



TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. IN LEVON MELIK-SHAHNAZARIAN'S OPINION, NAGORNO KARABAKH PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED THROUGH ANOTHER WAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/12/08]

The Nagorno Karabakh problem will be solved through another war. Political scientist Levon Melik-Shahnazarian expressed such an opinion at the May 12 press conference. According to him, that war will not happen soon, as the supplies of oil and gas in the region are still interesting for the world. "When these supplies finish or lose their economic significance, then we will try to solve our problems with each other," the political scientist said.

L. Melik-Shahnazarian also said that the negotiations of Nagorno Karabakh settlement are doomed to failure, as Nagorno Karabakh does not take part in them. "It is impossible to make a decision without taking into account one of the conflict sides. Armenia has never been a side of this conflict: it just helped, supported its compatriots," the political scientist said. He also reminded to journalists that NKR representatives also signed the cease-fire Bishkek agreement signed on May 12, 1994, being a direct side of the conflict.

2. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN ARMENIA AND LIECHTENSTEIN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/12/08]

RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and Foreign Minister of Liechtenstein Rita Kieber-Beck signed a Protocol on establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and Liechtenstein on May 7 in Strasbourg, in the Palace of Europe. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by the Press and Information Department of the RA Foreign Ministry.

During the *tete-a-tete* conversation held after the ceremony, the Ministers expressed readiness to develop interstate contacts and to carry out cooperation at bilateral and international levels, in the spheres of economy, culture, and science.

Liechtenstein is situated between Switzerland and Austria. Its capital city is Vaduz, state language is German. The monarch is Hans Adam II, Prime Minister Otmar Hasler. The main branches of Liechtenstein's economy are developed industry, in particular, chemical, pharmaceutical, and information technologies, banking and insurance spheres, tourism, and production of traditional agricultural goods.

Edward Nalbandian met with Frans Timmermans, the Minister of the Netherlands on European Issues, the same day in Strasbourg. Bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

The RA Foreign Minister presented the program priorities of the new Armenian government to his Dutch colleague, among which deepening of cooperation with European structures, as well as activation of foreign economic contacts are considered as important. In this respect the Ministers discussed issues connected with possibilities of involvement of Dutch capital in a number of spheres of Armenia's economy, in particular, in the spheres of agriculture, communication, and transport.

3. ANOTHER SENTENCE ON SUSPENDED IMPRISONMENT PASSED IN YEREVAN CRIMINAL COURT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/12/08]

By one of the cases instituted in connection with the March 1 events in Yerevan, Yerevan Criminal Court, presided over by judge Mnatsakan Martirosian, sentenced Haroutiun Mkrtychian accused of mass disorders (part 2, Article 225, RA Criminal Court) to three years' suspended imprisonment with three years' probation term. The case was examined by the order of speeded-up judicial procedure.

The judicial procedure against Yasha Melkonian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative (part 1, Article 316, RA Criminal Court) finished in the general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities, presided over by judge Arshak Petrosian. The defendant admitted the accusation brought to him, but said that he hit policeman Stepan Manukian after being delivered a blow from back, after the slap in the face he understood that he is a policeman. In his testimony given during the preliminary examination Y. Melkonian said that they organized RA presidential candidate Levon Ter-Petrosian's preelection headquarters with RA NA deputy Sasun Mikayelian in Hrazdan, the defendant was candidate's proxy. Yasha Melkonian, a resident of the village of



Meghradzor, Kotayk region, took part in self-defence fights of Artsakh's and Armenia's borders, received a number of awards. S. Manukian stated that no one had hit the defendant.

The court passed on to the stage of pleadings, prosecutor Koryun Piloyan petitioned to give him time to prepare his prosecution speech, and the court sitting was postponed until May 16.

The court sitting on the case against ANM Board member Hovhannes Ghazarian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative failed in the same court, presided over by judge Arayik Melkumian, due to the absence of prosecutor Hovsep Sargsian. The court sitting on the case against Isahak Malkhasian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative (part 1, Article 316) and carrying illegal gas, cold or throwing arms (part 4, Article 235) failed in the general jurisdiction court of Yerevan Shengavit community. The sitting was postponed until May 20 due to the illness of lawyer Seda Safarian. The court sitting on the basis of the appeal complaint of resident of Masis Husik Baghdasarian scheduled in the RA Criminal Appeal Court was also postponed due to the absence of the lawyer. The sitting was postponed until May 13. H. Baghdasarian appeals against the sentence of the general jurisdiction court of the Ararat and Vayots Dzor regions on sentencing to three years' imprisonment with the accusation of keeping illegal ammunition (part 1, Article 235).

4. NO POLITICAL POSITION WAS EXPRESSED IN DIPLOMATS' FEBRUARY 24 STATEMENT, MEMBER OF CHAMBER OF LAWYERS SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/12/08]

The February 24 statement of diplomats Vladimir Karapetian, Karine Afrikan, Marta Ayvazian, Arakel Semirjian, Varsenik Baghdasarian, and Elen Peteyan could not be a basis for dismissing them, as it does not contain any point on supporting any political force. Levon Baghdasarian, a member of the Chamber of Lawyers, gave assurance at the May 12 press conference. According to him, the law indeed prohibits diplomats to use their official position for the purpose of promoting political or religious activity. However, as he added, the above mentioned people did not express any political position with the February 24 statement.

It should be mentioned that in the February 24 statement the diplomats expressed concern with the "situation formed in the country." "We express our indignation in connection with the violations of the electoral process, which cast a shadow on the will of our country and society to hold civilized, fair, and free presidential elections in RA," the diplomats had mentioned. With that statement they joined the statement of Ambassadors Armen Bayburdian, Ruben Shugarian, Levon Khachatryan, and Razmik Khumarian made the previous day, on February 23. The Ambassadors, in their turn, had called "representatives of all structures responsible for ensuring order and calmness in the country for not yielding to the temptation of solving problems with force."

According to Vladimir Karapetian, the former Spokesperson of the RA Foreign Ministry, the authors of those statements had warned about the probability of such incidents that happened on March 1. "And while our predictions came true, the Foreign Ministry continues affirming that we were mistaken and continues struggling against us," he said. V. Karapetian said that they have applied to the court with the demand of restoring them on their posts, and the first sitting on the case will take place on May 14.

5. LEVON MELIK-SHAHNAZARIAN INTENDS TO PUT ILHAM ALIYEV ON TRIAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/11/08]

According to political scientist Levon Melik-Shahnazarian, the attempt upon his life made on April 22 in Ptghni "is the action of Azerbaijan's special services." As the political scientist said at the May 12 press conference, thanks to the measures undertaken by law enforcement bodies one of the criminals was arrested on May 8, and his version is confirmed by his testimony. "The order comes from Azerbaijan. Those ordering, committing, and assisting to the attempt upon my life are not RA citizens," L. Melik-Shahnazarian said. As the investigation of the case continues, he did not publicize any details, only said that he speaks about a serious gang.

L. Melik-Shahnazarian accused Azeri President Ilham Aliyev of the attempt upon his life, as, according to him, no special service of any state will dare to do such an action in another state without the order or consent of the first figure of the state. He declared that after disclosing the case completely he is going to put I. Aliyev on trial. According to the political scientist, the cause of the attempt upon his life, in all probability, is his article published in the Gharabaghski Express magazine lately, in which, in particular, he presented some details of I. Aliyev's becoming President in an illegal way.

As L. Melik-Shahnazarian evaluated, the attempt upon his life is evidence that Azerbaijan has announced a war not to Armenia, but to Armenian political scientists, journalists. And, in his opinion, he is not the only one, upon whose life they will make an attempt.



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6. FOR PRESENT, 15 FREEDOM-FIGHTERS GO ON TERMLESS HUNGER-STRIKE IN PROTECTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SHIRAK REGION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/11/08]

For the present, 15 freedom-fighters are going on termless hunger-strike from May 12, 2008 in the Shirak region in protection of imprisoned commander-colonel Ashot Zakarian and other political prisoner-hero freedom-fighters. It was mentioned in the statement spread by the freedom-fighters on May 10, at 17:00. It should be mentioned that on May 12, from 11:00, the judicial enquiry on cases against Ashot Zakarian, Shota Saghatelian, and Petros Makeyan will continue at the Armenian Northern Criminal Court's Gyumri residence. Shirak region's freedom-fighters are going to address applications on the May 12 termless hunger-strike to several Ambassadors accredited in Armenia and heads of international missions.

According to the statement provided by the Asparez journalists club of Gyumri, as the freedom-fighters evaluate, after the RA presidential elections of 2008 "with false and groundless accusations, for their political views many heroes of Artsakh liberation struggle have appeared in prisons. The trials have nothing in common with justice, as people are arrested or sentenced to imprisonment in some dubious circumstances, with false testimony of witnesses not inspiring confidence, by the order from above."

The freedom-fighters call RA authorities for being reasonable and sober-minded, as "the whole responsibility for constant persecution's consequences falls on them." The freedom-fighters and their another seven companions-in-arms had already gone on a 24-hour hunger-strike on May 7-8, to which the authorities did not react.

