



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, May 19, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. EDWARD NALBANDIAN: PIVOTAL ISSUE OF NEGOTIATIONS IS STATUS OF NAGORNO KARABAKH [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan will meet on June 7 in Saint Petersburg, the Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian announced on May 15.

He pointed out that it will be the first meeting of the newly-elected president of Armenia Serge Sargsian and the Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev, expressing a hope that it "will open new ways to continue negotiations and find solutions".

As for the May 14 statement of Azerbaijan's deputy foreign minister Araz Azimov that there is no alternative to the territorial integrity of their country, E. Nalbandian said this statement has no relation to the proposed document of the conflict's resolution and only reflects the opinion of the Azerbaijani side. "The pivotal issue of negotiations is status of Nagorno Karabakh, and it should be decided through a referendum which will provide Karabakh's population with an opportunity to freely express its will," he said. In the words of E. Nalbandian, the indicated document contains some proposals which are the result of long work of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, and the Armenian side has expressed a willingness to continue negotiations based on these proposals.

2. POSITIONS OF AMBASSADORS DISMISSED FOR SUPPORTING LEVON TER-PETROSSIAN STILL VACANT [Haykakan Zhamanak, 05/16/08]

The terms of appointment of new Armenian ambassadors to Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan and Italy have not been specified yet, the Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian said on May 15. According to him, the candidates will be appointed by the country's president on the recommendation of the foreign minister. There is no restriction on the term of office of an ambassador, and its duration depends on efficiency of the ambassador's work.

To recap, the ambassadors to the indicated countries were relieved of their positions and deprived of their diplomatic ranks because of expressing support for Levon Ter-Petrosian.

When responding to the question about implementation of the PACE resolution 1609 about Democratic Institutions in Armenia, the foreign minister attached special importance to wide inclusion of state structures in the working group set up for implementation of this resolution.

3. ARTASHES AVOYAN TO REPRESENT "ORINATS YERKIR" FACTION IN PACE [Azg, 05/16/08]

Henceforth Artashes Avoyan - member of the National Assembly "Orinats Yerkir" faction - will represent this faction as a member of the Armenian delegation in the PACE, the chairwoman of Orinats Yerkir Party Heghine Bisharian announced. To recap, Mher Shahgaldian, who was member of the Armenian delegation prior to that, laid down the duties of a National Assembly deputy after being appointed minister of emergency situations.

4. HEALTH OF ARAM KARAPETIAN SHARPLY DETERIORATED, DOCTOR TO HAVE EXAMINED HIM SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The health condition of the chairman of New Times party Aram Karapetian has deteriorated and he must be immediately taken to a cardiologist center, cardiologist of Erebuni medical center Armen Gasparian, who examined A. Karapetian on May 14, said at the May 15 press conference. According to him, A. Karapetian lost 6.5 kilograms, he has a metabolic disease. In the opinion of A. Gasparian, the risk of A. Karapetian's dying of a cardiovascular disease has increased several times as he has high blood pressure.

In the words of A. Karapetian's lawyer Harutyun Barseghian, on May 14 he filed a petition to prosecutor general's office with the request to replace arrest with another precautionary measure - an undertaking not to leave Armenia. The lawyer added that under the law, the prosecutor's office may grant or dismiss the petition within 5 days. Besides, the term expires for presenting a petition to extend A.



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Karapetian's arrest by the prosecutor's office. Under the law, if the investigator does not present such a petition until 5:25 pm, A. Karapetian has to be released.

Member of New Times Party Hrachia Sargsian, who was present at the press conference, stated that he will go on without time-limit hunger strike in front of the prosecutor's office from today. He said that he will end his hunger strike in two cases: if A. Karapetian is taken to a medical institution or if he is released.

5. TWO ALREADY FORMER PARTY MEMBERS PRETEND FOR POST OF MAYOR OF HRAZDAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

None of the two candidates registered for taking part in the May 25 elections of the Mayor of Hrazdan has made a self-rejection in the defined terms: until 18:00, May 15. This information was provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Andranik Apoyan, the Chairman of the Electoral Constituency Commission 25.

Thus, Republican 46-year-old Aram Danielian, the current Mayor and already former Republican 36-year-old Mesrop Mesropian, the Chief Specialist of the Production-Technical Department of the Harzdan-5 enterprise of the ArmRusGasProm CJSC, pretend for the post of the Mayor of Hrazdan.

According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Eduard Sharmazanov, an MP of the National Assembly and the Spokesperson of the Republican Party of Armenia, the party supports the candidature of current Mayor Aram Danielian, the Head of the Hrazdan's regional organization of RPA, therefore, Mesrop Mesropian was left out of the party on account of not having obeyed the demands of the regulations and bringing forward his candidature in the elections of the Mayor of Hrazdan.

It was also mentioned that according to press issues, Mesrop Mesropian is the friend of Sasun Mikayelian, an MP of the National Assembly, who is detained for the March 1 case, and took part in the regular assembly held in Hrazdan in defence of the latter on May 14.

6. "SITUATION IN COUNTRY IS STILL STRAINED AND CRISIS IS NOT OVERCOME," STEPAN DEMIRCHIAN DECLARES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

"2.5 months have passed after the March 1 events, however, the situation in the country is still the same and the crisis has not been overcome," Stepan Demirchian, the Leader of the People's Party of Armenia, mentioned during his meeting with journalists held on May 16. According to him, an independent and unbiased investigation is necessary for the elimination of the consequences of the March 1 events and it should be found out who has ordered to use weapon against peaceful demonstrators. In the opinion of Stepan Demirchian, the authorities are not implement the demands of the resolution passed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) as yet. In particular, the political prisoners have not been set free so far, which is one of the preconditions for starting a dialogue with the authorities by the opposition. And the main subject of that dialogue will be the holding of extra state elections.

Stepan Demirchian mentioned that the opposition will continue to reach its goals in a legal way. Their numerous applications for receiving permission for holding rallies have been turned down. According to Stepan Demirchian, no essential changes have been made in the new government and the impression is that it is the third election of the former president.

