2002 decree of the President of Armenia.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that the following changes have been made in the structure of the government:

1) Armenian Trade and Economic Development Ministry has been renamed to Armenian Economy Ministry.

2) Armenian Finance and Economy Ministry has been renamed to Armenian Finance Ministry.

3) Ministry of Emergency Situations have been created. Armenian Rescue service is established as a state body functioning within the Emergency Ministry.



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4) Armenian Foreign Ministry's Agency of Ties with Diaspora has become the state committee of ties with Diaspora affiliated to the Foreign Ministry.

Thus the Armenian government has the following structure:

Health Ministry
Justice Ministry
Foreign Affairs Ministry
Emergency Situation Ministry
Labor and Social Affairs Ministry
Nature Protection Ministry
Agriculture Ministry
Economy Ministry
Energy and Natural Resources Ministry
Education and Science Ministry
Culture Ministry
Defense Ministry
Sport and Youth Affairs Ministry
Territorial Governance Ministry
Transport and Communication Ministry
Urban Ministry
Finance Ministry.

16. FOREIGN MINISTER LEAVES FOR FRANCE [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Foreign minister Edward Nalbandian left for Paris, France on April 21 afternoon on a three-day visit.

The foreign ministry in Yerevan said in Paris Nalbandian is scheduled to meet with UNESCO director general Koishiro Matsura, Abdu Diouf, secretary general of Francophone Internationale, the French cochairman of the OSCE Minsk Group Bernard Fassier, Patrick Devedjian, the secretary general of the governing French party For People's Movement, Andre Santini, a state secretary for state service issues, Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë, mayor of Paris and other high-ranking officials.

The ministry said Nalbandian will be back to Yerevan on April 24.

17. SERZH SARKISIAN APPOINTS NEW AIDES [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian appointed April 21 Andranik Manukian, a former transport and communication minister and Manuk Topuzian, a former head of the government staff as aides to the president of Armenia.

The government press office said Levon Martirosian and Samvel Farmanian were also appointed as aides to president of Armenia.

It said also former territorial minister Hovik Abrahamian was appointed chief of presidential staff.

18. NO BURNING OF TURKISH FLAG PLANNED [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Vahe Sarkisian, chairman of Nikol Aghbalian student union, which is closely affiliated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and which will organize tomorrow evening a torched procession towards the Genocide Memorial, said today 'burning of Turkish flag' is not planned. He said burning the flag is a way to express the hatred towards Turkey which comes about at that moment

"We are not planning to burn Turkish flags and we are against any fanatical displays. If they happen they come from the procession's participants," he said at a news conference.

The procession to be organized together with the youth wing of the ARF will start at 8 pm. Vahe Sarkisian said a number of youth organizations will join them, as well as university students and young clergymen.

He said they expect over 15,000 young people to take part in the procession who will carry 300 troches and 10,000 candles. The young people will carry also the flags of nations which officially recognized the Armenian genocide.

He said it is high time to develop and present to Turkey the demands which it must observe as a country that committed genocide. He said the ARF has a clear-cut position in this sense, which is that the historical homeland and the lost legacy must be restored. He said the ARF is also against Turkey's membership in the EU without recognition of the genocide.



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19. ARF TO HOLD RECURRENT JAMBOREE IN JULY [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The youth wing of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) organizes every year various events to advertise healthy life styles and patriotism among young people.

Vahe Sarkisian, chairman of the Nikol Aghbalian student union, an affiliation of the ARF, said today annual jamborees play a special role.

He said this year it will be held on July 18-25 in the resort village of Aghavnadzor. It will bring together some 400 young Armenians from 10 countries.

These jamborees have been held for ten years giving Diaspora Armenians a unique chance to visit the country and see its sites.

20. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CONDUCTS MEETINGS IN PARIS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian who is in Paris on a working visit conducted today a number of meetings with French high-ranked officials and political figures.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that today during the meeting with the chief diplomatic consultant to the French president Jan-David Levit, Nalbandian presented the programs of the new Armenian leadership, the country's approaches towards issues of mutual interest as well as over regional developments.

During the meeting with the OSCE Minsk Group French co-chairman Bernard Fassier the sides discussed issues connected with the current pace of Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation.

E. Nalbandian also met with the State Secretary of French State Service Affairs Andre Santini. During the meeting they discussed a number of issues on cooperation and expansion of inter-governmental contacts.

On April 23 the minister is expected to meet with the Secretary General of the United People's Movement party Patrick Devejian.

During the conducted meetings the sides gave high assessment to the dynamically developing Armenian-French relations, expressing hope that the cooperation between the two countries will continue developing.

21. ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PARLIAMENTARIANS TO MEET IN STRASBOURG [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenian and Azerbaijani parliamentarians are going to meet within the framework of the winter session of PACE which will take place in January of the next year.

The head of the Armenian delegation to PACE David Harutyunian said such agreement has been reached during the meeting with the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE Samed Seyidov.

The time of the visit was suggested by the chairman of the PACE commission on Nagorno Karabakh issues Russell Johnston.

22. HOVIK ABRAHAMIAN APPOINTED HEAD OF RA PRESIDENT'S ADMINISTRATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

By RA President's April 21 decree Hovik Abrahamian was appointed Head of the RA President's Administration. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by RA President's Press Office.

H. Abrahamian was born on January 24, 1958 in the village of Mkhchian, Ararat region. He graduated from Yerevan Road College and Yerevan Institute of People's Economy. In 1977-1979 he served in the Soviet Army. In 1990-1991 he worked at Burastan Brandy Company as head of department, in 1991-1995 he worked at Artashat Wine-Brandy Factory as Director. In 1995-1999 he was a deputy of the RA National Assembly of first convocation. In 1995-1996 he worked as Chairman of Executive Committee of Artashat Town Committee, in 1996-1998 he was Artashat Mayor, in 1998-2000 he was RA Ararat Governor. In 2000-2001 he worked as RA Minister of Territorial Administration and Coordination of Infrastructure Activities. In 2001-2002, as a result of the structural changes made in the government he was appointed RA Minister of Territorial Administration and from 2002 February to 2005 he was RA Minister of Territorial Administration and Coordination of Infrastructure Activities. As a result of structural changes in the government, on April 27, 2005 he was appointed RA Minister of Territorial Administration with functions of a Coordinating Minister. From April 27, 2005 he has been a member of the Security Council under the RA President. By the RA President's decree signed on June 8, 2007 he was appointed RA Deputy Prime Minister, RA Minister of Territorial Administration.



