



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, April 25, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. EXPERT GYULNARA SHAHINIAN RECEIVES MANDATE OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON ISSUES OF SLAVERY BY UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

Citizen of Armenia, independent international expert Gyulnara Shahinian has been elected a specialist bearing a special mandate by the UN Human Rights Council. As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by G. Shahinian, she was given a mandate of a special rapporteur on issues of slavery and influence of its roots for three years' term. She will work with representatives of local NGOs, RA government, and UN to study the state of "slavery" in different countries and to work out proposals of coming out of them. Besides, G. Shahinian is to present a report to UN over that issue twice a year.

According to G. Shahinian, "white slavery," trafficking, exists in Armenia, as well. In her words, Armenia is considered mainly as a country of exit and transit of trafficking. She also said that work on struggle against that phenomenon is being done in Armenia, though it is not large for the present.

2. WITHIN FRAMEWORKS OF VISIT TO FRANCE RA MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS A NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

Eduard Nalbandian, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, who is in Paris on a working visit, introduced the programs of the new leadership of Armenia in foreign and home spheres, the approaches of Armenia concerning a number of issues of mutual interest, as well as regional developments during his meeting with Jean-David Levitte, the main diplomatic adviser of the President of France on April 22.

On the same day the RA Minister of Foreign Affairs discussed the issues connected with the current negotiation process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement with Bernard Fassier, a French co-Chairman in the Minsk Group.

And issues on the expansion of intergovernmental contacts in separate directions and on the deepening of the cooperation with France at a decentralized level were discussed during the meeting with Andre Santini, the Secretary of State for State Service of France.

The issues connected with the concrete activities in the spheres of education, culture, information and telecommunication envisaged within the frameworks of the national planning document of cooperation for 2008-2009 between Armenia and UNESCO were discussed during the meeting with Koichiro Matsuura, the Director General of UNESCO held on the same day.

Eduard Nalbandian once again called the attention of the Director General of UNESCO on the necessity for providing the assistance and interference of UNESCO in the protection of the Armenian historical-cultural values beyond the borders of Armenia, in particular, expressing a deep preoccupation with the fact of a purposeful destruction of the Armenian khachkars (commemorative cross-stones) in Nakhijevan and once again calling to take measures for the purpose of condemning the cultural terrorism against the Armenian monuments of Jugha.

On April 22 Eduard Nalbandian also had a meeting with Abdou Diouf, the Secretary General of the International Organization of Francophonie. The latter expressed satisfaction with the cooperation state with Armenia within the framework of Francophonie, highly appreciating in it the contribution of Eduard Nalbandian as the personal representative of the RA President in the Permanent Council of Francophonie.

Eduard Nalbandian mentioned the progress, which has been recorded in the direction of Francophonie for the recent years in Armenia and introduced the intention of Armenia for deepening its involvement in the organization still more. On this occasion the interlocutors exchanged ideas on the further ways of cooperation and the participation of Armenia in the Quebec Summit of Francophonie, which is envisaged to be held this October.

According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the Press and Information Department of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the meeting of Eduard Nalbandian with Patrick Devejian, the Secretary General of the Union for a Popular Movement is scheduled for April 23.



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3. DAVID SARGSIAN APPOINTED HEAD OF RA GOVERNMENT'S STAFF [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

By the April 22 decree of Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, David Sargsian has been appointed Head of the staff of the RA government. This information was provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office.

Before the new appointment David Sargsian held the office of the Head of the Department of Financial System Policy and Analyses of the RA Central Bank.

4. MANVEL BADALIAN: CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL WILL NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP ATTESTATION PROCESS AWAY FROM CORRUPTION RISKS WITHOUT NGOs AND MEDIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

A seminar-discussion dedicated to the strategy of stability of anti-corruption monitoring network was held on April 22 in Yerevan on the initiative of the Eurasia Cooperation Foundation. During over one year and a half the monitoring team consisting of seven NGOs implemented an all-embracing program aimed at reducing corruption risks in the civil service sphere, through monitorings of contest and attestation processes of civil servants. At the program's new stage, besides contests held in the Civil Service Council, monitorings of contest processes in the RA Ministries of Education of Science, Health, Labor and Social Issues were also held. A cooperation memorandum was signed between the RA Civil Service Council and monitoring network of NGOs within the framework of the program.

Vache Kalashian, the Chairman of one of the organizations included in the monitoring network of program's implementation, the Union of Armenian State Servants, said that the program's main goal was to ensure mutual contact between the public and the state through contest attestation processes monitoring, because, if we have that mutual contact, "we will have an efficient state, a legitimate machinery of state." At the initial stage five NGOs, the Union of Armenian State Servants, the Association of Armenian Young Lawyers, the Helsinki Committee of Armenia, the Civil Initiative of Reliable Information, took part in the monitoring, the Armenian branch of Transparency International also presented the program to its delegates, at present the number of organizations having joined the network has reached seven.

In the first part of program's implementation the grant was given by the Eurasia Foundation and Yerevan Office of OSCE, at present the program's implementation continues with the financing of the Eurasia Foundation. There is willingness to implement such a program in other spheres, as well, in particular, on court and judicial reforms.

"I attach much importance to state-society contact and the situation, in which we sometimes find ourselves, public intolerance, distrust, lack of confidence, distrustfulness, to some extent are the consequence of these phenomena," Manvel Badalian, the Chairman of the RA Civil Service Council, said in his turn. According to him, without NGOs and media the Civil Service Council will not be able to control the attestation process by keeping it away from corruption risks.

5. RA NA ORINATS YERKIR FACTION STAFF TO BE CHANGED [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

Mher Shahgeldian and Gurgen Sargsian, members of the RA National Assembly Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) faction, who have been included in the new government, will renounce their deputy mandates ahead of schedule. According to the Electoral Code, the vacant seats of these deputies elected by the proportional system, by CEC's decision, will be taken by the next two candidates of the OYP electoral roll.

The changes in the staff of the OYP parliamentary faction consisting of 8 people will not be limited to this. According to the agreement officially publicized in advance, OYP Chairman and head of the parliamentary faction Artur Baghdasarian, who has been also elected a deputy by the proportional system, will be appointed Secretary of Security Council. In this case he will also renounce his deputy mandate and the faction's staff will be replenished by the above mentioned order.

As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by Susanna Abrahamian, the OYP Spokesperson, OYP Board members, Khachik Haroutiunian representing the Lori region, Artsruni Aghajanian representing the Shirak region, and Ishkhan Khachatryan representing the Ararat region, will join the faction. And Heghine Bisharian, the faction's current Secretary, OYP Vice-Chairwoman, will assume the post of faction's head.



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6. RA CEC REGISTERS OYP MEMBERS KHACHIK HAROUTIUNIAN AND ARTSRUNI AGHAJANIAN AS NA DEPUTIES [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

RA Central Electoral Commission, at the April 23 sitting, registered as deputies Khachik Haroutiunian and Artsruni Aghajanian included in the Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) party's proportional electoral roll. NA protocols on considering as stopped deputy authorities of Mher Shahgelian and Gurgen Sargsian elected deputies by OYP proportional system in the May 12, 2007 parliamentary elections became a basis for the decision. The latters have been included in the new government.

According to CEC Secretary Abram Bakhchagulian, 6 candidates following K. Haroutiunian on OYP electoral roll have put in applications on withdrawing their candidatures, as a result of which A. Aghajanian received the deputy mandate. However, the CEC Secretary also said that among the above mentioned 6 candidates Gegham Gasparian, as well as candidate Viktoria Haroutiunian following A. Aghajanian have applied to CEC saying that they have not signed the applications on withdrawing their candidatures. CEC decided to send these applications to the Prosecutor General's Office for a signature expertise. If the signatures' authenticity is not proved, CEC will consider the decision on registering A. Aghajanian as a deputy.

By the way, A. Aghajanian was a NA deputy of second convocation (1999-2003) by the proportional system, by the OYP electoral roll.

7. SEASON OF RUSSIAN CULTURE TO BE HELD IN ARMENIA IN JUNE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

During the April 23 meeting of RA President Serge Sargsian and Head of RF Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography Mikhail Shvidkoy, the interlocutors attached importance to the 2008 cultural cooperation memorandum between the RA Ministry of Culture and RF Federal Agency of Culture and Cinematography to be signed the same day, as well as the Season of Russian Culture already planned in Armenia in June 2008.

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, S. Sargsian considering preservation and expansion of cultural ties as one of the most important components of cooperation mentioned the necessity to make active contacts between cultural figures.

M. Shvidkoy touched upon active and dynamically developing Armenian-Russian cultural relations mentioning that Armenia works actively in the CIS Humanitarian Cooperation Council. He said that at present he discusses the issue of implementation of joint children's and youth programs with his Armenian colleagues.

8. ACCORDING TO ANDRANIK TEVANIAN, THERE ARE NO NECESSARY BASES FOR DIALOG BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND OPPOSITION [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

The current internal political and economic situation in Armenia is close to a crisis one, political scientist and economist Andranik Tevanian said at the April 23 press conference.

According to him, a dialog between the authorities and the opposition is impossible because of the absence of any bases for it. In his opinion, in order to ease the internal political tension, it is necessary to decentralize power, make radical reforms and create an open economic and political system.

As for the opposition, according to A. Tevanian, it should move its struggle to the field of local government elections. In connection with election of Yerevan mayor, the political scientist attached special importance to elections of the council of aldermen, saying it would be incorrent of the opposition not to take an active part in these elections. Especially given the fact that the local government bodies have been turned into an institution of election rigging in the country.

A. Tevanian said that property right is not protected yet in Armenia, and the absence of legitimacy of property leads to illegitimacy of power. As a result, every election, especially a presidential one, creates a crisis situation in the country.