Residents of the town of Maralik, Shirak region, Babken Urutian and Karapet Loretsian, went on termless hunger-strike on May 11, at 14:00, in the central square of Maralik, by putting up a tent in front of the building of Mayor's Office. They demand fair judicial enquiry on the case of resident of Maralik Haroutiun Urutian in the Appeal Criminal Court and freedom to political prisoners. Haroutiun Urutian, Levon Ter-Petrosian's proxy, has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment with the accusation of striking Suren Avetisian and hindering the electoral process.

Roman Piloyan went on termless hunger-strike on May 10, at 15:00, in the village of Dzorakap, Shirak region. He joined the extreme political action resident of the village of Dzorakap Sevak Saghatelian started the day before. They demand "immediately releasing Mushegh and Shota Saghatelians, as well as all other political prisoners." (Sevak Saghatelian is the son of deputy Mushegh Saghatelian).

7. ANAHIT BAKHSHIAN CALLS SERGE SARGSIAN FOR REFUTING RUMORS OF FORMER PRESIDENT'S RETURN AS PRIME MINISTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

"Neither Serge Sargsian proclaimed President as a result of the rigged elections nor the new government seem to have got free of Robert Kocharian's influence. It continues heading the puppet governmental theater like a ghost," Anahit Bakhshian, the Secretary of the RA National Assembly Zharangutiun (Heritage) faction, stated during the Parliamentary Week program of Public Television. In her words, perpendicular illegal interventions in activity of different state structures introduced under the former President continue.

A. Bakhshian said that there are rumors that R. Kocharian will return as a Prime Minister in six months. "Those spreading these rumors have a single goal, to finally demoralize, discredit, and weaken the bases of S. Sargsian's presidency, which are weak as it is, as neither under the former President nor now there is a political will of taking reasonable steps aimed at restoration of state interests, citizens' constitutional rights, and freedoms in the country," the deputy said.

She called S. Sargsian for refuting the rumors on the return of the former President, immediately stopping legal arbitrariness, and making a proposal of amnesty in the National Assembly.

8. POLITICAL ANALYST LEVON MELIK-SHAHNAZARIAN BLAMES AZERBAIJANI SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ATTEMPT TO KILL HIM [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Armenian political analyst Levon Melik-Shahnazarian said that on April 22 in his house in Ptghni village an attempt was made to kill him. Today at a press conference he said that criminal investigation department of the Armenian police managed to arrest one of the criminals who is not a citizen of Armenia.

L. Melik-Shahnazarian said he is sure that the order was made by Azerbaijan and the implementers and their supporters in Armenia are not citizens of Armenia.



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"I want to inform Ilham Aliyev that I am safe and sound and continue my activity. I think that special services of any country could not give such order without permission of the head of the country. When all this ends I will sue Ilham Aliyev," the political analyst said.

Responding to the questions on the causes which made Azerbaijan to do it, L. Melik-Shahnazarian said that he is not the person about who Azerbaijan is concerned most. He is sure that he would be the first but not the last: there are political analysts and journalists in Armenia which Azerbaijan does not like.

He said one of the reasons may be his June, 2007 article published in "Karabakh Express" Russian-language magazine which is also distributed in Moscow in which under the title "State Usurper, Usurpers' State" he reveals and notes that the current Azerbaijani president has seized the power.

L. Melik-Shahnazarian said that with this Azerbaijan "has entered new round of conflict", though the first one failed. "We must let the world know that our neighboring country is not only sponsoring terrorism but is also its tool," the political scientist noted.

He told that at night at around 23:50 pm shots were made from 2.5-3 meter distance in the direction of the guest-room where they were gathered with the family. The bullet hit the window, the political analyst rushed out from the house but did not see anyone. On April 29 the criminals established contact with Melik-Shahnazarian threatening him that if he did not keep silence they would harm the members of his family.

For not harming the investigation process, the political analyst said that the mother of the person who shot is Azerbaijani, father is a lawyer.

Armenian police department press service confirmed that a person has been arrested for attempt to kill L. Melik Shahnazarian.

9. AZERI ARMED FORCES OPEN FIRE IN DIRECTION OF ARMENIAN ARMED FORCES IN BAGHANIS VILLAGE [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Azerbaijani Armed Forces opened fire today at 11:00 am in the direction of the Armenian military points located in the border line of the village of Baghanis of the Armenian province of Tavush.

Spokesman for the Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Shahsuvarian said that as a result of the fire, resident of Baghanis village, shepherd Lorik Avagian, born in 1957, has been wounded. Armenian armed forces managed to take him away from the fire zone only at about 12:40pm.

He was taken to the hospital and operated.

10. ARMENIAN DM SAYS AUTHORITIES DOING EVERYTHING FOR REACHING LOGICAL END OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

"We must do everything to continue the ceasefire regime. The authorities of our countries are doing everything so that Karabakh conflict has its logical end and be regulated in peaceful conditions," Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian said today in the NA.

Speaking about possible danger of war, the minister said that "today there is no such situation".

Referring to the fate of the Armenian citizens who passed Nakhijevan's border, the minister said that they received information about them and after relevant activities will be carried out they will be returned back home.

"They must have been returned a week ago, but we were informed that the ministry must carry out relevant work after which our citizens will be returned," Ohanian said.

11. CRIMINAL CASE OPENED AGAINST AIDE TO PROSECUTOR OF ARABKIR AND KANAKER-ZEITUN COMMUNITIES HAKOB SIMONIAN FOR TAKING LARGE AMOUNT OF BRIBE [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

With the decree of the Armenian Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepian a criminal case has been opened against aide to the prosecutor of Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeitun communities Hakob Simonian for receiving large amount of bribe.

Press secretary of the Armenian prosecutor general Sona Truzian told Armenpress that resident of Yerevan Samvel Gareginian submitted a statement on April 28 to the Armenian government-affiliated National Security Service, saying that H. Simonian demanded 12,000 USD bribe in his presence from his friend Hrachya Karapetian, based in Germany, for suspending the search of the latter's son Alexander Karapetian, who is wanted for escaping draft, and for freeing him from the service. He received in his office 8,000 USD, the rest was arranged to get after everything would be over.



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The criminal case has been sent to Armenia's special investigation service.

12. CEC REGISTERS SUKIAS AVETISIAN AS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM REPUBLICAN PARTY [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Armenian Central Electoral Commission decided today to register Sukias Avetisian, from the electoral list of the Republican party, as member of the Armenian parliament.

The decision was based on the declaration on "considering the parliamentary authorities of member of parliament Armen Danielian suspended" and self withdrawal of Karine Petrosian and Alina Harutyunian.

Armen Danielian has been appointed deputy prosecutor general.

13. CHAIRMAN OF CEC SAYS THE COMMISSION HAS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ELECTORAL LEGISLATION [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Chairman of the Armenian Central Electoral Commission Garegin Azarian said today after the session of the commission that "The Electoral legislation, in other countries as well, after every elections needs to be reformed as it also regulates many minor issues which may come into forth during the elections."

According to him, CEC has always had and now has suggestions for improving the Electoral legislation.

14. ARMENIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA MEETS WITH TWO MINISTERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Armenian ambassador to Syria, Arshak Poladian, met on May 12 with Syrian Tourism Minister Saadala Agha al-Kalali.

The press division of the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that during their meeting the two men discussed prospects for tourism development between their countries.

Particularly, they referred to the necessity of signing a tourism cooperation agreement for 2008-2011. The ministry said a draft cooperation program is under discussion.

Minister Agha al-Kalali noted that Damascus will host in October Silk Road Tourism Festival and an invitation will be sent to Armenia to take part.

The ministry said on the same day ambassador Poladian met with Syrian Education Minister Ali Saadi to discuss Armenian-Syrian cooperation in education and the details of the planned visit by Armenian education and science minister to Syria.

Minister Saadi was said to underscore the necessity of a meeting with his Armenian counterpart citing close education cooperation between the two countries. He said Syria would like to expand it further.

15. EXAMINATION OF CASE OF PETROS MAKEYAN AND OTHERS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The examination of the case of Ashot Zakarian, Shota Saghatelian and Petros Makeyan charged with preventing the voting process was to be continued at the Gyumri office of the RA North Criminal Court on May 12. According to a press release issued by the "Asparez" club of journalists (Gyumri), on that day the court building was surrounded by a large number of policemen and court instructors. Those present observed one minute's silence in remembrance of Levon Gulian, who was called to give evidence at the criminal investigation department of the RA police and died there under unknown circumstances. The mothers and relatives of the defendants kept chanting "Freedom" and "Free, Independent Armenia" for over an hour.

The court examination started later than scheduled and lasted for only 10 minutes. It was envisaged to make public the evidence of the secretary of local electoral commission No 34/06, then to ask this person questions, but after 10 minutes the court announced that the filming of the court sitting was interrupted, that the cameras were to be taken away, and the court instructors began pulling out the cameramen of Gala and Tsayg television companies. Defendant Ashot Zakarian, who prior to that did not object to resumption of the court examination in the absence of his lawyer, now declared that after such a step of the court he was against the continuation of the court examination - due to the absence of his lawyer. The court examination was postponed indefinitely.