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By the RA President's December 30, 2004 decree, for his efficient work in the state government system he was awarded Anania Shirakatsi medal, was also awarded RA Prime Minister's memorial medal, Marshal Baghramian medal, Fridtjof Nansen gold memorial medal. Hovik Abrahamian is a member of Councils of Yerevan State University and Yerevan State Economic University.

He is a member of the Board of the Republican Party of Armenia.

He is married, has three children.

23. ORINATS YERKIR TO HAVE THREE NEW PARLIAMENT MEMBERS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Artsruni Aghajanian from northwestern province of Shirak and Ishkhan Khachatryan from the southern Ararat province will replace two parliament members from the Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) party – Mher Shahgeldian and Gurgen Sarkisian- who were appointed government ministers.

Susana Abrahamian, a spokeswoman for the party, told Armenpress that after the parity chairman, Arthur Baghdasarian, was appointed chief of the national security council, his parliament mandate will be passed to Khachik Harutyunian, who is from the northeastern province of Lori.

The party's faction will be led by deputy party chairman, Mrs. Heghine Bisharian.

24. EU PARLIAMENT CALLS ON TURKEY TO OPEN BORDER AND START DIALOGUE WITH YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The European Parliament passed on Tuesday by a vote of 53 to 4 and 4 abstentions a new resolution on Turkey which calls on Ankara to open its border with Armenia.

According to Turkish NTV, unlike the previous resolutions, the latest one has no mention of the 1915 Armenian genocide but calls on Ankara to end Armenia's economic blockade, to open border and begin a dialogue with the government in Yerevan for search of reconciliation over the past.

The resolution tells the European Commission to help both sides ease the process of reconciliation.

25. ARMENIAN DELEGATION'S VISIT TO STEPANAKERT ANGERS AZERI POLITICAL ANALYST [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

A last week visit to Nagorno-Karabakh by an Armenian parliament delegation, led by its speaker Tigran Torosian, infuriated an independent Azerbaijani political analyst Oktay Sadykhzade who urged the government of Baku 'to show Armenia Azerbaijan's real strength and liberate some of Armenian-controlled Azeri lands.'

In an interview with Azerbaijani Ekho newspaper, he said Armenia wants 'to legalize' its relationships with Nagorno-Karabakh. He said Azerbaijan should make conclusions from this and take preventive steps.

"Raising noise in foreign newspapers and passage of declarative and non-binding documents are not enough. Azerbaijan must show its real strength to Armenia," he said.

He argued that if several of Armenian-controlled regions are won back by force Armenia will have to quit imitating talks over the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

26. POLITICAL ANALYST CONDEMNS TURKEY'S DENIALIST POLICY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armen Ayvazian, head of Ararat think-tank, condemned today Turkish government officials for saying every year ahead of April 24 that they are willing to seek normalization of relationships with Armenia.

April 24 is marked by Armenians around the world as anniversary of the genocide committed by the government of Turkey in the last years of the Ottoman empire.

Speaking at a news conference Armen Ayvazian said Turkish officials make these announcements to delude the international community and hold it back from intervening into Turkish-Armenian relations.

He said these statements are designed to show that Turkey is in dialogue with Armenia. The goal is to ease European pressure which demands that Ankara opens its borders, lifts the transport and economic embargo of Armenia and recognizes the 1915 killings of Armenians as genocide. But Armen Ayvazian said this pressure is ineffective resulting in no progress in terms of Turkey's policy towards Armenia.



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Armen Ayvazian recalled that the international recognition of the Armenian genocide became a foreign policy agenda of Armenia after 1998. He said this issue must be transformed from being a moral question into a territorial issue. He said Armenia's demands that Turkey returns Armenia's historical lands will be one of the most effective ways of pressurizing Turkey.

He agreed that Turkey will not return these lands immediately, but according to him, such opportunities may emerge years and even decades later, "because sooner or later the policy will lead to it and without political dividends Armenia must never give up its territorial claims."

Armen Ayvazian then spoke about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict saying the security issue of its people is a security issue for Armenia 'because without Nagorno-Karabakh the southern region of Syunik will cease to exist as an Armenian province and without Syunik Armenia will cease to exist too.'

According to him, Armenian-controlled regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh is a territorial and security guarantee.

He again referred to the Armenian genocide issue saying its official recognition by many countries and influential international organizations did not entail any progress in Turkish-Armenian relations. He said all these recognitions remain on the moral level. He said passage of an Armenian resolution by U.S. Congress could prepare soil for Turkey to also recognize it.

BUSINESS

27. HAYPOST AND MICROSOFT TO SIGN AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Microsoft and HayPost companies will sign an agreement on cooperation on April 22. NT correspondent was informed by HayPost company that the agreement will allow to continue the reforms initiated by HayPost in the information technology sector. The purpose of the agreement is to help HayPost use the advanced technologies of Microsoft and in this way to increase the productivity of the company's resources.

It was mentioned that Microsoft is going to organize training courses for employees of the IT sector and to conduct seminars.

28. INFORMATION ON CUSTOMS VALUES OF SOME GOODS ALREADY PLACED ON WEBSITE OF STATE CUSTOMS COMMITTEE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Information on the customs values of about 100 consumer goods has already been placed on the RA State Customs Committee's (SCC) website - www.customs.am, with more information to be available within a month. The head of the SCC Department for Customs Improvement and International Relations Karen Beglarian said at the April 21 press conference that it was done in accordance with the president Serge Sargsian's instructions on implementation of rapid reforms in the sector. S. Sargsian gave these instructions during a recent meeting with the heads of the SCC.

K. Beglarian announced that citizens may also send emails via the website to the SCC acting head, who personally reads emails and then informs citizens about measures taken based on their complaints. Besides, a hot line - 535573 will be set up at the Committee.

According to K. Beglarian, several meetings with entities engaged in foreign economic activity took place in recent days. The entities mainly raised issues related to the methodology of determination of customs values and to rapid registration of documents.

It was mentioned that an out-of-time attestation of officials of the SCC will be held soon.

29. NET FOREIGN DEBT OF ARMENIA GROWS BY 295.35 MILLION DOLLARS TO 920.6 MILLION DOLLARS IN 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

The gross foreign debt of Armenia amounted to 2 bln 927.33 mln USD in late December 2007, growing by 917.33 mln USD as compared with late December 2006.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, 43% of the gross foreign debt formed in the state governance system, 14.7% in the private sector, 6.6% - in monetary and credit regulation bodies, 18.6% - in commercial banks, and 17.1% were foreign direct investments received as intercompany credits from organizations engaged in various sectors of the economy.

In late December 2007, the gross foreign assets of Armenia made 2 bln 6.73 mln USD, increasing by 621.98 mln USD as compared with December 2006. As a result, the net foreign debt of Armenia grew by 295.35 mln USD to 920.6 mln USD.