In his words, having intergrown with the authorities, big business occupies a dominating position and either forces out or suppresses small and medium business. He said that it is no accident that the first step taken by the newly elected authorities was making amendments to the law on simplified tax, which was a step against small and medium business. He predicted that later when the authorities see that "money is not collected by means of tax terror", they will have to take some steps in the sphere of big business too.

A. Tevanian expressed an opinion that it is impossible to develop economy by solving fiscal problems only. In order to reduce the shadow economy, amendments to tax and customs legislation



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should be made, in particular, it is necessary to introduce progressive taxation when big business pays proportionally more than medium business which in its turn pays more taxes than small business.

9. ARPI VARDANIAN: ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MAKES PART OF HISTORY OF THE U.S. AS WELL [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

As previously, the Armenian community of the U.S. demands that the U.S. administration should recognize the fact of the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," Arpi Vardanian, the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) Regional Director for Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, said in an interview with Noyan Tapan.

She assessed as wrong the position of some Congressmen who consider it inappropriate to recognize the Genocide at the given moment: "The Armenian Genocide makes part of the history of the U.S. as well," Arpi Vardanian stated.

In her words, one should hope that President Bush who is finishing his term of office will finally keep his pre-election promise and will use the word "genocide" (instead of the other wordings used so far) in his annual speech to Armenians of the U.S. A. Vardanian said that although the U.S. presidents have not used the word "genocide" they did not deny its fact either.

She expressed her doubt on the possibility of discussion of resolution 106 by the House of Representatives in April: the issue of discussing this resolution has not been taken off the agenda but it is still unclear when its discussion will be held.

To recap, the draft resolution 106 calls on the U.S. president to ensure adequate perception of the Armenian Genocide and its reflection in the foreign policy of the U.S.

The new draft is called "House resolution" as approval of the House of Representatives is required for its adoption - neither approval of the Senate nor president's signature are necessary for its final adoption.

On October 10, 2007, the House of Representatives Committee for Foreign Affairs voted for adoption of resolution No 106 on recognition of the Armenian Genocide with 27 votes for and 21 votes against. In accordance with the procedure, after being adopted, the resolution shall be put on the agenda of a sitting of the House.

10. WORLD BANK REGIONAL DIRECTOR CONGRATULATES TIGRAN SARKISIAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Donna Dowset-Coirolo, World Bank regional director for Europe and Central Asia, sent a message of congratulations to Tigran Sarkisian on the occasion of his appointment as prime minister of Armenia.

The government press office said in her message Donna Dowset-Coirolo appreciated highly Tigran Sarkisian's performance as chairman of Central Bank. She said also that Tigran Sarkisian is well aware of all programs carried out in Armenia on World Bank credits which registered impressive achievements, but according to her, Armenia is still facing serious challenges.

She also said she is confident that under Sarkisian's leadership the Armenian government will continue to make progress and the World bank will have its contribution to it. She then singled out tax and customs administration improvement, fighting corruption, improving social services quality as key challenges of the new government.

11. ARMENIAN PM CONTINUES RECEIVING CONGRATULATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The Governor of the National Bank of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Petar Goshev sent a congratulation message to the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian on his new appointment.

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

"I have an honor to congratulate and express my best wishes to You on being appointed in the office of prime minister of the Republic of Armenia. Cooperating with You within the framework of IMF, I am sure that You will continue exerting efforts for more happy and prosperous Armenia.

In this respect let me express assurance that our bilateral and multilateral cooperation will continue developing in many directions for the sake of our countries and peoples. I wish You success in Your new office and expect to see You in future."

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The Chairman of the International Payments Bank Yoseph Tosovski also congratulated the prime minister on his appointment. In his congratulatory message he particularly wrote,

“I congratulate You on being appointed in the office of prime minister of the Republic of Armenia. Using this opportunity I wish You all the best and success in the new office and in confronting the future challenges.”

12. FIRST MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI FMs EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE ON MAY 7 [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mamedyarov are going to meet within the framework of the special session of the Council of Europe Ministers' Committee which will take place in Strasbourg on May 7.

Spokesman for the Armenian Foreign Ministry Tigran Balayan told Armenpress that the meeting proposal was made by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs.

13. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT CONDUCTS CONSULTATION WITH LEADERSHIP OF TAX SERVICE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian conducted today a working consultation with the leadership of the Armenian government affiliated state tax service.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that at the consultation present were Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Territorial Governance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgian, Head of Staff of the Armenian president Hovik Abrahamian, Finance Minister Tigran Davtian, Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian and other officials.

The president said the aim of the consultations is very clear: during the past year parliamentary and presidential elections took place during which pre-electoral programs were presented to the public.

“Today it is time to bring those programs to reality. Their main idea, the core, is that during the past seven years potential has been accumulated which gives us an opportunity to pass to the reforms of the second generation,” the president said, adding that today he is aimed at clarifying whether the state bodies are ready to implement these reforms and if yes to move forward together.

The president said that he has started the process from tax and customs bodies as any reform must be followed by economic growth and increase of the livelihood of the people.

“We have no right to say, ‘dear people, fasten your belts and wait three, four, five years until we carry out second generation reforms after which you will live well,’” the president pointed out.

Noting that tax and customs bodies are responsible for increase of competitiveness and for the process of implementation of budget duties, Serzh Sargsian expressed wish to know about the issues existing in the system, and how the leadership imagines their solution.

The head of the tax service Vahram Barseghian and heads of separate divisions presented what they are going to do in fighting against corruption, reduction of shadow turnover.

Summing up the consultation, the president demanded from the leadership of tax service to display equal and fair attitude towards all economic establishments.

14. ARMENIAN NA RECEIVES NEWLY APPOINTED BRITISH AMBASSADOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Tigran Torosian received today newly appointed ambassador of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Charles Lonsdale.

Armenian National Assembly press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the speaker expressed assurance that during the activity of the new ambassador new impetus will be given to the Armenian-British relations and particularly expressed hope that the inter-parliamentary ties will become more active.

With the request of the ambassador Torosian referred to the changes made in the Armenian law on rallies, meetings, marches and the results of its discussion with the experts of the Venice Commission.

Besides, the speaker also referred to the proposal on setting up parliamentary commission for investigating what happened on March 1.

Torosian also referred to the proposal on investigation of March 1 developments by the Armenian ombudsman's office, saying that it is not effective as the human rights' defender has his issues the effective solution of which is very important. The speaker did not exclude the variant of setting up a temporary commission in the NA.



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During the meeting the sides also discussed issues on activating inter-parliamentary cooperation and reached agreement towards developing certain programs.

15. ARF MEMBER URGES GOVERNMENT TO START DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

A parliament member from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) said yesterday the authorities should agree to start dialogue with the opposition and should also make more concessions because they have their grip on power.

Speaking at a news conference Alvard Petrosian, one of few women lawmakers, said President Serzh Sarkisian should rally around himself people with “good taste” and say goodbye to those who are not able to be up to the plank of a government official.

“There are people which must be dismissed (from the government), otherwise I will never believe that the government is serious when speaking about sweeping reforms,” she said.

Hakob Movses, who served as minister of culture in the administration of ex-president Levon Ter-Petrosian, said the current authorities must have the courage to bring the opposition to the National Assembly. He added that the current parliament must be dissolved and new elections held.

Alvard Petrosian said it is not important who is the president of the country. What is more important, according to her, is that he must take the country out of the current situation. She said she is optimistic in this sense.

16. ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN ON THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Dear Compatriots: today we pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

As a result of the state-conspired and carried out genocide in the Ottoman Turkey, a vast number of the Armenians were annihilated on their native land and lost their living space. At the time numerous cultural and material values, which the Armenian people had been creating for thousands of years, were destroyed and are being destroyed even today.

International recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide is an appropriate and inevitable part of the Armenia's foreign policy agenda. The Motherland of all Armenians – the Republic of Armenia – should double its efforts for the restoration of historic justice. When it comes to the genocide condemnation, the denial has no future, especially today, when many countries of the world have added their voices to the voice of truth.

Recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide is not just an Armenian issue. Crime against humanity bears universal significance and reverberation and must receive a universal recognition. Our goals have nothing to do with animosity or revenge. While keeping the memory of the innocent victims alive, presently we are ready to establish normal relation with Turkey without any preconditions.

Dear Compatriots:

The preconditions and causes of the Armenian Genocide have been widely spoken and written about. Many new facts and analytical works are waiting to be published. However, one thing is absolutely clear: execution of such a crime became possible only in the absence of the Armenian state.

Today, on April 24 we must acutely realize the exceptional meaning of the Armenian state. The Armenian nation should develop and strengthen, embracing our state - the guarantor of our people's security.

17. RA PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARKISIAN'S MESSAGE ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS COMMEMORATION DAY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Dear compatriots, this day is one of those symbolical days when all the Armenians pay tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims. The objective behind the crime which was planned and carried out by the authorities of the Ottoman empire was the extermination of the Armenian people: over one and a half million Armenians perished as a result of that dreadful crime, hundreds of thousands old men, women and children underwent violent deportation.

Today we grieve, and by paying homage to the memory of those innocent victims of the Great Genocide, we reinterpret in own way the most important lessons of the past: we cannot be in safety and security, if we are divided and separated, we cannot prevent major disasters from recurring if we fail to have a strong statehood: as a nation, we cannot and should not forget our history.

Dear compatriots,



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We should move forward, we must rally round our national goals and aspirations to build a strong and democratic state, to do our utmost and the impossible for Armenia's safety, well-being and development - for tomorrow's day of our country.

18. ARMENIAN FM PARTICIPATES IN CEREMONY IN PARIS DEDICATED TO THE VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, who is in Paris on a working visit, continues having meetings with the representatives of French state and political circles.

