



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, May 16, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. NATIONAL MOVEMENT REPRESENTATIVES DEMAND THAT YEREVAN MAYOR'S OFFICE AUTHORIZE HOLDING OF RALLY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The supporters of first RA President, radical opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrosian, on May 14, organized an action of protest near Yerevan Mayor's Office. The demonstrators, who carried placards "Freedom to Liberty Square!," "Don't Defy Democracy!," "No to Slavery!" demanded a permission of organizing rallies, processions, and demonstrations from Mayor's Office. As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by Artak Zeynalian, a member of the Hanrapetutun (Republic) party's Political Board, the Mayor's Office has declined opposition's all applications on organization of mass actions with groundless and false motivations so far.

Norayr Norikian, a member of the Alternative political-public initiative, in his turn, said that after the March 1 events the authorities have already for 28 times declined the applications of the national movement representatives on authorizing rallies. "We demand that the Armenian authorities fulfill the requirements of the PACE resolution and lastly we demand that the Mayor's Office take into consideration our applications on rallies to be held on May 23 and 24," N. Norikian said.

He stated that unless their demands are satisfied, they will do what Levon Zurabian, a member of L. Ter-Petrosian's central headquarters, has stated by Public Television lately: they will call the people for gathering in Liberty Square on June 20.

2. FORMER PRESIDENT OF FRANCE JACQUES CHIRAC CONGRATULATES EDWARD NALBANDIAN ON BEING APPOINTED AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER OF ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian continues receiving congratulatory messages on his appointment.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that former president of France Jacques Chirac sent a message to the minister which runs as follows,

"With great joy I learnt about Your entrance to the Armenian government as foreign affairs minister. I convey my warmest congratulations on that occasion. It is the recognition of Your talents which I had an opportunity to assess during Your whole tenure as an Armenian ambassador to France.

With Your wonderful dynamism and energy You worked for the development of Armenian-French relations and had a resolute role in the formation of close and intensive ties which exist today between our countries.

I wish You success in Your new responsible mission."

3. U.S. CONGRESSMAN JIM COSTA ASKS MARI YOVANOVICH ABOUT HER OPINION ABOUT ISSUE ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

U.S. Congressman Jim Costa at the end of the last week sent a letter to the candidate nominated as a U.S. ambassador to Armenia Mari Yovanovich asking her to tell about her approaches to the issue of the Armenian Genocide and her opinion.

"It is important for the USA to fulfill this vacancy in Armenia, but before she will be approved by the Senate it is very important for me to know her opinion about the Armenian Genocide," he said.

4. ELECTIONS OF HEADS OF AVAN, DAVITASHEN, MALATIA-SEBASTIA, NORK-MARASH DISTRICTS TO TAKE PLACE MAY 18 [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Elections of heads of communities of capital's Avan, Davitashen, Malatia-Sebastia, Nork-Marash districts will be conducted on May 18.

Press secretary of the Armenian Central Electoral Commission Tatevik Ohanian said that in Avan only one candidate has been registered – the functioning head of the district Taron Margarian (member of the Republican Party).



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Davitashen district too, has only one candidate – Arthur Gevorgian (from Republican Party). He is the deputy of the head of the district. David Ohanian, again from the Republican Party, is the only candidate in Malatia-Sebastia district.

Member of the Republican Party Varazdat Mkrтчian, non-parties Garnik Martirosian and Ashot Margarian will fight for the office of the head of Nork-Marash district.

5. A PERSON CONVICTED CONNECTED WITH MARCH 1-2 UNREST [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenian criminal court sentenced today Mkrтч Abrahamian to 3 year and 6 months imprisonment after finding him guilty in mass distractions, burnings, robbery, violence, armed confrontation displayed towards representatives of power and direct participation in mass unrest March 1-2, press secretary of the Armenian Court of Cassation Alina Yengoyan told Armenpress.

6. "MAIN REASON OF SPLIT OF ARMENIAN SOCIETY ARE VICTIMS OF MARCH 1 EVENTS," LEADER OF ULP BELIEVES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

According to Gurgen Arsenian, the Leader of the United Labour Party, the Armenian society is currently split, first of all because of the human losses of the March 1 events. Commenting on the March 1 events, Gurgen Arsenian reminded of the April 12, 2004 events at the press conference held on May 15, when the mass meeting of the opposition was dispersed with the interference of law enforcement bodies, however, no one died then. According to him, in difference to the 2004 events, they did not manage to avoid "irreparable human losses" on March 1, 2008.

In response to the question of who is guilty of the victims, Gurgen Arsenian mentioned that the issue will be made clear by the investigation of the law enforcement bodies. According to him, law enforcement bodies "are not a charity organization" and their activities can sometimes bring forth irreparable losses.

Gurgen Arsenian stated that the ULP has always considered the phenomenon, when political processes are moved to "a civil plane", as inadmissible. As an example he introduced the recent events in Lebanon, in which the civil society was involved. "That is the most dangerous thing," Gурgen Arsenian said, adding that the March 1 situation in Armenia was like the current one in Lebanon, however, later they managed to hold up the aggravation of the situation in Armenia.

The ULP, in his words, does not hurry to officialy respond to the March 1 events as it is seeking to remain loyal, not wanting to "pour oil on the flames."

7. "THERE ARE PEOPLE IN ARMENIA, WHO ARE DETAINED FOR HAVING CHANGED THEIR POLITICAL CONVICTIONS," GURGEN ARSENIAN DECLARES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

At present, there are people in Armenia, who are detained for having changed their political convictions and positions. This statement was made by Gурgen Arsenian, the Leader of the United Labour Party, at the press conference, which was held on May 15. According to him, irrespective of the fact that the RA Criminal Code does not include an article assuming prosecution for political views, it is a fact that, for example, NA MP freedom fighter Sasun Mikayelian was put under arrest immediately after he changed his decision on supporting Serge Sargsian and moved to the opposition front.

Referring to Karapet Rubinian, another defendant within the frameworks of the criminal case filed in connection with the March 1 events, Gурgen Arsenian mentioned that knowing the latter well he does not believe that Rubinian could behave like a hooligan. In addition to this, in the words of the ULP Leader, it is very unusual for him that such a political figure like Mikayel Hayrapetian, the Chairman of the Conservative Party, who is known for his activities in favour of Armenians, has currently gone underground.

8. ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENTS TO MEET ON JUNE 7 [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents Serzh Sargsian and Ilham Aliyev will meet on June 7 in Saint Petersburg.

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said today in the NA that it is always necessary to be optimistic for seeing basis for the regulation of the conflict. He expressed hope that the meeting of the presidents will open new doors in the process.

"The Armenia's approach is continuation of negotiations. Armenia has expressed its readiness to continue the negotiations on the basis of the suggestions which were presented by the OSCE Minsk



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Group co-chairs in Madrid and it is necessary that the negotiations continue on their basis," Nalbandian said.

Azerbaijani side is periodically reporting approaches which are presented as if they are points of the document, but they are opinions of the Azerbaijani side.

Currently the core of the negotiations is the status of Nagorno Karabakh which must be regulated taking into consideration the wish of the people of Artsakh.

9. KARABAKH NA FACTIONS SUGGEST PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT DEVELOP "NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT" [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Parliamentary factions of Nagorno Karabakh "Democracy", "Homeland" and "ARF Movement 88" presented a conclusion on May 14 connected with the process of international recognition of Nagorno Karabakh and steps stemming from it.

Press service of the Nagorno Karabakh NA told Armenpress that taking into consideration the results of hearings on "Karabakh Conflict: Prospects of Regulation" held on April 21, 2006 and discussions of the extended session of NA's permanent commissions on "Main tendencies of the process of negotiations over Karabakh conflict" on April 2, 2008 the factions considered it necessary to suggest president of Karabakh and the government the following:

- undertake practical steps on legal regulation of inter-state relations, aiming at consolidating the current level of negotiations and register new priorities stemming from regional and international developments

- ground the necessity of direct participation of Nagorno Karabakh in negotiation process with its efficiency

- develop and present to the National Assembly Karabakh's "National Security Concept" stemming from the priorities of conflict regulation

- before development and approval of the concept create a special task group of strategic analyses and information issues

- with that aim use the permanent representations of Karabakh abroad and potential of the Armenian Diaspora to exert more efforts towards international recognition of Nagorno Karabakh.