Referring to the issue concerning the non-participation of the opposition in the elections of 4 mayors to be held in the capital, Stepan Demirchian mentioned that the law on "Yerevan" should have been adopted instead of those elections.

As regards the suggestion of Levon Ter-Petrosian on forming "Armenian National Congress", Stepan Demirchian mentioned that it is early to speak about that, though he welcomed the unification of political forces and the amalgamation of parties.

7. "DECISION ON USING MILITARY WEAPON AGAINST PEOPLE ON MARCH 1 WAS MADE DURING ROBERT KOCHARIAN - RPA CONSULTATION," VAHAN SHIRKHANIAN BELIEVES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

In the characterization of Vahan Shirkhanian, the RA former Deputy Minister of Defence, the use of military force in Yerevan during the state of emergency declared in Armenia on March 1-20 was a rude violation of the Constitution. In addition to this, as Vahan Shirkhanian mentioned at the May 16 discussion, the use of military weapon against peaceful demonstrators on March 1 was a crime, as the



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use of the army is envisaged only in case of war by the Constitution. "There was to be a special sitting of the National Assembly on March 1, however, there was not: there was just a consultation between Robert Kocharian and the representatives of the Republican party, where it was decided to use military weapon against people," the former Deputy Minister said. In the estimation of Vahan Shirkhanian, what happened on March 1 "was a terrible crime", however, the authorities "smile instead of feeling ashamed" for what they did.

In his conviction, today the National Assembly is no way an equivalent body to the institution of the President, on the contrary, it has turned into an object "used by the President. That is why, in the words of Vahan Shirkhanian, the National Assembly as a body carrying a primary mandate, should be liquidated. In his opinion, Armenia will lose nothing if left without parliament.

8. YET ANOTHER CRIMINAL CASE RELATED TO MARCH 1 EVENTS GOES TO COURT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The court of general jurisdiction of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities on May 15 took for examination a criminal case related to the March 1-2 mass disorder in Yerevan. By the case, Melik Grigorian is accused of committing a crime envisaged by the RA Criminal Code's Article 316 Part 1 (violence against a representative of authorities), NT was informed by spokeswoman for the RA Cassation Court Alina Yengoyan.

9. COURT LEAVES UNCHANGED 2 YEARS' SENTENCE OF DEC No 13 CHAIRMAN SEYRAN MKRTUMIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The RA Criminal Appeal Court on May 15 left unchanged the April 17 sentence of the court of Yerevan's Erebuni and Nubarashen communities, according to which Seyran Mkrtumian, chairman of district electoral commission No. 13 (February 19 presidential election), was found guilty of the crime envisaged by the RA Criminal Code's Article 150 (forgery of election or voting results) and sentenced to 2 years in prison, NT correspondent was informed by spokeswoman for the RA Cassation Court Alina Yengoyan.

10. ONE MORE CONVICT ON MARCH 1 CASE: MKRTICH ABRAHAMIAN SENTENCED TO 3.5 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Under the sentence passed by Yerevan Criminal Court, Mkrtich Abrahamian was found guilty of committing a crime envisaged by part 2, Article 225, RA Criminal Court ("mass disorders"). He was sentenced to imprisonment of three years and six months.

According to Alina Yengoyan, the Spokesperson of the RA Cassation Court, Mkrtich Abrahamian was accused of taking an immediate part in the March 1-2 mass disorders accompanied by large-scale violence, slaughters, arsons, destruction of state, public, and private property, obvious robbery, making armed resistance to power representatives.

11. DOCTOR WHO EXAMINED ARAM KARAPETIAN DISMISSED FROM JOB [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

On May 16, at about 1 pm, a number of law enforcers wearing red berets seized the tent of member of New Times Party's (NTP) board Hrachia Sargsian who went on hunger strike outside the building of the RA prosecutor general's office. H. Sargsian told reporters that the purpose of the hunger strike which he started 23 hours ago is to achieve an immediate release of the NTP leader Aram Karapetian. According to him, he and another 5 persons on hunger strike were going to put up a tent in front of the prosecutor's office late May 15. However, policemen asked them not to put up a tent on that day. The strikers complied with their request but the next day, according to H. Sargsian, they pitched the tent as they needed a rest.

H. Sargsian said that the condition of Aram Karapetian, who was taken to the Erebuni medical center last night, continues to be grave: after a drop infusion he still has high blood pressure. Besides, the supporters of A. Karapetian are concerned about the fact that cardiologist Armen Gasparian, who had examined A. Karapetian, was dismissed from his job. The point is that at the May 15 press conference, the doctor (who was invited there) expressed concern at A. Karapetian's health condition and said that he must be immediately taken to a specialized medical center. After that, in the words of H. Sargsian, the doctor was dismissed from his job. H. Sargsian announced that he will apply in writing to the prosecutor's



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office with the request to form a group of independent doctors, including those from abroad, to make an impartial medical examination of Aram Karapetian.

12. REPRESENTATIVES OF 4 NGOs TO OBSERVE ELECTIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES IN YEREVAN ON MAY 18 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Elections of district heads will be held on May 18 in 4 communities of Yerevan: Avan, Davitashen, Malatia-Sebastia and Nork-Marash. One candidate is running in each of the first three communities, and 3 candidates will be voted on in Nork-Marash. Out of the current community heads, two are again running for their posts.

The only candidate proposed in Avan community is the current community head, member of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Taron Margarian, the candidate in Malatia-Sebastia is head of the trade and service unit of the district municipality, RPA member Davit Ohanian, and the candidate in Davitashen is deputy head of the community, RPA member Artur Gevorgian.

The candidates in Nork-Marash are the current head of the community, RPA member Varazdat Mkrtchian, and two non-party men: Garnik Martirosian and Ashot Margarian.