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30. MINISTRY TO GET 169,000 EUROS TO MAKE DOCUMENTARY ON ARMENIA

Prime minister Tigran Sarkisian has instructed the trade and economic development ministry to shoot a documentary about Armenia. It will be broadcasted by popular western TV channels.

The press office of the ministry said to Armenpress that the government has earmarked a sum equal to 169,000 euros for the ministry to make the documentary.

It said the scenario of the future film will have to be reconciled with culture ministry. The distribution agreement will be signed with Bazz Business company.

31. ECONOMY GROWS 10.2 PERCENT IN QUARTER ONE [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Armenia's economy grew 10.2 percent in quarter one. In January-February the growth was 10.1 percent.

Armenian Central Bank said the highest growth rate-20 percent- was again reported by construction sector.

Industrial growth was 5.8 percent aided significantly by growth in energy, food and metal production sectors. Growth in services was 11.2 percent. High growth rates were reported both in retail trade and services.

Agriculture rose 3.2 percent.

32. ARMENIA SELLS 3.5 MILLION LITERS OF WINE IN RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Last year Armenian wineries sold 3.5 million liters of wine in Russia. According to Gagik Kocharian, head of a department of the trade and economic development ministry, last year Armenia wine sales in Russia exceeded figures of 2005 four times.

Speaking at a news conference he said 96 percent of Armenia-produced wines are sold in Russia.

Avag Harutyunian, chairman of the Union of Armenian Wine Makers, said local wineries do not use the full capacities of their enterprises.

He disagreed with official figures which say that grapes are grown on about 16,000 hectares of land saying in fact grape is grown on less areas and 90 percent of grapes are procured for production of brandy.

He said unlike Armenian brandies which are an international brand, wines can not boast of it. He said Armenians wines if sold in Europe would be classified as the cheapest kinds of wines because of their poor quality.

He said although high quality grape sorts were planted in Armenia but their yield will be used in wine making only in 9 years. Out of 700 types of grapes grown in Armenia only 20 are used in wine making. He said Armenian wine makers need also new barrels and new modern winemaking equipment

Gagik Kocharian said the government set up Arm-Import-Torg company to promote and advertise Armenian wines abroad.

Armenian wine making companies enjoy several customs privileges. Thus imported bottles and labels are not subject to customs dues.

According to Areg Harutyunian, per capita wine consumption in Armenia is one liter, it is 9 liters in Russia and 50 liters on average in Europe.

33. GOVERNMENT RELEASES 21 MILLION DRAMS FOR RESTORATION OF TSITSERNAKABERD IRRIGATION SYSTEM [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The government has released 21 million drams to fund rehabilitation of the irrigation system of Tsitsernakaberd Genocide Memorial, which serves also as a public park.

Director of the Genocide Museum and Institute, Hayk Demoyan, told reporters on Monday that about 11,000 trees will be planted on the area of 15 hectares. He said the issue is being dealt with by the Armenian forest restoration fund.

The Tsitsernakaberd Memorial is located on the area of 100 hectares and every year part of the park will be rehabilitated with new trees to be planted. He said there are plans to build some entertainment facilities and to attract more people to the park.

He said funds will be released also for excavation of the north-eastern section of the park which is an archeological site.



34. GOVERNMENT RELEASES 1.4 BILLION DRAMS FOR IRRIGATION SYSTEMS RENOVATION [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The government has released 1.4 billion Drams to back up implementation of Irrigation Systems Renovation program.

Mher Mkrtumian, an official of the territorial ministry, said to Armenpress part of the funds will be used to restore 30 water canals, 35 pumping stations, over a dozen flumes, four water reservoirs-Arpi Lake, Aparan, Azat and Sarnaghbyur.

He said six administrative buildings will be also repaired 'to make resolution of urgent issues more effective.'

He said when this job is over some 125,000 hectares of land will be irrigated by gravity flow and water losses will be down up to 7 percent, while the efficacy of pumping stations will rise and power will be economized.

35. ARMENIA TO ANNOUNCE TENDER FOR THIRD MOBILE PHONE OPERATOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The government of Armenia is expected to announce early in May an international tender for the third mobile telephone operator.

Mariam Stepanian, a press officer for the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC), told Armenpress the tender conditions are being developed now and a special tender commission was set up already.

She said the commission will chose the third operator within 90 days since the announcement of the tender. She said some foreign companies have shown interest in the expected tender, including the Russian Megafon.

Armenia has two mobile phone providers-Beeline and VivaCell, both are Russia-owned. The entrance of the third operator is expected to push tariffs down and raise services quality.

36. BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS SHOULD FORM IN ARMENIA, PRIME MINISTER SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The prime minister Tigran Sargsian on April 22 presented the re-appointed minister Nerses Yeritsian to the staff of the RA ministry of economy (previously the ministry of trade and economic development). According to T. Sargsian, henceforth the minister will head a new ministry which should cooperate closely with the ministry of finance.

T. Sargsian pointed out the formation of business environment as a priority of the sector. At the same time he underlined that there are a lot of unsolved problems in economy. In his words, measures should be taken in order to create a favorable business environment through regulation of the normative field and to raise the quality of service and make them competitive. "We should form a business environment in line with international standards, a business environment that will give us a competitive advantage in the region," he stated.

In his opinion, today Armenia lags behind in the regional competition, and neighboring countries have surpassed Armenia by many criteria. In particular, rapid reforms have been made in customs and tax sectors of Georgia, and it will take Armenia at least 18 months to overtake Georgia. Nevertheless, according to the prime minister, the Armenian banking system is ahead those of its neighbors by 3 years, and he expects the other sectors to make success too.

37. TIGRAN SARGSIAN: ONE OF GOVERNMENT'S PURPOSES IS TO MAKE ARMENIA A FINANCIAL CENTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

One of the important purposes of the government is to make Armenia a financial center, the prime minister Tigran Sargsian stated when introducing the newly appointed minister Tigran Davtian to the staff of the ministry of finance. The prime minister said that T. Davtian is known among economists as an experienced specialist who is well-familiar with the economic problems of the country, also as a decent, educated and honest person with a rich biography.

The former minister of finance Vardan Khachatryan said that he assumed this post in 2000 in hard conditions when the state budget's current deficit amounted to 63 bln drams (about 203.2 mln USD at the current exchange rate), while economic growth made 4.2%. In his words, by common efforts they managed to get out of this situation and enter a period of sustainable development. V. Khachatryan



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expressed an opinion that an electronic procurement system should be introduced so that in 2010 it will be possible to transfer to a programmed system of budgeting.

