



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### AGBU NEWS

#### 1. RA PRESIDENT RECEIVED [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 04/29/08]

Yesterday, RA President Serge Sarkissian received Berge Setrakian, President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

He once again congratulated Serge Sarkissian on his recent election in the highest post of the Republic of Armenia.

The AGBU President expressed confidence that the newly-elected President will succeed in making Armenia the dream country of world-spread Armenians. Emphasizing the union's eagerness to bring its contribution to this process, Berge Setrakian mentioned that AGBU will support and back the President in his patriotic activities.

RA President Serge Sarkissian and AGBU President Berge Setrakian also spoke about Armenia-Diaspora relations, underscoring the importance of building these relations based on mutual understanding and cooperation. They both prioritized the issue of preservation of national identity. As Mr. Setrakian mentioned the AGBU has initiated a number of projects, the main goal of which is to strengthen ties of the Diasporan new generation with their homeland.

Noticing that Armenia is not rich with natural resources Serge Sarkissian said that our main resource should be the human potential, which we must unite and use for the sake of being a competitive country.

#### 2. AGBU PRESIDENT BERGE SETRAKIAN MEETS WITH RA PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARKISSIAN [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 04/30/08]

RA Prime Minister Tigran Sarkissian received the President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Berge Setrakian yesterday.

Congratulating Tigran Sarkissian in his new position Mr. Setrakian said that he was impressed by their latest meeting when Sarkissian was still the President of the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia, and wished the current government under his chair success in its mission.

Berge Setrakian mentioned that AGBU has spread its activities in many countries of the world for the sake of our Diasporan compatriots and our homeland. This visit is also aimed at supporting our country, our people, different programs carried out in different spheres, and also sowing love towards their homeland among the new generation of the Diasporan Armenians. Mr. Setrakian briefly presented to the Prime Minister the new and ongoing projects of the AGBU.

PM Sarkissian also expressed his enthusiasm about the previous meeting with the AGBU President and the programs discussed during that meeting. He said that the RA Government's program, which will be presented in the Parliament today, is also based on those attitudes and programs, which include creation of economy based on knowledge, and systems that give opportunity to every Armenia, no matter where they live, to take part in pan-national projects. The Prime Minister assured that the RA Government is ready to support the AGBU projects in every possible way, use the potential of the Diaspora, which is viewed as one of our competitive privileges. We have no right to fall behind our neighbors of the region, the Prime Minister said. Tigran Sarkissian once again emphasized the importance of realization of pan-Armenian programs, adding also that doing business in Armenia should become easy, so that every Armenian proudly says that doing business in Armenia is easier than in their country of residence.

#### 3. AGBU PRESIDENT BERGE SETRAKIAN RECEIVED BY HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 04/30/08]

On April 29, His Holiness Karekin II received the President of Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Berge Setrakian in the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin.

As the Holy See Press Service reported welcoming the AGBU President in Armenia and the Holy See His Holiness expressed appreciation for all the national and benevolent projects that AGBU carries out in Armenia and Diaspora. His Holiness also expressed satisfaction about the strong cooperation between the AGBU and the Armenian Apostolic Church.



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In his turn the AGBU President highly assessing the cooperation of the church and the AGBU assured that the AGBU will continue supporting the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin in effectively realizing its mission.

During the meeting they also spoke about other national issues in particular the Christian upbringing of the new generation and other educational issues.

## POLITICS

### 4. DEMONSTRATIONS FOR SETTING FREE SMBAT AYVAZIAN AND OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES CONTINUE IN HAGHTANAK VILLAGE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The daily demonstrations of protest are continuing in the Haghtanak village in defence of the currently detained Smbat Ayvazian, a member of the political board of the Hanrapetutiun (Republic) party and the RA former Minister of State Incomes, and his brother Marzpetuni Ayvazian. The number of the participants of the April 27 demonstration passed 100. Among the participants were the fellow-villagers of Smbat Ayvazian and tens of representatives of the Armenian Women Movement organization, who have arrived from the capital. The action participants called out "Smbat, we are with you," "Freedom to the prisoners," "Free, independent Armenia," "Struggle, struggle up to the end."

Demonstration participant Laura Smbatian told a Noyan Tapan correspondent that as the members of the Women Movement are organizing actions almost throughout the territory of the republic, the residents of Haghtanak as well are going to protest as long as the authorities meet the demands of the demonstrators. "It is not important for us who will come to power in Armenia, it is important that there is freedom, independence and justice in the country," Laura Smbatian stated. In her words, most of the detained political figures are heroes of the Artsakh war and May 9: the liberation day of Shushi, is their holiday and if they are detained, who is the day celebrated for?

Demonstrations will continue in the Haghtanak village until April 30.

### 5. OTHER PARTIES NOT TO BE INVITED TO MAY 2 CONGRESS OF FORCES SUPPORTING LEVON TER-PETROSIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The regular congress of the forces supporting Levon Ter-Petrosian, the first President of the Republic of Armenia, will be held in the sitting hall of the RA government on May 2. According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Arman Musinian, the Spokesperson of Levon Ter-Petrosian, famous intellectuals and public figures will take part in the congress in addition to the representatives of the political forces. And in response to the question of whether representatives of other parties as well will be invited to the congress, Arman Musinian stated: "There are no other political forces, in Armenia: there are only criminal forces."

According to the Spokesperson, the absence of tens of detained activists will not create any problem or obstacle for the proceedings of the congress. As regards the agenda of the congress, the issues to be discussed have not been decided as yet.

### 6. HEALTH CONDITION OF ARRESTED SMBAT AYVAZIAN WORSENS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The health condition of Smbat Ayvazian, a member of the Hanrapetutiun (Republic) party's Political Board, the former RA Minister of State Revenues, arrested within the framework of the criminal case instituted on the fact of the March 1 events has worsened lately and he has been moved to the emergency room of the Nubarashen penitentiary institution. Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed about it by S. Ayvazian's wife, Ruzanna Sargsian. She said that she cannot assert that violence has been used to her husband in the imprisonment place and added that he had heart problems in the past.

It should be mentioned that A. Ayvazian, who is Levon Ter-Petrosian's supporter, was kidnapped by people in black masks on February 24 from the Koryun-Terian crossroad. As it was found out later, he was taken to the General Department on Struggle Against Organized Crime (6th department). According to the statement spread by the Police, a club with a black handle and nickel-plated spring was found and confiscated from S. Ayvazian and a Makarov pistol with a cartridge and 7 bullets of 9 mm calibre was found and confiscated from his car.

R. Sargsian affirmed that her husband's arrest is a political persecution.



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## 7. BILL ON RECOGNIZING NKR NOT INCLUDED IN AGENDA OF RA NA REGULAR PLENARY SITTINGS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

RA National Assembly regular plenary sittings started on April 28. In difference to usual four-day sittings, they will last three days as May 1, according to the official calendar, is a day off.

NA Speaker Tigran Torosian informed journalists that the actions plan of the newly formed government is discussed at the government sitting the same day and as soon as they receive it, the program will be included in the agenda and will be discussed by the special order during current sittings. The parliament refused to additionally include the bill authored by Zharangutiun faction head Raffi Hovannisian On Recognizing the Nagorno Karabakh Republic into the sitting agenda. 15 deputies were for, 62 against, and 7 abstained. According to T. Torosian, parliament's attitude on including the issue in the agenda has nothing in common with NA's attitude to the recognition of NKR. "Nagorno Karabakh's recognition is our most important task," the NA Speaker said. Armen Rustamian, the Chairman of the NA Standing Committee for Foreign Relations, who did not approve issue's inclusion in the agenda, in his turn, said that no one in Armenia can be against NKR recognition. However, according to him, the issue was to be included in the NA agenda with a political consent. He said that the Committee has proposed postponing the issue until discussion by a tripartite, RA Foreign Ministry, NA, NKR, format.

After agenda's approval the parliament continued discussion of the RA NA's statement on Nagorno Karabakh conflict's settlement interrupted at the previous four-day sittings.

## 8. CHANGES MADE IN RA NA OYP FACTION'S STAFF [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

At the RA National Assembly April 28 sitting NA Speaker Tigran Torosian publicized an application on resignation of non-partisan member of Bargavach Hayastan party Vahe Hovhannisian. According to the NA Regulations, the deputy's authorities will be stopped if the deputy does not withdraw his application through a written application in a 15-day term after resignation's publication.

T. Torosian also said that by CEC's decision, as a result of stopping the deputy powers of Orinats Yerkir faction members Mher Shahgeldian and Gurgen Sargsian, Khachik Haroutunian and Artsruni Aghajanian from the party list were registered in the faction.

## 9. ZHARANGUTIUN FACTION NOT TO TAKE PART IN VOTING OF NA DRAFT STATEMENT ON NKR SETTLEMENT CONSIDERING IT BELATED [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

On April 28, the RA National Assembly finished discussion of the draft statement On Settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh Problem, which will be submitted for voting on April 29.

Draft author, NA Speaker Tigran Torosian expressed readiness to discuss possible proposals before voting. He, in particular, agreed to include in the draft ARFD faction's proposal on RA's being the guarantor of NKR security.

The draft statement has already undergone some changes on the basis of proposals made at the previous four-day sittings. Therefore, RA NA proposes RA President and government the following:

- making Armenia's policy on Nagorno Karabakh settlement more initiating,
  - making active and expanding efforts of elaboration and implementation of events aimed at completely informing the international community about the Nagorno Karabakh problem, by involving the all-Armenian potential, possibilities, and means for that purpose,
  - working out the legal bases within the framework of the international law, which will ensure more efficient cooperation between RA and NKR, as well as in case of a military aggression or other forcible measures by Azerbaijan will give RA a possibility to ensure NKR's complete security and defence,
  - exerting every effort for the purpose of ensuring negotiations' efficiency to restore NKR representatives' complete participation in that process as an internationally recognized conflict side,
  - preparing alternative possibilities of international recognition of NKR independence, which are to be used in case of failure of the negotiations proceeding within the framework of the Minsk Group.
- Zharangutiun faction member Larisa Alaverdian said that the faction is not going to take part in the voting, as they cannot vote for such a belated statement having no address, which does not contain consistency of any task set, is futile from the very start and does not stipulate the legal bases of legitimacy of NKR independence.