Today he met with members of French parliament, senators and a number of ambassadors accredited in Paris.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that E. Nalbandian also met with the Secretary General of the French "For People's Movement" ruling party Patrick Devejian.

During the meeting the sides discussed inter-state, regional and other issues of mutual interest, expressed readiness to continue boosting cooperation between the two countries.

On the same day the minister participated in a ceremony dedicated to the victims of the Armenian genocide. At the event also present were French state and political figures as well as hundreds of French Armenians.

19. MAN GETS 2 YEAR PROBATION SENTENCE FOR MARCH 1 UNREST [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

A criminal court in Yerevan sentenced Wednesday Artashes Matevosian to 4 years in prison. He was incriminated in preparation of mass public disorders and tried under so-called "rapid trial procedure" when defendants plead guilty.

Alina Yengoyan, a spokeswoman for the Court of Cassation, said to Armenpress that his sentence was commuted to 2 years probation sentence.

Matevosian was accused by prosecutors of being involved directly into mass unrest in Yerevan on March 1 and showing armed resistance to police officers. Matevosian was said to swear and throw stones at police officers on Grigor Lusavoritch street.

20. COURT BEGINS HEARINGS ON FORMER DIPLOMATS LAWSUIT [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

An administrative court in Yerevan began Wednesday hearings on a lawsuit against the Armenian foreign ministry that was filed by Martha Ayvazian, the former head of the ministry's NATO desk, Karine Afrikian, the former head of the U.S. and Canada desk, Arakel Semirjian, a counselor at the Europe desk and Vladimir Karapetian, former spokesman for the ministry.

They were dismissed with some other foreign ministry employees after signing a joint statement on February 24 expressing "outrage at serious fraud" which they said prevented the February 19 vote from being "civilized, free and fair."

The plaintiffs want the administrative court to declare their dismissal illegal and have them reinstated in their jobs. The court set the next hearing for May 14.

21. ARMENIANS MARK 93rd GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians from Armenia proper and its vast Diaspora went uphill today to the Genocide Memorial in Yerevan to remember 1.5 million of their ancestors killed brutally at the orders of the government of the Ottoman Turkey from 1915-1923.

President Serzh Sarkisian, Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, Parliament Chairman Tigran Torosian, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, parliament and government members and other top government officials, senior clergy and top army brass were the first to remember the victims by visiting the Memorial and laying flowers to it. The heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Yerevan were the next to lay wreaths at the Memorial.

Armenia's leadership, the senior clergy, guests paid their tribute to the genocide victims by observing a minute of silence and laying flowers at the Memorial. Catholicos Karekin II conducted a special church service for the repose of the victims' souls.

"There is no family in Armenia that would not mourn today with us, there is no family that was not affected by this great tragedy-directly or indirectly. Therefore we have to learn a lesson from the history. May God give us wisdom to do so, so that such tragedies never happen again. I think we have to be as



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wise as to realize that the only guarantee to avoid such crimes in future is to be strong and united. May God give us intelligence to understand this simple truth," prime minister Tigran Sarkisian said to journalists after paying tribute to Genocide victims.

Wreaths were laid at the Genocide Memorial on behalf of government ministries and agencies, political parties, student unions and civic society organizations.

Liturgies and special ceremonies of repose of souls of the victims were held in Armenian churches across the globe.

Countries officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide include Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, Vatican City and Venezuela. Although part of the United Kingdom, Wales also officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. The Parliament of the State of New South Wales, Australia passed a resolution acknowledging and condemning the Armenian Genocide in 1997.

International bodies that recognize the Armenian genocide include the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the World Council of Churches and the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal.

The Armenian genocide was recognized by about 40 states of the USA and a U.S. House of Representatives Committee of Foreign Affairs. An Armenian resolution was motioned by an Israeli parliament committee earlier this year.

22. IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA PAYS TRIBUTE TO GENOCIDE VICTIMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Iranian ambassador to Armenia, Mr. Seyed Ali Saghayan, expressed today his solidarity with all Armenians who remember 1.5 million of their ancestors killed in the Ottoman empire.

Speaking to Armenian journalists after paying tribute to the Genocide victims at the Genocide Memorial, the ambassador said every effort must be made to preclude such crimes from happening again.

He said genocides must be fought against in every corner of the world and all nations should extend their hands to each other to restore the justice.

"I wish Armenia cloudless skies and peace," he said.

23. DEFENSE MINISTER SAYS ARMY PREPARED FOR ANYTHING [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Defense minister Seyran Ohanian said today the process of the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was going on, admitting, however, that the post-election developments have tarnished Armenia's international image.

He made the remarks after paying tribute to 1.5 million of Armenians killed during the Armenian Genocide by the government of Turkey.

"I am head of an agency that must be always prepared for war so that no war occurs. We must be ready for military actions any moment as long as the current situation of 'no war, no peace' and the current ratio of forces continue to remain unchanged due to qualitative changes in our armed forces. We must do everything so that to be prepared for anything," he said.

24. MILITARY POLICE CHIEF SAYS ARMENIANS MUST BE UNITED [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

"What happened in 1915 should become a reason for us to make conclusions," chief of the Armenian military police, Vladimir Gasparian, told journalists today after paying tribute to the Armenian genocide victims.

According to him, 'the Armenian people must be united so that to be able to resist its enemies and prevent what happened 93 years ago from happening again,' he said.

25. FRENCH MASONS REMEMBER ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Representatives of the French Grande Oriente de France Masonic organization paid today tribute to the Armenian genocide victims.

Guy Hakobian, a representative of the lodge, told Armenian reporters that Turkey's denial of the Armenian genocide was unacceptable to him.



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He said members of the lodge are paying the second visit to Armenia on April 24. He said the humanity must never forget this crime.

26. PELOSI URGES ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RECOGNITION AT CAPITOL HILL COMMEMORATION [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi attended the Capitol Hill Armenian Genocide Commemoration event Wednesday and emphasized the importance of recognizing the Armenian Genocide and paid respect to the memory of the 1.5 million victims of that crime.

In remarks delivered at the event organized by the Congressional Armenian Caucus, she said that she has been carrying the front page of the New York Times published the day after the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted to approve H. Res. 106 'The Armenian Genocide Resolution pending in Congress' as a reminder of the importance of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

In a front-page story the day after the Oct. 10, 2007 Committee vote, the New York Times published the photos of four Genocide survivors who attended the committee hearing. Of the four survivors, two were in attendance at Wednesday's Capitol Hill Commemoration. One of the survivors passed away earlier this year.

Rep. Pelosi called the committee vote an important passage and said there was much work to be done.

Pelosi explained that she was attending the Congressional Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide to pay her respects to the victims of the Genocide and express sadness for this crime against humanity.

The Speaker said she is often asked why address an issue that happened decades ago. She said her response to those inquires is because if we ignore history, we are destined to repeat it. Pelosi said while she realized that the Genocide happened almost 100 years ago, Genocides were happening today in Rwanda and Darfur. As long as genocide exists, she said, we have to make sure that all genocides are properly recognized and commemorated.

She pledged that she would continue the fight for the recognition of the Genocide and urged others to follow suit.

27. KURDS AND YEZIDIS COMMEMORATE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Representatives of the Kurdish and Yezidi communities of Armenia (Yezidis are ethnic Kurds professing a different religion, while Kurds are Muslims) paid tribute today to the memory of 1.5 million Armenians killed by the government of Turkey in 1915-1923.

Knyaz Hasanov, chairman of the Kurdish community, told journalists that representatives of the community commemorate the Armenian genocide victims every year on this day.

He condemned successive Turkish governments for refusing to recognize this crime conspired and perpetrated by the government of Young Turks 93 years ago.

"On behalf of the Kurdish community we bow to the memory of innocent victims and condemn it. We also call on the Turkish people and its government to have strength and courage to acknowledge this heinous crime," Hasanov said.

Aziz Tamoyan, head of the Yezidi community, also condemned the denialist policy of modern Turkey that refuses to acknowledge this crime.

28. KARABAKH PRESIDENT RECEIVES OSCE CHAIRMAN-IN-OFFICE ENVOY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Nagorno-Karabakh president Bako Sahakian received April 23 evening Andrzej Kasprzyk, personal envoy of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for monitoring of the truce on the line of contact.

The press office of Sahakian said they spoke about the situation on the line of contact between armed forces of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and some other conflict-related issues.



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29. ARMENIAN FM HOPES THAT ONE DAY ARMENIAN AND TURKISH LEADERS TO PAY TRIBUTE TO VICTIMS OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TOGETHER [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, who is in France on a working visit, was today in Paris municipality where a reception in the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide has been organized.

At the event present were French state, political and public figures, heads of French, Jewish and Islamic organizations, French Armenians.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that expressing gratitude to the Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë for initiating the event which has become a tradition, the minister highly assessed the wisdom and political courage of the European leaders which they display for reconciling peoples of Europe.

"I hope one day Armenian and Turkish leaders will pay tribute in front of memorial to the victims of the Armenian genocide and getting rid of that heavy burden of the past will build a secure future together," Nalbandian said.

He noted that it is impossible to imagine the future without reconciliation, and the way to it is not the oblivion but conscious memory, "as together, turning over the black page of our history, we can view the future with trust and belief."

"I believe in wisdom of the leaders and peoples of our two countries. Armenia has many times stated about its readiness to establish relations with Turkey without pre-conditions. I want to reconfirm that Armenia is ready to exert efforts in that direction for finding solutions to the issue and hopes that Turkey will display same approach. All the countries of the region will benefit from it," the minister said.

In his speech the Paris mayor congratulated Nalbandian on his appointment and highly assessed his 10-year activity in France during which the relations between the two countries reached the highest level. He also stated that they accept the proposal of the minister to name the park around the Komitas monument as Yerevan park and invited the minister to open it together.