NT correspondent was informed by spokesperson of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) Tatev Ohanian that 4 local NGOs: Will of the Youth, Free Society Institute, Helsinki Committee of Armenia and Choice is Yours - were registered at the CEC to implement observer mission at the elections in the indicated communities.

13. THOMAS ADAMS URGES ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES TO TAKE PROMPT ACTION TO HEAL SOCIAL DIVISIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

U.S. Assistance Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia Thomas Adams visited Armenia May 14-17. Adams was accompanied by his deputy, Daniel Rosenblum, who has been designated to succeed him as Coordinator in the upcoming months.

The delegation has already held fruitful discussions with the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

According to the report of the U.S. Embassy in Armenia, Mr. Adams addressed a wide range of important issues in his conversations with his hosts from the Armenian government. He learned about the status of democracy and human rights issues in Armenia, in light of the post-election political difficulties. He urged Armenian authorities to take prompt action to heal the social divisions that have arisen as a result of the political conflict. Adams also discussed with Armenian officials a number of other important bilateral issues, including ongoing cooperation programs in energy and agriculture, Armenia's economy, measures to improve Armenia's attractiveness to foreign investment, and Armenia's important efforts to combat illegal trafficking in persons.

During his visit, Mr. Adams met with the Board of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia, as well as key leaders and stakeholders of the Millennium Challenge program in Armenia. The delegation also visited a number of project sites implementing U.S. assistance programs, including the Armenian-American Wellness Center, Arcolate Chocolate Company, Arzni Medical Ambulatory in Kotayk Marz, and a school in Nork, which was refurbished with the financial support of the U.S. Government.

14. MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE FUND CONCERNED ABOUT COMPLIANCE WITH SOME CRITERIA FORMING PROGRAM'S BASIS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

During a tete-a-tete talk with the U.S. State Department's Coordinator for Assistance to Europe and Eurasia Tom Adams, the Armenian president Serge Sargsian attached special importance to the strengthening of Armenia's relations with the United States, viewing these relations in the context of economic success, democratization and regional stability.

The sides spoke about the postelection situation in Armenia and the resultant problems. They discussed further activities of the Millennium Challenge Fund. According to the RA president's press service, Tom Adams said that they have some concern over compliance with the criteria forming the basis of the program.

Noting that the Fund-sponsored programs are mostly aimed at poverty reduction and overcoming the disproportion in development of urban and rural settlements, Serge Sargsian said that Armenia intends to continue its cooperation with the Millennium Challenge Fund. As for the economic and political criteria that form the Fund's basis, the president pointed out that there has been no regress from the



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economic point of view, to which Tom Adams agreed, saying that Armenia's macroeconomic indices were and continue to be good.

The interlocutors exchanged ideas about the political criteria and processes as well. The president underlined the necessity to give a correct assessment of the situation. Tom Adams considered it important to conduct a deep inquiry into the electoral violations and postelection developments.

15. ARAM ANANIAN APPOINTED ADVISOR TO ARMENIAN PRESIDENT [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/16/08]

By instruction of the Armenian president Serge Sargsian, Armen Abelian and Sevak Lalayan have been appointed assistants to the president of the Republic of Armenia. Aram Ananian has been appointed advisor to the president, NT was informed by the RA president's press service.

16. SASUN MIKAELIAN: LET NO PERFIDIOUS CREATURE CHERISH A HOPE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Sasun Mikaelian - National Assembly deputy, commander of "Sasun" detachment who was arrested under the criminal case opened in connection with the March 1 events, appealed to residents of the city of Hrazdan to vote for Mesrop Mesropian at the May 25 election of Hrazdan mayor. "By making a correct choice and defenting your votes, you will reject tomorrow's servility, flattery, corruption and unlawfulness," is said in the May 15 message of Sasun Mikaelian to residents of Hrazdan.

In the indicated election, M. Mesropian's rival is the current mayor of Hrazdan, head of the Hrazdan territorial organization of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Aram Danielian. The RPA, which endorses A. Danielian, on May 14 expelled from the party M. Mesropian for running in the election and violating the requirements of the party regulations. In his message, the NA deputy also calls on his comrades-in-arms and co-thinkers to unite and prevent the election from being rigged. "Don't be afraid, defend the people's right of free vote so that tomorrow we can look frankly in each other's eyes. And let no perfidious creature cherish a hope that I and those like me will remain in prison for a long time as our cause is a just one," is stated in Sasun Mikaelian's message.

17. ARMAN KIRAKOSIAN AND SYLVAIN ITTE DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF IMPROVING ARMENIA'S INFORMATION FIELD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

France is interested in assisting with democratic reforms in Armenia, the executive director of France Cooperation International organization Sylvain Itte said at a meeting with the Armenian deputy foreign minister Arman Kirakosian.

S. Itte said that the purpose of the visit to discuss the problems and proposals related to Armenia's legislation, human rights, mass media, tourism, and economy through meetings with representatives of Armenian state structures and to develop joint projects.

According to a press release of the RA MFA, during the meeting, proposals were made on improvement of the information field, development of informational education in Armenia with the participation of French experts, and joint activities of representatives of the mass media of the two countries.

18. NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON HUNGER STRIKE OUTSIDE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE INCREASES [Haykakan Zhamanak, 05/16/08]

The number of those who went on hunger strike outside the RA prosecutor general's office - in defence of the arrested leader of New Times Party (NTP) Aram Karapetian - reached 7 as of 7 pm on May 16. Karen Suvarian and Samvel Khloyan on May 16 joined NTP board member Hrachia Sargsian, supporters of the opposition Edward Grigorian, Gevorg Petrosian, Ruzanna Hovhannisian and Astghik Harutyunian who began hunger strike the day before.

To recap, the strikers demand that the NTP chairman Aram Karapetian who has health problems should be taken to a cardiological center and the precautionary measure with respect to him - arrest should be changed. A. Karapetian was arrested on February 24 and is charged under the RA Criminal Code's Article 333 Part 2 - false crime reporting.