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## 10. VENICE COMMISSION TO PRESENT ITS CONCLUSION ON BILL OF MAKING AMENDMENTS TO RA LAW ON HOLDING MEETINGS, RALLIES, PROCESSIONS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS UNTIL MAY 15 [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

Until May 15 the Council of Europe Venice Commission will submit to RA NA its conclusion on the bill of making amendments to the law On Holding Meetings, Rallies, Processions, and Demonstrations. According to NA Speaker Tigran Torosian, the bill revised as a result of the joint discussions held on April 15-16 in Yerevan was sent to the Commission on April 25. And in connection with the "speculations" over the format of those discussions he explained that the discussions proceeded by a narrow format, without participation of political forces, due to the lack of time.

Touching upon the April 17 resolution of PACE on activity of democratic institutions in Armenia, T. Torosian said that some stipulations of that document "do not reflect the situation completely." In particular, the resolution proposes change of the principle of formation of the National Committee of Television and Radio, which, however, is impossible, as it is a constitutional norm. Nevertheless, according to T. Torosian, the resolution contains proposals aimed at deepening of democracy in Armenia and as Armenia has joined the Council of Europe of its own free will, it should fulfill the resolution by finding right solutions.

According to T. Torosian, by the RA Ombudsperson's special report on the events of March 1-2, the proposal to reserve the right to hold an independent investigation of those events to the Ombudsperson's office was considered invalid, as with the above mentioned report A. Haroutunian presented his position exactly. Meanwhile the NA Speaker did not exclude the possibility of creating an ad hoc parliamentary commission mentioning, however, that no discussion on creation of such a commission has been held with parliamentary factions yet.

## 11. 66 PERSONS UNDER ARREST AS OF APRIL 28 BASED ON CRIMINAL CASE INVESTIGATED BY SIS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

As of April 28, 66 persons are under preliminary arrest based on the criminal case, which is being investigated by the RA Special Investigation Service (SIS) in connection with the March 1 events in Yerevan. Written undertaking not to leave Armenia was chosen as a precautionary measure with respect to another 27 accused persons. According to the press service of the RA prosecutor general, on the same day 31 criminal cases on 31 persons were sent to court by the SIS.

## 12. TURKS GOING TO SET UP MONUMENT IN MEMORY OF "TURKS MASSACRED BY ARMENIANS" [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

Turks are going to set up a monument in memory of the "Turks massacred by Armenians" in the Kyopryukyoy region of Erzurum.

As the Turkish press reports, the monument is to be set up in the vicinity of the "mass grave of Turks" discovered in the Kyopryukyoy region.

"Work has started in the mass grave of Moslem Turks massacred by Armenians. It is also envisaged to set up a monument on that space, which will inform all the world about the massacres committed against Turks in the past," Erol Kiurkcuglu, the Head of the Research Center of Armenian-Turkish relations of the University after Ataturk, stated.

## 13. "AL JAZEERA" TV CHANNEL GOING TO BROADCAST PROGRAM TELLING ABOUT "MASSACRES" COMMITTED BY ARMENIANS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The "Al Jazeera" TV channel is going to broadcast a program telling about the "massacres" allegedly committed by Armenians in Turkey. This information, as the Zaman daily reports, was provided by Yusuf Sherif, a representative of Turkey of the "Al Jazeera" TV channel, who was in Igdir for that purpose.

Sherif mentioned that their objective is "to listen to what has happened through the mouth of witnesses" adding at the same time that one of the witnesses of the "massacres committed by Armenians" told during the interview with the staff of the TV channel how "Armenians filled a house with about ninety Turks and burnt them alive."



## 14. DRAFT LAW ON MARCHES, RALLIES, MEETINGS SENT FOR INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

The draft law on rallies, meetings, marches, over which discussions were held in the NA with the participation of experts from Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, has been sent for the international expertise, Armenian National Assembly speaker Tigran Torosian said today noting that they are expecting to get the response until May 15.

Referring to the conduction of discussions with the European experts, the parliament speaker said that during the discussion they reached mutually acceptable approaches which in case of applying will give an opportunity to make the law relevant to the European standards.

T. Torosian also referred to the PACE resolution on the activity of the Armenian democratic institutions, noting that any suggestion or document must be taken into consideration if it is directed towards consolidation of democracy in Armenia.

"The document contains definitions which do not fully present what happened on March 1-2. As to what we must do, all the presented suggestions must be taken into consideration and the existing flaws be eliminated," the NA speaker said.

Referring to the point of the resolution about dialogue, Torosian said that it must be clarified over what the dialogue must be conducted. He reminded that call for dialogue has been voiced long time ago. "Those who do not accept the necessity of rule of law in Armenia, who do not accept the decisions of different establishments, including the decision of the Constitutional Court what dialogue may be held in such case," the NA speaker noted.

Speaking about setting up an independent group for investigation of March 1-2 developments, the speaker said that he finds it purposeful that the commission be set up within the NA but discussions with factions have not yet been conducted.

"If the factions will be ready for setting up such commission I think in that case it may be created and its work will be very important and will be very responsible in respect of future developments in Armenia," he said.

## 15. YEREVAN REFUTES AZERI CLAIMS OF ARRESTING ARMENIAN SUBVERSIVE GROUP [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

The Armenian authorities have refuted Azerbaijani media reports claiming that Azerbaijani armed forces have arrested an Armenian subversive group.

According to Armenian defense ministry, four Armenian men, all residents of villages in Gegharkunik province, went to see a friend who is having his mandatory military service in a military unit near the village of Khachik in Vayots Dzor province bordering with Azerbaijani Nakhichevan.

On their way back they apparently lost their way having crossed into the Azerbaijani territory and were arrested by its forces.

A spokesman for Armenian defense ministry, Seyran Shahsuvarian, told Armenpress that they have information that the four Armenian citizens are being kept by Azerbaijani security services. He said the Armenian side asked the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to help repatriate the Armenian citizens.

## 16. NAGORNO-KARABAKH AUTHORITIES TO REPATRIATE AZERI SOLDIER [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

In another display of good will the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh will repatriate on May 3 an Azerbaijani serviceman, Vusal Eibatov, who crossed into the Armenian-controlled area near the village of Yusifjanli on April 11.

The Azeri serviceman explained he had lost way and crossed into Armenian-controlled area.

Viktor Kocharian, chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh government commission dealing with PoWs and missing people, told Armenpress that the Nagorno-Karabakh branch of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) has established contact with a relevant Azerbaijani commission which agreed to take in the serviceman.

Nagorno-Karabakh authorities allowed ICRC officials to meet with Azerbaijani soldier who is allowed to send and receive letters to and from his family.

The Azeri soldier had no identification documents on him. He said he was a native of Azerbaijani village of Hilman in Shamkhor region.



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## 17. FUGITIVE PARLIAMENT MEMBER'S BROTHER PLEADS GUILTY OF COMMITTING TAX FRAUD [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Armenian authorities released a businessman, Martin Sukiasian, after he pleaded guilty to committing a tax fraud and paid 120 million Drams to have restored the damages his company sustained to the government.

Martin Sukiasian, who is the brother of the fugitive parliament member Khachatur Sukiasian, was arrested on November 6, 2007 and three days later he was charged with committing a financial fraud.

Sona Truzian, a spokeswoman for the Office of the Prosecutor-General, told Armenpress that Martin Sukiasian, who is the chief manager of Silivia Ltd., falsified invoices to export medical equipments from Armenia worth 720 million Drams.

Sona Truzian said Martin Sukiasian promised in writing not to leave the country pending the final investigation into his case. The investigation is being handled by the National Security Service.

## 18. IABP SECRETARY GENERAL CONGRATULATES PM TIGRAN SARKISIAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Secretary-General of the International Association of Business and Parliament. Frederic R. Hyde-Chambers, sent a congratulatory message to Tigran Sarkisian on the occasion of his appointment as Prime Minister of Armenia. The message states in part:

"It was my pleasure to meet you in November 2007 in your capacity of head of the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia when you were joined by Director General of the Armenia office of the IABP Erik Guzalyan. I was deeply impressed by that meeting with your staff and you.

I was pleased as much to hear of your appointment as Prime Minister of Armenia on which I am extending to you my best wishes and warmest congratulations.

Indeed, assisted by your team, you will manage to deepen and speed up the pace of the reforms underway in Armenia as I have known you as a man developing, implementing and promoting reforms. Once again, please accept my best and warmest congratulations.

The IABP stands ready to do its utmost in support of any such initiative of yours as may promote prosperity and development in Armenia."

## 19. ARMENIAN FM CONTINUES RECEIVING CONGRATULATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian continues receiving congratulatory messages on his appointment in the office of Armenia's foreign affairs minister.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that in the congratulatory message PACE Chairman Luis Maria de Pyuig particularly wrote, "On behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly I congratulate you on the appointment in the office of the Armenian Foreign Minister. Taking into consideration your rich experience in the international field, I am sure that you will exert all your efforts towards consolidating the main values of human rights of the Council of Europe, democracy and rule of law".

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kuser, underscoring the successful experience of Edward Nalbandian in France, and his contribution to the development of Armenian-French relations, expressed assurance in his message that he will continue his activity towards boosting relations between the two countries.

"I wish that our close cooperation both bilateral and on European and international levels expand and deepen more. The success of the "Armenie mon amie" ("Armenia My Friend") project, to which you greatly contributed, I view as a bright expression of our friendly ties," he wrote in his speech. He also expressed assurance that France will continue its efforts within the OSCE Minsk Group for finding regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherzhi wrote in his message "I am ready to work with you for boosting and consolidating Armenian-Indian partnership in all the spheres."

Brazilian Foreign Relations Minister Selsou Amorim expressed readiness to work with the Armenian newly appointed minister for activating the ties between the two countries.

Italian Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema wrote in his congratulatory message "I convey my congratulations and best wishes on being trusted the high mandate of foreign minister of Armenia. I wish that our countries continue working together for consolidation of our relations."