38. "MICROSOFT" TO ESTABLISH 1,000-2,000 WORKING PLACES IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

In the coming two years "Microsoft" company is planning to establish 1,000-2,000 working places in Armenia. The director of the Armenian office of "Microsoft" Grigor Barseghian said that in the sphere of Information Technology there is a great demand of specialists. Today the company is conducting training of specialists and is even making investments in universities and schools for preparing relevant specialists.

According to him, in Armenia the violation of copyright in IT sphere is 95 percent which is one of the highest indexes in the world.

Now it is necessary to decrease the index bringing it to minimum as a result of which "everyone will gain as people will use more reliable technology".

In near future "Microsoft" will establish cooperation with a number of Armenian companies.

39. FLASH COMPANY BIGGEST CUSTOMS DUE PAYER IN QUARTER ONE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The State Customs Committee has unveiled the list of biggest 100 customs dues payers in quarter 1. The list is topped by Flash petrol importing company that paid 2.322 billion Drams.

The second is Kagh Petrol Service company that paid 2.2 billion drams, third is Salex Group company which brings food tuff, which paid 1.230 billion Drams.

The fourth is Paren Armenia, which paid 1.2 billion Drams in customs dues. Then come K-Telecom, Grand Candy companies. At the bottom of the list are FurniFood and Prof AI companies which paid 87.15 million drams each.

DIASPORA

40. TURKISH STATE MINISTER VISITS ARMENIAN ST ALL-SAVIOUR HOSPITAL'S OLD PEOPLE'S HOME [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Nimet Chubukchu, the Turkish State Minister for Women's and Families' Affairs, visited the old people's home attached to the St All-Saviour Armenian hospital.

According to the reports of Turkish press, the State Minister spoke to old people there.

"I feel very well here and like this place very much. I do not consider visiting old people as my duty. That is, I do not come here as a Minister," Chubukchu said.

41. TURKS INTEND TO ORGANIZE ACTION OF PROTEST IN NEW YORK AGAINST FACT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Turks are going to organize an action of protest on April 26 in New York against the fact of the Armenian Genocide.

As the Anadolu agency reports, the action of protest organized under the aegis of the Federation of Turkish-American Associations, on the initiative of the Young Turks union will take place in Times Square under the title Struggle against the Lies of Armenian Genocide.

42. EVENT DEDICATED TO 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF GENOCIDE TAKES PLACE IN RUSSIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

On April 20, an event dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was held in Russia. It was organized by the Moscow Organization of the Union of Armenians of Russia (UAR).

43. CONFERENCE ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TAKES PLACE IN TBILISI [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

On April 19, Tbilisi hosted "Armenian Genocide 1915-1923: look from Tbilisi, Istanbul and Yerevan" scientific conference. As reported the press office of the Armenian center of cooperation Georgia, the event was held with the assistance of the Armenian Genocide Institute-Museum.



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44. CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO TAKE PLACE IN LONDON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

Armenian/Assyrian Genocide day conference will be held in London on April 24. It will be sponsored and chaired by Andrew George M.P in The Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons.

45. IN COMMEMORATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS ARMENIAN TRICOLOUR RAISED IN FRONT OF PEABODY CITY HALL [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

On April 17 the deep red, blue, and orange colors of the Armenian flag was raised in front of City Hall in remembrance of the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The flag was raised by the only Genocide survivor able to attend this year's event, 98-year-old Carl Mootafian. This ceremony has become a meaningful tradition in Peabody since former Mayor Peter Torigian, whose father was a Genocide survivor, first organized the event 30 years ago. "Pete was not only a great mayor, he was someone who had a great love for Armenian people," said Mayor Michael Bonfanti.

46. VAHRAM SHEMMASSIAN AND RICHARD HOVHANNISIAN TO MAKE SPEECHES DURING DIFFERENT EVENTS ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

Prof. Vahram Shemmassian, Assistant Professor of Armenian and Director of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, will speak at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum on May 4. The lecture is entitled "The Rescue of Enslaved Armenian Women and Children in Syria at the End of the World War I Genocide." It will be co-sponsored by the Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

And Armenian Genocide Scholar, Dr. Richard Hovannisian will speak on Armenian Genocide in Massachusetts on May 2 during an event dedicated to Holocaust Memorial Day.

47. ANCA EASTERN REGION TO DECORATE SAMANTHA POWER WITH FREEDOM AWARD [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The Armenian National Committee of America, Eastern Region (ANCA ER) has announced plans to hold its second annual banquet on September 13 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City, with honored guest, Pulitzer Prize winner Samantha Power, the author of "A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide" book.

In her first book, she writes about the Armenian Genocide leading to the unfortunate realities of the other genocides that followed. In her books Samantha Power refers to human rights issues and genocide awareness.

According to the information provided by the Office of the Armenian National Committee of America, the evening will be followed by a dinner and program, during which Samantha Power will receive the ANCA ER Freedom Award. This award is given to those who demonstrate extraordinary courage and devotion to freedom and justice. Last year's honoree was former United States Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, who was dismissed from his position for speaking the truth about the Armenian Genocide.

ARTS

48. ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS TO HOLD CONFERENCE AND PAN-ARMENIAN FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The Association of Youth Organizations of the World Armenian Congress plans to organize a three-day conference entitled 'The National Interests of the Armenian People and Young People's Activity.'

The conference will be held in June in the resort town of Tsakhkadzor.

Atom Mkhitarian, chairman of the Association, told Armenpress that at the conference the young people will present their research papers and there will be debates. Then these papers will be published in one book.



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He said in August the Association will organize Pan-Armenian Youth Festival that will last 3-4 days and will bring also young Armenians from Diaspora. The young people will sing, dance and present staged performances. The festival will be concluded by a gala concert in Yerevan.

49. PHOTO EXHIBITION DISPLAYS ARMENIANS BEFORE GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

An exhibition that opened today at the Armenian Architecture Museum-Institute shows how Armenians of Van, Kars, Erzerum, Sebastia, Kharberd and Diarbakir lived on their historical lands in western Armenia, now in Turkey, before they were wiped out by the government of Turkey.

The exhibition has on display photographs taken between 1860-1914 depicting prominent Armenians, Armenian villages and towns, historical and cultural monuments, costumes worn by Armenians of different regions.

Bakur Karapetian, chairman of Shushi charity fund, said only 220 photographs of a much richer collection are on display. He said these photographs are another evidence that these lands belonged to Armenians for millennia.

The Shushi Fund has collected about 7,000 old photographs. He said the Fund plans to establish a national photo gallery in Nagorno-Karabakh. He said they have asked the authorities in Stepanakert for permission adding if they will not give it they will turn to authorities in Armenia to set it up in an Armenian province.