10. ARMENIAN FM SAYS ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF OPENING OF ARMENIAN EMBASSY IN JAPAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenia needs to open embassy in Tokyo, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said today to the reporters in the NA. According to him, in a country like Japan, with which Armenia has both economic and other quite active relations it will be right to have an embassy which will coordinate them.

The minister said that as of 2007 Armenia has 45 diplomatic representations. In 2007 an office of consulate affairs opened in Prague, general consulate opened in Batumi. During the recent years as a result of the program adopted by the government buildings acquired for the Armenian diplomatic missions are becoming their property.

From the representations functioning abroad, buildings of embassies in 14 countries are their property, seven of them were bought with the money released from the budget. In 12 countries the buildings are given for usage on irretrievable basis and in 15 countries they are hired.

"In 2008 Armenia has not yet open representations as it is very difficult to open even one representation with the provided funds. In several countries Armenia must by all means have representations and the sooner the better. The opportunities are not big to open representations in places where we want, but we must do everything to open them there were we need the most," the minister said, adding that may be it will be possible to open 1-2 representations annually.

11. ARMENIAN DM RECEIVES RUSSIAN JOURNALISTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian met today with a number of representatives of the Russian leading mass media.

Spokesman for the Armenian Defense Ministry Seyran Shahsuvarian told Armenpress that guests congratulated the minister on his appointment and expressed hope that the ministry headed by him will continue the kind traditions of cooperation with Russian journalists.

The minister on his turn greeted the guests and answered to a number of questions they were interested in.



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12. ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER SAYS IT IS NECESSARY TO SEPARATE SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE BUSINESSES [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

For establishing and clarifying which is small business and which is large one in Armenia, it is necessary to first of all study the international experience and discuss with what standards the small and large businesses are separated from each other in other countries.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian said today at the meeting with businessmen that in such case there is no general solution “all the countries are establishing standards for themselves stemming from their development issues.”

“We must study the international experience but we must suggest our own Armenian model and the Armenian government must reach agreement with the businessmen in that respect,” the prime minister said, adding that with that reason statistics and government’s opinion will be presented to the businessmen and approaches will be suggested for formulation of small and middle size business.

“As a result of joint discussions we will reach agreement and I think we will find balanced solutions for all the sides to be satisfied,” the prime minister said.

13. E. NALBANDIAN SAYS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION MAIN PRIORITY OF ARMENIA’S FOREIGN POLICY [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

The European integration is the one of the main priorities of Armenia’s foreign policy and the efforts of the country are directed towards balancing to European political, economic and administrative standards.

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian told yesterday at the presentation of the European integration part of the 2007 budget performance report that the inclusion of Armenia in the European Neighborhood Policy and the signing of the action plan opened new round of EU-Armenian cooperation.

According to E. Nalbandian, besides the political importance, the program may become a tool supporting the reforms in Armenia. The minister reminded that before the Action Plan of the EU’s New Neighborhood policy entered into effect, EU provided financial assistance to Armenia through TACIS program which is still in process.

The minister said by the EU’s New Neighborhood “TWINING” and “TAYEX” tools process of making country’s legislation, administrative and institutional systems to European standards has been launched.

Armenian Deputy Finance Minister, chief treasurer Atom Janjughazian said that connected with Euro-integration issues a separate program has not been intended by the 2007 budget. The carried out programs stemmed from the European Neighborhood Policy – Armenian-EU Action Plan program.

14. STEPAN DEMIRTCHIAN ASSURES THAT OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE ITS ACTIVITY ONLY WITHIN THE CIRCLES OF LAW [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Armenian People’s Party has not yet discussed the suggestion of the former candidate of the presidential elections Levon Ter-Petrosian on creating a national Armenian congress of opposition forces.

The leader of the Armenian People’s Party Stepan Demirtchian told today at a press conference that in such issues the speed-up approach will not be right, though the party is not against the idea of enlarging the parties: joining of several forces on the ideological basis is necessary, he said.

As to the political situation created after March 1 developments, he said, the carried out steps are not enough for saying that the situation is no more tensed. S. Demirtchian noted that for the elimination of the consequences it is necessary to conduct unbiased, fair and transparent investigation as well as review the changes made in the Armenian Law on “Conduction of Marches, Meetings, Rallies” which is already in the process by the Armenian National Assembly.

Referring to the conduction of a dialogue, he said it demands concrete steps, besides it is necessary to implement the suggestions registered in the PACE resolution on the activity of the Armenian democratic institutions for which a special task group has been set up with the instruction of the Armenian president. As to the concrete steps of the opposition, K. Demirtchian said that it must follow that the authorities carry out the demands of the PACE and must participate in the political processes.

The political figure also said that the opposition will continue its activity only within the circles of law.



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15. PRIME MINISTER SARKISIAN DISCUSSES CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian received today UK's new ambassador to Armenia, Charles Lonsdale.

The government press office said after congratulating the ambassador on taking up his new tenure in Armenia, Tigran Sarkisian expressed hope that the ambassador's activity here will promote deepening of bilateral relations.

Concurrently with highlighting the development of British-Armenian political relations, the prime minister emphasized boosting of economic ties, the level of which is not satisfactory now.

The Armenian prime minister also noted that the government has designed a very ambitious plan for economic progress with the focus on solutions of social and economic problems.

Tigran Sarkisian also thanked the British International Development Office for supporting public reforms in Armenia and development of rural areas. He said Armenia wants to continue this cooperation by including new projects.

Tigran Sarkisian also said the government expects the British side to provide technical assistance for development and introduction of a new civic service concept. He said the government will do its best to ensure signing of bilateral agreement with UK on avoiding double taxation, which he said will become a serious impetus to enhancing economic relations.

Ambassador Lonsdale assured British side's willingness to continue ongoing programs in Armenia, saying for this it is cooperating now with the Council of Europe and World Bank. He said the government of UK is not going to cut its activity in Armenia, adding also that a lot depends on ongoing political processes in Armenia and its economic achievements. He, particularly, stressed the significance of support to the government's plan of actions designed to ensure proportional; development for all regions of the country.

Prime Minister Sarkisian assured that the government emphasizes the process of democratization having planned certain measures to solve the existing problems.

The government press office said the two men discussed also regional issues, referring, particularly, to Turkish-Armenian relations. Prime Minister Sarkisian reiterated Armenia's readiness for unconditional normalization of ties with Ankara. He said Great Britain can play a role in this.

16. REPRESENTATIVES OF "REPUBLICAN" AND "REPUBLIC" PARTIES UNDERSCORE REAL POLITICAL COMPETITION [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Member of the Armenian Republican Party Karen Avagian told today at a press conference that the approaches included in the PACE resolution connected with the Armenia's elections were discussed by the authorities before that. He said that the authorities are ready for dialogue but if pre-conditions are forwarded it is condemned to failure from the very beginning.

"The opposition demands that the arrestees be released and forward it as a pre-condition. The issue of the arrested people will be solved by the investigative bodies and it must not be brought to the political arena. Dialogue may be established on any level and after some time justice will show the arrested people are guilty or not," he said.

According to him, the issue of the authorities is to disclose all the guilty and punish them according to the law.

Member of the "Republic" party's political council Suren Surenyants said that the demands of the PACE must be implemented, people arrested for political reasons must be set free, changes of the law on conducting rallies must not be approved, and an international independent investigation must be conducted connected with March 1 unrest.

"The issue of the arrested people is very principle for us and the dialogue with the authorities is possible only in case of releasing them. Only at that time prerequisites will be created for real dialogue and other issues will not be presented as a precondition. I will be very glad if PACE demands are met and the opposition has never been against dialogue: there are political issues, there exists authorities and opposition and naturally, dialogue is necessary," Surenyants said.