On May 16, at about 8 pm tens of participants in a daily "political walk" along North Avenue joined those on hunger strike and people who have gathered around them. They occasionally chanted "Aram", "Freedom to Political Prisoners", "Now" and "Struggle, Struggle till the End".



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19. TIGRAN SARGSIAN, "THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS COME TO MAKE DRASTIC CHANGES" [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Armenian President Tigran Sargsian received today the delegation headed by the U.S. coordinator of European and Eurasian assistance Tom Adams.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the prime minister said that Armenia underscores the further development of relations with USA and particularly the activity of the U.S.-Armenian inter-governmental task group dealing with the economic issues, which he said, is ensuring progress for Armenia.

Tigran Sargsian thanked the U.S. government for the large volume of assistance provided to Armenia since its independence and added that in a number of spheres the results are obvious.

"At the same time we fully realize that there are spheres where the reforms are not notable and U.S. assistance will greatly promote to overcome the issues in those spheres as well," the prime minister said.

Congratulating Tigran Sargsian on being appointed in the office of the prime minister, Tom Adams said that he is very glad as he had an opportunity to cooperate with him when he was the chairman of the Armenia's Central Bank. T. Adams expressed assurance that Tigran Sargsian will succeed in his new position.

During the meeting the prime minister also presented Armenia's macroeconomic situation, as well as the pace of reforms in tax and customs systems. Considering it one of the main issues of the newly formed government, Sargsian said that the achieved results will directly promote the solution of social and economic issues of the country.

He said that soon program of events and aims of the reforms in tax and customs spheres will be published through which the public will be able to control the steps of the government.

Among the prior issues he also noted the creation of favorable conditions for the development of small and medium sized business, effective fight against corruption. He said that the government is cooperating with the international establishments in that direction.

Tom Adams noted that during the recent times the positive changes are quite notable in the improving tax administration and pointed out that there are still some issues connected with the development of democracy, rule of law, promotion of business. He promised that U.S. administration will continue cooperating with the Armenian government in the mentioned spheres for making the country attractive for foreign investments.

"People are tired of words and promises. We need to work and have announced that the new Armenian government has come to make drastic changes," Tigran Sargsian said.

20. A. ABELIAN AND S. LALAYAN APPOINTED AIDES TO THE PRESIDENT [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/16/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian decreed on May 15 to appoint Armen Abelian and Sevak Lalayan as aides to the Armenian president.

Presidential press service reported that on the same day the president also decreed to appoint Aram Ananian as referent of the Armenian president.

21. "GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THREATS" INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE CONDUCTED IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

"Global Challenges and Threats" international conference organized by the "Analytical Center of Globalization and Regional Cooperation" non-governmental organization will take place on May 20 in Armenia.

The chairman of the organization Stepan Grigorian said that the conference will discuss the issue about the possibility of joint efforts between Armenia and Turkey. During the event global challenges and threats will be discussed which may have an impact on Armenian-Turkish relations.

Distinguished experts from Armenia and Turkey, representatives of international organizations, embassies, analytical centers and mass media, as well as political and economic scientists will participate in the conference.

The participants will be presented the results of polls-interviews conducted in Armenia and Turkey.



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The international conference is being carried out within the framework of “Establishment of Ties between Armenian and Turkish Analysts” program supported by the Eurasian cooperation foundation and USAID.

22. ARMENIAN DEPUTY FM RECEIVES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF “FRANCE COOPERATION INTERNATIONAL” ORGANIZATION [ARMENPRESS, 05/16/08]

Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakosian met today with the executive director of the “France Cooperation International” organization Silven Itei.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service said that Armenian deputy foreign minister positively assessed the visit of the head of the organization to Armenia both in respect of boosting both bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation within the EU New Neighborhood program.

The executive director presented the functions of his organization and informed that France is interested in supporting Armenia in the implementation of democratic reforms.

He said that the aim of the visit is to discuss through meetings with the representatives of Armenian state institutions a number of issues on legislation, human rights, tourism and economy as well as issues on projecting joint programs.

During the meeting concrete suggestions were made for the improvement of media sphere, development of journalistic education with the involvement of French experts, joint work of the representatives of mass media of the two countries.

The sides expressed hope that the meetings will be effective and in near future it will be possible to develop programs and carry out them.

23. POLITICAL YOUTH CLUB TO OPEN IN ARMENIA [Aravot, 05/16/08]

A political youth club is expected to open in Armenia. Young people who want to actively participate in country’s social-political life, independent of political or other approaches and party belonging may become its member.

Representative of the youth wing of the Alliance of National Democrats party, member of the initiating group Karen Vardanian said today at a press conference that the main aim of the political club will be to promote the realization of the young people in the political field by active cooperation with political figures. He pointed out the main principles of the activity of the club like equality of members, publicity and variety of opinions as well as mutual support.

Head of the party Arshak Sadoyan said that those dealing with state, political activity must first of all have basis knowledge.

Several political and non-governmental organizations expressed readiness to support the activity of the club. They will participate in conferences, public discussions and debates.

The members of the club will also respond to the most different issues the public is concerned with by actively participating in country’s social-political processes.

24. PROGRAM FOR PRESENTING ARMENIA TO BE CARRIED OUT [ARMENPRESS, 05/17/08]

A big program will be carried out for presenting Armenia this year. Spanish “Global” company will help to shoot an hour-long documentary film about Armenia which will be compiled from 6-hour long materials, Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian said at the discussion of 2007 budget performance.

He said the right of showing the additional materials in Armenia and Diaspora the company will be give to Armenia, but the right of showing the 1-hour long film belongs to the company.

The company must sell the film and provide guarantees that it will be shown by National Geographic, Discovery and other channels.

25. LEGISLATION CALLING ON LIFTING TURKISH BLOCKADE OF ARMENIA PRESENTED TO U.S. CONGRESS [Azg, 05/17/08]

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) introduced legislation today calling on the President and Secretary of State to urge Turkey to lift its 15 year blockade of Armenia and outline concrete steps taken by the Administration in that effort, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA.)