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Argentinean Foreign Minister Jorge Tayana, underscoring the traditional relations between the two countries, expressed hope that during the tenure of the new Armenian foreign minister it will be possible to boost bilateral friendly relations.

Former chairman of NATO PA Pier Lelush expressed assurance that Edward Nalbandian will act for the sake of Armenia's integration to Europe for promoting stability and peace in Caucasus.

The chairman of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Pertch Sedrakian wrote in his message, "Your rich political experience, your activity in the international filed inspire trust and respect. We are sure that Armenia's cooperation with Diaspora Armenians and international circles will greatly benefit thanks to your skills."

## 20. ARF SAYS GOVERNMENT HAS TO FIND SWIFT SOLUTIONS TO MANY PROBLEMS [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Ara Nranian, a parliament member from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), told a news conference today that the government should undertake to find swift solutions to an array of pressing problems if it wants to become the government of national accord.

He said the government's long-term goals may seem hard to be implemented by a small country like Armenia, but according to him, they can ensure an environment of public unity and solidarity.

He said the ARF stands ready to do everything in its power to help archive these objectives. According to him, the focus should be on creating health, tourism and educational center and repatriation of ethnic Armenians to their homeland.

Ara Nranian then praised the new prime minister Tigran Sarkisian for highlighting the role of skilled and seasoned professionals. He said the new government fits into Tigran Sarkisian's concept that government officials should serve examples in all respects.

"The government should become a provider of quality services and not simply holder of some functions and not everything should be handed to private sector," he said.

He said the ARF remains an advocate of strong anti-corruption policy.

## 21. ARMENIAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS KARABAKH CONFLICT STATEMENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

With a vote of 96 to 3 and 2 abstentions the National Assembly (parliament) of Armenia adopted today a statement on resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The statement calls on the president and the government 'to make Armenia's policy on the settlement of the conflict more proactive and initiating.'

It says Armenia should step up efforts for development and implementation of measures designed to provide full and true information about the conflict to the international community and to that end to engage all-Armenian potential.

The statement also urges the president and the government to develop legal grounds, within the international law, that will ensure more effective cooperation between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and which will also allow Armenia to rebuff any potential aggression by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh and ensure its security and defense.

The statement also calls for restoration of the Nagorno-Karabakh officials' rights to participate in all related developments and processes as an internationally recognized side to the conflict.

It also urges to prepare alternative measures for international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh which should be put into effect in case the ongoing talks within the OSCE Minsk Group collapse.

## 22. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN RECEIVES BULGARIA'S' AMBASSADOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian received today Bulgaria's' ambassador to Armenia, Todor Staikov.

The government press office told Armenpress that the ambassador conveyed to Serzh Sarkisian a congratulatory message from Bulgaria's president Georgy Pyrvanov and an invitation to pay an official visit to Bulgaria.

Serzh Sarkisian underlined development of both traditional partnership relations with Bulgaria and cooperation within the frameworks of Armenia's European policy.

He assessed highly the level of political bilateral dialogue, saying also economic ties lag behind political contacts. The two sides underscored then swift establishment of a bilateral inter-governmental commission on economic cooperation.



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They also referred to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Azerbaijan's ongoing war rhetoric. According to the Armenian president, by joining the Council of Europe, Armenia and Azerbaijan committed to resolve all questions peacefully.

He also said the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have won their right to live free and independently and added that it is impossible to ignore the natural right of a people to strive for self-determination.

## 23. NORWAY STANDS FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Norway stands for peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Norway's foreign minister Jonas Gar Steren said in Baku.

"All conflicts in modern Europe must be resolved in a peaceful manner," he said during a news conference to sum up the results of his talks with Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mamedyarov.

"We recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and we help the OSCE Minsk Group to help both sides to find a peaceful solution," he said.

## 24. YOUTH PARTY OF ARMENIA TO DISPATCH GROUP TO USA TO ADVERTISE GOVERNMENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

A five-member team of Armenia's Youth Party will land in the USA soon for a series of meetings with representatives of American-Armenian organizations, including the influential American Assembly of America (AAA).

Chairman of the party, Vahan Babayan, told a news conference today that their mission will be to counter what he described as 'a very active campaign launched by groups supporting ex-president Levon Ter-Petrosian in the USA.'

He said Armenians living outside their homeland are concerned over the future of their country, but 'what happened after the presidential election was a well-designed and orchestrated scheme by external forces,' he said.

He said the party supported Serzh Sarkisian in the past election, adding also that the elected president still needs their support. He said his party along with other youth organizations will continue their propaganda to give a true picture of what is happening in Armenia.

According to him, Armenia is on the verge of a split. He also claimed there is no doubt who will benefit from it.

"Our party is resolute to continue its activity so that future generations have opportunity to build and advance their country," he said.

He said when in the USA they will tell American Armenians that those who chose to stay, saw hard times, but they are not going to leave Armenia.

## 25. ARMENIAN NA STARTED DISCUSSION OF GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Armenian National Assembly started today the discussion of the program of the Armenian government. Before starting the discussion the NA Speaker Tigran Torosian congratulated the newly formed government and expressed assurance that the cooperation between the Armenian government and National Assembly will be effective.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, presenting the 2008-2012 program of the government, noted that the new government, according to the Armenian Constitution, raises the question of its trust.

The prime minister noted that the program has been developed taking into consideration the National Security Strategy of Armenia and points of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and besides it includes the main points of the pre-electoral programs of the Armenian Republican party, Prosperous Armenia, Orinats Yerkir and ARF parties. The prime minister thanked the parliamentarians of the Heritage party for valuable suggestions.

He said the heads of parties forming coalition have many times stated in their programs and statements about the issues of the country – including unhealthy moral-psychological atmosphere, shadow economy, corruption, unequal competitive conditions, poverty etc. The political leaders raised the issues and the issue of the newly-formed government is to give acceptable solutions.

The prime minister presented the main basis on which the program has been formed. Which according to him are "first we need speed in this rapidly changing world, secondly – security, thirdly – society and economy based on knowledge, fourth preservation of spiritual and cultural values, fifth



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ensuring freedoms of a contemporary person. Our program is laid on the basis of mutual trust and respect," the prime minister said.

"We deeply believe that the only way of giving end to the gossip, offense is the hard work. The presented program must get the approval of not only coalition, National Assembly but also the people's. The way to it is to make each citizen a participant in the implementation of the program," T. Sargsian said.

Presenting the main priorities of the program, the prime minister said that for reaching them a new approach will be applied – implementation of all-national projects. "Thus we announce the beginning of 5 all-national projects: we must become "center of excellence" of business environment", educational center, organized rest center, financial center. Armenians spread around the world will have a full opportunity to participate in the implementation of the programs.

"Their involvement is an additional opportunity for displaying national, spiritual, cultural unity and consolidation. The joint potential of all Armenians will become our competitive privilege. The first step in that direction has already been made – we have set up a National Competitiveness Council with the participation of distinguished state and public figures," the prime minister said.

He also noted that the government greets the initiative of the National Assembly to consolidate the rights of the opposition which will create a field for effective cooperation.

## 26. PRESIDENT OF CREDIT AGRICOLE BANK CONGRATULATES TIGRAN SARGSIAN ON HIS APPOINTMENT [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

President of Credit Agricole Bank Rene Carron congratulated Tigran Sargsyan on his appointment as Prime Minister of Armenia. In his message he particularly wrote:

"With great pleasure, I learned of your appointment to the office of Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. In this connection, allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Credit Agricole Bank.

I had the occasion of meeting with you in May, 2004 in Yerevan in your capacity of head of the CBA during a meeting of the Central Committee of Credit Agricole's International Federation as presided over by me.

Subsequently, we had the pleasure of hosting a delegation led by you consisting of Armenian banks' representatives at the headquarters of Credit Agricole in Paris.

On several occasions, we have had the opportunity of appreciating your exacting professionalism and your ability of making open-minded comments on various issues. Armenia's Central Bank and the banking system recorded significant progress under your management as part of the overall development of your country. You are well aware of the role played by the Credit Agricole in the establishment and development of the ABCA (starting from 1993) at first through consultancy and training, then by means of trade and systemic partnership and, finally, in the form of a 28% strategic stake as endorsed by you in October, 2006.

I am extending to you my most sincere and friendly wishes for your country's development and the Armenian people's well-being.

It will be a great pleasure for me to meet with ACBA Director General Stepan Gishyan and you again in Paris or Yerevan to reaffirm the strengthening of our cooperation."

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President of the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan Marat Alapayev congratulated Tigran Sargsyan on his appointment as Prime Minister of Armenia. The congratulatory message particularly says:

"On behalf of the staff of the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan and myself, I congratulate you on your appointment to the post of RA Prime Minister.

Please accept my most sincere wishes for robust health, unfailing energy, peace, prosperity and success in your responsible work in favor of Armenia's development and progress.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express gratitude for your contribution to the strengthening of the fruitful ties of cooperation between our banks in the hope that they will be maintained in future."

## 27. A NUMBER OF PROGRAMS CARRIES OUT BY "MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE FOUNDATION ARMENIA" PRESENTED [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

The session of the board of stakeholders of the "Millennium Challenge" Foundation –Armenia" program took place today during which a number of programs carried out by the foundation and the ones which are in the process of implementation have been presented.

General executive director of "Millennium Challenge Foundation-Armenia" Ara Hovsepien particularly underscored the agreement signed in April of the running year with 2 banks and 2 credit organizations within the framework of which it is expected to provide long-term credits to Armenian



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farmers. The construction works of canals are in process in 4 villages. They have started in January of the running year and are expected to be finished until June.

## 28. GOAL OF UNION OF RUSSIAN ARMENIANS IS TO DEFEND ARMENIANS LIVING IN RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

“The charter goal and issue of the Union of Russian Armenians is to defend the Armenians living in Russia, support them in their jobs, social, cultural and legal affairs,” the deputy head of the union, director of its Armenian branch, deputy head of the World Armenian Congress Vladimir Aghayan said today at a press conference.

Today around 2.5 million Armenians are living in Russia. The goal of the Union of Russian Armenians is to unite them.

V. Aghayan said a situation has been created when in case of having any issues the Armenians living in Russia apply to the union or its branches and the latter on their turn support their compatriots.