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BUSINESS

17. ARMENIA TO BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN SILK ROAD TOURISM FESTIVAL IN DAMASCUS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

Prospects of developing tourism between Armenia and Syria were discussed at the May 12 meeting of the Armenian ambassador to Syria Arshak Poladian and the Syrian minister of tourism Saadalla Agha al-Qala. In particular, the sides underlined the necessity of signing a program of cooperation in the tourism sector for 2008-2011. The draft program is now under discussion.

Saadalla Agha al-Qala said that a Silk Road festival of tourism will be held in Damascus in October, and the Armenian side will soon receive an invitation to participate in this event.

According to a press release submitted to NT by the RA MFA Press and Information Department, on the same day A. Poladian met with the Syrian minister of education Ali Saad. The Armenian-Syrian cooperation in the education sector, as well as the details of the envisaged visit of the Armenian minister of education and science to Syria were discussed at the meeting.

Ali Saad attached special importance to the meeting with his Armenian counterpart, saying that there has been a close and mutually beneficial cooperation in education between the two countries, and the Syrian side is interested in developing this cooperation.

18. SECOND CONFERENCE ON COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION OF ARMENIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES OPENS IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Armenian government has set the goal of implementing a rapid technological transformation of the country and reducing the current technological gap, especially in terms of information technologies, between Armenia and developed countries, the RA minister of economy Nerses Yeritsian stated at the second conference on competitiveness and innovation of Armenian IT. The conference opened in Yerevan on May 14.

In his words, for this purpose several pilot programs are being implemented in Armenia in order to lay the basis of state - private sector cooperation in the IT sector's development. The head of the ministry - the event's organizer expressed a hope that the conference participants will identify the problems of IT sector's development and outline their solutions.

According to Hayley Alexander, director of the USAID-financed Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project - another organizer of the event, the conference aims to prepare IT companies' entrance into the financial market, as well as to discuss the regulation field of their activities and problems related to the implementation of investment and educational programs.

The director of the USAID Economic Development Office Rolf Anderson attached special importance to assistance to the IT sector, saying that sector has great potential in terms of contributing to Armenia's economic growth and its competitiveness. He said that from the viewpoint of IT sector's development level, Armenia is among leading countries in the CIS and the Middle East. According to him, the United States' share in the investments in the IT sector amounts to 70%.

The first day of the conference was dedicated to subjects of promoting IT competitiveness, including certification and protection of copyright and intellectual property. The main developments in the telecommunication sector were also presented.

A number of new and innovation products of Microsoft (MS Windows Server 2008, MS Visual Studio 2008, MS SQL Server 2008) will be displayed on the second day of the conference. Special attention will be paid to the models of optimization of Microsoft infrastructures as a form for planning the development of IT capacities, as well as to the IT sector's several major tendencies which will have a transforming effect on the infrastructures and use of software in the next 3-5 years.

The conference is being held in cooperation with the Union of IT Enterprises of Armenia, the Armenian Association of Three-Dimensional Modeling, the Association of Advanced Technology Experts and the E-Content Association.

Among the event's organizers are also Microsoft RA company and the Enterprise Incubator Foundation.



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19. DELEGATION FROM CB'S FINANCIAL MONITORING CENTER LEAVES FOR KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

A delegation from Central Bank's Financial Monitoring Center will be in Karabakh from May 14-16.

A representative from the Central Bank told Armenpress that as a result of the technical support of the center to the Karabakh authorities on December 26, 2007 a law on "Fighting against Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism" was adopted in Nagorno Karabakh and which entered into force from April 9, 2008.

Within the frameworks of support to the Karabakh authorities in fighting against money laundering and financing to terrorism a conference will be held in Stepanakert on May 15.

20. ABOUT 3,000 COMPANIES WITH FOREIGN CAPITAL REGISTERED IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

About 3,000 companies with foreign capital are registered in Armenia, but studies show that only half of them are active.

According to Valery Shabanov, foreign investments director of the Armenian Development Agency (ADA), the majority of active companies are joint ventures with USA, Russian, Lebanese, Iranian and the United Arab Emirates capital.

He said the number of joint ventures was on the rise in the last several years. The geography of countries has also expanded.

He said it is natural that not all registered companies are active, because they may start and then due to some reasons shut down.

21. CONSULTATION ON CREATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING CENTER IN NKR TO BE CONDUCTED IN STEPANAKERT ON MAY 15 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

A consultation on creation of the Financial Monitoring Center (FMC) - a body for the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing in the NKR - will be conducted in Stepanakert on May 15. NT was informed by the press service of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) that the consultation will take place under the program of CBA's assistance to the NKR authorities in the introduction of the system of fight against money laundering and terrorism financing in the NKR. A delegation of the CBA FMC will be in Nagorno Karabakh on May 14-16 in order to participate in the consultation.

Thanks to the technical assistance provided by the CBA FMC to the NKR authorities, the NKR Law on Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing was passed on December 26, 2007. The law took effect on April 9, 2008.

22. FINANCING OF EDUCATION INCREASES BY ABOUT 30% IN 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The state budgetary financing of the education and science sector grew by about 32% or 22.9 billion drams in 2007, the RA chief treasurer Atom Janjughazian said at the May 14 joint sitting of the RA National Assembly standing committees. According to him, 95.8 bln drams was spent instead of 91.8 bln drams envisaged by the state budget for education and science.

The share of science and education made 2.7% of GDP in 2006 and 3% of GDP in 2007. The financing of science remained at the same level making 5.9 bln drams, while the financing of education grew. Sums given to secondary education (76.8%) made the largest share of the allocations to education.

The minister of education and science Levon Mkrtchian said that in 2007 the budget of science and education had a programmed basis. In his words, the ministry has already developed detailed programs for up to 2015 and is cooperating under these programs with the World Bank and several other international financial structures.

Last year some changes were made in the credit programs: in particular, 15 thousand teachers underwent training instead of the envisaged 8 thousand ones. The training of head masters finished in 2007. Besides, a radical reform of the specialized secondary education system has been prepared under the European Neighborhood Policy. Its implementation is envisaged in 2008.



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23. TENDER FOR CHOOSING THIRD MOBILE OPERATOR TO BE ANNOUNCED IN MAY [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Transport and communication minister Gurchen Sarkisian said today the tender for choosing the third mobile phone operator, originally slated for May 1, was postponed because of some problems regarding posting of the announcement in foreign newspapers. He said the announcement will be posted within this month.

Speaking to journalists in the parliament the minister said the bids will be summarized 90 days later.

"I think the entrance of the third operator will have a positive impact. We all have seen the favorable impact of the second operator's emergence in Armenia, both in terms of service quality and tariffs," he said.

He said the entrance of the third operator will bring about a new quality of services and reasonable prices.

24. GERMANY PLEDGES FRESH 74 MILLION EURO CREDITS TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

The government of Germany will give Armenia 74 million euro fresh credits which it will spend on upgrading its power grid, water supply and water removal systems. Part of the credit will be used to fund health projects.

The agreement was signed today in Yerevan by Armenian Minister of Finance, Tigran Davtian, and Germany's ambassador to Armenia, Andrea Wiktorin.

The agreement is part of financial cooperation program between the governments of the Republic of Armenia and the Federal Republic of Germany in 2007-2008.

Ambassador Wiktorin said the agreement is yet another testament of friendship and partnership relations between Armenia and Germany. She expressed hope that this cooperation will benefit Armenia and help it improve the living conditions of its citizens.

Minister Tigran Davtian said Germany is one of the major trade and economic partners of Armenia and one of the biggest donors. He said bilateral relations between the two countries are very high.

Part of credits, a 20.4 million euros disbursement, will be used to build a 400 kilowatt power line between Armenia and Georgia, rehabilitation of Gyumri-2 high-voltage power station and the upgrading the Vorotan system of hydro power plants.

Two other disbursements of 14.6 million and 29 million will be developments loans. They will come from the German government and KfW bank.