50. CULTURAL CENTER AND MUSEUM IN KAPAN UNDER RENOVATION [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The authorities in Kapan, the center of Syunik province, have received 110 million Drams from the state budget to renovate the local culture center. The renovation will be over in June.

The building was not repaired for decades. It already has modern doors and windows, sanitary facilities were also replaced. The culture center will have also a new boiler house. Part of necessary funds, 11 millions Drams, came from the municipality.

The new boiler house will also heat in winter months the nearby art college and a musical school.

Kapan authorities will accomplish soon also the repair of the local regional museum. The repair is funded by the local government. Vilen Badalian, head of the municipal urban department, said the Zangezour smelter pledged 45 million Drams to help repair the museum.

51. OUR HOME EXHIBITION TO OPEN ON APRIL 23 [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Expo-Media Center will organize on April 23-27 the seventh Our Home exhibition. The goal of this exhibition, according to its organizers is to bring together Armenian, international and foreign organizations which are dealing with construction, repair, design and which offer high standards.

The exhibition gives also an opportunity for producers and consumers to establish contacts to promote new business ties, to expand the market and introduce new technologies.

The exhibition's organization is being assisted by economy ministry, Armenian Development Agency, Yerevan Municipality and the Union of Armenian Builders.

RELIGION

52. CHURCH SHOULD REMAIN ONE OF STRONGHOLDS OF ARMENIAN SPIRIT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY, RA PRESIDENT SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Catholicos of the Great Cilician House Aram A visited RA President Serge Sargsian on April 21. As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA President's Press Office, mentioning that due to the circumstances he was not able to take part in the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected President, Catholicos Aram A said that he has arrived in Armenia to personally congratulate S. Sargsian and to express his support to him.

According to S. Sargsian, having support of two Catholicoses, he can do much and achieve great results. He highly evaluated church's role in the life of the Armenian people and said that under conditions of 1000-year lack of statehood the church assumed some functions of statehood, preservation of the Armenian nation and bore it with honor. Emphasizing that henceforth the state will continue supporting strengthening of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the head of state said that the national church should remain one of the strongholds of Armenian spirit and national identity.



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53. CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA ARAM I PAYS ONE-DAY VISIT TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I arrived at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin on the morning of April 21. The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I offered a prayer in the Cathedral.

According to a press release submitted to NT by the press service of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, at noon the Catholicos of All Armenians and the Catholicos of Cilicia visited the Armenian president Serge Sargsian.

The Catholicos of All Armenians and the Catholicos of Cilicia also went to the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex to Victims of the Armenian Genocide and to the Armenian Genocide Museum. After laying wreaths at the memorial complex, a ceremony for the peace of the souls of the innocent victims of the Genocide was held at the Eternal Fire.

On the same day Aram I left for Beirut.

SOCIAL

54. EXHIBITION "WESTERN ARMENIA IN PHOTOGRAPHS OF 1860-1914" OPENS IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

An exhibition under the title "Western Armenia in Photographs of 1860-1914" opened on April 21 at the National Museum-Institute of Architecture on the initiative of the RA Ministry of Culture and Shoushi Charity Fund. The 220 photographs displayed at the exhibition present economic, cultural life of Western Armenia, its public figures, settlements, cult monuments in the period from the 1860-s to 1914, national costumes peculiar of different regions.

As Bakur Karapetian, the Director of the Shoushi Charity Fund, mentioned, the documents of Western Armenia are irrefutable evidence that Armenians lived in Van, Kars, Erzurum, Sebastia, Kharberd, and Diarbekir. According to him, their goal is to present that exhibition also abroad, in particular, in the United States.

B. Karapetian said that for the purpose of founding a national gallery of photography the Fund has created a collection of 7 thousand antiquated photographs including different sides of Armenia's, Artsakh's, Western Armenia's, and Diaspora's life, the most part of which is shown at the www.avetis.org website.

The Fund's director also said that they intended to repair one of the Shoushi's old schools and to turn it into a picture-gallery, but the NKR authorities did not assist them and the program remained unfinished. According to B. Karapetian, unless the program of founding a picture-gallery in Shoushi receives assistance, they will apply to the town authorities of Gyumri or Vanadzor. "This is a unique collection, our history is presented in these photographs, and we are obliged to make it accessible for everyone," B. Karapetian emphasized.

55. JUDGES WORRY THAT SOCIETY HAS NOT SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE TO COURTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

The judicial system of Armenia does not enjoy sufficient confidence by society. David Avetisian, the Vice-Chairman of the RA Union of Judges, the Chairman of the RA Cassation Court's Criminal Chamber, said at the April 19 general meeting of the RA Union of Judges. He also said that there is no sufficient predictability to activity carried out by courts, in particular, to judicial acts. The evidence of it is the fact that nearly 22 percent of judicial acts on civil cases is annulled by the higher judicial instances and 39 percent on criminal cases. Therefore, raising the quality of judicial acts is an important problem for Armenia.

D. Avetisian also considers that "if we wish to have a really fully-fledged judicial power, we should give proper payment to those administering that power."

The report on the work done by the RA Union of Judges in 2006-2008, as well as the report of the Union's Control Commission was heard during the Union's general meeting.



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56. MUSEUM-INSTITUTE OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO HAVE NEW CONCEPT DISPLAY SOON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

During the coming one or two years the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide will have a new concept display with modern designer and technical solutions. Hayk Demoyan, the Museum Director, said at the April 21 brief press conference of Museum's activity. In his words, the designers group, who is to study in detail all existing materials, has been already formed.

Hayk Demoyan touched upon the collection work being done in the museum mentioning that oral stories of people having experienced the Genocide have been recorded, hand-written memories have been collected and studied during the year. According to him, that work is too important, as any new material or fact has a considerable importance for the process.

In the respect of museum's publishing and literature collection work the rare manuscripts of late 19th century and early 20th century and books by unknown authors on that subject are especially important. According to the Director, the goal of this collection activity is to create a complete library on slaughters of Armenians. Hayk Demoyan said that a large batch of books has been donated to the library lately by the ARFD Dro Library and the library of Mechitarist Congregation. Touching upon the Museum's international activity, Hayk Demoyan said that the institution has already become a member of the International Association of Genocideologists and he has been elected a member of the Association's electronic committee.

Much work has been also done in the issue of signing cooperation agreements during collection activity: thanks to these agreements the Museum receives a right to use materials or photographs of other archives. The Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide has already signed agreements with the Museum of Ethnography of Russia, Deutsche Bank's archives, Washington's Museum of Armenian Genocide, and other organizations.