## 29. PRIME MINISTER BRUSHES OFF MEDIA CLAIMS ABOUT DENYING OPPOSITION'S APPLICATION [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian denied Tuesday media reports claiming that the government turned down an application from ex-president Levon Ter-Petrosian's office requesting permission to hold a gathering of pro-Ter-Petrosian political groups and non-governmental organizations in the government's conventions hall, but later revised it.

Asked by journalists to comment on these rumors Tigran Sarkisian said the government received two applications requesting permissions to hold gatherings in the government conventions halls and none was rejected.

He added that there is information on the government's official website saying that the convention hall can be rented by any political party or civic organization on condition that they ensure security and no breach of law.

He said the two applications in question came from Levon Ter-Petrosian's office requesting permission to have a gathering in the conventions hall on April 30 and the second was from the Hanrapetutyun (Republic) party which was not denied either.

He said the second application requested for permission to hold a meeting on April 25, but the government could not allow it as on April 25 the hall hosted an exhibition and therefore, May 2 was suggested.

## 30. FOREIGN MINISTER OUTLINES FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Foreign minister Edward Nalbandian met Tuesday with representatives of the diplomatic corps in Yerevan to present in an extensive speech Armenia's foreign policy agenda, outlining also its priorities and approaches towards an array of urgent processes.

According to the foreign ministry, minister Nalbandian told foreign diplomats that Armenia will continue to boost relationships with friendly countries. He said Armenia will deepen its special strategic relations with Russia and will also step up efforts to deepen friendly and partnership relations with the USA.

He said European direction has become one of the major priorities of Armenian foreign policy. He also said Armenia will seek to strengthen relations with UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other influential international organizations.

He said Armenia appreciates its ties with neighbor countries, which are of friendly and partnership nature and is eager to normalize relations with those neighbors with which it has yet unresolved problems.

He said also seeking a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a major priority. He reconfirmed Armenia's commitment to continue talks within the frameworks of the OSCE Minsk Group.

He then reaffirmed Armenia's willingness for unconditional normalization of ties with Turkey.

He also emphasized the role of Armenian Diaspora in terms of enhancing relations with friendly nations.



## 31. HERITAGE LEADER SAYS DIALOGUE BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND OPPOSITION TO HAPPEN SOON [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Head of the Zharangutyun (Heritage) party, Raffi Hovhanesian, (it is the only opposition party in the parliament) , said today the public at large will witness soon a dialogue between the authorities and the opposition.

He argued that president Serzh Sarkisian and his major rival in the February 19 presidential election, ex-president Levon Ter-Petrosian, should meet and in all likelihood their meeting may happen soon.

He admitted that as a citizen of Armenia he had tried to mediate and bring both men who have serious disagreements and who in general bear political responsibility for election and post-election processes at a table.

He praised the president and prime minister for their calls 'to break the walls,' saying these statements may serve as a good starting point to turn words into deeds. Raffi Hovhanesian said he told the prime minister that his plan of actions would hardly materialize unless the national crisis is surmounted.

He said Heritage party will present soon its own plan of how to overcome the lingering tensions. He said also his party expects the government to implement a string of conditions listed by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) resolution on Armenia before its next session in summer.

"What is written on paper should be materialized and this is a window to new Armenia," he said, emphasizing an independent investigation into the March 1-2 events, release of people arrested because of their political views and overcoming the gap between authorities and opposition.

## 32. YOUNG ARMENIANS HAVE DIFFERING VIEWS ON RELATIONS WITH TURKEY [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

A TV commentator Menua Harutyunian said today Armenia should pursue 'a most mild policy' on Turkey in view of the fact that it is a neighbor country and will remain as such and because it is a powerful, developing country.

"Young Armenians can be demanding, sometimes they can voice extreme opinions, sometimes romantic opinions and sometimes they can burn Turkish flag, however the government policy is something different. The society is allowed much, while the government is not. It should have a clear-cut policy that will stem first of all from its and people's interests," he said.

"Turkey has changed, but Turks have not and at any moment Turkey may return to its past 'Turkishness. Our state interests demand that we have a more clear-cut policy with this quickly developing nation, especially in terms of recognition of the Armenian genocide. We have not defined in clear terms our claims to Turkey, there is a big divergence among Armenian political forces regarding this issue and if Turkey recognizes the genocide one political group will demand that it returns Armenian lands, the other will say it is not necessary. A united approach must be developed," he said.

'Although Armenia has not diplomatic relations with Turkey thousands of Armenian citizens can survive due to trade with Turkey and the latest developments there show that it can start warming up relations with Armenia," Menua Harutyunian said.

Unlike Menua Harutyunian, Ishkhan Saghatelian from the ARF-affiliated Nikol Aghbalian students union, disagreed with opinions that Turkey has changed. He said the genocide continues and cited the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, destruction of Armenian monuments in Turkey. He said members of the union will continue burning Turkish flag on different occasions as long as Turkey has not recognized the Armenian genocide.

He also said Turkey has been supporting for the last 20 years Azerbaijan and questioned arguments that Turkey is a democracy. He complained of absence of an in-depth study of the potential economic and political impacts of the open borders. He said Turkey must recognize the genocide, give back the biggest part of historical Armenian lands to the Republic of Armenia. He said recognition will be a guarantee that no genocide will ever happen in future.

Karen Karapetian from the Armenian National Movement said Armenia and Turkey must have normal relations, saying for this the authorities of both countries should negotiate.

He too recalled that thousands of Armenian citizens live and work in Turkey.



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## 33. PARLIAMENT APPROVES GOVERNMENT PROGRAM OF ACTIONS FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

By a vote of 88 to 3 the National Assembly approved today the government program of actions for 2008-2012. The program was voted against by the oppositional Zharangutyun (Heritage) party.

Parliament chairman Tigran Torosian said the National Assembly stands ready to support implementation of this 'very important program.'

Before voting took place Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian said his government will implement changes and will begin with government members.

'We shall expose our defects and we shall be keeping you informed on how we are going to carry out this program,' he said.

He thanked the parliament for interesting debates over the program and their suggestions and remarks many of which that were incorporated into it. He also thanked the opposition Heritage party for their 'moral support to the new government,' saying it is more obligative than frequent criticism.

The Heritage party had said earlier it would not vote for the program because it wants a program of actions that would enforce system changes, but said it would help the government correct its shortcomings.

The prime minister also thanked members of the political coalition for supporting the program.

'I am confident that soon our people will see that the government has come to implement sweeping reforms,' he concluded.

## 34. SENATOR OBAMA PLEDGES CONTINUED EFFORTS TO PRESS TURKEY TO ACKNOWLEDGE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

U.S. Democratic Presidential Candidate Sen. Barack Obama pledged to continue his efforts to press Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, in a strongly worded statement submitted yesterday to the Congressional Record marking the 93<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of this crime against humanity, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

The statement by the Senator, who has been endorsed in the Democratic primaries by the ANCA, was one of 30 remarks by Senators and Representatives. Speaker Nancy Pelosi offered remarks at the April 23rd Armenian Genocide observance on Capitol Hill.

"Armenian Americans value Senator Obama's consistent and principled leadership in pressuring Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and to end its shameful campaign to deny this crime against humanity," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. "He remains clearly the best positioned to bring about real change, real action, and real hope for an end to the cycle of genocide."

In a statement issued to the Armenian American community on January 19, 2008, Sen. Obama had noted "America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides. I intend to be that President."

## 35. SOME 150,000 MILLION CUBIC METERS OF WATER TO BE PUMPED OUT OF LAKE SEVAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Deputy agriculture minister Samvel Galstian said today late last year 103,000 hectares of land had been sowed with winter crops and 100,000 more hectares will be sowed with crops before late in June to lay the basis for this year's harvest.

He said land areas under cereals will increase by 7,000 hectares. According to his calculation, if nothing extraordinary happens, the country may gather about 480,000 tons of crops. He said to ensure high yield the government brings in high quality seeds and pesticides.

He said because of very high temperatures irrigation season began two weeks earlier than usual and overall some 150,000 million cubic meters of water will be pumped out of Lake Sevan for irrigation purposes.

## **BUSINESS**

## 36. AHARON CHILINGARIAN APPOINTED FIRST DEPUTY HEAD OF STS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

People expect changes to be made in tax administration sector too, and Armenia has no right to yield to regional countries in this sector's development, even though international organizations noted that



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tax administration is not so good in the country, the Armenian prime minister Tigran Sargsian stated on April 28 when introducing the first deputy head of the RA State Tax Service (STS) Aharon Chilingarian to the STS staff.

Describing A. Chilingarian as an honest and decent person, the prime minister said that he is also one of the best experts in this sphere.

In the State Tax Service, A. Chilingarian will coordinate the program of reforms in tax administration. Prior to this appointment, he worked at Aharon Paradigma consulting company.

## 37. TAXES OF 75 BILLION DRAMS COLLECTED IN FIRST QUARTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

Taxes of 75 bln drams (about 241 mln USD) were collected by employees of the RA State Tax Service (STS) in the first quarter of 2008, which exceeds by 31% the index of the same period of last year. The deputy head of the STS Robert Kocharian told reporters on April 28 that social payments collection made 21.1 bln drams in the indicated period - against 18.7 bln drams in the first quarter of 2007.

## 38. 4 EMPLOYEES OF STATE TAX SERVICE DISMISSED FROM JOBS IN FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

91 court decisions were made based on suits filed to courts by the RA State Tax Service (STS) in 2007 and in 1st quarter of 2008. The STS deputy head Artur Osikian told reporters on April 28 that in first quarter of 2008, 190 suits on confiscation and bankruptcy were filed to courts by the STS, with 227 mln drams (about 732 thousand USD) being transferred to the state budget. Tax bodies conducted 2,535 checks, 8.7 bln drams as fines was transferred to the state budget in the indicated period.

In the words of A. Osikian, 4,209 violations were revealed in the first quarter of this year; as a result of the fines imposed, 58.9 mln drams was transferred to the state budget. Besides, 34 criminal cases were opened, mostly based on facts of tax evasion, by the STS investigation unit, which exceeds more than 3fold last year's index.