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16. ACCORDING TO FRENCH ARMENIAN LAWYER, ONLY TESTIMONY OF POLICEMEN CANNOT BE PROOF [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

A group from the Union of Armenian Advocates and Lawyers of France consisting of 6 people was in Armenia on a 5-day visit. It had come especially for the purpose of assisting their Armenian colleagues in connection with the elections and in particular, the March 1 events. Gerard Cholakian, a member of Union's Administrative Board, told Noyan Tapan correspondent that they have an impression that tension is felt in the work of lawyers and justice structures: "At the moment it seems to us that the lawyers have been refused to be informed about the details of the case, the investigation," the French Armenian lawyer said. It was also mentioned that they are "mainly concerned with the difficulties of lawyers they have when defending the defendants during these cases." The group has met with local lawyers, some imprisoned people, as well as with RA Justice Minister Gevorg Danielian. "We feel that rather strong pressures are exerted, some judicial and examination procedures have not been respected. We would be able to give a more detailed and concrete answer if we were able to get acquainted with the case more in detail and were able to take part in legal proceedings."

On the last day of the visit the French Armenian lawyer was present at the judicial enquiry on the case against former freedom-fighter Khachik Gasparian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative. "It is impossible to imprison a man unless there is concrete evidence in his cases," Cholakian said emphasizing that in all countries only testimony of policemen is not considered proof. It is envisaged that the organization will make a report on the visit's results by late May. Cholakian did not exclude that French lawyers will return with representatives of NGOs to be present at the judicial enquiries.

17. 17 PEOPLE GO ON HUNGER-STRIKE IN SHIRAK REGION IN PROTECTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

As of 10:00, May 13, 17 people are on hunger-strike in the Shirak region, 13 out of which are in Gyumri, 2 in Dzorakap, in a tent put up near the Halivor Pap chapel, 2 in Maralik. According to the report of the Asparez journalist club of Gyumri, all they have gone on a termless hunger-strike, until the authorities sustain their demands, release the political prisoners.

The people who have went on hunger-strike said in private conversations that it is Armenia's authoritarian regime that has forced them to take this extreme measure. "Unless this measure helps, we also know other, stricter measures, which we will use no doubt," the youngest and the oldest of them said.

It should be mentioned that from 14:00, May 12, 12 freedom-fighters of the Shirak region went on termless hunger-strike with their combat friend from the Kotayk region in the Gyumri office of the Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union, demanding releasing Ashot Zakarian and other political prisoners.

Ashot Zakarian is accused of hindering the process of voting during the presidential elections and is under arrest. On May 12 the trial on his case was once more postponed for indefinite time in the Gyumri residence of the RA Northern Criminal Court.

22 freedom-fighters from the Shirak region had gone on a 24-hour hunger-strike as far back as on May 7 demanding changing the restraint to Ashot Zakarian. However, neither the court nor the local and regional authorities gave any reaction to that hunger-strike.

18. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN SENDS CONDOLENCE MESSAGE TO CHINESE COUNTERPART [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Armenia's President Serzh Sarkisian sent a message of condolences to his Chinese counterpart, Hiu Zintau. The presidential press service said his message reads as follows.

"On behalf of the Republic of Armenia and myself I convey my deep condolences to you and the friendly people of China on the occasion of the destructive earthquake in the province of Si Chuan that took many human lives. I share the deep grief and pain of the killed people's relatives and families and wish soonest recovery to injured people.

I am confident that the people of China will find enough potential to recover quickly from moral and material damages caused by this tragic disaster.

Having in mind Armenia's experience in elimination of earthquake consequences I express our readiness to show necessary assistance."



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19. ARAM SAFARIAN URGES GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION AND STOP UNGROUNDED PRICE HIKES [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Aram Safarian, a parliament member from the Prosperous Armenia, said at a news conference today that the government should take swift action to stop the 'speculative' rise of prices of foodstuff and services, otherwise there will be problems.

Aram Safarian said many unfair businessmen are trying in this way to earn as much profits as possible.

He said price hikes in Armenia are not proportional to global price hikes. He said the Central Bank, vested with authority to supervise pricing, should take action in the first place to stop this.

In his view, if the government takes appropriate steps, prices will not rise. Otherwise, he said, the government will have to deal not with an opposition group, but with a widespread public discontent.

BUSINESS

20. ACCORDING TO PRIME MINISTER, IT IS ENVISAGED TO KEEP HIGH TAX COLLECTION RATES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

Despite the fact that 2007 was a year of parliamentary elections and preparation for the presidential election, a 33% growth of budgetary revenues was registered, the RA prime minister Tigran Sargsian stated at the May 12 joint sitting of the RA National Assembly standing committees. In 2006, the growth of revenues made 16%. The share of taxes in GDP grew by 1.6% - against the programmed 0.4% growth. There were some structural changes in the expenditures which grew by 32%: some additional funds were allocated to the social sector, science, education and health care.

According to T. Sargsian, it is envisaged to keep high rates of tax collection - about 0.5% a year, as well as to increase the share of taxes in GDP and improve tax administration with the aim of reducing shadow economy and ensuring a competitive field.

21. NUMBER OF TOURISTS TO ARMENIA INCREASES BY 15.1%, THOSE FROM ARMENIA BY 16.5% IN JANUARY-MARCH 2008 AS COMPARED WITH SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

The number of tourists to Armenia made 84,234 in January-March 2008 - against 73,188 in the same period of 2007, with the growth making 15.1%.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, in the indicated period 89,542 people left Armenia to travel abroad. The growth made 16.5% as compared with January-March 2007.

22. SHORTCOMINGS IN BUDGET EXECUTION HAD POSITIVE EFFECT ON INFLATION, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF CBA SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

There are some problems with the execution of Armenia's budget in recent years and these problems have had a negative impact on efficiency of the monetary and credit policy, the deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) Arthur Javadian said at the May 12 joint sitting of the National Assembly standing committees.

In particular, according to him, tax collection exceeded the programmed level and expenditures were saved in the first quarter of 2007. Besides, a large share of expenditures in cash was retained in the structure of budgetary expenditures in 2007. "Thus, on the one hand, the large share of cash in budgetary expenditures, on the other hand, some proportions in the nonspecified state budget negatively affected the efficiency of management of banking liquidity and the process of improving the activity of the financial market," A. Javadian said. At the same time, in his words, under conditions of accelerating inflation in Armenia and the appreciation of the Armenian dram in 2007, the collection of more revenues than was envisaged and the underfulfilment of the expenditure programs did not create any additional pressure on inflation in the consumer market and in fact, had a positive effect on macroeconomic stability.



23. ACCORDING TO CHAIRMAN OF CONTROL CHAMBER, DIFFERENCE REGISTERED IN PRICES OF STATE PROCUREMENT AGENCY AND ACTUAL MARKET PRICES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

The shortcomings of the 2007 state budget's execution are mainly related to state procurement, the chairman of the RA Control Chamber Ishkhan Zakarian said during a talk with reporters on May 12. "We see a serious difference in the prices given in the report of the State Procurement Agency and actual market prices, which causes concern," he said. In his words, no detailed report has been presented by the agency, to which about 193 billion drams was allocated by the 2007 budget. "We need new definite state mechanisms in order to determine the difference in the actual market prices and those declared," I. Zakarian underlined.

24. IRANIAN-ARMENIAN TRADE IN FIVE YEARS MAKES \$700 MILLION [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

A business forum was held today in Yerevan at the initiative of Cavendish University of Iran and the Armenian Development Agency (ADA). The goal was to look into opportunities for establishment of a very favorable business and investment environment.

The focus in today's discussions was on stepping up cooperation between small and medium-sized companies of both countries, which were said could cooperate successively in such areas as cattle growing, production of building materials and veterinary medications, introduction of automated systems and so on.

Another array of issues related to production of soap, ice-cream, export and import of equipment for prospecting and production of oil and natural gas was also discussed.

Valery Shabanov, an ADA director for foreign investments, described Iranian-Armenian economic ties as 'quite strong,' saying also that Iran is a good partner for Armenia. He said expectations are big that Iranian businessmen will increase the volume of their investments in Armenia. He said active dialogue between the two governments is a serious support for it.

According to Valery Shabanov, Iranian-Armenian trade in the last five years amounted to about \$700 million, of which \$111 million were Armenian exports to Iran. Direct investments in the last three years were \$550,000.

"Both sides believe that there is the appropriate potential to seriously increase the volume of bilateral economic cooperation," he said, adding that Armenia is the world leader in terms of vehicles with converted engines working on liquified gas. He said in this sense the ADA suggests Armenia and Iran join to build a plant for production of gas cylinders.

He also said both countries can seriously increase cooperation volumes in such areas as chemical and food production and tourism. In this sense he stressed the significance of Iran-Armenia gas pipeline and construction of a hydro power plant on the river of Arax.

Hussein Tajbash, director of Cavendish University of Iran and head of the Iranian delegation, thanked the ADA for providing consultations to Iranian businessmen wishing to cooperate with Armenian counterparts.