Titled the “End the Turkish Blockade of Armenia Act,” the legislation notes that “Turkey’s ongoing blockade of Armenia does not promote regional security and prosperity, thereby undermining the short-



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term and long-term policy objectives of the United States.” It goes on to cite that the “Department of State has estimated that the blockade is inflating Armenia’s transportation costs by between 30 and 35 percent, thereby stifling its trade and economy.”

The resolution, in addition to calling for the immediate lifting of Turkey’s blockade, would mandate that the Secretary of State “submit to Congress a report that outlines the steps taken and plans made by the United States to end Turkey’s blockade of Armenia,” within thirty days of the bill’s passage.

“We need to step up pressure on Turkey to lift the draconian blockade of Armenia, permitting Armenian businesses to fully participate in the global economy and assisting Armenia’s integration into Europe,” explained Rep. Schiff.

The Schiff resolution is similar to legislation introduced in the 109th Congress (H.R.3103), which secured 14 cosponsors. In the 110th Congress, Rep. Schiff is lead author, along with Reps. George Radanovich (R-CA), Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) of the Armenian Genocide Resolution, H.Res.106, which was adopted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee last October and currently has over 200 cosponsors.

26. ACCORDING TO INITIAL RESULTS TARON MARGARIAN ELECTED HEAD OF AVAN DISTRICT, ARTHUR GEVORGIAN OF DAVITASHEN, DAVID OHANIAN OF MALATIA-SEBASTIA AND VARAZDAT MKRTCHIAN OF NORK-MARASH [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/19/08]

Elections of heads of Yerevan’s Avan, Davitashen, Malatia-Sebastia and Nork-Marash districts took place on May 18.

Press secretary of the Armenian Central Electoral Commission Tatevik Ohanian told Armenpress that in Avan district, according to the initial results, the only candidate Taron Margarian, from the Republican Party, got 18,578 voices. Around 105 people voted against the candidate and 174 voting papers were found invalid, inaccuracies were registered in 6. Overall the total number of eligible voters in the district was 18,857.

The number of eligible voters in the Davitashen district was 15,585 of which 15,366 voted for the only candidate Arthur Gevorgian. The number of invalid voting papers is 92, inaccuracies were registered in 16. About 123 people voted against the candidate.

David Ohanian, only candidate in Malatia-Sebastia district, received 29,914 votes. Around 471 voted against the candidate, 282 voting papers were found invalid, inaccuracies were registered in 62. The total number of eligible voters in the district was 30,673.

The registered one candidate is considered elected if he receives more than half votes of the voters.

In Nork-Marash district three candidates fought for the position – member of the Republican Party Varazdat Mkrтчian, non-parties Garnik Martirosian and Ashot Margarian.

From 3,393 eligible voters 3,072 voted for V. Mkrтчian. G. Martirosian received 49 and A. Margarian 212 votes. Sixty voting papers were recognized invalid, one inaccuracy has been registered.

27. VAHAN HOVHANNISSIAN TO HEAD ARF PARLIAMENTARY FACTION, HEGHINE BISHARIAN – ORINATS YERKIR PARTY’S PARLIAMENTARY FACTION [Aravot, 05/19/08]

Former Armenian deputy NA speaker Vahan Hovhannissian will hence head the ARF parliamentary faction, and Heggine Bisharian, who was the secretary of the Orinats Yerkir party’s parliamentary faction of the party, will now head it.

National Assembly chairman Tigran Torosian said today that the decisions were made during the consultations of the factions. The secretary of the Orinats Yerkir party’s faction will be newly elected parliamentarian Khachik Harutyunian.

The office of the head of the Orinats Yerkir party’s parliamentary faction was vacant after its former head Arthur Baghdasarian has been appointed in the office of the secretary of the Armenian National Security Council, and the head of the ARF faction Hrayr Karapetian applies for the position of deputy speaker of the parliament the elections of which are expected to take place during the current four-day sessions of the parliament.



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28. A. MUSINIAN ASSURES THAT LEVON TER-PETROSIAN AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO CHOOSE LEGAL WAYS TO CONTINUE POLITICAL FIGHT [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

Armenian first president, former presidential candidate Levon Ter-Petrosian and his associates will choose all the legal ways to continue the political fight.

Press secretary of Levon Ter-Petrosian Arman Musinian excluded today at a press conference the conduction of dialogue with authorities without the implementation of demands of the PACE which (the demands), by the way, have been adopted by the former president and are considered "agenda of the activity" in spite of being a pre-condition for dialogue. Musinian, though, said he considers dialogue as the only way to smoothen the public tension.

Answering to the question whether Levon Ter-Petrosian is not applying double standards by calling the European establishments during elections as organizations of "pensioners or young careerists" and now putting PACE demands as pre-condition for a dialogue, Musinian noted that they strictly criticized the European establishments but "criticizing does not mean stop working with someone".

According to him, Armenia is a full member of the Council of Europe, it means that not only a member country assumes commitments but the establishment as well. "The European establishments failed in that mission," the press secretary said.

Musinian also said that the supporters of Levon Ter-Petrosian are going to appeal against the March 8 decision of the Armenian Constitutional Court in European Court of Human Rights.

The decision was on leaving the February 24, 2008 24-A decision of the Armenian Central Electoral Commission in force.

BUSINESS

29. 95% OF ARMENIA'S ROADS OF INTERSTATE IMPORTANCE ARE IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Both state budgetary allocations and foreign investments for restoration of the country's road network are growing year by year, thanks to which the motorways of interstate and republican importance have already been improved and made safe, the RA minister of transport and communication Gurchen Sargsian said at the May 16 discussion of the 2007 state budget's execution in the parliament. According to him, about 95% of roads of interstate importance have been restored and brought into line with international standards.