Another deputy head of the STS Kajavan Nurijanian added that 14 internal investigations were conducted in the first quarter of 2008. As a result, 36 employees of the STS received verbal reprimands, 44 employees received written reprimands, 23 were subjected to material liability and 4 employees were dismissed from their jobs.

## 39. ARMENIA HAS 31 LICENSED AUDITING COMPANIES [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

At the end of March there were 31 licensed auditing companies and 4 individual auditors, according to Armenian finance ministry.

The ministry's press division said the latest company that was granted a license was the PricewaterhouseCooper firm, which is one of the biggest and influential auditing firms in the world.

Armenia was the 150-th country in which it opened its office. The ministry said locally-registered auditing companies are carrying out reforms now to make Armenian standards to comply with internationally accepted ones.

## 40. VTB-ARMENIA BECOMES 4-th LEADING BANK IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Valery Ovsyanikov, the CEO of the Russia-owned VTB-Armenia bank, convened today his first news conference in Yerevan to present what the bank did last year and what kind of plans it has for future.

He said at the end of last year the VTB-Armenia's aggregate assets were worth 84.8 billion Drams, posting a 23 percent rise over the previous year. Its credit portfolio rose last year 12 percent to 45 billion Drams and overall liabilities rose 13 percent to 63,5 billion Drams.

He said by these indices VTB-Armenia was the 4-th biggest bank in Armenia.

Valery Ovsyanikov described last year as 'a breakthrough' with a significant rise in mortgage credits. He said the bank's tactics is to move faster than the country's overall economy advances. He said the goal is to reinforce position of one of the leading banks.

He said due to increasing demand for mortgaged credits the VTB-Armenia has revised the interest rate to lower it to 12 percent and extend the repayment period up to 20 years.



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## 41. 2nd FORUM ON ARMENIAN TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS AND 1st TOURISM CAREER FAIR TO BE HELD IN EARLY MAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The second forum on Armenian tourism competitiveness is scheduled for May 6, and the 2008 Tourism Career Fair will be held on May 7 in Yerevan, NT correspondent was informed by Armine Israelian, coordinator of the tourism cluster the USAID-financed Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) program.

According to her, the forum participants - heads and experts of tourism companies, state bodies and assistance-providing foreign organizations will present last year's achievements of the tourism sector and speak about future programs.

A tourism career fair will be held for the first time. During the event, students of five Armenian higher educational institutions, which prepare specialists for the tourism sector, will present their capabilities to the tourist companies, providing them with an opportunity to find qualified employees.

Discussing the issue of specialist preparation for the sector, CAPS travel marketing and communication advisor Nadia Pasqual said that although newly established, these institutions work hard but they lack teaching staff and literature. According to her information, Armenian tour operators are not quite willing to create an opportunity for students to do practical work. She explained it by the fact that not having received tourism education, the heads of tour operating companies avoid giving jobs to those with such education. "Whereas, practical skills are no less important than theoretical knowledge," she said.

## 42. ARG TO BUY BACK 4 UNITS OF HRAZDAN POWER PLANT [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

The joint Russian-Armenian ArmRosGazprom (ARG) natural gas operator said it wants to buy back four units of Hrazdan thermal power plant that were handed to Russia as part of a deal known as "Assets for Debt," whereby Armenia handed to Russia several enterprises in return for its \$100 million debt.

Shushan Sardarian, a spokeswoman for the ARG, told Armenpress that ARG plans to unite these four operating units with the fifth one which is under construction to form a single power generation facility to produce as much electricity as to sell part to neighboring countries.

She said the deal is very likely to be cut within this year.

Shushan Sardarian said apart from \$250 million necessary to accomplish the construction of the fifth unit of the Hrazdan power plant, extra \$170 million will be needed to build a state-of-the-art power plant with a 440 megawatt capacity operating on gas turbines.

She said the Hrazdan power plant will be part of the ARG's charter capital, but as an independent economic entity.

She said construction of the fifth unit is supposed to be over in 2010. She said also a tender was announced to choose a contractor whose name will be known in May.

## 43. ARMENIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY RECOVERING FROM MARCH 1 UNREST [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Mekhak Apresian, head of an economy ministry's tourism department, told Armenpress that the country's tourism industry is recovering from a setback it suffered in the aftermath of the March 1-2 unrest in Yerevan, when the number of foreigners wishing to visit Armenia declined drastically.

Mekhak Apresian cited 'approximate' calculations and data from travel agencies to ground his statement.

He said foreigners are again visiting Armenia, which according to him is due to signs of stability.

He said also ad trails presenting Armenia as a winter tourism destination were sent to CNN and EuroNews TV channels and will be broadcast beginning from next week.

## 44. BITUMEN PLANT IN SURENAVAN TO BE RESTORED [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Several Armenian and foreign companies have invested \$10 million to restore a bitumen plant in the village of Surenavan in Ararat province.

Nelly Voskanian, the chief manager of Abit company, told Armenpress the plant will process the raw material brought from Russian Volgodonsk. She said it will hire 120 local residents to do the job.



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She said the plant will have modern equipment and will be the only one in its kind in the South Caucasus. It will have a capacity to produce 44,000 tons of batmen annually. The plant will be ready to work by the end of the year.

The village of Surenavan, 15 km off the town of Ararat, has 3000 residents who are engaged largely in agricultural production.

## DIASPORA

### 45. ARMENIAN YOUTH OF KRASNODAR HOLDS TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION IN MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

Events dedicated to the memory day of victims of Armenian Genocide committed in Turkey in 1915-1923 were held in Krasnodar on April 23-24. As the Yerkramas newspaper reported, on April 23, the youth held a torchlight procession to the crossstone of victims of Armenian Genocide placed in the yard of the town's Armenian church. More than hundreds of young people with torches and flags honored the memory of their compatriots, who had died in the years of the Genocide. The April 23 events were concluded by a rally of representatives of the youth and students.

On April 24, after a memorial divine service and laying mourning flowers to the crossstone, a rally of representatives of Armenian organizations of Krasnodar took place. Guests also spoke. Sergei Madatian, the ataman of the International Armenian Cossack Union, was also among them. All speakers condemned the policy of non-recognition of the Armenian Genocide by modern Turkey and called the international community and Armenians in the whole world for continuing struggle for restoration of historic justice to the Armenian people.

Tigran Tavadian, a representative of the Russian-Armenian Cooperation organization, the editor-in-chief of the Yerkramas newspaper, read the address of Armenian organizations of Kuban to the deputies of the Legislative Assembly of Krasnodar territory, which asked the legislators to express their attitude to the fact of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey through adoption of the respective Resolution on recognizing April 24 day of memory of victims of Armenian Genocide committed in Turkey in 1915-1922.

The organizers of the events held in Krasnodar were: the Krasnodar territorial representation of the Russian-Armenian Cooperation organization, the Khachkar Krasnodar town cultural-educational center, and the Krasnodar town branch of the Union of Armenians in Russia.

### 46. LEBANESE ARMENIAN PUPILS HONOR MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

On April 23, pupils of Armenian national colleges of Lebanon were present at the requiem ceremony held on the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide in the Catholicosate. Nearly 1900 pupils paid the tribute of their respect to the memory of the victims of Armenian Genocide and laid flowers in front of the Mayravank Martyrs Chapel.

### 47. EVENT DEDICATED TO GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY HELD IN HAYKAZIAN UNIVERSITY OF LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

An event dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide took place on April 23 at Haykazian University. University Director Paul Haytosian, lecturers, students, and guests took part in the event. After the art program Katya Peltekian presented fragments from articles on Armenian Cause published in Armenian press before and after World War I.

### 48. EVENT IN MEMORY OF GENOCIDE VICTIMS TAKES PLACE IN ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

An event in memory of victims of Armenian Genocide took place in the evening of April 23 in the yard of Lebanon's Armenian Catholic Patriarchate. A great number of believers and Armenians took part in the event.

After the ceremony of lighting candles those present watched documentary video materials on Armenian people's history and Armenian Genocide. Publications in press about the Genocide were also presented.



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## 49. LEBANESE ARMENIAN STUDENTS MEET WITH ARA PAPIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

A meeting between Ara Papian, the former Ambassador of Armenia to Canada, and Lebanese Armenian students took place on April 23 in the Gyulbenkian hall of Cilicia museum of Catholicosate of the Great Cilician House. The territorial request of the Armenians and the Treaty of Sevres were spoken about during the meeting, in particular.

An opinion was voiced in one of the speeches, according to which the lands under the rule of Turkey belong to our ancestors and to Armenia and returning them is a historic right for us.

The meeting was organized by the Armenian club of Beirut's Lebanese American University jointly with the Armenian clubs of Lebanon's all universities.

## 50. LECTURE ON SUBJECT OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS OF LEBANESE ARMENIANS TO BE GIVEN AT HAYKAZIAN UNIVERSITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

An event on the subject "Language challenges of the Armenian diaspora of Lebanon: conclusions on resolution of still denied crime" will take place on April 30 in the hall of Lebanon's Haykazian University. According to information provided by the Lebanese Armenian community, doctor Arda Jebejian will give a lecture.

## 51. ARAM HAMBARIAN: BUSH COMPLETES EIGHT-YEAR TERM OF BREAKING HIS WORD TO RECOGNIZE GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

At the end of the term of his tenure U.S. President George Bush again used avoiding and mitigating words to conceal the whole moral, historic, and current legal sense of the Genocide committed by Turkey against Armenians in 1915-1923, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) reported. Therefore, as ANCA Executive Director Aram Hambarian mentioned, President Bush completed the eight-year term of breaking his preelection word to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide.

"The President not only broke his word to recognize the Armenian Genocide, but also used the whole power of White House to hamper Congress to undertake the step he had promised to fulfill when being a candidate for presidency. He not only dismissed the U.S. Ambassador, who dared to fulfill the promise his President had not fulfilled, by speaking the truth about that crime, but also nominated a person denying the Genocide to his post. He not only carried on patient anti-Armenian policy during his two terms, but also in spite of his talks about Armenian causes during his numerous meetings with foreign officials, never discussed these issues with the leadership of the Armenian community of America," A. Hambarian said.