57. WEBSITE OF MUSEUM-INSTITUTE OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ALREADY LAUNCHED [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/21/08]

The website of the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide, www.genocide-museum.am, is already operating in English. It has 500-600 visitors every day. As historian Hayk Demoyan, the Museum's Director, said at the April 21 press conference, that number will grow in the coming days in connection with the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. According to the Director, the launching of the website's English department has purely strategic significance, as it presents the official position of the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide. The website will also have Armenian, Russian, and Turkish versions in the future.

The Museum's website consists of two parts: the horizontal part presents information on the Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide and the left perpendicular part contains documents and photographs, memories of people having experienced the Armenian Genocide, which are periodically refreshed. The latest materials of that part are evidence of Jewish and Swedish eye-witnesses about the Genocide.

Besides, a virtual museum is presented on the website: any person from any point of the world can visit the website, roam about the memorial complex and museum in the three-dimensional virtual territory. It was mentioned that in average 150-300 thousand people visit the Museum every year and under the circumstance of existence of an electronic museum their number will grow considerably.

58. 12.3 BILLION DRAMS PAID AS PENSIONS IN QUARTER ONE TO YEREVAN RESIDENTS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Some 12.3 billion Drams were paid to senior citizens in Yerevan as old-age and retirement pensions and 1.3 billion Drams as poverty allowances to 25,400 families.

Armen Soghoian, head of a Yerevan municipality department in charge of health and social issues, told Armenpress that 3,472 babies were born in Yerevan in quarter 1, a little over of 3,432 from a year before.

He said 510,743 visits to Yerevan clinics and policlinics were registered in the first three months of this year, up from 444,682 from a year before.

He said 86 percent of Yerevan residents have chosen their family doctors. Also 344 family doctors were trained during the same time span. Their training was funded from a World Bank health credit.



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59. YEREVAN MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENTS COOPERATE WITH GERMAN AND RUSSIAN COUNTERPARTS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Kanaker-Zeytoon medical Center of Yerevan and Vivantes Hospital Network of Berlin, Germany, signed lately a cooperation agreement.

Armen Soghoian, head of a Yerevan municipality department in charge of health and social issues, told Armenpress that under the signed agreement the Armenian medical center will send some of its patients for further treatment to Germany. He said the treatment will be paid, but some of them may have free treatment.

He said cooperation agreement envisages also exchange of doctors.

Soghoian also spoke about another agreement between Yerevan and Moscow health establishments under which in case of need Moscow residents may have free medical treatment in Yerevan and vice versa. As part of that agreement Armenian doctors have training courses at best Moscow hospitals.

60. MORE VEHICLES IN ARMENIA USE LIQUIFIED GAS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

There are 207 liquified gas filling stations across Armenia which boasts the highest percentage of vehicles with converted engines to work on liquified gas. The volume of liquified gas used by these vehicles has grown drastically from 29 million cubic meters in 2001 to 286 billion in 2007.

Shushan Sardarian, a spokeswoman for the Russian-Armenian ArmRosGazprom (ARG) natural gas operator, said an ARG affiliate, Avtogaz, runs 9 stations, which are connected to major gas pipelines.

She said they have capacities to fill daily about 3,000 vehicles. According to her, some 60,000 vehicles are registered to have safe converted engines working on liquified gas. She said the growth makes annually 10 percent.

Overall, some 40 percent of all vehicles in the country are supposed to work on liquified gas allowing their owners to save annually about \$200 million.

61. ARMENIAN KAPAN MAY HAVE SISTER TOWN IN POLAND [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

A delegation of the Kapan municipality, the administrative capital of the southern province of Syunik, is preparing for a visit to Poland. The invitation was extended by Pzsemislaw Grabowski who led a Polish embassy delegation to Kapan recently.

Kapan mayor Armen Karapetian told Armenpress that during that meeting the Polish side offered its help in implementation of small development projects for the town.

Particularly, an agreement was reached on repair and equipment of the medical point of a secondary school of the town. The mayor said the town needs such small projects.

During the visit to Poland the Armenian town delegation is likely to be offered help for implementation of larger scale projects. There is a preliminary agreement that Kapan and a Polish town may sign a sister-city agreement.

62. YOUNG PEOPLE TO ORGANIZE TORCHED PROCESSION TO REMEMBER GENOCIDE VICTIMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

On April 23 the Armenian Youth Union and the Nikol Aghbalian Student Union, both are closely affiliated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF,) will organize a torched procession towards the Genocide Memorial in Yerevan.

The procession will start at 8 pm from Freedom Square. Both unions asked Armenians to light a candle on that evening in memory of the genocide victims.

63. ALLIANCE OF MARTYRED NATIONS TO REMEMBER VICTIMS OF ARMENIAN, GREEK AND ASSYRIAN GENOCIDES [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The International Alliance of Martyred Nations comprises the Federation of Assyrian Organizations, Bontso Greek organization, the Unions of Armenian and World Yezidis. These are the nations that were subjected to genocide by the authorities of Turkey.

The founder of this alliance, Avetis Kalajian, told a news conference today that its major goal is to strengthen ties with the nations which fell victim to genocides carried out by Turkish government in late 19-th and early 20-th centuries.



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“We shall continue our fight until Turkey acknowledges these genocides and pays compensations. Our alliance plans a range of public actions and events,” he said.

He said the Alliance will organize a procession on April 24 which is marked as the Armenian Genocide day and also on May 1 and August 7 to remember victims of Greek and Assyrian genocides committed by the government of Turkey.

He said he plans to publish a book which he said is the result of his 12 year-long research which proves that Turks subjected to genocide about 70 nations killing 50 million people in Asia, Africa and Europe.

64. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT AWARDS FOREIGN RESEARCHERS FOR THEIR INPUT INTO GENOCIDE RECOGNITION [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian has decreed today to award several foreign researchers for their huge contribution to the international recognition of the Armenian genocide.

The presidential press service said they are Yuri Barseghov (Russia) who is awarded for his two-volume work called ‘The Armenian Genocide. Turkey’s Responsibility and World’s Obligations;’ Ive Ternond, France, for his input into the recognition of this crime.

Sarkisian also decreed to award Rodger Smith from the USA the Armenian Movses Khorenatsi medal for his efforts to promote the international recognition of the Armenian genocide.

65. FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CONGRESS TO BE HELD IN JUNE [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The fourth international Construction-2008 congress will be held in Tsakhkadozr town in Armenia on July 11-14. The theme of the congress will be major trends in Armenia’s construction sector development.