He told the 20-member Iranian delegation that they can turn to the ADA any time and the result will be successful cooperation with Armenian businessmen. He also expressed hope that such gatherings of Armenian and Iranian businessmen will be more coordinated.

25. TENDER TO CHOOSE THIRD MOBILE PHONE COMMUNICATION OPERATOR POSTPONED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The rules of the tender to choose a third mobile phone communication operator in Armenia have not been approved yet. The head of the telecommunication unit of the RA Public Services Regulatory Commission Gevorg Gevorgian stated on May 13 that there is a necessity to hold additional discussions on these rules, as a result of which the tender has been postponed.

G. Gevorgian failed to say when exactly the tender will be announced and which companies intend to participate in it. According to him, information about the tender will be published by famous foreign mass media, including the Financial Times.

26. GAS FILLING STATIONS TRY TO USE COMPETITIVE PRICES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Within the framework of the proceedings initiated in order to identify a possible anticompetition agreement in the gas filling market, in the past two days the RA State Commission on Protection of Economic Competition conducted monitoring and revealed that the price of gas sold at the country's gas



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filling stations has declined. The Commission was also informed about it in writing by the economic entities providing gas filling services. According to the Commission's press service, various prices are currently used for filling 1 cubic meter of liquefied (natural) gas in Armenia, including in Yerevan: 130 drams (a filling station in the city of Hrazdan), mostly 150 drams, prices of 160, 162 and 170 drams have been registered as well.

27. TOTAL OF \$2.3 BILLION OF DIRECT FOREIGN INVESTMENTS MADE SINCE 1991 [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

About \$2.3 billion of direct foreign investments have been made into Armenian economy since 1991, of which \$580 million were made in 2007.

Valery Shabanov, foreign investments director of the Armenian Development Agency (ADA), told Armenpress that last year's direct foreign investments constituted 25.4 percent of all direct foreign investments. They grew 30 percent against the previous year of 2006.

He said direct foreign investments began to grow since 1998. According to him, expectations are also high for 2009.

Foreign investments create new jobs in Armenia, which according to Shabanov, is one of the priorities of the ADA. Foreign investments have created up to 20,000 jobs in Armenia, he said.

Foreign investments are directed to various sectors, but in the last years their bulk went to gas distribution, communications, chemical industry, mining and metallurgy sectors.

In the last two years the biggest investor in the natural gas and communications sectors was Russia.

DIASPORA

28. ARMENIA FUND CHAIR TO BE AWARDED ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The president of the board of Armenia fund of the Western Region of the United States of America, Maria Mehranian, has been awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations. Mehranian was honored at a special ceremony at the Ellis Island in New York, which was held on May 10.

The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is designed to pay homage to those remarkable Americans, who exemplify outstanding qualities in both their personal and professional lives, while continuing to preserve the richness of their particular heritage.

29. "KEEPING UP WITH KARDASHIANS" COMEDY STARS INTEND TO VISIT ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

"Keeping Up with the Kardashians" comedy star Kim and her friends Khloe, Kourtney and Rob have decided to take a trip to Armenia.

"My great grandparents were from Armenia and escaped the genocide," Kim revealed. "No one has been back since. All I know about my country is what I read and pictures I see on the Internet."

30. EDGAR MANUCHARIAN DOES NOT SEE HIS FUTURE IN AJAX [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Ajax striker Edgar Manucharyan has admitted he does not have a future at the club. The 21-year-old has not played a single minute for the first team this campaign and does not want the same thing to happen next season.

31. DINNER PARTY TO BE ORGANIZED IN HONOR OF AYA FOOTBALL TEAM BY FORMER AYA PLAYER CYPRIAN-ARMENIAN MP VARTKES MAHDESSIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The AYA football team arrived from London to Larnaca on 10 May. A welcoming reception was held for football players of AYA and AYMA teams. There was open participation to all members of the community. On May 11 the visit of football players to Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church and Melkonian Institute was envisaged. On 12 May a football match took place and a farewell dinner party will be organized on May 17.



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Armenian MP in the Cyprus Parliament Vartkes Mahdessian - a former player with AYA - will be throwing a dinner party for the AYA team on May 14 evening at his residence.

32. SONY PICTURES PICKS UP DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS TO ATOM EGOYAN'S FILM [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Sony Pictures has picked up the distribution rights to Atom Egoyan's latest film, Adoration, starring Arsinee Khanjian and Scott Speedman. The movie, set to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival on May 22, centres on a teenager, who creates a fake internet identity and pursues a family secret.

This film marks the seventh collaboration between the Toronto filmmaker and producer Robert Lantos. Egoyan has previously said the movie was inspired by a true story about a man who talks his pregnant girlfriend onto an El Al flight, where she is found with a bomb in her handbag.

33. PRIMATE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND INTERVIEWED BY ABC RADIO [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

With the advent of commemorations last week in remembrance of the Armenian Genocide, a radio interview was conducted with His Eminence Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand by John Clearly on ABC Radio Local.

Whilst the interview was initiated to introduce the Archbishop and the Armenian Apostolic Church to the broader listening audience, it was timely scheduled to coincide with the commemorative week and bring about greater awareness of the Genocide and the issue of recognition. The interview also explored religious aspects of Armenian heritage as well as some cultural.

34. NEW ALBUM OF GUITARIST GENE ESS TO BE RECORDED IN JUNE WITH PARTICIPATION OF TIGRAN HAMASIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Guitarist Gene Ess and his quartet will be recording a new album in June. This new work will feature the 2006 Thelonious Monk Piano Competition 1st place winner Tigran Hamasyan on piano. At twenty-one, pianist Tigran Hamasyan has already done much to launch his name into the world of emergent young lions. After winning the prestigious Thelonious Monk Jazz Piano Competition in 2006, he studied in the United States before returning to Paris, where he recorded his first album, New Era. Tigran will be joining Gene Ess, Harvie S, and Tyshawn Sorey for these New York dates.

35. REP. COSTA CALLS ON NEW U.S. NOMINEE TO RA MARIE YOVANOVICH TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Congressman Jim Costa sent a letter to Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovich, the new nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, asking to answer questions about her feelings on the events that happened in Turkey between 1915 and 1923. "It is important that the United States fill this empty diplomatic position in Yerevan," said Costa. "But before she is confirmed by the United States Senate, it is critical for my constituents and me to know her thoughts on the first genocide of the 20th century: the Armenian Genocide."

36. "GIVING FORM TO FAITH: ART AND THE CATHEDRAL" EXHIBITION TO BE ORGANIZED BY U.S. EASTERN DIOCESE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) will organize "Giving Form to Faith: Art and the Cathedral" free exhibition of works by major 20th and 21st century Armenian-American artists. The exhibition opens on June 19 at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York. A concert featuring renowned Armenian-American artists Lucine Amara, soprano, Sahar Arzruni, piano, and Ani Aznavoorian, cello, will take place on the same day. The exhibition will remain on view until June 24.



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37. KEN KHACHIKIAN MENTIONS IN HIS LETTER ADDRESSED TO U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE SPECIFIC AREAS OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY NOT CORRESPONDING TO VIEWPOINTS OF AMERICAN ARMENIANS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Chairman Ken Hachikian strongly criticized President George W. Bush's most recent April 24th statement as the final step of his betrayal of his campaign promise to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and a symbol of his Administration's "morally bankrupt" eight-year policy of complicity in Turkey's lies and denials. The letter also notes that the President, during his two terms in office, has refused repeated requests by the leadership of the Armenian American community to discuss the Armenian Genocide and other issues of mutual concern. Earlier this year, on April 4, Hachikian wrote a separate letter to the Secretary of State, outlining 13 specific areas in which the Administration pursued policies at odds with the views and values of America's one and a half million citizens of Armenian heritage.

38. TURK TOURISTS, WHO VISITED ARMENIA, RETURN TO TURKEY UNDER GREAT IMPRESSION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The Turk tourists, who visited Armenia a few days ago, have returned to Turkey under a great impression.

As the Turkish sources report, 29 Turks and one German took part in the journey with famous Turk excursion guide Faruk Pekin at the head organized by the Fest Tourism agency and they were all very pleased with the journey made to Armenia.

Murad Ismail, the representative of the Fest Travel agency, mentioned that it is the first time that such a tourist journey has been organized and stressed that the tourists were greatly impressed by the historical monuments of Armenia.

"We were very well welcomed. Everybody was very kind," he said.

And Faruk Pekin mentioned in his turn that the most negative thing during the journey was "the problem of lavatories" as those situated on roads between cities have turned into ruins.

The Turk tourists in Armenia visited the monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin, Matenadaran (Armenian repository of ancient manuscripts), the Blue mosque, the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and other places.

The Turkish press writes that the group of the Turk tourists visits Armenia when efforts directed at the establishment of diplomatic relations are continuing between the parties.

ARTS

39. 30th ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION OF A. KHACHATRIAN HOUSE-MUSEUM TO BE MARKED IN JUNE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

Aram Khachatrian House-Museum will mark the 30th anniversary of its foundation on June 6, the birthday of the world-famous composer. As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by museum Director Armine Grigorian, the museum is preparing a new permanent display in this connection, which will be opened on the first day of the events organized on this occasion.