## 52. IRANIAN AUTHORITIES THIS YEAR ALSO DO NOT PERMIT ARMENIANS TO ORGANIZE PROCESSION TO TURKISH EMBASSY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

A holy liturgy was served on April 24 in the Saint Sargis Church in the capital city of Iran, Tehran. At the end of the liturgy representatives of the local Armenian community laid flowers to the memorial of victims of Armenian Genocide of 1915 in the church yard.

As the Zaman daily reports, this year, either, representatives of Iranian Armenian community were not permitted to organize a procession towards the Embassy of Turkey in Iran.

It should be mentioned that on April 24, 2007 the Iranian Armenian community was not allowed to organize a procession, either.

## 53. PROCESSION ON OCCASION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY HELD IN HOLLYWOOD [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

A procession on the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide was held on April 24 in Hollywood.

According to the statement of Los Angeles Police, no extraordinary incident was recorded during the procession with the participation of many thousands of people.

According to some information, the procession was organized on the initiative of the ARFD youth branch.



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## 54. AMERICAN-BASED ARMENIANS ORGANIZE ACTION OF PROTEST IN FRONT OF EMBASSY OF TURKEY ON OCCASION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

On the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide American-based Armenians organized an action of protest in front of the Embassy of Turkey in Washington.

As the Anadolu agency reported, at the same time, not far from Armenians, American-based Turks also organized an action of protest with Turkey's flag and different placards.

Reporting that it is the first time American-based Turks are organizing such a large action of protest, the agency in no way mentioned the approximate number of Turks taking part in the action.

It was also mentioned that Nabi Shensoy, the Ambassador of Turkey to Washington, thanked Turk demonstrators for the "efforts they exerted."

## 55. ACTION OF PROTEST WITH PARTICIPATION OF MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ORGANIZED IN PARIS ON OCCASION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

An action of protest with the participation of many thousands of people, dedicated to the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide, was organized in Paris, near the monument to Komitas.

The French politicians and representatives of French Armenian community taking part in the action of protest criticized Turkey for its negation position adopted in the issue of Armenian Genocide.

The Zaman Turkish daily mentioned that one of the representatives of Masonic lodge of France participating in the action of protest stated that "members of Masonic lodge should exert efforts for the law criminalizing denial of Armenian Genocide adopted by the French National Assembly to be adopted by the Senate, as well."

The demonstrators organized a procession from the territory near the monument to Komitas.

## 56. TURKISH ORGANIZATION DECIDES TO STRUGGLE AGAINST FACT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE WITH ELECTRONIC LETTERS AND DISKS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The Union of Struggle Against Ungrounded Assertions of Genocide has made a decision to struggle against the fact of the Armenian Genocide with electronic letters and disks. As the Cihan agency reported, Union Chairman Savash Egilmez stated this.

"Every year Armenians mark April 24 as a commemoration day of the Armenian Genocide victims and wish that day to be accepted by the whole world. And we together with university representatives have decided to send 5 thousand disks and 50 thousand electronic letters made in the French, English, Russian, and German languages to presidents, parliamentarians, NGOs, media of a number of states of the world, in which we, refuting the Armenian lies, present reality," Savash Egilmez stated.

## 57. ARMENIANS ORGANIZE ACTION OF PROTEST IN FRONT OF EMBASSY OF TURKEY IN LONDON ON OCCASION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

On the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of Armenian Genocide, a group of Armenians organized an action of protest in front of the Embassy of Turkey in London.

As the Cihan agency reported, at that moment a group of Turks with Turkey's flag in their hands approached the Embassy. The Police interfered at that moment and in order to avoid incidents took Turks away from Embassy's territory.

It was also mentioned that London-based Armenians intended to organize a procession on Sunday.

## 58. YUSUF HALACHOGLU: HRANT DINK'S MURDER WAS A STRONG BLOW [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The murder of Agos weekly's editor-in-chief Hrant Dink was a strong blow. Doctor, professor Yusuf Halachoglu, the Chairman of the Turkish Historic Association, stated in his interview to the Hurriyet daily.

Mentioning that "Hrant's murder became the strongest blow for the solution of the Armenian cause," the Turkish professor said: "If Hrant Dink were alive, I would be able to carry out the most efficient dialogue. He was a personality, with whom I would be able to work. I did not share Hrant Dink's all ideas, but in the recent period some of his assertions coincided with our assertions."



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"I had an idea, to invite Hrant Dink to the Historic Association for organizing a conference. However, I was not fated to do it," Halachoglu said adding: "Unfortunately, the most important person, with whom we could carry out a dialogue, was killed."

## 59. REGULAR COURT HEARING ON CASE OF HRANT DINK'S MURDER TO TAKE PLACE TODAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

A regular court hearing on the case of murder of Agos weekly's editor-in-chief Hrant Dink will take place on April 28 at the court of Istanbul.

As Turkish media report, policemen are implementing emergency security measures near the court.

## 60. ARMENIANS ORGANIZE ACTION OF PROTEST IN FRONT OF CONSULATE OF TURKEY IN BERLIN ON OCCASION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

On the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, representatives of the Armenian community organized an action of protest in front of the Consulate General of Turkey in Berlin.

According to the Cihan agency, during the action the demonstrators carried placards with content of condemnation of the crime committed in 1915 by Turks. The action participants also accused Azerbaijan for hatred for the Armenian nation. The demonstrators grounded their accusations by the fact that Azerbaijan periodically organizes discussions on the subject of the so-called "Khojalu genocide."

## 61. MIGRATION FROM ARMENIA TO RUSSIA: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CONVENES IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Eurasia Partnership Foundation, together with the Armenian organization Zinvori Mair (mother of Soldier) convened today a two-day international conference entitled Migration from Armenia to Russia: the Role of Civil Society, Networks, and Dialogue with Government.

The conference is attended by a number of experts on migration issues from state and non-governmental entities and businesses from Armenia and Russia.

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielian, Eurasia Partnership Foundation head, said in his opening speech that the goals of the conference are to increase public awareness about Russian and Armenian migration policies, to present the experience of government and non-government entities in addressing issues and solving problems related to migration, and to forge stronger ties between government and non-governmental organizations in Russia and Armenia in their efforts to decrease irregular migration.

"Armenia's major export are its citizens, their labor and brains. We want this export to turn from a problem into a useful strategic factor," he said.

Massive out emigration from Armenia began in 1988, prompted by the war with Azerbaijan and the destructive earthquake. According to Gagik Yeghanyan, head of a government affiliated department on migration and refugees, overall 1.2 million people, or every third citizen, left Armenia in 1988-1995. The majority, over 75 percent, headed for Russia, sixty percent were males aged 20-44.

At the conference, the findings of new research on migration trends in Armenian communities, conducted in 2007-2008 by Eurasia Partnership Foundation, will be presented for the first time.

A resolution on migration policy, including issues such as bilateral cooperation and diplomacy, special assistance programs for migrants and their families, and reintegration of migrants, will be developed by participants of the conference.

The conference is part of Eurasia Partnership Foundation's labor migration program, which provides information to migrants and potential migrants through NGO-based service centers, which also aid in migrants' return and reintegration.

## 62. ARMENIAN EMBASSY IN GEORGIA HOLDS A NUMBER OF EVENTS IN MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The Armenian embassy in Georgia held a number of events in memory of the Armenian Genocide victims on April 19-24. Among the events' organizers were also the Georgian diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Cooperation Center of Georgia, Georgian mass media reported.

The international conference "The 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide. A Look From Tbilisi, Istanbul and Yerevan" took place at Tbilisi's French Cultural Center after A. Dumas on April 19.



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An exhibition based on the novel "The 40 days of Musa Dagh" by Franz Werfel was held at the Cinema House of Tbilisi on April 23, after which the documentary "The Genocide without Comments" of filmmaker Karen Gevorgian was demonstrated.

Tree planting was organized at Khajivank's Armenian Cultural and Public Figures Pantheon on April 24.

Divine services in memory of the victims of the 1915 tragic events were held in Surb Gevorg Temple and other churches of the Georgian diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Thematic photo exhibition and demonstration of Canadian Armenian film maker Araz Artinian's film "The Genocide in Me" took place at Young People's Theatre of Tbilisi.

The remembrance events finished on Thursday by the play "Attractive Silence" staged by Garnik Seyranin at Tbilisi's State Armenian Dramatic Theatre after P. Adamian. The Armenian ambassador to Georgia Hrach Silvanian made a speech before the performance.

The Genocide victims remembrance events were also held in Georgian regions populated by Armenians on April 24.

## 63. MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS HONORED IN U.S. CONGRESS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated in the U.S. Congress on April 23. This traditional ceremony was organized under the patronage of the pro-Armenian group of the Congress, the Armenian embassy and American Armenian organizations. The level of Congressmen's participation in the remembrance event was unprecedented: speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, majority leader of the House, Congressman Sten Hoyer, co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Joe Knollenberg and Frank Pallone, tens of members of the Congress and the Senate attended the ceremony and made speeches. Congress employees, heads of American Armenian religious, political and community organizations, members of the Armenian community, friends of the Armenian nation were present at the ceremony. The keynote speaker was Prof. Gregory Stenton, chairman of the International Union of Genocide Experts. He gave a report on significance of the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

According to the RA MFA Press and Information Department, in her speech Nancy Pelosi attached importance to the Genocide's recognition by the U.S, expressing confidence that it will happen without fail. She and Congressman Hoyer assured those present that they will continue struggle for adoption of a resolution on recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

In his speech the Armenian ambassador to the U.S. Tatul Margarian addressed the resolution on the Armenian Genocide adopted by the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee in October 2007. He underlined its importance and the fact that during unprecedented discussions the committee members recognized the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide. The ambassador pointed out the Armenian president Serge Sargsian's statement that the international recognition of the Genocide will continue to have a special place in Armenia's foreign policy, which affirms the inflexibility and consistency of Armenian statehood in this issue of importance to the Armenians.