G. Sargsian said that in 2008 the state budgetary allocations for restoration, maintenance and operation of roads made 24.4 bln drams, 18 bln drams of which was allocated to repairs and restoration of roads of state importance and transport facilities, and about 6 bln drams was provided for protection and operation of motorways of interstate and republican importance.

30. "INFOTOUR 2008" ARMENIAN-RUSSIAN FORUM OF BUSINESSWOMEN HELD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

"Only after the Businesswomen Support Foundation-Business Center adjunct to the RA Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) started operating, it became possible to form an idea about how great the potential of Armenian businesswomen is," the RA CCI chairman Martin Sargsian stated at "Infotour 2008" Armenian-Russian forum of businesswomen on May 16.

In his words, there are opportunities to increase trade turnover between Armenia and Russia in such sectors as agriculture, chemistry, tourism, food industry - in particular, organic food production, construction, IT, textile production and energy. M. Sargsian expressed a hope that the forum will lay a basis for new cooperation projects.

The director of the foundation-business center Lilia Gevorgian said that the Armenian-Russian forum of business women is being held in the framework of the programs on cooperation of South Caucasian countries. The idea to organize this forum was put forward by the Armenian delegation at the South Caucasian Economic Forum held in the Abkhazian city of Pitsunda in the autumn of 2007. According to L. Gevorgian, familiarization trips to be organized during Infotour 2008 will help Russian businesswomen to form a notion of Armenia's business resources. By the way, the majority of 15 members of the Russian delegation (from Tatarstan, Abkhazia, Sochi) are businesswomen engaged in the tourism sector.

The director general of Continent OJSC (Sochi) Lyudmila Aminova expressed an opinion that such forums should take place in Sochi as well, which will allow to direct part of Sochi's tourist flow to



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Armenia. Asya Khachaturian, who runs a hotel and public catering business in Sochi, made a proposal that the RA CCI assist with organizing an exhibition on Armenia's tourism sector in Sochi. She said that some Armenian companies will participate in programs on construction of Olympic facilities in Sochi and supply of cement for construction work in this city.

The chairwoman of the Union of Abkhazian Businesswomen Yulia Gumba considered cooperation with Armenia in the tourism sector as prospective, noting that 3 million tourists visited Abkhazia in 2007. The director general of Mika-Cement company Naira Martirosian expressed a wish that this cooperation would also cover Nagorno Karabakh.

M. Sargsian announced that it is envisaged to organize the response forum of businesswomen in Russia in September of this year. According to him, the Russian delegation will take familiarization trips in Armenia until late May.

31. SECOND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CAREER FAIR HELD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The Second Annual IT Career Fair with the participation of 30 information and communication technology (ICT) companies of Armenia took place at the American University of Armenia (AUA) on May 16. The fair was organized by the USAID-financed Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project. The higher educational institutions implementing IT educational programs - Yerevan State University, State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA), Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, as well as the Union of IT Enterprises of Armenia (UITE) were also involved in the event's organization.

According to the CAPS director Hayley Alexander, the holding of an IT career fair in 2007 allowed more than 20 students and graduates to find jobs. Such fairs also pursue the goal of bringing together IT companies and young specialists with great potential for development, which allows to address the problem of supply and demand for qualified employees.

The RA minister of labor and social affairs Artyom Asatryan said that such events contribute to the strengthening of links between the economy and the educational system, and the state also plays a considerable role in this process.

Among companies - participants in the Second Career Fair were ArmenTel, K-Telecom, Synopsys, Virage Logic, National Instruments, Epygy Technologies, and Synergy.

32. ARMENIA INTENDS TO DEEPEN FURTHER ITS COOPERATION WITH ARAB WORLD AND EGYPT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/17/08]

The Armenian authorities intend to continue the further deepening of cooperation with the Arab world and Egypt, the Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian stated at the May 16 meeting with the Egyptian deputy foreign minister Ramzi Ezzeldin Ramzi. According to a press release of the RA MFA, R.E. Ramzi said that Egypt appreciates its friendly relations with Armenia. He presented the programs of the Egyptian Foundation on Technical Cooperation with CIS Countries and the projects of further cooperation with Armenia within the framework of these programs.

The interlocutors discussed the formation of the Armenian side of the Armenian-Egyptian intergovernmental commission, the two countries' cooperation in international organizations, and some regional security issues, in particular, problems of the Middle East and the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

DIASPORA

33. DOCTOR LYNN JONES TO GIVE ILLUSTRATED TALK ON MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN KINGSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Dr. Lynn Jones of Florida State University will give an illustrated lecture entitled "Between Islam and Byzantium: Aghtamar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Kingship," on May 22 at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center in Belmont. This lecture is the second talk given in memory of Arshag Merguerian, an architect and an active member and friend of NAASR.



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34. DAVID V. ABRAHAMIAN JOINS CAPITAL GATEWAY PROGRAM [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

David Vahe Abrahamian of Burbank, became the latest to join the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Capital Gateway Program. This program is designed to open career doors for young Armenian Americans seeking to make their mark in American politics, the media. Abrahamian's participation in the program was made possible through the Hovig Apo Saghdejian Memorial Fellowship, a special fund established for young Armenians seeking opportunities in politics and public service.

35. "LEBANESE ARMENIANS DO NOT SUFFER ANY LOSSES AS RESULT OF MILITARY CLASHES IN THAT COUNTRY," RA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DECLARES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The Lebanese Armenians have not suffered any losses as a result of the military clashes, which took place in Lebanon and no danger threatens them at the moment. This statement was made by Armen Melkonian, the Head of the Department of the Near and Middle East of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the press conference, which was held on May 15, who added that the only incident was the arson of the Sevan radio station. "And even then, before setting fire to the radio station, people were asked to come out of the building and were allowed to bring out the equipment," he said. Armen Melkonian mentioned that there are a few number of RA citizens in Lebanon, most of whom are permanent residents. According to him, there are also a few tens of RA citizens, who live and work in Lebanon on contractual bases.