In the morning Nalbandian had a face-to-face meeting with the mayor during which they discussed issues on boosting Armenian-French cooperation and carrying out programs within the frameworks of Yerevan-Paris partnership.

Today late in the evening the minister will arrive back in Yerevan.

30. CAPITAL CITY OF BULGARIA RECOGNIZES ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The city council of Sofia recognized the fact of the Armenian Genocide, Cihan news agency reported.

According to Cihan, Sofia is the fourth Bulgarian city after Burgas, Plovdiv and Stara Zagora to recognize the Armenian Genocide. However, the news agency forgot to refer to the information it published a week ago, by which the Bulgarian city of Ruse has also recognized the fact of the Genocide.

To recap, last month the city council of Sofia postponed adoption of a resolution on the Armenian Genocide. According to the Turkish press, the Bulgarian government prevented discussions on adoption of the Armenian bill. It explained that such a step would harm Turkish-Bulgarian relations: the discussion of the bill was prevented during a visit of the Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Bulgaria.

31. CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS HELD UNDER TRIUMPHAL ARCH IN PARIS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian, who is on a working visit to Paris, met with the Secretary General of ruling UMP party Patrick Devejian on April 23.

Later on the same day E. Nalbandian took part in a ceremony in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide under the Arc de Triomphe (Triumphal Arch) in Paris. He laid a wreath at the grave of the Unknown Soldier. The national anthems of Armenia and France were performed, the battle flags were lowered, and those present observed a minute of silence in memory of the victims.

According to a press release of the RA MFA Press and Information Department, the ceremony was attended by French statesmen, political figures, mayors, high-ranking officers, and hundreds of French Armenians.



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32. SERGE SARGSIAN: "ANY REFORM SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INCREASE IN LIVING STANDARD OF PEOPLE" [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Parliamentary and presidential elections have been held in Armenia for the past one year and pre-electoral programs have been introduced to society. "Today, it is already time for those programs to become reality. The main, key idea of them is that potential has been accumulated for the past seven years, which enables us to pass to the reforms of the second generation," Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, said during the April 23 working consultation with the leading staff of the RA Government's Tax State Service.

According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office, the consultation was also attended by Tigran Sargsian, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Armen Gevorgian, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Territorial Administration, Hovik Abrahamian, the Head of the staff of the RA President, Tigran Davtian, the Minister of Finance, Nerses Yeritsian, the Minister of Economics, and other officials.

Clarifying why that work should be started from the very tax and customs bodies, Serge Sargsian said that it is obvious for everybody that any reform should be accompanied by economic growth and increase in the living standard of our people. "We have no right to say dear people, tighten your belts, wait for about three, four, five years, until we implement the reforms of the second generation, then you will live in good conditions," the President declared.

He mentioned that the tax and customs bodies are the first to be in charge of the economic growth, the increase in competitiveness and, of course, in the implementation process of the budget obligations. The RA President claimed from the leaders of the Tax Service to display equal and fair approach towards all the economic entities, to lead a decisive and severe struggle against phenomena of corruption and sponsorship. Serge Sargsian said that the activities of the tax and customs bodies and the solution of the given tasks will continue to be in the centre of his direct attention.

33. HOLY LITURGY CELEBRATED IN MOTHER SEE OF HOLY ETCHMIADZIN ON APRIL 24 - ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION DAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

On April 24 - the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day, His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II accompanied by monks of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin visited the Tsitsernakaberd Complex dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

His Holiness and the Armenian president Serge Sargsian laid wreaths at the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex, after which a service for the peace of the souls of the Genocide victims was held by Karekin II at the eternal fire.

The ceremony was attended by the speaker of the RA National Assembly Tigran Torosian, the prime minister Tigran Sargsian, National Assembly deputies, government members and statesmen.

NT was informed by the press service of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin that a holy liturgy was celebrated in the Mother See on the same day.

Following the holy liturgy, a service for the repose of the dead was held by Catholicos of All Armenians at the Khachkar of Prayer and Oath near the Mother Cathedral.

The Papal Nuncio in Transcaucasia, Archbishop Claudio Gujerotti took part in the ceremonies.

34. OSCE MINSK GROUP COCHAIRMAN PIN ALL HOPES ON NALBANDIAN-MAMEDYAROV MEETING [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

The French cochairman of the OSCE Minsk Group, Bernard Fassier, was quoted by AzeriPress Azerbaijani news agency as saying that he and his two colleagues from Russia and USA pin all their hopes, regarding the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh. Conflict, on the May 6 meeting of Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in Strasbourg.

He said to the Azeri news agency that the peace brokers from the Minsk Group decided not to visit the region before the first meeting of new Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian with his Azerbaijani counterpart, Elmar Mamedyarov.

"We talked to both sides and expect much from the planned meeting,' Bernard Fassier said.

According to Fassier, the issue of this meeting had been discussed at the past NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania. He said the date of their next visit to the region will be decided based on the outcome of the May 6 Strasbourg meeting. He added also they hope to start working on preparation of the first meeting of Armenian new president Serzh Sarkisian and Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev.



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35. STATEMENT BY GEORGE W. BUSH ON ARMENIAN REMEMBRANCE DAY [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

U.S. president George W. Bush made a statement on the occasion of the 93-rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide. According to the White House, his message reads as follows.

“On this day of remembrance, we honor the memory of the victims of one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, the mass killings and forced exile of as many as 1.5 million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. I join the Armenian community in America and around the world in commemorating this tragedy and mourning the loss of so many innocent lives.

As we reflect on this epic human tragedy, we must resolve to redouble our efforts to promote peace, tolerance, and respect for the dignity of human life. The Armenian people's unalterable determination to triumph over tragedy and flourish is a testament to their strength of character and spirit. We are grateful for the many contributions Americans of Armenian heritage have made to our Nation.

We welcome the efforts by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster reconciliation and peace, and support joint efforts for an open examination of the past in search of a shared understanding of these tragic events. We look forward to the realization of a fully normalized Armenia-Turkey relationship.

The United States is committed to a strong relationship with Armenia based on shared values. We call on the Government of Armenia to take decisive steps to promote democracy, and will continue our support for Armenia to this end. We remain committed to serving as an honest broker in pursuit of a lasting and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

On this solemn day of remembrance, Laura and I express our deepest condolences to Armenian people around the world.’

36. GOVERNMENT TO SUBMIT PLAN OF ACTIONS TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NEXT WEEK [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

Prime minister Tigran Sarkisian said today next week his government will submit its plan of actions to the National Assembly's approval.

He said the government will be highlighting all major issues that were put forward by the president of the country and which were approved by the parliament.

“They are ambitious programs and in order to be able to materialize them we need to rally the people around these programs’ he said explaining that people should believe that these plans are real and feasible.

He said the government will be constantly taking stock of its plan of actions to identify priorities. He said each government agency will have a specific plan of actions and a timetable.

The new Armenian government was formalized on April 21 when all ministers were appointed. Under the Constitution the new government has 20 days to develop and submit its plan of actions to the parliament's approval.

37. ORINATS YERKIR OPTIMISTIC ABOUT NEW GOVERNMENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

A parliament member from the Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) party of former parliament chairman Arthur Baghdasarian said today he was optimistic about the new government ‘because changes that were made to it are promising and inspiring and because corruption and the final recovery of the earthquake zone are highlighted.’

Speaking at a news conference Hovhannes Margarian said the government's short-term plans were under consideration. Margarian said the government plan is to provide all homeless families in this area with housing within the next five years. He said all members of the coalition government realize this is a serious job and their approach to it is serious as well.

He also spoke about the need of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition. “If every political party or group, every political figure realizes that the dialogue is necessary for all the dialogue then will be established,” he said.

“I think on day this dialogue will take place because solutions to major problems of this country are contingent on it,” he said.



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38. AUTHORITIES WILL START DIALOGUE ONLY AFTER OPPOSITION RECOGNIZES CONSTITUTIONAL COURT VERDICT [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

Aram Safarian, a lawmaker from the Prosperous Armenia party, one of the four members of the coalition, said today they were ready to start dialogue with the opposition if it recognized the ruling of the Constitutional Court that endorsed the official results of the February 19 presidential election.

Speaking at a news conference, Aram Safarian said the dialogue should be over ways of going out of the existing political situation.

He said the authorities made their first call for dialogue with the opposition the following day after the polls.

He also spoke about the Armenian genocide, saying that 'We have one demand-recognition and condemnation of the Armenian genocide.'

At the end of the news conference Aram Safarian repeated that the coalition will agree to start dialogue with opposition only after it accepts the Constitutional Court's verdict.

39. PRESIDENT DISMISSES DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian dismissed on April 23 Lieutenant-General Gurgen Melkonian from the office of deputy defense minister, the presidential press office said.

Gurgen Melkonian was head of army's rear services.

BUSINESS

40. ARMENIA SHOULD TAKE LEADING ROLE IN REGIONAL COMPETITION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR, PRIME MINISTER SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

Transport and communication sector is of great importance for Armenia, especially taking into account the current geopolitical problems and challenges, the prime minister Tigran Sargsian said when introducing the newly appointed minister Gurgen Sargsian to the staff of the RA ministry of transport and communication. According to him, IT sector is among the priority directions of the government's activities, and the ministry should be able to achieve a turning point in development of the sector and allow it to take a leading role in regional competition.

Speaking about the work of the previous minister Andranik Manukian, T. Sargsian said that A. Manukian succeeded in establishing close relations with his partners from Russia, Iran, Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, and this achievement should be maintained and developed.

A. Manukian in his turn stated that construction of interstate roads has mainly been completed, part of the roads of republican importance have been reconstructed, and construction of rural roads has begun under several programs, including with state budgetary resources. Negotiations with the Japanese Bank have finished: the Japanese side intends to allocate 130 million dollars for restoration of rural roads in Armenia. It is envisaged to restore the whole road network of the country by 2010.