Construction of power line between Armenia and Georgia will help establish a unified power transportation system that will later join Iran and Russia. Rehabilitation projects will improve power supplies and decrease losses.

Six million euros will go to back mortgage loaning. The agreement envisages also a 3 million extra grant for improvement of management of water supply and waste water removal systems in Armavir, Shirak and Lori marzes.

A 1 million euro grant will be made available for health projects, particularly, to help carry out anti-tuberculosis projects.

Separate agreements will be signed for each program. The credit is allocated at 0.75 annual interest rate with a 40 year maturity period and 10 year-long grace period.

In terms of bilateral relations Germany is the second largest partner of Armenia after the USA. It allocated to Armenia a total of 265 million euros within the frameworks of cooperation development policy since 1993.

DIASPORA

25. ARMENIAN INTERNET COMMUNITY MARKS VICTORY DAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Armenian Internet community marked May 9 - Day of Victory in the Great Patriotic War and Day of Liberation of Shoushi by organizing an action. The newspaper of Armenians in Russia "Yerkramas" reported that on the holiday days over a hundred Armenian Internet resources placed a banner depicting St. George Ribbon and the national flag of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic on their pages. Along with the banner, there were photos of the Armenians - heroes of the Great Patriotic war and



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the war for freedom of Nagorno Karabakh, followed by a text, in which the victories on May 9 were called a triumph of Mankind over the ideas of racial hatred and ethnic intolerance. Among web resources which took part in this action were www.maicum.ru, www.siv.am - the website of the Union of Intellectual Interaction of the Armenian Youth, www.yerkramas.org, Armenian sections of www.vkontakte.ru, the patriotic website www.vardanank.org and others.

26. FOR THE FIRST TIME MINISTER OF UK GOVERNMENT HAS USED TERM ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The UK government has at last issued a strongly-worded condemnation of the desecration of the Armenian Genocide Monument in Cardiff, which occurred on Holocaust Memorial Day. In a reply to Mr David Burrowes MP, Minister Paul Murphy, replying for the UK government specifically referred to "the desecration of The Armenian Genocide Memorial in Cardiff in January" He continued: "I wholeheartedly condemn this violent act of desecration. This attack, like many similar crimes, is often unprovoked and undertaken under the cover of darkness. I hope that when the person(s) are caught and prosecuted for this crime, this will go some way to easing the pain and distress that has been caused by this terrible act".

"This is a most significant development," said a spokesman for Armenia Solidarity. "In the past government ministers have made strenuous efforts to avoid using the phrase the Armenian Genocide. Considering the recognition given to the Genocide by the majority of Welsh Members of the UK parliament as well as the majority of the National Assembly Members, the minister must have found it impossible to persist in this avoidance. The truth of the Genocide has been set in stone in Wales, and such violent acts of desecration by extremists can only embolden other politicians in the UK to stand up for this truth."

27. IN OPINION OF TURK HISTORIAN, "IF ARMENIANS WERE NOT EXILED, TURKEY WOULD FACE MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS TODAY" [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Turkish "Kanal-1" TV channel broadcast the speech of historian Murad Bardakce, who had recently published one of the diaries of Taleat pasha. In his April 26 speech Murad Bardakce read extracts from an interview with the widow of Taleat pasha and declared that Armenians did not fulfill the orders of Taleat and revolted and that there was not a genocide but a war between two peoples at the beginning of the century.

Murad Bardakce mentioned that exile was not a good thing and at the same time considered it to be a right solution as, according to him, if Armenians were not exiled, Turkey would face much more serious problems today.

28. TURK STUDENTS TRY TO FAIL COMMEMORATION EVENT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

An unpleasant incident happened during the event organized by the Union of Armenian Students and Union of the Students of the Armenian Higher Education Institutions in the State University of Southern California of the United States of America, which was held on April 24 on the occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. During this incident two Turk students attacked and tried to tear the posters prepared by the organizers and throw away the wreaths placed by those present.

The organizers of the event had placed 1500 flowers since early morning that day in memory of the one and a half million victims of the genocide, as well as placed numerous posters and slogans in the open-air place disposed for the holding of the event, however, two Turk students approached and tried to hinder the work by trampling the flowers and posters.

K. Navasardian, the Chairman of the Union of Students of Higher Education Institutions, stated after the incident that students were trying to make a peaceful and effective agitation and commemorate the Armenian victims adding that it is the fair right of every free citizen, especially when under this circumstance not only the Armenian nation but the issue the humanity is interested in is the problem.

On the other hand, H. Guyumjian, the Chairman of the Union of Armenian Students, stated that one of the members of the union informed him about what had happened and also about the fact that the Public Security Center of the University had detained the Turk student. However, the Public Security Center denied that information.

The Armenian students, as well as the other students taking part in the event, soon successfully continued the commemoration event.



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29. GIFT CONTEST-FESTIVAL STARTS IN STEPANAKERT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Gift fourth annual all-Armenian song contest-festival started on May 13 in Stepanakert with the participation of young singers. Armenian singers from Nagorno Karabakh, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Poland take part in the contest.

Ashot Ghulian, the NKR National Assembly Speaker, received the contest participants led by Artur Grigorian, the Director of Yerevan State Theater of Song. Zoya Shakarian, the Honorary Ambassador of Culture of NKR, was also present at the reception.

On May 13 the singers performed songs in Armenian, on May 14 foreign songs will be performed, and original performance of songs will be presented on May 15.

The prize distribution ceremony and the gala-concert will take place on May 16.

The sponsors of the Gift contest-festival are American Armenian benefactors Vahe and Veronika Karapetians. The general partner of the festival is the Antares publishing-house.

30. NKR PRESIDENT AND DELEGATION OF RF VLADIMIR REGION DISCUSS PROSPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF INVESTMENT PROGRAMS IN ARTSAKH [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

NKR President Bako Sahakian received the delegation of the RF Vladimir region in Stepanakert, led by academician Viktor Katushev, the head of the Kolchugino regional administration. A number of issues regarding prospects of implementation of different investment programs in Artsakh, as well as establishment of contacts between the Vladimir region and Artsakh in the economic, cultural, educational spheres were discussed during the meeting.

The NKR President expressed satisfaction in connection with the cooperation agreements signed between the towns of Stepanakert and Kolchugino, as well as between State Universities of Artsakh and Vladimir, considering it a promising basis for development of bilateral relations.

Academician Vladimir Kechin, the Pro-Rector of Vladimir State University, the head of the Regional Inter-University Innovation Center, Hrachya Avagian, the Chairman of the Adamand concern, and Kamo Gasparian, the head of the Armenian community of the Vladimir region, were among the members of the Vladimir region's delegation.

31. WILLIAM SAROYAN CONTEST SUMMED UP [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Union of Armenian Dramatic Art has published the names of the William Saroyan dramatic art contest's three prize-winners. They are Lily Tomasian's creation "Nadia," Christen Lazarian's "Meat and Tenderness," and Matthew Yaldezian's "The Live and the Dead." The bids of performances have been accepted from the United States, United Kingdom, and Armenia. Non-abridged plays in English and on Armenian subject were to be presented for participation.

32. MARIOS GAROYAN MEETS WITH PRESIDENT OF GREECE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

"It takes two to tango, and up to now Cyprus President Demetris Christofias has been dancing alone," Cyprus House of Representatives president Marios Garoyian said in Athens on May 12, speaking to reporters after being received by President of the Greek Republic Karolos Papoulias. This information was provided by Athens news agency.

The Cyprus parliament leader also said he had noted to Papoulias that Christofias "has taken initiatives in the right direction, which has been appreciated by the international community". However, according to him, "there is also the factor of the standing Turkish intransigence". "President Christofias has the political volition, and is trying to overcome the impasse. But it takes two to tango, and President Christofias is dancing alone," Garoyian stressed.

As regards Christofias' upcoming new meeting with Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat, Garoyian said it had to do with the fact that the "working groups have not produced tangible results", and consequently "the two leaders will meet to see where this process is stumbling".