Armen Melkonian stated that the Embassy of Armenia in Lebanon and the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs have attentively followed the development of the events in that country. "We are ready to assist the RA citizens living there and in case of being able the Lebanese Armenians as well at any moment," he made assertions, adding that the Ministry envisages to add the number of diplomats in the given embassy.

In the words of the diplomat, Lebanon and Armenia are friendly and closely cooperating countries. "We cannot help worrying about the situation, that has been governing in Lebanon for the recent years. We hope that the parties involved in the conflict, will be able to reduce to the same denominator their viewpoints, positions through a dialogue and reach a quick regulation for the problem," he mentioned.

36. ARMENIANS OF AYNCHAR SETTLEMENT AFFECTED BY LEBANESE EVENTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/17/08]

The residents of the Armenian settlement of Aynchar have greatly suffered from the latest events in Lebanon, as a result of which the border with Syria has been closed. Armenians of Aynchar can no longer export their products, Radio Liberty reported.

"Unless the border check-point is opened, I will not be able to export cabbage I grow to Saudi Arabia," resident of Aynchar Sargis Movsesian told Reuters.

Sunni Muslims closed the border with Syria in response to Hizbullah's actions in Beirut that resulted in deaths of several dozen people.

Aynchar is located in the Bekaa Valley. The local association of farmers declared that rural residents were unable to export nearly 1,000 tons of fruit and vegetables because of the closed border.

The internal political uncertainty has also had a negative impact on the previously prosperous tourism as there are ruins of some ancient palaces near Aynchar. "Before Hariri's murder, about 2 thousand people used to visit historical sites in Aynchar daily. No one has come to the ruins in the past week," resident of Aynchar Asatur Andelian said.

Aynchar was founded after the genocide when 5 thousand residents of Musa Ler had been moved there by French ships. 2,400 Armenians currently live in Aynchar. The settlement has three Armenian schools.

ARTS

37. ENTRANCE TO ALL ARMENIAN MUSEUMS TO BE FREE ON MAY 18 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The International Day of Museums will be marked on May 18 in Armenia. Entrance to all museums of Yerevan and regions will be free for visitors on that day.

As Anahit Galstian, the head of the Museums and Libraries Department of the RA Ministry of Culture, said in her interview to Noyan Tapan correspondent, at present 110 state and non-state



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museums, house-museums, and reserve-museums function in Armenia, 60 out of which are under state care and 30 under care of communities. The rest museums work under the patronage of individual citizens or organizations. Though museums have had many obstacles in the recent years, they continued working. Some museums have been closed, but new ones have been opened instead.

According to A. Galstian, Armenia has joined three actions on the occasion of the International Day of Museums, the most interesting of which is the Museum Night action announced on May 17.

The International Day of Museums has been marked in Armenia since 1978.

38. IT IS FOURTH TIME ARMENIAN MUSEUMS JOIN MUSEUM NIGHT ACTION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

All Armenia's museums also join the Museum Night action organized for already the fourth time on the initiative of the directors of French museums. That country having the richest European cultural traditions has a goal to consolidate all museums of the world through this action, by dedicating one night to exclusively cultural events. Armenian museums joining the action will be open all night long on May 17: various cultural events, national traditional ritual performances, concerts, film showings will be organized.

According to the Public Relations Department of the RA Ministry of Culture, during the event, all participant-museums will free of charge receive art-loving society until 1:00 am, by making them participants of the night festive events.

In 2005, more than 1200 museums of Europe, wishing to present their exclusive collections to the public, united and organized the first Museum Night action.

39. EXHIBITIONS OF WORKS OF S. SAHAKIAN, V. TERUNI AND R. MURADIAN OPENS IN YEREVAN FOLK MUSEUM [ARMENPRESS, 05/17/08]

Exhibition of works of Sahak Sahakian, Vahan Teruni and Rafik Muradian opened today in Yerevan Folk Museum within the frameworks of "Museum Night 2008" annual event. The exhibition presents sculptures, paintings and other works of the artists. The museum will be open until 00:00am.

Saro Sarukhanian, the director of the Folk Museum, noted that the initiative promotes the interest of the public towards the museum and the flow of people witnesses that the attention of people towards art has increased.

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.

40. ARMENIAN DEPUTY CULTURE MINISTER CALLS ON MUSEUM OFFICIALS TO WORK TOWARDS JOINING ICOM [ARMENPRESS, 05/17/08]

Armenian Deputy Culture Minister Gagik Gyurjjan called today the museum officials to start the process of membership to the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

The council is aimed at protecting cultural heritage, make the cultural values available for the public. It is a non-governmental organization which has non-formal relations with UNESCO and is considered UN's consultant in museum issues and is carrying out museum programs for UNESCO.

Gagik Gyurjjan said today that Armenia is not yet member of the establishment and the museum officials must work for becoming its member.

The deputy minister noted that the ministry will support the initiators. "Several museum officials may gather and create Armenian ICOM and present an application to the international one," he said.

For instance Armenian National Museum of Architecture is member of ICOM through other organizations but Armenia, as a country must have its national council.

ICOM has been established in 1946 and has 24,000 members from 150 countries.

41. "NIGHTINGALE" BOOK RELEASED DEDICATED TO ARMENIAN OPERA SINGER GOHAR GASPARIAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

A book dedicated to famous Armenian opera singer, Gohar Gasparian, was released recently. It is called "Armenian Nightingale."

The book was authored by Robert Davtian, a professor of the Yerevan Architecture and Construction University. It tells about the great singer's life, her tours and concerts in 52 countries, when she sang in 23 operas.



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Robert Davtian told Armenpress that the book's print-run is 300 copies. It will not be sold and will be distributed only to subscribers.

He said four more volumes are to follow. According to him, he will release each year a next volume on May 16, the day when the singer died.

He said the first volume of the book is of cognitive nature. Since the author was close to the singer and her husband, Tigran Levonian, who was also a famous opera singer, the book contains many personal facts about Gohar Gasparian.