According to A. Manukian, the inventory making of Armenian Railway will finish by May 15, and on June 1st the company will be transferred to South Caucasian Railway.

41. STATE COMMISSION ON PROTECTION OF ECONOMIC COMPETITION TO EXAMINE 2007 DATA OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES MARKET [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

The RA State Commission on Protection of Economic Competition will soon examine several markets of household appliances. Such an examination has already been made based on data of 2006 and the first half of 2007. However, with the aim of clarifying this data, at the April 26 sitting the Commission took a decision to carry out a wider examination.

It was mentioned that more than 38 thousand television sets were imported into Armenia by 90 economic entities in 2006. Among the biggest importers are the following companies: Zigzag (28%), Aray (27%) and Pretty Way (17%).

42. FULLER VERSIONS OF COMMERCIALS ADVERTISING ARMENIA AS COUNTRY OF TOURISM SENT TO CNN AND EURONEWS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

Fuller versions of the commercials, which have been demonstrated by CNN and Euronews television channels since September 2006 and which advertise Armenia as a country of tourism, have



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been sent to CNN office in London and Euronews office in Paris. NT correspondent was informed by Mekhak Apresian, head of the tourism department of the RA ministry of economy that the commercials presenting Armenia as an attractive country for winter tourism will be broadcast by Euronews starting from next week and by CNN - from May.

According to M. Apresian, these commercials are of special importance for showing Armenia's tourism opportunities and presenting it as a stable country attractive for entrepreneurial activities.

43. HAYPOST TO OFFER INSURANCE SERVICES [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

HayPost and Ingo Armenia companies on April 23 signed an agreement, by which HayPost will offer insurance services to its Armenian customers. NT correspondent was informed by the press service of HayPost CJSC that starting from June 1st, insurance service packages will be available at all offices of HayPost. The company's staff is undergoing training to acquire the necessary qualification with the aim of offering and providing insurance services.

44. ARMENIAN ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PROTECTION COMMISSION TO STUDY VIOLATIONS BY ARMENIAN BANKS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The session of the Armenian economic competitiveness protection state commission took place today during which the participants discussed the application submitted by the Central Bank on March 28.

The application notes that the Armenian banks, while providing financial services, as a precondition offer the clients to use insurance, property evaluation and other services of concrete organizations. The application also says that it limits the right of choice of clients of the mentioned services which may be considered as a violation of law on "Protection of Economic Competitiveness" by banks as a result of reaching anti-competitive arrangement with organizations.

The Central Bank has been asked to provide the lists of licensed banks, insurance companies and credit organizations, and on their turn, the banks have been asked to present the names of those companies with which they work.

After collecting the necessary information it is expected to find out how much the banks are limiting the choice opportunity of their clients.

According to initial information, the number of property evaluating companies in Armenia exceeds 400 and not all of them are working with banks, thus there is a necessity to separate the ones which have been left out.

The number of insurance companies is only 10 and they must also present necessary information.

The chairman of the commission Ashot Shahnazarian pointed out that for carrying out relevant administrative execution it is necessary to collect information which is a quite long-lasting and hard work.

According to him, the financial field is a new field for commission to study, and it is necessary to be very careful.

He also said that the Central Bank has applied to the commission as it does not have legal grounds for the regulation of the issue.

45. STATE EMPLOYMENT CENTER TO HOLD JOB FAIRS [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The State Employment Center of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry will hold job fairs in May and June. The event will be held within the frameworks of a World Bank supported Social Sector Management Program.

The State Employment Center told Armenpress that job fairs will be held on May 17 in Abovian, on May 31 in Goris and on June 14 in Yerevan.

About 40 employers are expected to offer jobs at job fairs in Abovian and Goris and over 60 in Yerevan.

The State Employment Center organizes such fairs on a regular basis in a bid to help both employers and those seeking jobs.

The first job fair with the support of the USAID was organized in 2007 in Yerevan, as a result 100 people found jobs.



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46. ARMENIAN BANK EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN IFCCT [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Representatives of Armenian financial organizations will fly to Doha, Qatar's capital, to participate in an international symposium on modern methods of preventing financial crimes and have a related training course.

The event will be held on May 18-22.

The Union of Armenian Banks told Armenpress that the training course is organized by The International Financial Crime Prevention and Compliance Training Course (IFCCT). It said the course is intended for employees of ministries, central banks and legislative bodies.

47. RUSSIAN AND ARMENIAN BUSINESSMEN TO GATHER IN TSAKHKADZOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

Businessmen from Armenia and Russia will gather in Armenia's resort town of Tsakhkadzor for a conference that will start on April 30 and end on May 3.

The press office of the Armenian economy ministry told Armenpress that the major issues to be discussed at the gathering refer to cooperation in energy, transport, oil-refining, mining and some other sectors.

It said participants of the meeting will discuss also prospects for tourism development. The ministry said the country's top leadership, economy, energy, agriculture, education and science and health ministers, also leading businessmen will take part in the conference.

A cohort of top Russian CEOs and government officials will represent the Russian side.

The conference is being organized by Armenian Multi-Group concern, Russian embassy in Armenia and several Russian companies.

DIASPORA

48. ARMENIAN MONUMENT IN SQUARE OF LYONS LIKELY TO BE MOVED TO SOME OTHER PLACE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

The fate of the Armenian monument erected in one of Lyons' squares has become a subject of debate between the city municipality and judicial authorities. Remaining faithful to his promise to Armenians, the mayor of Lyons Gerard Collomb allowed to erect an Armenian monument in one of the city's squares. However, members of the union on preservation of the historical nature of the city reminded that this square is on the UNESCO list of squares subject to preservation so no changes can be made here and the Armenian monument has to be removed. The union members applied to Lyons administrative court that ruled the Armenian monument to be removed from the square. The fact that the complaints against the monument have been sustained does not mean that it has to be destroyed. In all likelihood the monument will be moved to some other place.

49. AMBASSADOR LEVON SARGSIAN VISITS EDITORIAL OFFICE OF AZDAK NEWSPAPER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

The Armenian ambassador to Tunisia and Algeria Levon Sargsian accompanied by the national benefactor Suren Vardanian visited the editorial office of the Armenian newspaper "Azdak" in Lebanon. During a talk, Ambassador Sargsian and the director of "Azdak" discussed issues of educational, cultural and information spheres in the light of Armenia-Diaspora cooperation. In his interview with the newspaper, the ambassador in particular spoke about the internal political situation in Armenia, Armenia-Diaspora relations, the activities of Theological Faculty of Yerevan State University, and the program of pilgrimage to Der Dzor.

50. ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION TO PROTEST IN FRONT OF TURKISH CONSULATE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The Armenian Youth Federation will organize its annual protest in front of the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles on April 24. Thousands of Armenian Americans and human rights activists are expected to be actively protesting their serious disappointment with the denialist policies of the American and Turkish governments, a press release by the Federation said.



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This year marks the 93rd anniversary of the genocide committed against the Armenians by the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The Armenian Genocide is the first genocide of the 21st century and is not yet properly acknowledged and accepted by the American and Turkish governments.

April 24, 1915 marks the day that the Turkish government kidnapped all the intellectual Armenians and slaughtered them as it embarked on its systematic annihilation of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population.

The Turkish government has attempted to place a "gag rule" on the United States Congress as evidenced by its heavy-handed opposition to H. Res. 106 (The Armenian Genocide Resolution, which passed the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on 10/10/07).

The ongoing genocide in Darfur today is a testament to the need for clear and unequivocal acknowledgement of the crime of genocide. The protest shall strive to raise awareness regarding the denialist policies of the American and Turkish governments and how these policies enable and embolden perpetrators of genocide to both commit and deny this crime. The protest not only mourns the death of the 1.5 million Armenians massacred from 1915-1923 but it also tries to educate others about past and present genocides.

51. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY MARKED IN FRANCE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

A series of ceremonies commemorating the 1915 Armenian genocide are being held in some French towns and cities. Paris mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, was to pay tribute to the genocide victims by laying flowers at a monument in Paris erected in memory of its victims.

Hilda Tchoboian, chairwoman of the Armenian National Committee of Europe, told Armenpress an exhibition was to be organized near the monument to Armenian composer Komitas, erected on Canada Square. It will display various evidence and facts about Turkish continued denial of the fact of the genocide.

The Armenian community of France was also to protest outside the Turkish embassy in Paris. By the way, Turkish nationalistic organizations were also planning a series of anti-Armenian events.

Armenian genocide commemorating events were to be held also in Lyon, where a church service was to be served. The Lyon branch of the Armenian National Committee of Europe was to organize a protest action that was to be joined by representatives of Tibet and Lyon mayor.

A church service was already served in Grenoble near an Armenian cross-stone.

Various events were to be held also in Nice, Toulon, Cannes, Bordeaux and other French cities. In Marseille they started on April 29.

52. ARMENIANS OF POLAND MARK GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The Armenian community of Poland organized a procession in Warsaw today to remember 1.5 million Armenian victims of the 1915 genocide. The protest began near the Virgin Church ending outside the Turkish embassy.

Participants carried flags, lit candles and posters condemning the genocide.

The community's press office said a church service was to be held in the Episcopal church of Warsaw.

In 2005 Polish parliament adopted a resolution condemning the mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Turkey and describing them as genocide.

53. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MARKED IN RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

A ceremony commemorating the victims of the Armenian genocide was conducted today in Moscow, in the court of the Armenian church which is being constructed there. Armenian ambassador to Russia Armen Smbatian, representatives of the Russian Diocese of the Armenian church as well as representatives of the Armenian community participated in the event.

Press secretary of the embassy Gevorg Minasian told Armenpress that a requiem service was held and wreaths were put in the memory of 1.5 million innocent victims.