A traditional wreath-laying ceremony on behalf of Washington-based Armenian organizations and persons took place at the khachkar at the Armenian embassy on April 24. The heads of Surb Astvatsatsin and Surb Khach Armenian churches in Washington celebrated a service for the peace of the souls of the Armenian Genocide victims. Those present observed one minute's silence in remembrance of the Genocide victims. The Armenian ambassador stated in his speech the unity of all the Armenians around Armenian statehood is the best guarantee that all national goals of Armenia: building a powerful and prosperous homeland, stipulation of Artsakh's independence and international recognition of the Armenian Genocide - will be fulfilled.

## 64. VANDALS DESECRATE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE KHACHKAR IN BUDAPEST [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The Khachkar dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims in Budapest was desecrated by the unknown a few hours before the ceremonies of the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The memorial was erected in Budapest in 2000. It's the first time that such an act of vandalism is perpetrated against the symbolic Armenian monument.



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## 65. ARMENIANS AND JEWS MARKED GENOCIDE 93RD ANNIVERSARY IN YEKATERINBURG [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

On April 24, the Armenian community of Yekaterinburg, held a rally on occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey. Member of the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the co-chair of the Council of Tolerance, Mikhail Oshtrakh was among the speakers at the event. He said the Armenian and Jewish people suffered similar ordeals.

## 66. FILMS OF TWO ARMENIAN PRODUCERS TO TAKE PART IN FESTIVAL DE CANNES [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

Atom Egoyan's new film, Adoration, was named one of the 19 finalists that will be in competition next month for the prestigious Palme d'Or Award at the 61st annual Festival de Cannes. The film's inclusion in Official Selection marks the sixth time that a feature film from the director's work has made the cut. As media report, the GATA documentary film of Armenian producer Diana Mkrtychian living in Russia will also be in competition for the festival.

## 67. AMERICAN ARMENIANS TO MEET WITH JOHN DANILOVICH [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

On the initiative of Congressman Adam Schiff, Armenian community representatives will have the opportunity to meet with Ambassador John Danilovich, the CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, on May 1 to discuss the work of the corporation in Armenia. The event will take place at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles.

## 68. "ARMENIANS IN EGYPT: CONTRIBUTION OF ARMENIANS TO MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EGYPT" BOOK TO BE PRESENTED IN CHICAGO [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The presentation of Sona Zeitlian's book "Armenians in Egypt: Contribution of Armenians to Medieval and Modern Egypt" will be presented in Armenian General Benevolent Union Onnig Norhad Center in Chicago on May 3. The event has been organized by Chicago's only Armenian language newspaper under the patronage of Dr. Nancy Topouzian.

Sona Zeitlian will deliver a lecture in English about the social, economic and political context that allowed Armenians to play an important role in both medieval and modern Egypt.

## 69. AUTHOR GEORGE BOURNOUTIAN TO DELIVER LECTURE ON "TIGRAN THE GREAT" BOOK IN BELMONT [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

George Bournoutian will give a lecture about his most recent work "Tigranes II and Rome" on May 5. The book has been translated to English from the original Armenian text by historian Hakob H. Manandyan. The book is regarded as the first serious attempt to examine the 1st century B.C. Armenian monarch, Tigran the Great, without appealing to patriotic sentiments and with a grounding in Greek and Roman sources.

## 70. AMBASSADOR ASHOT HOVAKIMIAN DELIVERS LECTURE IN VIENNA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

At the invitation of the Vienna International University Ambassador of Armenia to Austria Ashot Hovakimian delivered a lecture titled "Armenia at a crossroad" on April 22 for students and professorial staff.

The Ambassador touched upon the historic past of Armenia stressing the circumstances of being a geographical, cultural crossroad and the influence and consequences they left on the country and the people. He mentioned that those factors are still of great vitality for the current Armenia and the factor of a geopolitical crossroad has been added after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Armenia.

The Ambassador introduced the total picture of the foreign policy priorities, the economic development of the Republic of Armenia, the regulation process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the Armenian-Turkish relations and the regional situation. The interpolitical situation in Armenia after the presidential elections was briefly introduced.



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According to the information provided by the Press and Information Department of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after the end of the lecture, Ambassador Hovakimian answered the questions of those present. Representatives of the Austrian Armenian community were also present at the lecture.

## 71. ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF POLAND HOLDS PROCESSION IN MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

On April 24, the Armenian community of Poland held a silence procession dedicated to the memory of Armenian Genocide victims. The peaceful procession started from the Blessed Virgin church and finished near the Embassy of Turkey with an action of protest. The demonstrators carried flags, placards, and candles.

## 72. ESTER DAVTIAN'S NEW COLLECTION TO BE PRESENTED IN GLENDALE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

A regular literary meeting of the Union of Armenians Writers of California will take place on May 1 in the hall of Glendale Public Library. The third newly published collection of poetess Ester Davtian, "To Live Like a Tree," will be discussed. The author will read her works. Professor Oshin Keshishian will present a literary report, then an exchange of opinions will take place.

## 73. ACTION OF PROTEST ORGANIZED BY AMERICAN-BASED TURKS AGAINST FACT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE FAILS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The action of protest organized by American-based Turks in New York failed because of indifference shown by the local Turks to the action.

As Turkish press reported, several dozens of Turks participated in the action organized under the aegis of the Federation of Turkish-American Unions, on the initiative of the Young Turks Union in Times Square under the title Struggle Against Lies of Armenian Genocide. The total number of action participants did not exceed 100.

Abdullah Bezirgan, the Chairman of the Young Turks Union, explained their failure by the lack of the Armenian bill on their agenda. "We exerted every effort. However, there was no Armenian bill on the agenda this year, therefore the Turks passively participated in the action. I supposed it would be just this way," Bezirgan stated.

## 74. ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MUSEUMS OF ARMENIA AND AMERICA SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The Museum of Armenian Genocide of America and Yerevan's Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide have signed a cooperation agreement in Yerevan. This information was provided by the Museum of Armenian Genocide of America.

The agreement was signed between Hayk Demoyan, the Director of Yerevan's Museum-Institute of Armenian Genocide, Hrayr Hovnanian, the Chairman of Board of Trustees of the Museum of Armenian Genocide of America, and Van Z. Grigorian, museum's trustee, the Chairman of the Commission of Construction and Work. The agreement envisages permanent cooperation, which will give a possibility to the two museums to coordinate their programs and to exchange experience.

## ARTS

## 75. ARMENIAN PUPPET THEATER TO PERFORM IN PRAGUE [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

The Yerevan Puppet Theater, named after Hovhannes Tumanian, will perform for an international puppet festival to be held in Prague, the Czech Republic, on June 2-9.

Ruben Babayan, the director of the Armenian puppet theater, told Armenpress that the theater will perform in Prague a play called Ak-Ak. He said the festival's organizers chose 23 plays, including the one of their theater, out of 250 applications.

He said the theater will tour this year also in Russia's Moscow and Yekaterinburg and in Egypt.



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## 76. CAVENDISH UNIVERSE OPENS BRANCH IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

John Sanders, head of the British Cavendish University that opened a branch in Armenia, said today the branch will work to prepare specialists meeting high international standards.

He said the University has branches in ten countries, including Iran, India, Sri Lanka and some African countries.

The Armenian branch opened in 2007, but was accredited this year by the education and science ministry and will enroll the first students wishing to major in business management offering bachelor and master's degrees.

Some of the subjects will be taught in English, others in Armenian by both local and invited professors.

The University offers also short-term training courses for people wishing to improve their knowledge of English and accountancy.

Tuition fee is rather high on Armenian scales varying between \$1000 to \$2,400 a year.

## 77. ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF BRITISH FILMS KICKS OFF IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

The annual festival of British films kicked off in Yerevan. The director of the Armenian office of "British Council" Arevik Saribekian said that it is already the 7<sup>th</sup> year since the organization is holding the festival in Armenia. This year as well the Armenian audience will be presented the films which received number of awards in Great Britain and Europe.

"Again we offer you to travel through Great Britain starting from 15<sup>th</sup> century, living happy and romantic moments with the heroes of the films," A. Saribekian said.

The festival of British films is called to present British culture and art, livelihood and traditions, spread English through films which will particularly interest those who are majoring in English.

According to the tradition the money received from the film-showing will be directed for charity reasons, particularly will be given to an organization dealing with children's issues. Within the framework of the festival cartoon will be shown for children of orphanages on May 2.

The festival will be also held in Gyumri from May 6-11. The tickets there are free of charge.

## 78. YOUNG ARMENIAN WRITERS TO GATHER IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

The four-day 6-th gathering of young Armenian writers will kick off in Nagorno-Karabakh on May 4. Chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, Levon Ananian, told today that the main goal of the gathering is to promote and encourage young writers and give them an opportunity to meet each other and unfold discussions on their works.

The gathering will start in the town of Shushi and then move to the capital city Stepanakert. Concurrently with this event the Union of Nagorno-Karabakh Writers will organize an event dedicated to the Armenian writer Muratsan.

Participants of the gathering will meet with professors and students of Artsakh University and an anthology of works by young Armenian writers will be presented.

The event will be concluded by a prize awarding ceremony to students, winners of a special competition announced by the Union of Armenian Writers.

## 79. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CENTER OPENS FOR REMOTE VILLAGE [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

Narek educational and cultural center was inaugurated today in the village of Sepasar in Ashotsk region of the northwestern province of Shirak. The center is the initiative of the Armenian Caritas charity organization.

The new center is part of Narek program funded by a German Renowabia organization. It is implemented by the Armenian Catholic Church.

The center will offer computer, dancing, sewing and other classes. The rural kindergarten was reopened as part of this program. It did not work for the last 20 years. The Armenian Caritas provided it with furniture, toys and other necessities.



## SOCIAL

### 80. ACCORDING TO SERGE SARGSIAN, MEANS DIRECTED AT SCIENCE TO ALWAYS BE INCREASED [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

To have a low quality of education in the 21st century means to have a low living standard. This statement was made by Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, at the annual general meeting of the RA National Academy of Sciences, which was held on April 25.

He mentioned that in 2007 the government endorsed the complex program of the reforms of the sphere of science and a State Committee of Science was formed. "We expect that the strengthening of this link of the state government is to have a considerable result in terms of a more productive settlement of the problems of the sphere of science," Serge Sargsian said.