A. Grigorian said that a festival of classical music will be also organized, where works of prominent Armenian composers, as well as premieres of new works will be performed. Vocal solo and orchestra performances will be also presented.

The museum is also preparing with much responsibility for the Aram Khachatrian International Contest of Pianists, which will be held with state financing.

40. DAYS OF ARTSAKH KICK OFF [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Days of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) were launched today in Yerevan. The event, organized by the Armenian Tourism Institute, will last for 3 days.

Robert Minasian, rector of the Tourism Institute, said today at the opening ceremony that the goal is to give an opportunity for all to see Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, their culture, nature and arts from a closer range.

The first day was to feature classes on education and business sectors of the country, the second day will feature screening of films and the last day will be dedicated to the liberation of the town of Shushi in Nagorno-Karabakh.



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These events will be accompanied by demonstration of pictures showing Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, fair-sales and visits to different sites.

Karlen Avetisian, representative of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia, said many people think that they know everything about small-sized countries, but there is a lot to learn about Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

More importantly, he said is that today's young people know well their homeland.

41. PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARKISIAN CONGRATULATES PROMINENT COMPOSER EDWARD MIRZOYAN ON HIS BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Prime minister Tigran Sarkisian sent a congratulatory message today to a prominent contemporary Armenian composer, Edward Mirzoyan, on the occasion of the latter's 87-th birthday anniversary.

The government press office said the message runs as follows.

"Dear Maestro Edward Mirzoyan. I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart on the occasion of your 87-th birthday anniversary.

Being one of the most prominent representatives of the Armenian school of composers, you have composed works of classical music which have brought you and our country a universal recognition and honor. These works occupy a deserved place not only in the treasury of Armenian but also of world music.

Your huge creative legacy has been assessed and awarded both during the Soviet times and in independent Armenia. By leaving an indelible trace in Armenian national musical history you have contributed to maximum to our society's moral and artistic education.

Dear Maestro, I congratulate you once more on this occasion. I wish you good health, fruitful work for the sake of our culture's development and prosperity."

42. REPRESENTATION OF "GOLDEN APRICOT" INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL TO OPEN IN PARIS [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Presentation-reception of the "Golden Apricot" international film festival will be organized on May 23 in French city of Cannes. The chairman of the film festival Atom Egoyan and director Harutyun Khachatryan will meet the guests.

The art director of the film festival Susanna Harutyunian said the reporters that in Cannes meetings with film producers, directors and participants of the festival will take place. At present the office of the festival is conducting negotiations over films.

This year the closing film of the festival will be Atom Egoyan's "Worshipping" film presented at Cannes' international film festival.

Representation of the "Golden Apricot" international film festival will open in Paris. S. Harutyunian said the sponsor of the festival Raymon Yezegulian will provide a place in his office in Paris for the representation.

43. FIRST NATIONAL COMMUNITY THEATER FESTIVAL STARTS IN KAPAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

The first national festival of community theaters kicked off on May 12 in Kapan. The festival is being held under the high sponsorship of President Serzh Sarkisian with the support of the Culture Ministry.

Karapet Ter-Petrosian, head of Khald charity organization, the organizer of the festival, told Armenpress that for the conduction of the festival an application was submitted taking into the basis government's plan of actions designed for 2007-2012 to boost cultural life outside the capital city. He said the goal of the festival is to bring together community theaters and create an environment for them to meet and discuss their plans and their work.

The official opening of the festival was attended by Kapan mayor, Armen Karapetian, who thanked the organizers, expressing regret that due to the repair of the Kapan theater building not all theater lovers will get the opportunity to watch the plays which will be staged in a smaller hall.

Theaters from Armavir, Stepanavan, Yeghegnadzor, Hrazdan, Etchmiadzin, Noyemberian and Kapan are participating in the festival.

Theater companies will also play for residents of several rural communities and the towns of Meghri and Kajaran.



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44. THREE ARMENIAN FILM DIRECTORS TO PRESENT THEIR FILMS AT CANNES FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Three ethnic Armenian film directors will participate in the Cannes film festival that starts on May 14 and will run through May 25. They are Canadian Armenian director Atom Egoyan, Diana Mkrтчian from Russia and Arman Tadevosian of Armenia.

Atom Egoyan will take to Cannes his "Adoration" film, a drama about young people who try to communicate through Internet and short telephone messages (SMS). His wife, Arsine Khanjian, plays one of the main characters.

Diana Mkrтчian will present her 33-minute-long documentary called "GATA", while Arman Tadevosian will take to Cannes a short film called "Transformation".

Tadevosian's 10-minute long film was shot in Turkish Kars and tells about the transformation of cultures and civilizations in this city located in historical Western Armenia.

45. FIRST INTERNATIONAL ARMENIAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN MOSCOW [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

First international Armenian Cultural festival opened today in Moscow. The head of the Union of Russian Armenians Ara Abrahamian said to reporters that within the frameworks of the "Nostalgia" festival a number of concerts, exhibitions, meetings with writers, film screenings and even contest of Armenian cuisine will be held. The festival will be conducted every year.

"Such events unite peoples, they are important not only for the Russian Armenians but for all Russians," Ara Abrahamian said.

Within the framework of the festival which will last until May 19 an exhibition of contemporary Armenian artists opened in Glinka music culture museum, in the evening meeting with writers Andrey Bitov, Kim Bakhshi and Jovani Guaytay will be held.

ITAR-TASS reports that tomorrow in the theatre of Armen Jigarkhanian premier of Pertch Zeituntyant's "Stand Up, Court is Coming" piece which tells about the trial of Soghomon Tehlerian will be given.

The main event of the festival will be the gala-concert in Kremlin Palace on May 15. On the same day a memorial board to Arno Babajanian will be opened in Moscow.

46. ARMENIAN BRANCH OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ART CRITICS TO OFFER TWO-WEEK INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL FOR EXHIBITION CURATORS [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

The Armenian branch of the International Association of Art Critics will organize in July a two-week international summer school for exhibition curators.

Lilit Sarkisian, a representative of the Association, told Armenpress that several well-known art critics, curators and art professors from abroad will be invited to deliver lectures.

She said this will be the third such summer school in Armenia that will bring together art critics from CIS countries.

She said the Armenian branch of the Association has been conducting experimental classes for local exhibition curators and journalists writing on art to have the least necessary knowledge on organization of exhibitions and fairs.

She said there is a demand now for exhibition curators, as no university offers this course. Ten people are having experimental classes at a local private university. They will run until November.

The Armenian branch of the International Association of Art Critics is a non-governmental organization. It was founded in 2004.

47. GYUMRI HOSTS CONFERENCE ON RUSSIAN-ARMENIAN CULTURAL DIALOGUE [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

The first international conference on Russian-Armenian Cultural Dialogue was launched in Armenia's second largest town of Gyumri on May 13.

The three-day conference has brought to Armenia representatives of cultural and art community of Moscow.



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Hasmik Harutyunian, a professor of the Gyumri branch of Yerevan-based Komitas Conservatory, which is hosting the gathering, told Armenpress that the goal of the conference is to present and restore cultural links between the two peoples.

"The more I study the links between Russians and Armenians the more I get assured that there is still a great deal to study and a great deal of facts to reveal. Many prominent Armenians contributed heavily not only to their national but also to world culture," Ekaterina Vlasova, a professor of Moscow Conservatory said.

Guests from Moscow donated a rich collection of CDs to Gyumri branch of Yerevan Conservatory, Russian guests will visit some historical sites of the region.

RELIGION

48. ARMENIAN CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDS CONFERENCE ON LIFE AND LEGACY OF SAINT EPIPHANY [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

A representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church participated in a conference that was held on May 8-12 in Cyprus. It was organized by the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. The conference, dedicated to Saint Epiphany of Cyprus, brought together theologians and church experts from Orthodox and other Christian churches.

The information department of the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin told Armenpress that the Armenian Church was represented by deputy director of Karekin I Theological Center for Armenian Studies, abbot Mesrop Parsmaian, who conveyed to the present the blessing and good wishes of the head of the Armenian Church, Catholicos Karekin II.

The information departments said abbot Parsamian delivered a speech dedicated to the life and activity of Saint Epiphany and reflection of literary legacy in Armenian literature.

49. HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II ENDS VISIT TO VATICAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, concluded his one week fraternal visit to the Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, His Holiness Benedict XVI and is back home.

Accompanying His Holiness throughout the duration of the visit were His Eminence Archbishop Nourhan Manoogian, Grand Sacristan of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem; His Grace Bishop Aram Ateshian, Grand Sacristan of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople; and approximately 20 additional archbishops and bishops of the Armenian Church – primates of Armenian Dioceses in North and South America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

On Tuesday, May 6, the Pontiff of All Armenians and his delegation arrived in Rome. This was His Holiness' third visit to the Vatican since his election as Catholicos of All Armenians in 1999.

The visit to Italy was composed of three parts: a four-day visit to the Vatican, a one-day visit to the Armenian community of Milan and a two-day visit to the Mekhitarian Congregation on the Island of San Lazzaro in Venice.