A group of young people of the Russian Armenian community organized a protest rally in front of the Turkish embassy in Russia demanding that the Turkish authorities come to terms with the facts and recognize the Armenian genocide.



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54. INDIAN ARMENIAN COMMUNITY COMMEMORATES VICTIMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The whole Indian Armenian community and pupils of the Armenian humanitarian college together with their teachers visited the Armenian St. Nazareth Church in Calcutta near which a memorial to the victims of the Armenian genocide is placed.

A representative from the college told Armenpress that after putting a wreath to the memorial the participants paid tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of the Armenian genocide with one minute silence, afterward a requiem service was conducted.

55. ARMENIAN EMBASSY IN GEORGIA CONDUCTS A NUMBER OF EVENTS TO MARK ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian embassy in Georgia conducted a number of events from April 19 to 24 dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide.

Georgian Diocese of the Armenian Church and Armenian Cooperation Center of Georgia also participated in the organization of the events.

An official from the embassy said that on April 19 in the A. Diuma French cultural center an international scientific conference on "1915-1923 Armenian Genocide: View from Tbilisi, Istanbul and Yerevan" theme was held.

On April 23 in Tbilisi Cinema House an exhibition has been organized in the motives of Franz Werfel's "40 Days of Musa Dagh" after which documentary film of Karen Gevorgian "Genocide without Comments" was shown.

Today the Armenian cultural and public figures have organized a tree planting in "Khojavank".

Service has been conducted in churches of the Georgian Armenian Diocese in the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide.

In the theatre of young audience in Tbilisi an exhibition was organized and "Genocide is in Me" film was shown.

The events will be wrapped up by Garnik Seyranian's "Absorbing Silence" performance.

56. COMMEMORATING CEREMONIES HELD IN NICOSIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The Armenian Cypriot youth distributed leaflets at Eleftherias Square, where information about the Armenian Genocide was projected on a big screen.

Armenian Cypriot web site informs that in the evening Holy Liturgy at Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church in Nicosia was held. Besides, a march along Armenia street ending at Genocide Memorial took place.

On May 4 a service commemorating the victims of the Armenian genocide will be held in the Greek Evangelical Church.

57. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MARKED IN A NUMBER OF GERMAN CITIES [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

On the initiative of the Armenian Central Council and with the support of German Diocese of the Armenian church a service was conducted today in Frankfurt church to commemorate the victims of the Armenian genocide.

An official from the Armenian Central Council told Armenpress that at the event present were political, cultural and scientific figures.

Professor from Leipzig university Georg Megle, official of the Evangelic Church Council of Germany and the EU Stefan Reimer, Archbishop Garegin Bekchian delivered speeches.

"Time will come when the denial of the Armenian genocide will at last be punished in Germany and time will come when the genocide and violence of the 20th century will be included in the education system," the chairman of the Armenian Central Council Shavarsh Hovasapian said.

"It is necessary to break the silence which is being displayed by a number of European and other countries. Those who keep silence become participants of the crime. It is a historic mistake that time may clear the issue. Just the opposite, the developments of recent years show that history does not forget anything," he said.

The council also urged the Turkish organizations of Germany come to terms with history and recognize the Armenian genocide.

Commemorating services were also held in Berlin, Köln, Stuttgart and other German cities.



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58. ANC CENTRAL CALIFORNIA HONORS FRESNO MAYOR AS 2008 "MAN OF THE YEAR" [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Armenian National Committee of Central California honored Fresno Mayor Alan Autry as the 2008 Man of the Year. Nearly 200 guests and community leaders attended the event organized in honor of the Mayor. "We wanted to thank the Mayor for his steadfast support of Armenian Genocide recognition," said ANC Central California representative, Hilda Santikian.

59. CHAIRMAN OF FORUM OF ARMENIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF EUROPE EXPRESSES READINESS TO SUPPORT RA NEWLY-APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER DURING HIS TENURE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Ashot Grigorian, the Chairman of the Armenian community of Slovakia and the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe, has sent a congratulatory message to Tigran Sargsian on the occasion of having been appointed on the post of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. The message runs as follows:

"Honorable Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe, the Armenian community of Slovakia and on my own behalf I congratulate you on the occasion of having been appointed on the post of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. We are sure that you will serve to the state and national interests of the Republic of Armenia more productively, contributing to the increase in the living standard of our people.

I, as the Chairman of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe and the Armenian community of Slovakia, declare about my readiness to support you during your tenure and contribute to the further development process of the relations between the European countries and Armenia."

60. VERNATUN UNION PUBLISHES TWO NEW BOOKS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Vernatun Union of Armenian Writers of Georgia has published the sixth literary chronicle and the fifth issue of Zartonk of the Literary Shoots club. Both collections have been edited by Union Chairman Gevorg Snkhchian.

The chronicle's regular issue has been published with the financial assistance of benefactors, Georgian Armenian Hasmik Nikoghosian and American Armenian Araksi Gapushian-Tatulian.

The chronicle also includes Hovhannes Marikian's greeting speech to benefactor Sergei Khalachian from Heshti, residing in Russia, with the assistance of which the church of his native village has been repaired.

As A-Info reports, Vernatun-6 is multi-genre. It opens with the selected poems of Viktor Hovsepian. Poems by Rafael Javakhk,

Hovhannes Marikian, Dvin Kashanian, Araksia Snkhchian, Artyush Gevorgian, Nazeli Nairi, and others are also included in it.

The chronicle's prose section is also rich. Works by Mikayel Yesoyan, Khazhak Yeprikian, Monika Kurkchian, and others are presented here.

Prose and poetry literary attempts of Literary Shoots club's 7 members are included in Zartonk-5. Six young authors are presented in the Our New Shoots section.

It should be mentioned that 2008 is a jubilee year for Vernatun. A festivity dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Tumanian's Vernatun and 10th anniversary of its restoration will take place on May 24 in Tbilisi's Petros Adamian Armenian theater and Sayat Nova Vardaton will take place in Tbilisi the next day.

61. PRESENTATION OF TWO VOLUMES ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TAKES PLACE IN ANTELIAS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The presentation of two new volumes on the Armenian Genocide took place in the Gulbenkian Hall of the Cilicia Museum in Antelias. This book is a republication of the book "Voice of Sufferers" released in London in 1922. It contains letters of the Genocide survivors to their distant relatives.

Speaking about the first volume, Lebanese Armenian intellectual and lecturer Sargis Kirakosian said that it is a document of lines written with blood and tears of Armenians who witnessed the Genocide, it contains letters sent by survivors to their relatives scattered all over the world, searching them and telling about the tragedy.



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The presentation was attended by the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I, monks of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the president of Haykazian University Paul Haytostian, the head of the Armenian unit of Galust Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon) Zaven Yekavian, intellectuals and representatives of the society.

62. EVENTS DEDICATED TO 93rd ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TAKE PLACE IN GLENDALE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Events dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide took place on April 21 in Glendale Memory Hospital and on April 18 in Sahak-Mesrop Armenian Christian school. Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the primate of the Armenian Church of North America Western Diocese, was present at the events.

63. ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF LAS VEGAS GIVES MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO CONGRESSWOMAN SHELLEY BERKLEY FOR HER EFFORTS IN DIRECTION OF RECOGNITION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

During the April 20 event dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian community of Las Vegas gave a memorial plaque to Congresswoman Shelley Berkley for her tireless efforts aimed at recognizing in Congress the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Receiving the memorial plaque, Congresswoman Berkley said: "Being a Jew it is a shame to deny the genocide of another nation, that is why I cannot deny what happened to Armenians and will continue assisting the recognition of the Genocide."

64. ACTION OF PROTEST TO BE HELD IN FRONT OF TURKISH CONSULATE OF LOS ANGELES ON APRIL 24 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

On April 24, the Armenian Youth Federation is organizing its annual action of protest in front of the building of the Turkish Consulate of Los Angeles. Thousands of American Armenians and apologists of human rights demand that the Turkish government stop its policy of negationism over the Armenian Genocide. Nearly 10 thousand people took part in that action of protest last year.

65. BISHOP NAREK ALEEMEZIAN SPEAKS ABOUT ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AT MEETING WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Representative of the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I Bishop Narek Aleemezian was among members of the delegation of the World Council of Churches that paid an official visit to Damascus on April 19-22.

The purpose of the delegation's visit was to have interchurch, interreligious and state contacts and to meet with Iraqi refugees in Syria.

On April 21 the delegation was received by the Syrian president Bashar al-Asad. Bishop Narek Aleemezian conveyed greetings of the Catholicos Aram I to the Syrian president. Speaking about the Armenian Genocide, he reminded those present that Syria was the first country where Armenians who had escaped the Genocide found refuge and saw warm hospitality of Muslim and Christian Arabs. In response to these words of gratitude of Bishop Narek Aleemezian, the Syrian president spoke favorably of the Armenians of Syria, underlining their positive contribution to social, religious and economic life of the country.

The delegation also met with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch Ignatius IV, the Syrian Mufti Ahmad Bader Hassoun, the Greek-Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III, monks of the Evangelical Church of Damascus, the Assyrian Orthodox Patriarch Zagga I, and Iraqi refugees.

66. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS REMEMBERED IN ARGENTINA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

A minute of silence in memory of the Armenian Genocide victims was observed in football stadiums of Argentina.

According to the press service of the Ramkavar Azatakan Party, the council of the Buenos Aires Province accepted the proposal of Serjio Nahapetian, deputy of this province, and applied to the Argentine Football Federation so that a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide will be observed before all football matches held in Argentina in April.



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67. HENRIK EDOYAN PARTICIPATES IN ISTANBUL POERTY FESTIVAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Beyoglu Poetry Festival started in Istanbul. The Beyoglu community council and the Institute of History and Social Science are the organizers of the event.