In response to the speeches of scientists, according to which the sums allocated for science have been decreased, the President mentioned that in 2008 the budget financing of science has increased by 18 percent. In addition to this, the size of the additional payments given for degrees has been doubled and the financing fund of subject studies has increased by 50 percent.

The President is sure that both the hard social-economic state of scientists and the lack of a proper attention of the state have played a role in the fall of the scientific specialties and ratings. However, in the opinion of Serge Sargsian, the careless attitude of certain unconscientious scientists towards their work has also played its great role. "For example, the significance of academic ranks has seriously been endangered, the number of scientific councils has increased turning out numerous candidates of science, who do not correspond to the demands for that degree at all," he mentioned.

In the conviction of Serge Sargsian, the problems existing in the sphere should, first of all, be settled with the help of scientists: "It is easy to always criticize the authorities, but one should also support. Offer a solution, display a civil posture, we are ready to add the allocated means," Serge Sargsian said. The President mentioned at the same time that they should be sure that the allocated means are used productively.

### 81. YARD SPORTS FESTIVAL TO BE ORGANIZED THIS YEAR AS WELL ON INITIATIVE OF YEREVAN MAYOR'S OFFICE [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

A contest-festival of Yerevan's music and art schools is held for already the second year on the initiative of Yerevan Mayor's Office. This year it started on April 20 and will finish on June 14, with a concert to be held in Aram Khachatrian concert hall. As Kamo Movsisian, the Head of the Youth, Culture, and Sport Department of Mayor's Office, said at the April 28 press conference, festival's goal is not only to raise quality of music schools, but also to draw children's attention to national instruments. It was also mentioned that the best ten of music and art schools will be chosen in the contest and the winning schools will be given prizes.

According to K. Movsisian, a yard sports festival and The Best Sport Family event will be organized this year as well on the initiative of the Mayor's Office. In his words, the first yard sports festival was held in 2007, in which 2000 children from different communities of Yerevan took part. The festival includes a number of kinds of sport: football, volleyball, basketball, handball. It was mentioned that both cultural and sports events will involve disabled children as well.

K. Movsisian also said that like every year this year also Yerevan Mayor's Office will organize a concert dedicated to the Last Bell event for comprehensive school leavers in Liberty Square.

### 82. ENCOURAGEMENT OF COOPERATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS WILL PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE, ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

It is time for the RA National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to address the problem of introducing the internationally recognized systems of qualification and objective assessment of scientists, the Armenian president Serge Sargsian stated at the April 25 annual meeting of the RA NAS.

Besides, in his opinion, it is necessary to contribute to the integration of science and education, which also requires more active work with higher educational institutions. According to S. Sargsian, one of the government tasks is to promote cooperation of the public and private sectors. He expressed confidence that it is the most important direction of science development as well. He indicated commercialization of scientific product and offering it both in domestic and international markets as another important task. "Unless clear and tangible steps are taken in this direction, the link between



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science and production will be finally broken, and our scientific world will shrink into itself and inevitably lose its attractiveness," the president said.

## 83. 2790th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION OF YEREVAN TO BE CELEBRATED WITH GREAT SOLEMNITY IN OCTOBER [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

The municipality of Yerevan will celebrate the 2790th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan with a great solemnity this year. As Kamo Movsisian, the Head of the Department of Youth Culture and Sports of the municipality of Yerevan, stated at the press conference held on April 28, the events envisaged within the frameworks of the "Erebuni-Yerevan" celebration will be held in October.

According to him, the discussion of the presented scenarios is currently underway. In the words of Kamo Movsisian, the preparatory-organization work of the events will probably start in two months. "As we are celebrating the 2790th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan this year, we should so that the events of this year differ from the previous ones," Kamo Movsisian said.

It was also mentioned that delegations from different countries of the world will arrive in Yerevan for the purpose of taking part in the celebration.

## 84. 100-200 MILLION DOLLARS NEEDED TO RESTORE EXPERIMENTAL BASIS OF RA NAS [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/28/08]

Scientific developments of 70 themes with basic financing and 228 themes with thematic financing continues at 27 institutions and 4 newly-created scientific centers of the RA National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 2007, the president of the NAS Radik Martirosian stated at the April 25 annual meeting of the Academy, when summarizing and positively assessing the results of the 2007 scientific activities.

According to him, as of January 1, 2008, the RA NAS had 72 academicians and 53 corresponding members. 140 young specialists received jobs in the NAS system last year. 10 doctoral and 52 Ph.D. theses were defended.

R. Martirosian said that the NAS scientific institutions continued to take an active part in grant programs of international scientific centers and foundations. Last year Armenian scientists received 82 grants of the total amount of nearly 5 million USD.

In the words of the NAS president, in the past 15 years repair work has not been done in many scientific and research institutions, and the heating systems are out of commission. He said that no funds were allocated for purchase of new equipment, while in order to restore the experimental basis it is necessary to develop a special state program with financing of 100-200 mln USD.

"Over the past 65 years, the RA NAS has become a national value and important visiting card of our people. Any change in its status or structure should convince our public of the necessity of this step," R. Martirosian stated.

## 85. PRIVATE COMPANY TO BRING 150 BUSES TO YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Ashot Sahakian, chief of a Yerevan municipality department in charge of public transport, told Armenpress that a private company will bring in June 150 Ukraine-made Bogdan buses.

Overall in June there will be 467 buses in Yerevan to transport passengers. The municipality plans to cut the number of minibuses which are still the main commuter transport in Yerevan, by 1,600 this and next year.

He denied rumors about immediate rise of fares, saying, however, they may increase depending on objective reasons.

## 86. PRIVATE COMPANY MAY HELP RESOLVE HOMELESS FAMILIES PROBLEM [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

A private company is building a village of 16 one-story cottages near the town of Akhurian, which is close to Gyumri, Armenia's second largest town.

Samvel Petrosian, a deputy governor of Shirak province, told Armenpress that although the village is being built by a private company it may help resolve the still pressing problem of homeless families in the region that is still recovering from an earthquake that razed it to ground in 1988.

This is a test program and if it succeeds it may expand, according to local authorities. Each cottage will have its own heating system and a garage.



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## 87. LEVEL OF LAKE SEVAN CONTINUES TO RISE [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

As the level of Armenia's biggest Lake Sevan continues to rise, it covers areas that are planted with trees. To keep the lake clean and immune from turning into swamps the authorities log the trees, bushes and other plants.

Surik Aghajanian, chief forester of Sevan national park, told Armenpress that the government has earmarked funds for cleaning this year 95 hectares of such areas.

He said the rising level does not yet threaten the motorway running along the lake.

## 88. EARTHQUAKE JOLTS VARDENIS [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

An earthquake measuring 4 points on Richter scale jolted today morning the town of Vardenis in Gegharkunik province.

Martin Barseghian, chief of the provincial rescue service, told Armenpress the tremor occurred at 10. 20 am. He said the epicenter was 20 south-east of Vardenis. In the town the earthquake's force was 4 point. According to reports, the earthquake caused no damages to structures and no one was injured.

## 89. SHELL FOUND IN KINDERGARTEN YARD [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

An artillery shell was found in the yard of a kindergarten in Yerevan's Nor Nork district on April 28 during repair works. The kindergarten's head called sappers who established it was an artillery shell.

The rescue service of the emergency ministry said the sappers transported the shell to a safe area to neutralize it.

## **SPORTS**

## 90. FIVE ARMENIAN FREE-STYLE WRESTLERS TO FIGHT FOR OLYMPIC LICENSES [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

Five free-style Armenian wrestlers will fight for obtaining Olympic Games qualifications at a competition in Poland on May 1-3.

They are Mihran Zaburian, 55 kg, Martin Berberian, 60 kg, Ruslan Kokaev, 74 kg, Edgar Yenokian, 96 kg and Ruslan Baviev, 120 kg.

Armenian free-style wrestlers have already won two licenses for the Games. The tournament in Poland will be the last chance for the five to do so as well.

The head coach of the national team is Hrant Yenokian.

## 91. ARTHUR ABRAHAM DENIES RAPE CHARGES, TO SUE NEWSPAPER AND RIVAL BOXING CLUB [ARMENPRESS, 04/29/08]

In a telephone interview with Armenpress Armenia-born middleweight IBF boxing champion Arthur Abraham, who resides in Germany, denied flatly charges of rape he is incriminated in.

According to Allboxing website, he is suspected of raping a maidservant of a German hotel. It allegedly happened when Abraham was practicing ahead of his latest fight against Elvin Ayala of the USA.

Arthur Abraham learned about charges in Switzerland where he is getting ready to take on Edison Miranda in June.

"They are lies disseminated by my rival Universum boxing club to damage my image," he said to Armenpress. He said the rumors were spread by Bildt newspaper, owned by this club and Felix Sturm, who represents Universum boxing club, is a world IBF champion in a different category. According to Abraham, by damaging him the club wanted to push Sturm to the forefront.

"The only explanation is envy," he said. He said his lawyers will file a lawsuit against the newspaper and the club for slander and lie.

## 92. ARMENIAN WOMEN'S TENNIS NATIONAL TEAM TAKES 2nd PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 04/29/08]

The third-group women's tournament of Euroafrican region of Tennis International Federation finished on April 26 in Yerevan. The Armenian national team won in 4 out of 5 games (it beat the national



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teams of Finland, Montenegro, Egypt, and Moldova). The Armenian national team was only beaten by the team of Morocco.

The Armenian women tennis players took the 2nd place and will take part in the tournament of the same group next year, as well. And the winner, the national team of Morocco, passed to the 2nd group.

## 93. STAR MALL BECOMES AFF'S MAIN SPONSOR [ARMENPRESS, 04/30/08]

President of Armenian Football Federation (AFF) Ruben Hayrapetian and the chief manager of Star malls signed today an agreement whereby Star becomes the main sponsor of the 2008 national championship.

Ruben Hayrapetian declined to reveal the amount of money donated by Star to the Federation saying only that its executive committee will meet later today to make a decision on dividing the money equally among all 8 FCs.

The chief manager of Star malls said they will sponsor also the national team.

Ruben Hayrapetian said the Hrazdan stadium is being reconstructed and in all likelihood Armenia's first game against Turkey in Europe Cup qualifications will be held on that stadium.

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