The discussions will focus on a wide spectrum of related issues. The ‘Master’ international integration support center, which is the organizer of the congress, told Armenpress that representatives of about 120 Armenian organizations will take part in it apart from participants from Russia, Georgia, Ukraine and Iran.

The organization of the congress is supported by the urban ministry, the Union of Armenian Industrialists and Businessmen and the Union of Armenian Builders.

66. RENAMED MINISTRY TO UNDERGO STRUCTURAL CHANGES [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Structural and staff changes are expected in the ministry of energy that was renamed at president Serzh Sarkisian’s decree the ministry of energy and natural resources.

Lusine Harutyunian, a spokeswoman for the renamed ministry, told Armenpress that the ministry will be vested with more functions from now on. She said the nature and the amount of structural and personnel changes are being specified now.

She said the ministry’s authorities in terms of supervising and managing natural resources will also be specified.

67. YOUNG ARMENIANS AND TURKS TO MITIGATE EXISTING STEREOTYPES [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

The Association of Young Armenian Women and the Turkish Community Volunteers Fund are organizing an exchange program for young volunteers.

The Armenian Association told Armenpress that the goal of this program is to mitigate the existing stereotypes among young Armenians and Turks and give them an opportunity to learn more about each other, their cultures and form a sort of a cultural understanding.

This project will be implemented on May 16-19 in the Turkish city of Kars. Armenian participants should be young people aged 17-25 (10 girls and ten boys) and students. Residents of regions are encouraged to apply.



68. SEMINAR DISCUSSES ROLE OF NGOs IN CORRUPTION REDUCING IN CIVIL SERVICE SECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Eurasia Partnership Fund has helped to carry out in the last 18 months a program that was designed to increase the role of civic society and media in fighting corruption in the civil service sector.

Within the frameworks of this program monitoring groups comprising 7 non-governmental organizations implemented monitoring of the process of certification of civic service employees and conduction of competitions to fill in vacancies.

As part of the program the Civil Service Council and the Network of Monitoring Ngos signed cooperation agreement.

The Eurasia Partnership Fund organized a seminar today to discuss this program, its stability and whether it could be expanded.

Vache Kalashian, chairman of the Civil Servants Union, said a survey revealed that almost 14 percent of respondents believe that involvement of NGOs in the competition and certification processes helps make them more transparent. Almost 31 percent said this makes the certification and competition commissions more objective.

69. SOIL FROM GRAVE OF SWISS MISSIONARY PLACED IN ARMENIAN MEMORIAL WALL [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Soil from the grave of the prominent Swiss missionary, Jakob Kunzler, brought to Armenia was placed today in the Memorial Wall of the Genocide Complex in Yerevan. Jakob Kunzler was a friend of Armenians. This initiative belongs to the Genocide Museum and Institute.

Fourteen of Kunzler's descendants have arrived in Armenia to take part in this ceremony. They planted a tree in the nearby alley.

Jakob Kunzler was born in 1871. In 1899 he left for Urfa in Western Armenia that became the center of his pro-Armenian activities.

In 1922 he helped 8,000 Armenian orphans to move from Turkey to Syria and Lebanon. In the same year he founded an orphanage in Ghazir for 1,400 Armenian underage girls. In Beirut he founded a hospital for Armenian orphans and a resort house for Armenian children ill with tuberculosis.

He recalled all his memories in a book called 'In the Country of Blood and Tears' that was first published in 1921 in Germany's Potsdam.

Speaking at today's ceremony, Hayk Demoyan, head of the Genocide Museum-Institute, said the name of Jakob Kunzler must be written in gold letters in the humanity's history.

The descendants of this great man will be received on April 23 by Catholicos Karekin II. Head of the Armenian Church.

70. IN 2007 BIRTH RATE WAS UP 7 PERCENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

Birth rate in Armenia last year rose 7 percent against the previous 2006, Karine Kuyumjian, head of census and demography department of the national statistical service, said today.

According to her, 40,000 births were registered in 2007 against 37,000 in 2006. She recalled that in 1990 the birth rate was 80,000 and 32,000 in 2004. It began to grow steadily after 2004.

The death rates, she said, in 2006 and 2007 were the same. But she added that death rate is increasing with every year. She said the number of young deaths is on decline.

The share of senior citizens is on the rise, which she said is because of still low birth rates. She said every woman should at least give birth to more than 2 babies to ensure simple reproduction of population. In 1990 the index was 2.6, in 2008 it was 1.348 which is not enough for simple reproduction.

Hamlet Sarkisian, a demographer, attributed the drastic decline in birth rates to a long string of economic and political causes recalling that at the end of the 19-th century the majority of Armenian families had 8-10 children.

According to Karine Kuyumjian, male life expectancy in Armenia is 70 and that of women is 76.8, highest figures among former Soviet nations.



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71. TIGRAN SARGSIAN: ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WORK ON INTRODUCTION OF MULTISTAGE PENSION SYSTEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The activity program of the RA government envisages making the vulnerable groups protection policy most targeted, the prime minister Tigran Sargsian stated while presenting the re-appointed minister Aghvan Vardanian to the staff of the ministry of labor and social issues. According to him, it is necessary to identify precisely the vulnerable groups and provide targeted aid to them so that funds will not be wasted and will reach the families in need of this aid.

The prime minister said that pension reforms and the introduction of a new concept will be the key tasks of the government in the next 5 years. The government will continue work on introduction of a multistage pension system, including the cumulative pension system. "The population should learn to save, while the young generation should assume responsibility for a well-off old age by participating in the cumulative pension system," he pointed out.

In his words, a concept for introduction of the new system has been developed: "we have knowledge and a team of young experts capable of introducing the cumulative pension system in Armenia".

72. A NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED IN PARALLEL WITH ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

5-6 big road construction projects are being implemented under the Master Plan of Yerevan in the city. The director of Yerevanproject institute Gurgen Musheghian said at the April 21 press conference that in parallel with road construction, a number of environmental problems will be solved: in particular, there will be no traffic jams and, by forecasts, exhaust gases from vehicles will be reduced 5 times.

According to G. Musheghian, a big ring road will be built from Agatangeghos Street to Avetisian Street, thanks to which vehicles will take 5-10 minutes to go along a freeway from Agatangeghos to Avetisian Street. Construction work is also underway at the crossroads of Sayat-Nova and Khanjian Streets, Alex Manukian Street and New Highway (construction of a road along the course of the Getar River), and Charents and Koryun Streets.

G.Musheghian said that construction work will finish in September.