On Wednesday morning, His Holiness Karekin II and the Armenian bishops visited the tomb of Pope John Paul II of blessed memory, in the crypt below Saint Peter's Basilica, and offered a solemn prayer for the repose of his soul.

The Catholicos and the Armenian delegation also visited the newly named St. Gregory the Illuminator plaza inside St. Peter's courtyard and viewed the statue of the patron saint of the Armenian Church, placed there during the pontificate of John Paul II.

Immediately afterwards, the Armenian delegation of clergy and laity participated in the general audience in St. Peter's Square, jointly held by Pope Benedict XVI and Catholicos Karekin II. The two church heads exchanged messages of greeting, a fraternal embrace and kiss of peace on the platform in front of the mother cathedral of the Roman Catholic Church, before a crowd of more than 35,000 faithful.

That same afternoon, His Holiness Karekin II was presented with an Honoris Causa doctorate degree from the Pontifical Salesian University recognizing his fruitful work in Christian Education and Youth Instruction.

On Thursday, May 8, His Holiness Karekin II and his delegation visited the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, and conveyed his blessings and warm greetings to the participants of a symposium dedicated to the study of the Armenian Divine Liturgy.

Friday morning, May 9, the delegation of 100 Armenian bishops and faithful went to the Apostolic Palace of the Holy See, for a private audience under the joint presidency of His Holiness Karekin II and



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His Holiness Benedict XVI. The two pontiffs again exchanged warm messages of greeting and brotherly love, embraced with a solemn kiss of peace and spoke of the strong ties and increasing collaboration between the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

A short prayer service was held under the presidency of both church heads, following which, the faithful approached the Catholicos and the Pope to kiss their right hands and receive their blessings. At the conclusion of the audience, Catholicos Karekin II and Pope Benedict XVI met privately during lunch to discuss issues of importance to both Churches.

In the afternoon, His Holiness Karekin II, met with His Grace Archbishop Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Vatican Guest House for a private meeting. The head of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion was coincidentally also in the Holy See this week, and the two fondly recalled the Archbishop's fraternal visit to Holy Etchmiadzin in September 2007, as well as discussed the upcoming Lambeth Conference for the Anglican Communion and the current state of relations with sister Churches.

The final event at the Vatican was an Ecumenical Prayer Service, offered at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, where the grave of St. Paul the Apostle is located. His Holiness Karekin II presided during the service, which included the participation of Roman Catholic and Armenian Church bishops and clergy.

In addition to the official events throughout the course of the week, His Holiness and the church hierarchs also visited a number of Armenian and Catholic churches and shrines. His Holiness and the high-ranking clergymen departed Rome for Milan on Saturday morning, where he met chaired an event dedicated to the 50-th anniversary of foundation of the local Armenian church.

On May 11-12 His Holiness was the guest of the Mkhetarist Armenian Catholic Congregation on the island of san Lazzaro.

SOCIAL

50. CITIZENS' VISITS TO YEREVAN POLYCLINICS INCREASE BY 10% IN JANUARY-APRIL 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

The number of citizens' visits to Yerevan polyclinics made 650935 in January-April 2008, which exceeds the index of the same period of the previous year by 10%. As Armen Soghoyan, the Head of the Health and Social Security Department of Yerevan Mayor's Office, said at the May 12 press conference, in the above mentioned period the number of people's visits to narrow specialists increased by 38% and the number of laboratory instrumental researches by 37.4%. 12013 patients received free treatment in 6 clinics under the subordination of Mayor's Office in the above mentioned months, which exceeds previous year's index by 19.9%. At the same time it was mentioned that the number of births also increased by 5.8% in these months in Yerevan.

According to A. Soghoyan, the number of people receiving free medicines also increased by 18.2% in January-April. According to him, it means that citizens consider important primary medical aid, as a result of which the number of citizens using free dispensary polyclinical services grows year by year. At the same time it was mentioned that as of May 1, 86% Yerevan population was registered at district therapists in the primary health protection link. It was also mentioned that 344 doctors and 205 nurses had retraining within the framework of the World Bank (WB) credit program. 42 doctors and 43 nurses have retraining at present.

A. Soghoyan said that the repairs implemented at the St Mother of God and St Gregory the Illuminator medical centers within the framework of the WB credit program will also finish soon.

51. MEDICS OF YEREVAN INVOLVED IN THREE MONTH-LONG CLEAN-UP [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Medical personnel of Yerevan hospitals and clinics are actively involved in the ongoing clean-up declared by the municipality which will end in June.

The clean-up embraces areas adjacent to these institutions. Armen Soghoyan, head of health and social issues department of the Yerevan municipality, told today that 44 trucks of garbage and refuse were collected and taken to the dump. He said medics planted also 345 trees.

This is the first time Yerevan municipality is having a three month-long clean-up. Last year it lasted for 30 days.



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52. NSS PREVENTS IMPORT OF ILLEGAL NARCOTICS [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Armenian National Security Service (NSS) said as a result of operative work its officers revealed and staved off an illegal import of a big quantity of narcotics to Armenia from the neighboring Iran.

According to NSS press office, narcotics were found in a cache in the cabin of a truck owned by Hovik Khallatian, a resident of Georgian Marneuli. The narcotics were discovered on May 8 when it crossed into Armenia. The press office said overall 2,330 of opium and 35 grams of hashish were found.

Khalatian was arrested. A criminal case was started. The case is being handled by NSS investigators.

53. FRIENDS OF RUSSIA OPENS BRANCH IN ASHTARAK [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

A branch of a charity organization called Friends of Russia opened in Ashtarak, the administered capital of the central Armenian province of Aragatsotn.

This is the third branch of the organization. It has branches also in Lori and Armavir. The branch will be addressing problems and issues which are a concern for the provincial ethnic Russian population.

Anahit Danielian, head of Ashtarak branch, told Armenpress that they will organize exchange visits to Russia and other former Soviet republics, concerts and charity fairs.

She said local authorities have promised to support the branch. The nearest event to be organized by the branch will be dedicated to 350-th anniversary of Israel Ori, a prominent Armenian of the 18-th century who sought Russian Empire's support to Armenia that was then under Persia and Turkey.

54. ARMENIAN FARMERS EXPECT GOOD YIELD OF FRUITS AND GRAPE [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

A senior official of the Agricultural Ministry predicted today an abundant yield of apricots, grape and some other fruits this year. Garnik Petrosian, head of an Agricultural Ministry's department, told a news conference that farmers are very likely to gather up to 60,000 tons of apricot.

He said if the weather gives no surprises farmers may gather up to 260,000 tons of fruits, by 17 percent more than in 2007 and 240,000 tons of grape that will be 10 percent higher.

He said land under crops has increased by 6,000-7,000 hectares and the aggregate forecasted yield may rise up to 480,000 tons. According to him, Agricultural Ministry officials are discussing with apricot growers ways and terms of apricot exports to Russia either by air, ferry boats or railway.

He also said local canneries are already signing procurement contracts with farmers and there will be no payment delays.

He said severe cold in January damaged only some sorts of peaches which ripe earlier, while others which do it later were not damaged. He said the cold damaged also some vineyards.

He said the amount of damages caused by the sudden snaps of cold this month in some high altitude regions of the country is insignificant.

55. 344 PEOPLE PASS TRAINING AND GET FAMILY DOCTOR QUALIFICATION WITHIN WB'S CREDIT PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Within the framework of World Bank's credit program 344 officials of the medical system participated in training and received family doctors' qualification. The training of other 42 is in the process.

Within the framework of the same program 205 family nurses have been trained.

The head of the municipality's health and social affairs department Armen Soghoyan said today at a press conference that construction works carried out in "St. Goodness" and "St. Grigor Lusavorich" medical centers, within the framework of World Bank program, will soon end.

He said the program is effective: the mentioned medical establishments are providing medical services in accordance with international standards.

56. NIKOLAY RIZHKOV INITIATES ERECTION OF A MONUMENT DEDICATED TO VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE IN GYUMRI [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the disastrous earthquake in Gyumri and Spitak, on the coming December 7, a monument will be erected in Gyumri dedicated to the victims of the disaster. The initiator of creation of the monument is former head of the Soviet government, Russian Trade-Industrials Minister Nikolay Rizhkov.



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The author of the monument is Russian people's artist and Armenian honored artist Fridrich Soghoyan who erected monument of Nikolay Rizhkov in Spitak.

"Moskovski Komsomolets" newspaper reported that the monument will be transported from Moscow to Gyumri by a military-transport plane of the Russia's Defense Ministry.

57. ARMENIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS OT HAVE TRAINING COURSE IN USA [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Some 60 secondary school teachers from Eurasia and South Asia will have an extensive training course in the USA designed to help them improve their teaching skills. The training is to be held within the frameworks of a program called "Education Excellence and Achievements In Eurasia, South Asia" conducted by IREX organization.

Teachers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan will have a 6 week-long training at a US-based university.

Tigran Tovmasian, an IREX education consultant in Armenia, told Armenpress that the training will embrace curricula development, teaching methodology and other relevant aspects along with practical classes.