During his stay in Athens, Parliament Speaker of Cyprus Marios Garoyian met with a delegation of the Armenian National Committee of Greece on May 11.



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33. VARDAN ADZEMIAN SIGNS CONTRACT WITH GALAXY FOOTBALL TEAM [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

Glendale Ararat Chapter's star soccer player, Vardan Adzemian just signed a one-year contract with the Los Angeles Galaxy team. Adzemian also traveled to Armenia last summer as part of the Pan Armenia games representing the City of Glendale. Adzemian is currently on loan for a few months to play for Oregon's professional team, Portland Timbers. Adzemian will be back in Los Angeles to play along world class soccer players, David Beckham and Landon Donovan. Adzemian's name is already listed on the Los Angeles Galaxy roster.

34. NUMBER OF CONGRESSMAN CO-SPONSORS OF HRANT DINK BILL REACHES 61 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

Congressman Brad Sherman is now a sponsor of House Resolution 102, which honors the life and legacy of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. The Assembly-backed bill, introduced in January 2007 by Congressman Joseph Crowley, also calls on Turkey to take appropriate action to protect freedom of speech by repealing Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code.

"I am proud to cosponsor this important Human Rights legislation," Sherman told the Assembly. "It is important that the individuals behind Hrant Dink's brutal murder are brought to justice. We must show the world that Hrant Dink did not die in vain."

"Sherman also supports U.S. reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide and is a cosponsor of House Resolution 106.

35. ARMENIAN TENNIS PLAYERS MAKE PROGRESS IN ITF CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

Armenian tennis players participating in the ITF Seniors Tennis Championships taking place in Larnaca have recorded successful results. As the local Armenian media report, Haig Ashdjian defeated Laurence Leroy of Australia 6-4, 6-3 and Simon Aynedjian defeated Tasos Theopanous 6-3, 0-6, 6-3.

36. PUPILS OF NAREG SCHOOL OF CYPRUS PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS EVENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The annual Sports Day of Nareg School took place on May 14. As the Gibrahayer electronic medium reports, the Nareg schools of Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca took part in this sports event.

37. SIPAN'S GIRLS PERFORMING IN NICOSIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The Sipan Dance Ensemble performed at the Acropolis Park in Nicosia on May 14. As the Gibrahayer reports, the the Ensemble performed at a United Nations sponsored Cultural event.

38. MUSIC DIRECTOR OF ARLINGTON PHILHARMONIC RUBEN VARTANYAN DIES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

70 years old Ruben Vartanian, the Music Director of the Arlington Philharmonic died at his home in Arlington on May 7. The cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage.

Maestro Vartanyan had been an Arlington resident since arriving in the area in 1988. He had served as the music director of the previous Arlington Symphony for 13 years, and took the helm of the Philharmonic, when it was created in 2005.

39. THREE ARMENIAN DIRECTORS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CANNES FESTIVAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

Three film directors of Armenian origin - Atom Egoyan of Canada, Diana Mkrtychyan of Russia and Arman Tadevosyan of Armenia - will participate in the Cannes Festival to be held from 14 to 23 May. The official webpage of the Festival informs that Atom Egoyan will participate with his "Adoration" film, which is a drama about young people who try to communicate with each other via Internet and SMS messages. The film stars Arsine Khanjyan, the director's wife. Diana Mkrtychyan's 33-minute film titled "GATA" is



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presented in the documentaries. Arman Tadevosyan's film is presented in the short films program. The 10-minute documentary was shot in Kars. The film tells about the cultural and civil transfiguration in Kars.

40. MEMORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE VICTIMS COMMEMORATED IN KUWEIT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated in Kuwait on April 24. For the purpose of attending the commemoration events Kiro Manoyan, Hay Dat and Political Affairs Office Director, was in Kuwait. He visited the national college of the colony, where he took part in other April 24 events. College director Manuk Manukian introduced a report to the students of the college on the proceedings of Hay Dat.

A great number of young people commemorated the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide in the St. Vardanants church on April 23. The control evening held under the sponsorship of Archbishop Koryun Papiyan was organized by the ARF Kuwait "Christapor" youth union and "Hrayr Hell" youthful union.

41. 88TH ANNIVERSARY OF AYNTAP HEROIC BATTLE CELEBRATED IN PASADENA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

A celebration dedicated to the 88th anniversary of the Ayntap heroic battle took place in the AGBU Boyajian hall of Pasadena on April 26. Chairman of the Union Avetis Demirchian welcomed those present, then Pargev Taragchian's prayer was followed by a dinner party. An artistic announcement was made after the dinner and the chorus of women of the Lark musical union with Vache Parsumian at the head performed.

42. THREE CONCERTS DEDICATED TO ARMENIAN MUSICAL HERITAGE HELD IN BILGARIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

During April the Bulgarian Armenian community organized three concerts dedicated to Armenian musical heritage. As the local Armenian media report, the concerts held with the support of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) were success.

43. NUBAR AFEYAN AWARDED ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

Noubar B. Afeyan, Ph.D., was among this year's recipients of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Afeyan was given the medal by the National Ethnic Coalition (NECO) during a special ceremony held on May 10 in New York City.

The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is awarded to outstanding Americans who have distinguished themselves as citizens of the United States and have enabled their ancestry groups to maintain their identities while becoming integral parts of American life.

44. DAVID BOYAJIAN AWARDED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO STRUGGLE AGAINST ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The Massachusetts Governor's Council issued a resolution honoring Newton resident David Boyajian for his role in the campaign against the Anti-Defamation League's denial of the Armenian Genocide. The corresponding resolution of the House was introduced by Marilyn Petitto Devaney, a Governor's Council member and Watertown Town Councilor.

ARTS

45. CULTURAL TV CHANNEL WILL SERVE ITS PURPOSE, CULTURAL FIGURES ARE CONVINCED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

"I think a TV channel without advertisements and far from policy will be aimed at promotion of high-class art," Artavazd Bayatian, the Director of the Ardzagank radio station, said at the May 14 press conference meaning the cultural TV channel to be opened in Armenia soon.

According to him, the cultural TV channel will give artists, critics a possibility of expression, besides, classical music will be often performed by that channel, which, unfortunately, is not done by the



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other TV channels at all. "Classical art is very important for aesthetical education. Certainly, there will be also variety music on that channel, but not the art created for sale," A. Bayatian said. In his words, television should form opinion and taste, the cultural TV channel is expected to be just this way.

Eduard Topchian, the Art Director and the Conductor of the Armenian State Philharmonic Orchestra, is also sure that the new TV channel will serve its purpose. "I hope it will be the only channel our "stars" and "starlets" will not seize. Let all TV channels be theirs and that one ours. Certainly, there should also be variety music, but not the music we have on the market today," E. Topchian emphasized. In his words, unfortunately, our people wishes to listen to such music. The bright evidence of it is that if variety singers rent the Aram Khachatrian concert hall, the concerts are held in crowded halls, while, if world-famous musicians, opera singers perform, those concerts are held in half-empty halls.

46. EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO FIRST ARMENIAN REPUBLIC OPENS [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

An exhibition called 'May Battles and First Armenian Republic' opened today at the National Archives of Armenia.

The exhibition is part of a series of events dedicated to the 90-th anniversary of the First Armenian Republic that emerged in 1918 after the collapse of the Russian empire.

Part of items on display tell about the heroic Sardarapat, Bash-Aparan and Karakilisa battles against the invading Turkish army in 1918. The opening was attended by deputy territorial minister Arsen Grigorian, an aide to prime minister Fadey Sarkisian, Yerevan University rector Aram Simonian, historians and army officers.

Amatuni Virabian, director of the National Archives, said few documents were made during the Sardarapat battle, apart from several orders. The display has many memoirs of the battle's participants.

Harutyun Khachatrian, the director of Golden Apricot Film Festival, handed to Virabian the award of the London Kurdish Film Festival, which has been cooperating with the Golden Apricot festival in screening documentaries kept in the Armenian National Archives, which tell not only about Armenians but also about Kurds and Yezidis.