According to Radical daily, a number of poets from various countries, including poet Henrik Edoyan, the head of the foreign literature chair of Yerevan State University, are participating in the festival.

68. TURKISH ORGANIZATION SENDS LETTER DENYING FACT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO 12 AMBASSADORS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Union of Victims of Massacre of Armenian Bands in Van sent a letter denying the fact of the Armenian Genocide to the ambassadors of the following countries in Anakara: the U.S, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the Netherlands and Israel.

The Turkish press reported that it is indicated in the letter, with which a book entitled "Van. The 1915 Armenian Events" and a disc were enclosed, that "Armenians committed massacres all over Anatolia, particularly in Van. 2,345 party figures were arrested on April 24, a day marked by the Armenians as day of remembrance of the victims of the genocide".

The letter authors express concern about the fact that "some countries that consider themselves democratic states do not state that the claims of the Armenian Genocide are a lie and slander, a means of pursuing political and economic interests".

69. PHOTO EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OPENS IN ESTONIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

April 21-May 11, the Tartu University, Estonia, is hosting an exhibition "First Genocide of 20th Century". As the Armenian portal of Estonia reports, the exhibition is dated to April 24, the Day of Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide victims. The exposition includes photocopies depicting mass murder and persecution of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

The Armenian Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide has provided historical data on the number of Armenian population, parishes and schools in 1914-1922.

The exhibition has been organized by Baltic Armenian House NGO.

70. STUDIES CONDUCTED BY SWEDISH UNIVERSITY CONFIRM FACT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

A recently conducted study at the Uppsala University has revealed highly interesting information in the Swedish Archives, which once again confirm the researchers' view of the events in the Ottoman Turkey during the First World War: the Christian minorities, the Armenians in particular, were subjected to genocide. As the Swedish press writes, the massacres in Ottoman Turkey during the First World War claimed the lives of approximately 1.5 million out of a world population of four million Armenians, while over 250,000 Assyrians and equal number of Pontic Greeks. In 1923, for the first time in over 2,500 years, Armenians no longer lived on 85 % of their fatherland.

71. BOOK "THE FIRST HOLOCAUST" BY ROBERT FISK TO BE SUBMITTED TO DUTCH PARLIAMENT COMMISSIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Armenian community of Holland will commemorate the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide at the memorial of the Armenian Genocide in Assen.

As the local Armenian websites report, the April 24 Committee of the Federation of Armenian Organizations in The Netherlands (FAON) will hand over a Dutch translation of the book "The First Holocaust" by Robert Fisk on Armenian Genocide to the Permanent Commissions of European Affairs and Foreign Affairs of the Dutch Parliament.

The April 24 Committee of FAON will submit a petition on April 22 together with the Fisk's book to the Dutch Parliamentary Commissions regarding lack of progress in Turkey on such issues as the human rights, freedom of expression and rights of minorities, as well as continuation of persecution of Armenians and other Turkish citizens. It is also noted that there is no progress in recognizing the past, particularly the Armenian Genocide, by Turkey.



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72. EVENT DEDICATED TO ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TAKES PLACE IN AUSTRALIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Around 1,000 people from Australia's Armenian community gathered in Sydney to commemorate the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide. The guest speaker of the event was visiting US professor Peter Balakian. "We can't understand the Holocaust, or the Cambodian genocide or the Rwandan genocide without understanding the template for all genocide in the modern period," he said.

73. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBERED IN THESSALONIKI [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

Events marking the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide were held in the northern port city of Thessaloniki, Greece, on April 20. The event was organized by the Armenian National Committee and the Thessaloniki Prefecture. The keynote speaker at the event was former parliament president Apostolos Kaklamanis.

Greetings were also addressed by the representatives of the Armenian Ambassador in Greece and the Thessaloniki Prefect, Thessaloniki Mayor Vassilis Papageorgopoulos and representatives of the Armenian Youth of Greece.

74. THE CALIFORNIA COURIER 50 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The California Courier, the oldest independent English-language Armenian newspaper published in the United States, is 50 years old this year.

75. FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF GREECE TO SPEAK AT EVENT DEDICATED TO ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN CYPROS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

On April 23 an event dedicated to the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide took place in Cyprus and former Defence Minister of Greece and PASOK MP Akis Tsokhadzopoulos was the main speaker of the commemoration event. The event was under the high auspices of The President of The House of Representatives Marios Garoyan.

76. EVENT DEDICATED TO ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO BE ORGANIZED BY ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF ALBANY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

On April 25, the Armenian National Committee of Albany (ANC of Albany), will host the 93rd annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at Troy City Hall.

As the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) reports, Congressman Michael McNulty, Mayor Harry Tutunjian of Troy, and Mayor Michael Manning of Watervliet will be in attendance at the event, and will speak and reflect on the importance of genocide recognition. Also present will be Democratic Darius Shahinfar, who is seeking to replace the retiring Congressman McNulty.

The event will be followed by a dinner and a lecture by David Kherdian, an Armenian American poet and novelist.

77. EVENTS DEDICATED TO 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO TAKE PLACE IN JERUSALEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The Armenological program of the Institute of Studies of Asia and Africa of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will organize a commemoration evening and consultation dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 29. Professor Israel Charney will be present at the event. During the evening Armenian instrumental and vocal performances will be sounded.

78. DILIJAN GROUP SEASON-ENDING CONCERT IN LOS ANGELES DEDICATED TO ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

During the Dilijan Chamber Music Series' season-ending concert to be held on April 27 in Los Angeles music by great Armenian composer/priest Komitas will be performed. This commemorative concert is dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The performers are Ensemble Resonance, violinists Movses Pogossian and Sarah Thornblade, cellist Ronald Leonard, and pianist Joanne Pearce Martin.



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ARTS

79. ARMENIAN CULTURE MINISTRY AND BRITISH COUNCIL ARMENIAN OFFICE TO SIGN A MEMORANDUM [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Culture Ministry and Armenian Office of the British Council organization will sign a memorandum on April 25.

Press service of the ministry told Armenpress that the Armenian office of the organization gives the public an opportunity to use the information resources of its information center. Together with the Ministry of Culture a number of events have been developed for improving the library and information services in Armenia.

An official from the British Council Armenian office said that within the framework of the memorandum meetings have been conducted for the staff of public libraries.

80. TWO BOOKS ABOUT ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ISSUES IN JAPANESE LANGUAGE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The chairwoman of the NA's science, education, culture and youth affairs permanent commission Hranush Hakobian hosted today professor of Japanese Aichi Sanyoyi University Hiroyoshi Segava who is in Armenia during these days and who is author of two books about the Armenian genocide.

His first book is entitled "The Forgotten Armenian Genocide". "For Japanese who do not know whether the genocide occurred or not that book was necessary and I wrote it. As a result of my survey, I understood that genocide was committed and wanted to present it to Japanese reader," the professor told Armenpress.

He said that first time he learnt about the Armenian genocide while studying the international right but there was only slightly mentioned about it.

Later he found many materials about the Armenian genocide and after first visit to Armenia in 2002 he wrote "The Forgotten Genocide of Armenians", later he published "In the Memory of the Armenian Genocide: Open Lectures" book.

"I wish that in 2015, on the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide Armenians and Turks sign reconciliation agreement," the Japanese professor said.

81. BOOK ON ARMENIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAYS TO BE PUBLISHED [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Hranush Kharatian, a prominent ethnographer and demographer, told Armenpress that a new book about Armenian national holidays will be published soon.

She said three of her colleagues traveled across the country last year to collect materials about how Armenians of different regions mark their holidays and a great deal of relevant information.

The book will give extensive description of various scenarios of how these holidays are celebrated. It will also have photographs, lists of Armenian dishes and their receipts.

Hranush Kharatian said books will be distributed free to schools and people who deal with handling of national holidays.

She said there are two national rites which are actually common to all. The first is celebration of New Year and the second is April 24, the day when Armenians remember 1.5 million of their ancestors killed in Turkey.

She said a focus was on how these holidays are marked by urban and rural population. She said the conclusion of the studies is that the majority of people have little or no information at all about how the holidays should be marked, even those who are responsible for their organization.

In this sense, she said, the book will be very instrumental.

82. YEREVAN ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY HOLDS GENOCIDE POSTERS EXHIBITION [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

The Nikol Aghbalian student union of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and the Armenian Engineering University's student council organized today an exhibition of posters dedicated to the 93-rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Many of the displayed posters were exhibited in 2005 when Armenians around the world marked the 90-th anniversary of the genocide.



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Flags of the countries which have officially recognized the Armenian genocide were hoisted today on the Engineering University's major compound.

Engineering University rector, Vostanik Marukhian, condemned the denialist policy of current Turkish governments, saying there is no place for it in the civilized family of European nations.

The Engineering University will also organize today and tomorrow a candle-lighting ceremony and screening of documentaries about the Armenian genocide and a minute of silence.

83. ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES THE HEAD OF THE RUSSIAN CULTURE AND CINEMATOGRAPHY FEDERATIVE AGENCY [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian received today the head of the Russian Culture and Cinematography Federative Agency Mikhail Shvidkoy.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that greeting the guest, the prime minister noted that culture is one of the important bases of integration between the two peoples in different spheres. During the meeting the sides discussed a number of issues on cooperation in the cultural sphere.

Mikhail Shvidkoy said that he is glad that the head of the Armenian government is paying a great attention to the culture. He also expressed gratitude for the state support in conduction of "Seasons of Russian Culture in Armenia". Noting that they are also planning to conduct "Seasons of Armenian Culture" in Russia, Shvidkoy expressed hope that in future they will be held periodically.

During the meeting the prime minister also spoke about necessity of high quality cultural TV programs, noting that he has assigned to work out a relevant concept and it will be good to get the support of Shvidkoy in the development and implementation of the program taking into consideration his great experience in the field.