The program will also include a 2-3 week-long practice at a school to give its participants an opportunity to closely cooperate with American peers and students.

This program's participants will be allocated post-program grants for purchase of materials which their schools need to help organize classes for teachers.

He said five Armenian school teachers received grants last year to conduct special classes in their respective schools. He said American school teachers visited Armenia in April.

In spring 2009 15 teachers from USA schools will pay mutual visits to Eurasia and South Asia.

58. SHIRAK RECEIVES 168 MILLION DRAMS TO FUND PAID PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

The northwestern province of Shirak has received 168 million Drams to support Paid Pubic Works program.

Amalia Adamian, head of the provincial Employment Center, told Armenpress the money is divided among regional employment centers based on unemployment rates.

The timetable of works to be carried out within its framework has been developed. In Gyumri alone, which is the provincial capital, some 1000 jobless people will get seasonal employment. This year too university students will be eligible.

The bulk of projects are of social nature-such as tree planting, maintenance of green zones, restoration of water pipelines and repair of roads. The daily rate for these people is 2,000 Drams.

59. GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE 1.6 BILLION DRAMS AS AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

The government has earmarked a total of 1 billion and 645 million Drams as subsidies to farmers. The amount is 8 times higher of last year's figures, when the government began the pilot subsidizing program.

Garnik Petrosian, head of an Agricultural Ministry department, told a news conference today that subsidies will be made available to farmers after a concurrent monitoring of spring agricultural works is over.

He said if a farmer inflates the size of the cultivated land he will become ineligible.

According to Garnik Petrosian, last year's subsidies prompted that farmers increase cultivated land areas by some 20 percent, while the communities which received subsidies increased agricultural production volume by 25 percent.

The amount of subsidy is 35,000 Drams per one hectare of vineyards and orchards. Farmers will get 35,000 Drams per each one newly cultivated hectare of land under crops and fodder plants for the first year and half of the subsidy for the following years.

Garnik Petrosian said next year all provinces except for Ararat and Armavir, will be eligible to subsidizing.



60. CONCEPT ON APPLYING INSURANCE SYSTEM TO BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY OCTOBER [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Concept on applying Insurance system will be presented to the Armenian government by October. Currently it is being developed in the Armenian Agriculture Ministry.

Head of a department of the ministry Garnik Petrosian said today that within the frameworks of the concept the methods of applying contemporary insurance conditions, its mechanisms and policy will be presented. It will also register times of growth of separate plants and possible threats connected with nature disasters.

In parallel with it a program of implementation of the Insurance system is being worked out.

61. TWO STUDENTS FROM EUROPEAN AND YEREVAN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITIES TO STUDY IN ATHENS' HIGHER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

On the initiative of the "Intracom Armenia" and Athens' "Intracom Telecom" companies from the September of the running year a student from the Armenian European University and one from the Yerevan State Polytechnic University's information technology department will have an opportunity to continue their education in the Athens' Higher School of Information Technology with 1.5 year term.

Head of IT solutions department of the "Intracom Armenia" company Asya Dallakian told Armenpress that students of the two universities have already applied for participation in the contest as a result of which best students will be selected. The applications for participation will be accepted until May 15.

A. Dallakian said that they have reached agreement with the Armenian Economy Ministry according to which one of its officials, whom the ministry will select itself, will also get an opportunity to study and develop skills in Athens.

"The goal of the program is to give the students an opportunity to receive contemporary education in one of the best European IT schools," she said.

The program costs 40,000 euros and during the study the students will also receive 10,000 euro scholarship. During that period they will also have an opportunity to arrive in Armenia twice.

Armenian Deputy Economy Minister Vahe Danielian greeted the conduction of the program and thanked "Intracom Armenia" company for providing such an opportunity and highly underscored the implementation of such programs.

"Intracom Armenia" company is the Armenian branch of "Intracom Telecom" company which suggests effective and progressive solutions in telecommunications sphere.

62. JUSTICE COUNCIL APPLIES TO ARMENIAN PRESIDENT FOR SUSPENDING AUTHORITIES OF A JUDGE [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

The Justice Council discussed on May 8 the mediation of the Armenian Court of Cassation on suspending the authorities of Misha Asatrian, judge of the Armenian civil court, for not carrying out his duties for more than four months because of not being able to work temporary.

The council decided to apply to the Armenian President for suspending the authorities of M. Asatrian, press secretary of Armenian Court of Cassation Alina Yengoyan said.

63. CRIMINAL CASE OPENED AGAINST EMPLOYEE OF PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

By the May 8 decision of the RA prosecutor general Aghvan Hovsepian, a criminal case was opened against Hakob Simonian, an assistant prosecutor of Yerevan's Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeytun communities, based on the fact of taking a bribe of a large amount (the RA Criminal Code's Article 311 part 4 point 2), NT correspondent was informed by the RA prosecutor general's office. The case has been sent to the RA Special Investigation Service.

Resident of Yerevan Samvel Gareginian on April 28 submitted a report to the National Security Service adjunct to the RA government. According to the report, in the presence of S. Gareginian, assistant prosecutor Hakob Simonian demanded 12 thousand dollars from Hrachia Karapetian (he is S. Gareginian's friend, his son Alexander Karapetian lives in Germany and he came temporarily to Armenia in early December 2006) for ending the search for A. Karapetian for military service evasion. In the period before December 10, H. Simonian received 8 thousand dollars, saying that he would take the rest of the money after completing the case, while later he neither kept his promise nor returned the money.



64. FIRST LONDON-YEREVAN TV BRIDGE HELD BETWEEN LAWYERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The first London-Yerevan TV bridge held between Armenian and British lawyers, as Ruben Sahakian, the Chairman of the RA Chamber of Lawyers, explained, is implemented under a program aimed at assisting Armenian lawyers in the issue of introducing more literate, high-quality complaints to the European Court. "It is a unique way of exchanging experience, which will reduce the financial expenditures," the Chamber Chairman said adding that there is already an agreement to develop similar cooperation with lawyers of France and Belgium. R. Sahakian also said that on May 12 the RA Chamber of Lawyers uniting 718 lawyers will become an observing member of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) (only country-members of the European Union can become a full member of it), representatives of that international lawyer structure will visit Armenia in September. R. Sahakian expressed satisfaction with the fact that soon the Armenian Chamber of Lawyers, in its turn, will be able to assist its Karabakh colleagues, to hold seminars with a number of post-Soviet countries.

The TV bridge was held within the framework of the memorandum of cooperation in the spheres of human rights and permanent law education signed between the British East-West Centre organization and the RA Chamber of Lawyers in January 2007.

All technical means for holding the TV bridge were got with the financing of the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in RA. The program was worked out with the joint efforts of the latter, the British East-West Centre, and RA lawyers in consideration of the proposals of lawyers having introduced complaints to the European Court of Human Rights. The program's goal is to be in a direct contact through Internet with London lawyers specialized in the issue of applying to the European Court, to hold with them discussions of Armenian lawyers' questions regarding concrete cases. Among the seven questions raised during the TV bridge was, in particular, the question of whether the relatives of Murad Bojolian sentenced with the accusation of espionage can introduce a claim of additional compensation of expenditures to the European Court, negligence in connection with institution of a case against a lawyer, the issue of applying to the European Court with the basis of violation of the reasonable terms of case examination, and the bases and details of applying to the European Court in connection with other cases.

The case on the fact of dismissing a YSU political science lecturer for expressing an anti-governmental position was also touched upon. In this connection the British specialists expressed an opinion that the basis of Article 6 of the Convention, the right of fair judicial enquiry, would be liable if we had a person carrying out a state function: according to the British specialists, a lecturer does not carry out a state function. On the occasion of the case they can apply to the European Court with the basis of Article 10 of the Convention, freedom of expression.

65. OPERATION OF TEGHUT MINE WILL CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO NATURE AND LOCAL POPULATION, ENVIRONMENTALISTS WARN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The operation of the Teghut mine of strategical importance to Armenia will cause considerable damage both to the local population and nature, the chairman of Burg NGO Arman Vermishian said at the May 13 press conference.

According to him, the mine operation project contains unspecified figures, while the scale of actual damage has been considerably reduced. "Today Lori marz is endangered. In case of operation of this mine as well, we will face a serious danger. Explosions to be made during the operation will also cause panic in the local animal world," A. Vermishian said.

In his words, one of the project's errors is that ACP company operating the mine has assessed 1 square meter of the area at 38 drams only, which gives an occasion for doubt. Besides, so far it is not clear how many hectares of forest will be felled. A. Vermishian announced that 3 ha of forest has already been cut down.

66. BY OPERATING TEGHUT MINE, WE WILL BECOME A BACKWARD COUNTRY, MEMBER OF "HERITAGE" FACTION SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Who is behind the company registered in Liechtenstein and owns 81% of ACP company that has a licence for operating the Teghut mines. This and a number of similar questions related to operation of the Teghut mine will be presented to the government, member of the NA "Heritage" faction Zaruhi Postanjian stated at the May 13 press conference.