47. ARAM KHACHATRIAN MUSICAL CONTEST TO KICK OFF MAY 30 [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

The Armenian Ministry of Culture, Yerevan Conservatory and Aram Khachaturian cultural foundation will hold an international violin contest.

The press division of the Ministry of Culture told Armenpress that the annual competition will kick off on May 30 and end on June 6, which is the famous composer's birthday. The contest will wrap by an award handing ceremony and a gala-concert.

The jury of the contest comprises well-known musicians.

The Aram Khachatrian cultural foundation was set up in 2004. It deals with organization of different concerts, exhibitions and popularization of the composer's works.

48. ARMENIAN SHORT FILM TO BE SHOWN AT CANNES FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

A short film made by Armenian director Vrezh Kasoun called "Love or..." will be shown at Cannes Film Festival.

Gevorg Gevorgian, head of the National Film Center, told Armenpress that the Center will take to Cannes a film scenario by Armine Abrahamian called 'Jane and Voices.' He said if the project is approved the Cannes festival will help to shoot it.

He said the National Film Center will present "The Priestess" by Vigen Chaldanian and a cartoon called "Little Troll" at Listapad film festival in Belarus.

He said another film by Armen Ronov - "Anna Karenina"- will be shown at Venice Film Festival.

49. PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL VALUES AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART ARE TOP PRIORITIES IN CULTURAL SPHERE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

The 2007 state budgetary allocations of 16.7 billion drams for the sphere of culture were almost completely spent, the RA chief treasurer Atom Janjughazian stated in the National Assembly on May 14.

According to the minister of culture Hasmik Poghosian, the preservation of the cultural heritage and the development of modern art were priorities of the cultural sphere in the reported year as well. A number of programs on cultural education were implemented.



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With the aim of preserving the cultural heritage, restoration of 15 monuments and design of 15 monuments' restoration was done in 2007. Sums were allocated from the reserve fund of the government for improvement of monument to the Serb pilots in connection with the 20th anniversary of the Spitak earthquake and for restoration of the Bash-Aparan Memorial Complex.

584 mln drams was allocated from the 2007 state budget for 13 state libraries under the jurisdiction of the ministry of culture, with this sum being completely spent. According to the minister, a 3-year program on major repairs of libraries was launched last year.

50. CENTENARY OF PROMINENT LITERARY CRITIC MARKED [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

The Union of Armenian Writers held a special event today to mark the centenary of a prominent Armenian literary critic Nshan Muradian. The event, attended by many intellectuals and readers, was moderated by author Norayr Adalian.

Norayr Adalian said although Nshan Muradian did not write poems, the impression from his works is that he was a poet as he never remained within strict boundaries.

Levon Ananyan, chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, spoke of Nshan Muradian as a man devoted fully to the Armenian literature. He said he may serve as a sample of perfection for many current generation literary critics.

Poetess Metakse described Nshan Muradian as a prominent member of the Armenian family of writers. She also told that Nshan Muradian was very fond of Lake Sevan dreaming to die on it.

Nshan Muradian was also a professor of Yerevan Teachers' Training Institute and one of the best Armenian experts on William Shakespeare.

51. MUSEUM NIGHT SCHEDULED FOR MAY 17 [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Armenian museums participating in the 'Museum Night 2008' program that will be launched on May 17 will be open for all visitors from sunset until 1 am next morning.

The press division of the Armenian Culture Ministry told Armenpress that the National Picture Gallery will present "Gallery + Theater" program, which is an array of permanent expositions.

Armenian History Museum will present a display of Chinese Bronze Artifacts. The Yeghishe Charents museum will offer an event dedicated to great Armenian opera singer Gohar Gasparian.

The Folk Art Museum will have on display artifacts by well-known Armenian masters. Yeghishe Charents museum will also host an evening of poetry.

Various events will be held also by Yervand Kochar Museum, Hovhannes Tumanian Museum. The latter will display documents about the First Armenian Republic and intellectuals of that time and a performance of Tumanian's fairy tales.

Alexander Spendiarian Museum will present "One Photograph History" exhibition and a musical performance.

Martiros Saryan Museum will host music lovers for a chamber music concert and a lecture about famous painter's visit to Venice in 1924. Museums outside Yerevan are also involved in Museum night event.

The Erebuni Museum will present an exposition called from "Velikun to Urartu," and a one-day exhibition dedicated to European Heritage Day.

The first Museum Night event was held in 2005 by about 1,200 European museums, which wanted the new young generation to discover the richness of their collections and multi-layer cultural heritage. Armenia joined it that same year.

52. AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA HOSTS IT CAREER FAIR [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

The American University of Armenia hosted today the second annual IT career fair, held by USAID. These fairs are held to meet the demands of local IT companies, university students and graduates majoring in IT.

About 30 companies participated in today's fair by presenting their vacancies and expected openings to third and fourth year students and graduates. The latter could submit their resumes to these companies.

Aram Hajian, deputy dean of the engineering department of the University, said the fair will enable students and graduates to learn about available vacancies and new openings. He said a series of studies show that the demand for skilled specialist is bigger than the proposal.



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Artem Asatrian, a deputy labor and social issues minister, underscored the significance of job and career fairs, saying the objective is to prepare high quality specialists through close relationships with universities.

"This fair is a good opportunity for job seekers. The experience shows that they are productive," he said.

Before the career fair started applicants were shown how to write a resume and besides, an informative seminar was conducted for them.

SOCIAL

53. GOVERNMENT APPROVES NEW STATUS OF MATENADARAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

The government has approved today the new statute of Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Old Manuscripts. Under the new statute this research institution is a state non-profit organization.

The government invalidated also its old statute adopted in 2002.

According to Education and Science Minister Levon Mkrtchian, under the new statute Matenadaran, which is also the biggest depository of old Armenian manuscripts, will have the status of a research center in addition to its status of museum.

Its scientific board will have the authorities to train related specialists. The minister said also the new statute gives special heed to expansion and strengthening of contacts with foreign institutions and researchers.

The statute allows Matenadaran to turn into a self-financing entity. The minister said the statute had been discussed with all interested agencies receiving no objections.

54. HOVHANNES GARNETSI'S PRAYER-BOOK PUBLISHED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

The Publishing Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin published the prayer-book of archimandrite-chronicler Hovhannes Garnetsi, a hermit of the 12-13th centuries famous as a miracle-worker. 35 prayers are collected in it.

The book's research article has been written by Gevorg Ter-Vardanian, the comparison of manuscripts has been done by Lilit Petrosian, and the translation into the modern Armenian language has been done by Arshak Madoyan. The series' editor-in-chief is Archbishop Yeznik Petrosian, the Director of the Publishing Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. The book has been published with the donations of Mr and Mrs Armen and Nune Sargsians.

According to the report of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, the publication of such prayer-books gives believers a possibility not only to join in the rich spiritual heritage of their ancestors, but also to use them in their everyday life.

55. COAF AND CASCADE-CREDIT TO PROVIDE LOANS PACKAGE TO PEOPLE OF SIX VILLAGES OF ARMAVIR [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), cooperating with the Cascade-Credit company, will provide a loan package tailored to the needs of the communities of the Model Cluster, including Argina, Dalarik, Karakert, Lernagog, Miasnikian and Shenik.

The package offers negotiable financing and flexible repayment schedules, with maturity varying between 6 and 84 months and annual percentage rate starting at 12 %. For engaging rural women in entrepreneurial activities, a special credit for women entrepreneurs is offered with 11.5% annual percentage rate.

The main goal of the initiative is to increase the level of loan availability in rural areas which will result in the development of the rural economy, creating new jobs and increasing the quality of life in the Model Cluster villages.

The founder and chairman of COAF Karo Armen said today that the choice of the communities is agreed with the fact that the fund worked with them previously. For the implementation of "Model Cluster", the COAF included six mentioned villages taking into consideration the bad social condition of their population. In future it is expected to create such opportunities for the people of other villages.