The head of the Russian Culture and Cinematography Federative Agency expressed readiness to support at his best.

During the meeting they particularly pointed out the necessity of cultural programs for young people as the new generation does not have enough idea about the rich culture of our peoples. Shvidkoy also noted that it is possible to develop cooperation within the CIS humanitarian cooperation foundation as well.

84. MINISTRY DEVELOPING CURRICULUM TO TEACH ARMENIAN AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Education and science minister Levon Mkrтчian said Wednesday that the ministry has embarked on developing an official curriculum to teach Armenian as a foreign language.

Speaking at a news conference he said this needs to be developed in order to enhance Armenian Studies programs in the country.

According to him, the only way to develop Armenology internationally is to have a method of promoting the language abroad and teaching it in foreign languages. The Diaspora, he said, would greatly benefit from such a policy as it experiences difficulty in preserving the language.

He said it is also necessary to devise methods for teaching Armenian to the nearly 4000 foreign students studying in Armenia, saying they speak Russian or English when communicating with Armenian citizens.

SOCIAL

85. RA NAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO TAKE PLACE ON APRIL 25 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

The annual general meeting of the RA National Academy of Sciences will take place on April 25. During the meeting NAS Chairman Radik Martirosian will report about the main results of the RA NAS 2007 scientific activity. Babken Haroutiunian, a RA NAS academician-secretary, will present NAS 2007 scientific-organization activity.

According to the RA NAS Press Service, a discussion of the results of the RA NAS scientific and scientific-organization activity will also take place.



86. AT PRESENT PROCESS OF RECOGNITION AND CONDEMNATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IS AT STAGE OF "FROM RECOGNITION TO RECOVERY" ASHOT MELKONIAN CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

At present the process of recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide is in the legal-political field "from recognition to recovery." Ashot Melkonian, the Director of the History Institute of the RA National Academy of Sciences, expressed such an opinion at the April 23 press conference. According to him, we should pass much more "stony, difficult way" to complete this stage of the process. According to A. Melkonian, the court is to determine the amount of the damage of the Armenian people and the form of recovery. "A tragedy happened, the world admits it, but the world should not satisfy itself with only providing moral assistance," A. Melkonian said.

The historian also mentioned that the Armenian Genocide is a "classical" example of genocide. However, according to A. Melkonian, in difference to the Jewish Holocaust, the Armenians were slaughtered just in their homeland, in Western Armenia. "Here we have a problem of not only a genocide, but also a problem of deprivation of homeland, to which we should pay attention," he said. In A. Melkonian's opinion, in case of depriving of homeland it is impossible to speak about only material recovery, as it is difficult to turn into material units the 2500 villages, 66 towns, 1350 churches, etc. the Western Armenians lost.

87. RA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE WORKS OUT NEW METHODS FOR TEACHING ARMENIAN AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/23/08]

For the purpose of developing Armenology, the RA Ministry of Education and Science is working out methods of teaching Armenian as a foreign language for Diasporan Armenian pupils. RA Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrтчian said at the April 23 press conference.

The Minister expressed discontent with the language policy carried on in the country, be it a native or foreign language. And for the purpose of developing Armenology, according to him, we should first have a possibility of teaching it in foreign languages, as promotion of the Armenian language abroad is done through foreign languages, in particular, in the Diaspora, which has a problem of preservation of the Armenian language.

L. Mkrтчian also considered important the necessity of methods of teaching Armenian for nearly 4 thousand foreign students studying in Armenia, who living and receiving education in Armenian higher education institutions, speak in Russian or English with RA citizens. "We wish to create such methods, through which a foreign student will be able to learn Armenian in two years. And after graduating from the University and leaving our country he will also take our language value with him, involuntarily becoming a function assisting with spreading of Armenian," he said.

According to the Minister, the spreading and strengthening of Armenian is the work of responsible specialists living in the homeland and engaged in the sphere. The terminological committee has been recreated for already three months, the activity of which has an important role in the issue of sphere's development. "It is possible to take the criteria and use them in the sphere of mathematics or physics, while just we are responsible for the sphere of Armenology," he added.

88. EARTHQUAKE REGISTERED IN THE TERRITORY OF ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

An earthquake with 3.4 magnitude on Richter's scale has been registered today in the territory of Armenia – 7 km east from the town of Ashotsk.

The Seismic Protection National Service told Armenpress that in the epicenter the strength of the earthquake reached 4-5 magnitude.

89. RA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE PLANS TO CREATE EDUCATION QUALITY NATIONAL REGISTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The RA Ministry of Education and Science plans to create Education Quality National Register in 2008, the goal of which is to control the process of bringing the higher educational institutions' educational system in line with international education standards. As Levon Mkrтчian, the RA Minister of Education and Science, said at the April 23 press conference, the structure's founding has a goal of not only controlling, but also to some extent regulating university education in the country. He said that for that purpose universities are to first "evaluate themselves," after which the "self-evaluation" is to be passed to the Quality National Service, which, in its turn, is to evaluate university education in country's



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higher educational institutions on the basis of them and is to introduce the results to the Education European Quality Service.

The Minister of Education and Science said that after all this the Education European Quality Service will already decide how much "honestly" and "correctly" Armenia evaluates its higher education system. Positive results will be a basis for Armenia's joining the Education European Quality Service.

For bringing the educational system in line with European standards on the way of European integration L. Mkrtchian first of all singled out the necessity to carry out content reforms in the system. Only introduction of the credit system and three-level educational order in the universities, according to the Minister, does not mean yet that universities ensure education of international level. The Minister noted that the content problems have not been solved yet parallel with positive shifts in this sector of education today.

L. Mkrtchian emphasized that these problems regard both state and private higher educational institutions. "Today there are nearly 60 thousand students in Armenia, nearly 20 thousand of which study at private institutions and 40 thousand at state ones. The goal of the Education Quality National Register is also to evaluate the education quality of private and state universities. And unless a university is able to ensure education corresponding to international standards, its working will be already considered senseless," he added.

90. LEVON MKRTCHIAN: FINAL AND UNITED EXAMINATIONS WILL BE ABSOLUTELY TRANSPARENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/24/08]

The final examinations at comprehensive schools and united examinations for university entrance will be absolutely transparent. The RA minister of education and science Levon Mkrtchian stated at the April 23 press conference that the human factor is ruled out during the united examinations: works will be checked by computer, which makes somebody's intervention in the process of giving scores to works impossible. The new examination system does not envisage any examination commissions, which, according to the minister, contributes to transparency.

Taking into account the results of last year's united examination on the subject "The Armenian Language and Literature", school leavers will take examinations on the subjects "Mathematics" and "Foreign Languages" by the same order. In order to conduct fair examinations, the examination process in all exam halls both in Yerevan and the marzes will be filmed. Special deafening devices will be used to exclude the possibility of using mobile phones during the united examinations.

The printing of united examination papers is underway in Great Britain. The format of these tests is in line with the common standards of the given subject. "A school leaver with lower than average knowledge can easily get 8 points so there are no problems in terms of test papers' contents," Levon Mkrtchian said.

"12 thousand school leavers take examination on the same subject in a day, while the results are published immediately after the test papers have been checked. In this case it is just impossible to help an examinee or to raise his/her score," the minister assured those present. He expressed confidence that the new examination system will prove to be correct, and with time its positive results will become evident to the public.

91. FARMERS OF TSOVINAR GROW 70,000 YOUNG TREES ANNUALLY [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

Tsovinar is a village in the province of Gegharkunik that grows annually about 70,000 young trees. According to Vrezh Melkonian, head of the provincial agricultural support center, saplings are grown by about 30 families of the village, who are diversifying their products.

Now, along with traditional saplings of apple and pear they offer to farmers from across Armenia saplings of apricot, peach, plum and cherry.

Some 30,000 young fruit trees were already planted by April 21. Each costs from 800 to 1,500 Drams. The experience shows that these trees are more cold resistant than those brought from other countries.

92. PREPARATORY WORKS BEGIN AT TEGHOUT MINE [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

Armenian Copper Program (ACP), a company that was allowed by the government to exploit a copper mine in Teghout in the northeastern province of Lori, has hired 145 local people to broaden and repair local roads, a key condition for successful operation of the mine.



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The government allowed the company to build all necessary facilities on the area of 1.565 hectares. Some 360 hectares of local forests will be logged. The logging is being strictly supervised.

Ruben Papoyan, regional director of the ACP for Teghout, told Armenpress that preparatory works will take up to 45 days. He said the company will bring soon machines and equipment from Russia to pass to a second stage of the work.

SPORTS

93. TWO LEGENDARY TENNIS PLAYERS TO VISIT ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Famous Argentinean-Armenian tennis player, David Nalbandian, will visit Armenia this year, Armenian Tennis Federation said.

The date of his visit is being specified now.

Harutyun Pambukian, president of the Armenian Tennis Federation, told Armenpress that David Nalbandian will spend several days in Armenia. He said that will be his first visit to Armenia.

Pambukian said another legendary, American-Armenian tennis player, Andre Agasi, will also visit Armenia.

94. ARMENIAN TENNIS WOMEN TEAM BEATS MONTENEGRO TEAM [ARMENPRESS, 04/23/08]

Armenian women tennis team beat today Montenegro team and gained two points in the 3d Euro-African Zone championship held in Yerevan.

In previous games the Armenian team beat team from Finland and was defeated by Morocco team.

95. ARMENIAN REFEREE TO JUDGE WIMBLEDON GAMES [ARMENPRESS, 04/25/08]

An Armenian tennis referee, Grigor Davtian, will be judging Wimbledon tournament-the unofficial world and individual tennis championship. He will be the first Armenian to do so.

The decision was made by Wimbledon's organizing committee.

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

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Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.