73. COURT HEARING OF ISAHAK MALKHASIAN'S CASE POSTPONED UNTIL APRIL 25 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The court of Yerevan's Shengavit community (chairman - Judge Gagik Poghosian) postponed the April 21 court sitting to examine the case of Isahak Malkhasian charged with violence against a representative of authorities and carrying a gas, cold steel or dart weapon until April 25. I. Malkhasian is brother of National Assembly deputy Myasnik Malhasian charged with instigation of mass disorder combined with murder and usurpation of state power.

At the previous court sitting, I. Malkhasian declared that he rejects his defence lawyer Melania Arustamian who defended him during the investigation and he asked to involve a new lawyer. Lawyer Seda Safarian stated in court on April 21 that she signed an agreement with the defendant's relatives on April 19 so she is not familiar with the materials of the case, she does not even know what crime the defendant is charged with. Moreover, I. Malkhasian in his turn said that he is not familiar with the case materials either, while the note of the investigation that he has been acquainted with the case materials is a result of the "deception of the investigator". The court decided to give time to the defendant so that he will familiarize himself with the case materials.

74. TIGRAN SARGSIAN: ARMENIA SHOULD BECOME REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/22/08]

The prime minister Tigran Sargsian on April 21 presented the re-appointed minister Harutyun Qushkian to the staff of the RA ministry of health. He described H. Qushkian as an expert in his field who enjoys confidence of the specialists, and everybody appreciates his professional and organizational abilities. All this, according to T. Sargsian, will allow the minister to solve problems of the health sphere. The prime minister said that one of the ambitious priorities of the health care sector is to make Armenia a regional health center.

In his opinion, in order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to introduce the best standards in the sector without copying experience of developed countries. "We should introduce the standards the



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developed countries are striving to achieve," T. Sargsian stated. One of the preconditions to become a health center is to create an opportunity for specialists to undergo training at the best medical institutions of the world.

75. PRESIDENT SARKISIAN VISITS SARALANGE ROAD AND SCHOOL

President Serzh Sarkisian visited today the new Saralanj road in Yerevan which is being built on Lincy Fund's money. The Fund also finances major reconstruction of five secondary schools outside Yerevan and five in the capital city. Serzh Sarkisian was eager today to learn how the construction proceeded and what was done so far.

He was accompanied by territorial minister, vice prime minister Armen Gevorkian, who is also chairman of Lincy Fund Programs Management Council, Yerevan mayor Yervand Zakharian, Eduard Bezoyan and Hrayr Sarkisian, who are heads of offices in charge of implementation of road construction and school construction programs respectively.

On Saraland road builders were drilling a tunnel which Bezoyan said is of key significance. He praised the drillers for excellent job. Construction of the tunnel began in 2006 May but no explosions were made not to damage nearby residential houses.

Construction of two of three major transport junctions of the Saralanj road is over. A section was built top join Riga street with Saralanj road and it also intersect Azatutyun Avenue. The third key juncture will be on Heratsi-Myasnikian.

Bezoyan said the tunnel will take the brunt of major traffic flows from Heratsi street to the highway. The tunnel is 180 meter long. He said the builders will do their best to accomplish its construction by the end of August. Six billion Drams are envisaged for construction of the road and 1 billion for the tunnel.

The school building program embraces five schools in regions and five in Yerevan. Hrayr Sarkisian said in Gyumri a children gym was built and repair is 80-85 percent over in other schools. This program will be over before September 1 when the schooling year begins in Armenia. The repaired schools will be adapted to 12 year schooling and will be seismic resistant.

President Sarkisian visited number 56 school today. It was built in 1964 and was assessed by experts as breakdown in 1996-1997. As a result of fortification it will resist a nine point earthquake. It will accommodate 720 students. Some 560 million Drams will be spent on its renovation while the entire school building program's budget is \$20 million.

76. PRESIDENT SARKISIAN CHAIRS LINCY GOVERNING BOARD MEETING [ARMENPRESS, 04/22/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian chaired today a recurrent meeting of the Lincy Fund Governing Board. According to the presidential press service, the president emphasized greatly cooperation with Lincy Fund saying successful implementation of the ongoing projects will permit to continue and deepen cooperation with it.

He said deputy prime minister Armen Gevorkian will continue to head the Fund's governing board from the government already.

Serzh Sarkisian said all programs implemented with the support of the Lincy Fund will be under his direct control. He especially stressed two circumstances-the first is that all work be carried out with high quality and second is that all structures be in line with modern standards.

The today's meeting discussed also other issues.

77. EDWARD NALBANDIAN DISCUSSES ISSUE ON PRESERVATION OF ARMENIAN MONUMENTS WITH UNESCO GENERAL DIRECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian met in Paris with the UNESCO general director Koichiro Matsuura. During the meeting the latter congratulated Edward Nalbandian on his appointment and expressed hope that the close ties established previously and the cooperation will continue more dynamically.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service reported that during the meeting the sides also discussed issues connected with the concrete activity in education, culture, information and telecommunication spheres within the framework of 2008-2009 cooperation program between Armenia and UNESCO.



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E. Nalbandian also drew the attention of the UNESCO general director to the mediation and support of UNESCO in preservation of Armenian cultural-historic values which are outside of the Armenian territory expressing deep concern towards the purposeful elimination of Armenian cross-stones in Nakhijevan by the Azerbaijani side.

At the end of the meeting UNESCO general director asked to convey his congratulations to the Armenian president.

78. LAKE SEVAN LEVEL UP 61 CENTIMETERS FROM A YEAR AGO [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Melting snow up in the mountains surrounding Armenia's largest lake Sevan has reached the lake raising its level by 12 centimeters more.

According to weather service of Gegharkunik province, the lake's level on April 21 was 1,899.04 meters above sea level, which was 61 centimeters higher from a year ago.

The lake's level is expected to rise further in May when more melting snow reaches the lake via over a dozen of rivers flowing into it.

79. TEGHUT TO HAVE 24 HOUR WATER SUPPLY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The UN Food Program is assisting the Teghut rural community of Lori province to build a new drinking water pipeline. This project will be accomplished in three months.

The job is being done by 25 people who are hired by the Food for Work program. When the pipeline is built the community will have water supplies from two sources-one from Aznut and the other from Tandzut areas.

The pipeline is almost 3 km long. Teghut will have 24 hour water supplies.

80. KAPAN TO HAVE MODERN BRIDGES [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

New bridges will be built over Voghji and Vachagan rivers that flow across the southern town of Kapan.

Kapan mayor Armen Karapetian had ordered a close study of all metal bridges in the town which have been affected by corrosion

Vilen Badalian, head of a municipality department in charge of urban issues, told Armenpress construction of new modern bridges will be assisted by sponsors.

Construction of one such bridge has already started across the River of Voghji. It is sponsored by a Moscow-based native of the town.

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

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