Cascade-Credit is providing loans ranging from AMD 1,000,000 to AMD 15,000,000. Around 370 applications have already been received and by now 32 have been approved.

These loans are provided for agricultural development, mainly animal husbandry and farming, acquisition and modernization of agricultural machinery, and even for other ventures.



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In addition to the loan program, the partnership also offers agricultural leasing to facilitate the acquisition and modernization of agricultural equipment and business renewal. Agricultural leasing ranges between AMD 1,500,000 and AMD 350,000,000, with a minimum 14% annual percentage rate and 7 years' maturity.

The Children of Armenia Fund is a non-profit foundation that aims to reduce poverty through the revitalization of rural Armenia and the realization of projects that are instrumental for the revival of communities.

56. ARMENIAN HEALTH MINISTER RECEIVES COORDINATOR OF U.S. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE JERALD OBERNDORFER [ARMENPRESS, 05/14/08]

Armenian Health Minister Harutyun Kushkian received today the coordinator of the U.S. humanitarian assistance Jerald Oberndorfer.

Press secretary of the Armenian Health Ministry Ruslana Gevorgian told Armenpress that J. Oberndorfer informed the minister that soon 2 containers with medical materials will reach Armenia and be provided to the hospitals of Martuni and Artik.

The coordinator was also interested in the possible options of cooperation with the Greek "Hypocrite" Fund in Alaverdi town. The minister positively assessed the cooperation with the fund, noting that the agreement of cooperation will be extended for another 5 years.

During the meeting the interlocutors also referred to the implementation of programs directed towards ensuring medicine to the unsecured families.

At the end of the meeting the minister thanked Jerald Oberndorfer for implementation of humanitarian programs in the Armenian health sphere.

57. BEELINE NOT TO CHARGE BILLS FOR FIXED TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Beeline (formerly ArmenTel) company said on May 14 it will not charge bills for fixed telephone conversations for January- March which were not in the bills because of the technical upgrading of the network and were transformed to April bills causing the anger of subscribers.

Genady Kalgashkin, the acting Beeline CEO, told a news conference on Wednesday that services were delivered to all subscribers, but the calls were not registered since the company was undergoing a major upgrading.

According to him, the problem affected about 20 percent of 640,000 fixed telephones. He said the decision not to charge these bills was made in view of the business ethics. He said the lists of people who paid the bills will be available on May 28 and the charged money will be given back. He said the total sum amounts to \$300,000.

58. PROGRAM CARRIED OUT TO SUPPORT MEDICAL CENTERS OF VAYOTS DZOR, SYUNIK, TAVUSH, LORI AND GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCES [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

"Support to Communities" non-governmental organization is providing medicine to the medical centers of 135 communities of Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Tavush, Lori and Gegharkunik provinces once in a quarter.

The head of the NGO Karen Arakelian told Armenpress that the medicine for the first quarter has already been provided. He said the program will last until 2009.

In certain Armenian communities the organization is carrying out classes on healthy lifestyle. Currently they are being held in Kotayk province and will take 5-10 days.

The NGO has also created health resource centers in Vayots Dzor, Lori and Syunik which are providing necessary information, consultation for the specialists.

59. EREBUNI MUSEUM TO HOLD SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE IN AUTUMN [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

A scientific conference dedicated to the 40-th anniversary of Erebuni Museum in Yerevan and the centenary of a famous Russian archeologist Boris Piotrovski will be held in Armenia in September-October.

Ashot Piliposian, director of Erebuni Museum, told Armenpress that scientists from USA, Russia and Georgia are expected to attend the conference.



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He said invitations were sent to Turkish researchers as well.

60. 40 JOBLESS PEOPLE IN KAPAN TO HAVE TRAINING COURSES [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

The government will help organize training courses for 40 jobless people in the town of Kapan in the southern province of Syunik.

Araik Hayrapetian, deputy head of the Kapan Employment Center, told Armenpress they will be held in the second quarter. The first stage will involve 21 people

The training course will offer culinary, make-up and other classes. The center has agreements with local employers who promised to hire these people after the classes.

61. GYUMRI HOSTS FIRST SOUTH CAUCASIAN CHEESE FAIR [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

The town of Gyumri is hosting the first South Caucasian Cheese Fair. Cheese-makers from Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are showcasing their produces.

The fair is organized by the Caucasian Center for Conflict Resolution. Its head, Artush Mkrтчian, said to Armenpress this fair is the biggest event they have had recently.

About 80 companies from the South Caucasus are showing their cheese. Zaki Aydin, head of the Turkish Figaro cheese-making company, told Armenpress that this fair is an excellent opportunity for the countries of the region to present their goods to their neighbors.

He said the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border will profit both sides, adding also that the peoples are ready to establish economic relations and the turn is for their governments.

Vafa Parajeva from Azerbaijan said business contacts between Armenians and Azeris will help settle political disputes.

62. ISSUES ON PROVIDING MEDICAL SERVICES DISCUSSED TODAY [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenian NA's social, health and nature protection permanent commissions and Health Ministry conducted today a discussion over the financing issues of the medical services in Armenia.

The specialists presented reports on financing of the sphere, transparent activity and development of legislation. The experience of health systems of the developed countries was also presented.

Ara Babloyan, the chairman of the NA's social, health and nature protection affairs permanent commission, said that works must be carried out for increasing the number of state-funded places, especially in case when the financing of the sphere is increasing annually.

Babloyan pointed out the demand of the Constitution to establish by law the list of main medical establishments and system of providing medical services to each citizen free of charge.

The director of the state health agency of the Armenian Health Ministry Ara Ter-Grigorian said the aim of the discussion is to decide the financial flows of the sphere and make them more manageable.

He said that the statistics shows that the provisions to the sphere from the state budget promoted the decrease of expenditures of the patients.

63. ACTION OF PROTEST AGAINST TEGHUT MINE OPERATION HELD NEAR RA GOVERNMENT BUILDING [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/15/08]

A group of members of the Group of Teghut Protection organization, on May 15, organized an action near the RA government building, complaining against the operation of Teghut mine. Citizens carrying placards reading "Stop Robbing Our Country!," "Teghut, a Crime Towards the Generations," "Teghut, the Biggest Tailing of the World," including RA National Assembly deputy Zaruhi Postanjian, demanded stopping mine's operation. The deputy said that the government has always signed agreements without public control, but in this case it will not be permitted to implement the program of Teghut mine operation.

The action participants conveyed their demand to the RA Prime Minister in a written form, that is, to stop the work already started in the mine territory and to reconsider the government decisions on the operation of the mine.

According to the statement spread by the Group of Teghut Protection, it is envisaged that the actions will be held in front of the RA government building every Thursday, until the government gives solution to the above mentioned problems.



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64. NAGORNO-KARABAKH NGOs TO GATHER FOR FIRST CONFERENCE ON MAY 17 [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Non-governmental organizations of Nagorno-Karabakh will convene on May 17 for their first conference which is entitled "Nagorno-Karabakh Civic Sector; the Past and Development Prospects."

Irina Grigorian, administrator of the Center for Conflicts Transformation and Peace Resource, told Armenpress that the goal of the gathering is to discuss with non-governmental organizations and identify what kind of problems exist in Nagorno Karabakh and what kind of programs they are implementing.

She said also new projects for which there is a need, will be proposed. Participants will also find out what they can do to help each other and the society in general.

Representatives of about 70 non-governmental organizations will take part in the conference.

65. MONUMENT DEDICATED TO 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF KARAKILISA BATTLE ERECTED [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

A 14 meter high monument, dedicated to the 80-th anniversary of the famous Karakilisa Battle is under construction in Armenia's third largest town of Vanadzor.

The monument was designed by architect Romik Julhakian. It is expected to be unveiled on May 28 when Armenia will mark The First Republic Day.

The construction of the monument is funded by the government and the office of Lori governor. The latter released 19 million Drams.

Edik Hovsepian, an aide to the governor, told Armenpress that a special fund was set up that has raised already 3.3 million Drams to back the monument's construction. Vanadzor municipality will provide 6-7 million Drams.