She said that the current prime minister knows very well the scale of damage to be done to the country as a result of the mine's operation. "The prime minister has delivered good lectures on which



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countries are considered developed, which are industrial or postindustrial and which are servicing, backward countries. According to the prime minister, the countries with an economy which is developing based on mining industry are considered as the most backward ones," Z. Postanjan underlined, adding that in fact, we will become a backward country by operating the Teghut mine.

She expressed confidence that the implementation of the government's decision may be prevented if the society applies much pressure. "If Teghut's operation is not prevented, mines will be dug to the detriment of nature in other parts of Armenia. In particular, work to determine the uranium reserves has already begun in Syunik marz," the deputy said. She announced that the environmentalists are going to dispute in a legal way the government decision on operation of the Teghut mine.

67. ARTASHAT LIBRARY GETS 1,100 BOOKS [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

About 1,100 books were donated to Ohan Chubarian Library in the town of Artashat, Ararat province by the Armenian Culture Ministry, Russian Book Center in Yerevan and the Union of Armenian Writers.

The donation ceremony on May 13 was attended by Levon Ananyan, chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, representatives of the Culture Ministry and prominent people of art.

The majority of books-1000-were donated by the Russian Book Center.

Karo Vardanian, head of the cultural policy department of the Culture Ministry, said all libraries receive funds on annual basis for purchase of books.

Among the donated books are works by Russian literature classics, history, culture and children literature. Karo Vardanian said the government approved a program of major repair of all provincial libraries that will be implemented in 2009. All of them will be connected to natural gas networks and have secure winter heating.

Artashat Library director, Yuri Petrosian, said the library will mark its 60-th establishment anniversary in October and the centenary of a prominent literary critic Ohan Chubarian. The government will release 400,000 Drams to help the library mark both anniversaries.

Yuri Petrosian said the library receives every year from 300 to 3,000 pieces of books and subscribes also to 12 dailies and monthlies.

The Artashat Library has a total of 94,343 books now. It employs 26 people.

68. 16,100 JOBLESS PEOPLE ELIGIBLE TO ALLOWANCES [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

In quarter one of this year a total of 16,100 jobless people in Armenia were eligible to monthly unemployment allowances. In the first quarter of 2007, there were 11,400 jobless people eligible to monthly allowances.

At the beginning of this year there were 14,800 unemployed people receiving allowances. At the beginning of 2007 there were 10,200 such people.

According to the Armenian National Statistical Committee, the average unemployment allowance by the end of March, 2008 was 13,338 Drams. It was slightly down from 14,095 Drams in January.

In March of the last year the average unemployment allowance was 10,458 Drams.

The average unemployment monthly level in quarter one was 6.4 percent, down from 7.4 in 2007 first quarter.

The majority of all officially registered jobless people – 83.4 percent – had worked for one and more years before losing their jobs, 4.2 percent had worked less than 12 months.

Fifty one percent of all jobless people had secondary education, 23.2 percent-vocational education and 12 percent-higher education. The majority were women.

69. SIX GRADUATES OF "HUYS" CHILDREN'S HOME TO GET FREE APARTMENTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Six graduates of Huys (Hope) children's home in Gyumri are included in the Support for Children's Homes Graduates program handled by the Labor and Social Issues Ministry.

Ruben Markosian, head of Huys children's home, told Armenpress that this program will be fulfilled in two stages. In the first stage part of graduates will get apartments before July and the rest before the end of the year.

The graduates' choice of a town for permanent residence will be taken into consideration. This program is implemented in cooperation with Fund for Armenian Relief.



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The oldest graduate of Huys children's home is 22 years old. He has been in the list for receiving free apartment for three years. Before he gets his apartment he is living with his relatives, while others continue to live in the children's home despite lack of extra housing.

70. EDIK KHACHATRIAN FOUND GUILTY OF KEEPING ILLEGAL ARMS AND AMMUNITION [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

The northern criminal court found Edik Khachatrian guilty according to the 2 point of the 235 article (illegal acquiring, selling and keeping of arms and ammunition, explosive materials or devices).

Press secretary of the Armenian Court of Cassation Alina Yengoyan told Armenpress that E. Khachatrian has been sentenced to 3-year imprisonment. The court did not apply the sentence against E. Khachatrian conditionally establishing probation for 3-year term.

E. Khachatrian was accused of keeping illegal ammunition belonging to the director of "Vanatur" restaurant Sasun Mikaelian, in one of the stores of the restaurant, from October 2007 to March 1, 2008. For eliminating the traces of crime, E. Khachatrian threw the boxes with ammunition into a small lake near the restaurant.

71. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE HELD IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian addressed today a two-day seminar entitled 'Armenian Information Technology Competitiveness and Innovation.' The main focus of the conference is on prompting this sector's competitiveness, IT cluster development and looking into its prospects and problems.

The minister said the goal of the conference is to study this sector, raise major probes and point out ways of their solution.

In his words, the government regards IT sector as a priority, an industry which is closely related to other economy sectors. He said this means action to significantly decrease the gap between Armenia and developed countries.

The minister, particularly, singled out creation of a techno-park in the second largest town of Gyumri, one-month of IT, implementation of a Computer to Everyone program and introduction of interactive education.

H. Alexander, CAPS program manager and Ralph Andersen from the USAID, spoke at the conference, saying Armenia has a big potential to expand IT sector, which will in turn create new jobs.

According to Andersen, almost 70 percent of all investments in Armenia IT sector in recent years came from the USA. Armenia IT products are sold in 23 countries.

SPORTS

72. ROMAN AMOYAN JOINS ARMENIAN SPORTSMEN LEAVING FOR BEIJING [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/10/08]

The International Olympic Rating Tournament of Greco-Roman Wrestling finished on May 11 in Rome. Five sportsmen performed from Armenia. Only Roman Amoyan (55 kg, Yerevan) among them performed successfully. He won in 3 out of 4 fights, took the 3rd place and received a permit to take part in the Beijing Olympic Games.

Now Arman Adikian, Yuri Patrikeyev, and Roman Amoyan among Armenian Greco-Roman wrestlers have a permit to take part in the Beijing Olympic Games.

The last rating tournament of Greco-Roman wrestlers will start on May 22 in the city of Novy Sad, Serbia.

73. ARMENIAN UNDER -19 CELEBRATE THIRD SUCCESSIVE WIN IN ITALY [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Armenia's Under-19 national soccer team celebrated their third successive victory over peers from Italian Juventus FC. The Armenians scored 4 goals and received one. This was their third victory over Italian clubs.

Armenians are playing at an international tournament in Italy featuring youth teams.

The team's head coach is Armen Gyulbudaghjian. Earlier Armenians upset Monza and Vicenza teams also scoring four goals and receiving one in each game.



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74. ARMENIAN TENNIS TEAM DROPS OUT OF DAVIS CUP [ARMENPRESS, 05/12/08]

Armenian men tennis team lost today 0:3 to the team from Estonia dropping out of the Davis Cup of the 3d Euro-African championship and in 2009 will play in lower – 4th zone.

Armenian tennis team's membership consisted of Harutyun Sofian, Hayk Zorianian, Roman Yedigarian. The coach of the team is Vahe Avetisian.

The chairman of the Armenian Tennis Federation, member of National Assembly Harutyun Pambukian told Armenpress that the conduction of international tournaments in Armenia promote the development of national tennis.

75. BOXER ALEXANDER ABRAHAMIAN BEATS HIS FRENCH RIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/13/08]

Brother of Arthur Abraham, the middle-weight world boxing champion, Alexander Abrahamian beat today representative of France M. Hazrii.

Alexander Abrahamian stopped participating in championships after receiving a bad trauma and after a long lasting pause he again returned to the ring.

76. NATIONAL TEAM OF UNDER 19 FOOTBALL PLAYERS OF ARMENIA FINISH COMPETITION TOUR IN ITALY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

The national team of under 19 football players of Armenia finished their competition tour in Italy. A 2:2 draw was recorded in the third control match with the Breshia youth team. Like in the first and second games, the national team of Armenia gained a victory in the fourth one as well with the 4:1 score. This time the Armenian football players defeated the youth of the famous Juventus club.

77. FIRST ROUND GAMES FINISH IN INTERNATIONAL CHESS TOURNAMENT IN SOFIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Levon Aronian was beaten by leader Vasili Ivanchuk (the Ukraine) on May 12, in the 5th tour of the International Chess Tournament being held in Sofia. Vasili Ivanchuk gaining 5 out of 5 possible points remains at the top of the tournament table.

Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria), Teymir Rajabov (Azerbaijan), and Ivan Cheparinov (Bulgaria) have 2 points each, Levon Aronian 1.5 points, and Bu Syan Chzhi (China) 1 point.

The first round of the tournament finished, and May 13 is announced a rest day. In the first tour of the second round scheduled for May 14 L. Aronian will compete with V. Topalov.

78. 5 ARMENIAN BOXERS TO TAKE PART IN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT IN SPAIN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/13/08]

Five members of the Armenian boxing national team have left for Spain on May 12 to take part in the International Boxing Tournament. Hovhannes Danielian (48 kg), Hrachya Javakhian (60 kg), Edward Hambartsumian (64 kg), and Andranik Hakobian (75 kg) among them have a permit to take part in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

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