A monument-spring will be later constructed and trees planted in autumn in the museum's territory.

66. HAYASTAN FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 27 IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

The 17-th meeting of the Board of Trustees of the pan-Armenian Hayastan Fund will be held in Yerevan on May 27.

The press office of the Fund told Armenpress that the meeting will be chaired by president Serzh Sarkisian. President of Nagorno-Karabakh Bako Sahakian, Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh prime ministers Tigran Sarkisian and Araik Harutyunian, Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian and finance minister Tigran Davtian, who are members of the Board of Trustees, will also participate in it.

Hayastan Fund executive director Vahe Aghabekiants will present to the members of the Board of Trustees and representatives of local branches the ongoing projects, including the rural development project, in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The meeting will discuss and make decisions on the long-term goals of the Fund, short-term projects, urgent issues. It will also specify the details of the next fund-raising telethon.

Before the meeting on May 26 a special ceremony for handing of Presidential Awards will be held at the presidential palace. Winners in 13 categories will be announced. The president of the country will personally hand all prizes.

67. 18 PERCENT OF OLD PEOPLE POINT OUT IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR SOCIAL-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

A study conducted by Armenian Caritas charity organization in three Armenian provinces of Shirak, Lori and Gegharkunik among 600 senior citizens found the living conditions of 54.5 percent between 2002-2007 neither improved nor worsened.

Findings of these studies, conducted within the frameworks of Dignified and Secured Life for Old People were presented on May 15 in Gyumri, the capital of northwestern province of Shirak.

Anahit Mkhoyan, Armenian Caritas program coordinator, told Armenpress that the study and publication of findings in one book were implemented at the organization's initiative. The objective was to identify major problems of senior citizens.

The study was conducted in 2007 October 2-15 in 73 rural and urban communities among respondents aged over 60, who were residents of the given community for the previous 12 months.



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Some 33.4 percent said their living and economic conditions worsened while 11.8 percent said they improved.

On average about 70 percent of all respondents said they did not make use of any medical service.

Eighteen percent in Shirak and 13 in Gegharkunik said they would like to live outside Armenia. Also 87 percent described the attitudes of their families to them as "good."

68. GOVERNMENT CHARITY PROGRAMS COMMISSION APPROVES 11 PROJECTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

The government commission coordinating charity programs held its recurrent meeting today chaired by its chairman Simon Ter-Simonian.

The government press office said the commission discussed 11 charity programs. It, particularly, discussed and approved the following programs: furnishing number 3,4,5, 6 and 7 secondary schools in the town of Artik of Shirak province and improvement of the yard of Hovik Edgarian art school in Parakar village of Armavir province. Both projects will be carried out by Hayastan all-Armenian Fund.

The American Armenian Health Care charity organization will help to assemble, test and put into action the heating system of an anti-tuberculosis medical center in the town of Dilijan.

The Mother See Saint Etchmiadzin will fund construction of a church in Arabkir quarter of the See, as well as installment of television, Internet and telephone systems for the brotherhood's premises, and installment of LG-TAREX0CS-1000 automated telephone system for Mayravank.

Altitude 5165 French Armenian charity organization will provide dental services to residents of Etchmiadzin, Vardenis and Gyumri.

69. OVER 5000 FOREIGN STUDENTS MAJOR AT ARMENIAN UNIVERSITIES [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

A conference organized today by Yerevan State University (YSU) was to discuss problems which foreign students encounter while studying at Armenian state-run and private universities. The conference will continue on Saturday.

Kamo Atayan, a YSU faculty dean, said the focus will be on looking into social, psychological and cultural problems which foreign students face here and prepare directions to solve them.

He said the ultimate objective is to make Armenia a regional education center, but he added that Armenia does not have that many foreign students so far. Besides, he said a lot should be done to make Armenian educational system to comply with internationally accepted standards.

According to Hrach Tadevosian, head of Diaspora division of the Education and Science Ministry, more foreigners, both Diaspora Armenians and others, want to study in Armenia with every year. He said over 5,000 foreigner students from 44 countries are majoring now at Armenian universities, of whom some 2,786 are ethnic Armenians.

He said 2,050 foreigners study at state-run universities and 358 of them do not pay for it. The majority of ethnic Armenian students from abroad are from Georgia-1,400, 630 are from Russia, 400 from Iran, 123 from Syria.

There are also Armenians from Iraq, Ukraine, USA, Turkey, Lebanon and many other countries.

Non Armenian students are from Iran-1300, India-607, Syria-180, Russia-105, China-18, Nepal-12, Ukraine-7, Georgia-7 and USA-3.

Over 1069 foreigners are students of Yerevan Medical University, 325 are majoring at the Engineering University, 50 at Conservatory and another 50 at Slavonic University.

70. NSS ARRESTS UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR FOR EXTORTION [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Armenian National Security Service (NSS) said today it had arrested a Yerevan State University professor on charges of extortion.

The NSS told Armenpress that the arrested man, Karlen Matinyan, is a professor of foreign literature at the University's faculty of foreign languages.

The NSS acted on a hint that the professor who is also a member of the graduation examination commission, struck a deal with students and their parents demanding \$500 for a positive mark at the graduation examination.

He was arrested in his room at the foreign literature faculty on May 15 while taking a \$500 bribe. The search revealed seven envelopes with bribes from students. The total sum was \$2000 and 610,000 Drams.



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Four other students gave explanations saying that the professor extorted \$500 for positive marks. The NSS said it turned out that the professor was practicing extortion on a regular basis.

The NSS investigators opened a probe into this case.

71. ARMENIA IS READY TO SUPPORT CHINA IN ABOLITION OF EARTHQUAKE CONSEQUENCES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/14/08]

On the occasion of the destructive earthquake, which took place in the Sichuan province of China, Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, has sent a message of condolence to Hu Jintao, the President of the People's Republic of China. "We share the deep sorrow of the families and relatives of those killed in the earthquake and wish a quick recovery to those injured," is said in the message.

Taking into consideration the experience of Armenia in abolition of earthquake consequences, Serge Sargsian stated about the readiness of Armenia in showing necessary assistance.

SPORTS

72. DARCHINYAN TITLE FIGHT PUT ON MAY 16 [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

VIC Darchinyan's challenge to Russia's IBF Super flyweight world champion Dimitri Kirilov has been set for May 16.

Sydney-based Darchinyan the current IBO super flyweight world champion and former IBF and IBO flyweight world titleholder, was originally scheduled to challenge Kirilov on August 2.

Darchinyan has spent the last month training in Armenia the country of his birth.

The IBF has announced a tender for organizations to win the right to host the event. The organization that will offer the highest prize money will win. The bid is \$25,000. The winning boxer will get 75 percent of the prize money and the other one 25 percent.

73. ARONIAN COMES THE FIFTH IN SOFIA TOURNAMENT [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

Armenian grand master Levon Aronian, with 1.5 points, is on the fifth place in the Master's class international tournament going on in the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia. In the sixth round he lost in the play with Bulgarian Vesselin Topalov who has 4.5 points and is the second in the tournament.

Ukrainian Vasili Ivanchuk played draw with Azerbaijani Teymur Rajabov and with 5.5 points continues leading the championship. Bulgarian Ivan Cheparinov won Chinese Bu Syanchzhi.

I. Cheparinov is the third with 3 points, Rajabov with 2.5 points is the 4th and Chinese Bu Syanchzhi is the 6th with 1 point.

74. VIVACELL TO BECOME MAIN SPONSOR OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL SOCCER TEAM [ARMENPRESS, 05/15/08]

VivaCell phone operator, a subsidiary of Russian Mobile TeleSystems OJSC and the Armenian Football Federation (AFF) will sign an agreement on May 17 whereby VivaCell will be declared main sponsor of Armenian national soccer teams.

The AFF told Armenpress that the agreement will be signed by AFF president Ruben Hayrapetian and VivaCell CEO Ralph Yerikian.

The AFF has signed recently an agreement with Star chain of supermarkets whereby the latter has become the main sponsor of Armenia's national soccer championship.

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