The second volume will contain memories and opinions about the singer. According to Davtian, he will compile it by September.

RELIGION

42. ARMENIAN CHURCH PARTICIPATES IN WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ROUND TABLES MEETING [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

On May 14-17 the city of Ohrid in Macedonia hosted the World Council of Churches' European Ecumenical Round Tables' meeting.

The information department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin told Armenpress that Karen Nazarian, the executive director of the Armenian Round Table, was among 35 representatives of the meeting delivering a report.

During the four-day meeting its participants discussed social, diaconic and development projects implemented by the European Round Table. The reports focused on what European churches have done in fighting against HIV/AIDS, trafficking in human beings and peace and reconciliation efforts.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in 2009 October in Armenia.

SOCIAL

43. IN OPINION OF RESIDENTS OF BUILT-UP AREAS, DECISION ON CITIZENS' PROPERTY RIGHTS OF REAL ESTATE NOT IMPLEMENTED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

Residents of 28 districts of Yerevan, in particular, Armenakian St, 23 Koryun St, Antarayin and Verin Antarayin Streets, and 3 districts of Shangavit community staged a protest outside the residence of the Armenian president on May 15. They demanded that they should meet with the president Serge Sargsian to tell him about the faults during the process of recognizing the citizens' property rights of real estate.

The chairman of Community and Law NGO Samvel Mkrтчian said that the residents of the indicated districts demand that the Armenian president change the members of the commission dealing with these areas' issues. Besides, they demand revising the government decision on recognition of citizens' property rights of real estate. According to the NGO chairman, although this decision took effect, its implementation in more than 30 districts has not been regulated.

The residents of the indicated districts have applied to the appropriate bodies for several years, asking them to restore the property right of their land plots and apartments. A commission was set up, but, in the words of S. Mkrтчian, it only makes arbitrary decisions. "For example, if a citizen owns a 800 sq.m. land plot, an unfounded decision may be taken to privatize only 120 sq.m.. It is unfair because people have lived in these areas for 50-60 years and in fact, it is their property," S. Mkrтчian said.

The protesters were received by the RA presidential staff's correspondence unit Aida Asatrian. An agreement was reached with her to organize a joint meeting of the commission on problems of residents of the indicated areas and the RA presidential staff's supervision department on the same day.

44. WORK OF ELABORATION OF PROGRAM OF DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION SPHERE ABILITIES AND STRATEGY FINISHED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

A program of elaboration of development of abilities and strategy of education sphere has been implemented in Armenia with the financial assistance of the USAID jointly with the US Academy of Education Development.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the Yerevan office of the Academy of Education Development, at the program's first stage, as a result of technical and content assistance provided to the RA Ministry of Education and Science, the draft state program of education development for 2008-2015 has been worked in Armenia.



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Besides, eight international experts of education sphere from different countries took part in the Education 2015 conference, who discussed the draft strategic vision of education development in Armenia and made proposals of further elaboration of that document. A series of consultation meetings with beneficiaries, as well as many private interviews with representatives of not only education system, but also other state and public structures closely connected with the system preceded the conference. According to the report, the draft state program of education development has been revised according to the proposals submitted by the government and has been returned to the government for final approval.

Work of estimation of abilities and needs of the RA Ministry of Education and Science was done at the second stage of the program of Elaboration of Development of Education Sphere Abilities and Strategy, from November 28 to December 18, 2007. As a result of the estimation, proposals have been introduced for organizing Ministry's work more efficiently. Abilities necessary for conducting new policy envisaged by the draft state program of education development for 2008-2015 were also estimated.

45. ARMENIAN EMBASSY IN LABANON HELPS CITIZENS OF RA TO MOVE FROM LABANON TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/16/08]

The Armenian community of Lebanon has no problems related to the strained situation in that country, the Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian stated in the RA National Assembly on May 15. In his words, the large Armenian community of Lebanon is in the center of attention of the RA embassy there, and help will be given to the Armenian community in case of necessity.

E. Nalbandian announced that with the assistance of the embassy, a number of Armenian citizens were moved from Lebanon to the neighboring country (NT: Syria) from where they can come to homeland.

46. VIVACELL, UNICEF JOINT PROJECT IMPROVES EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/17/08]

UNICEF and VivaCell, a subsidiary of Mobile TeleSystems OJSC (NYSE: MBT) announced on May 16 that thanks to their joint initiative, access to quality education for more than 200 Armenian children with special needs will become much easier.

Over 36 million drams donated by VivaCell to UNICEF in 2007 were spent on establishing and furnishing resource rooms in eight inclusive schools in Yerevan and Tavoush province as well as on the purchase and outfitting of three specially equipped minibuses that will be provided to three community centers offering transportation services to children with special needs in Tavoush. "I welcome this joint initiative that creates opportunities for children with special needs to exercise their right to education," Bagrat Yesayan, Deputy Minister of Education and Science said during the ceremony of handover of minibuses and resource rooms held on May 16 at the inclusive school No.180 in Avan community of Yerevan.

"This joint initiative will help ensure that children with special needs have full access to quality education in eight inclusive schools, and will enable community centres to provide outreach services to other children with special needs," UNICEF Representative in Armenia Sheldon Yett said.

Under the project each of the eight selected inclusive schools was equipped with a resource room where children, with the support from specially trained teachers, will engage in various developmental activities. Resource rooms will also serve as a place of convergence for parents of children with special needs where they will be able to receive information and guidance from professionals.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, there are approximately 8,500 children with disabilities living in the Republic of Armenia. Although the country has 14 inclusive schools and 5 UNICEF-supported community centres that cater for the needs of 1,500 children with disabilities, many of these children remain isolated from the society and deprived from basic education.

47. SYUNIK SCHOOLS TO ISSUE OVER 2,002 GRADUATES THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

Some 2002 graduates will be issued this year by 119 secondary schools in the southern province of Syunik. Twenty-nine of them claim to so-called 'gold medals,' a sign of excellence in studies.

Fourteen are in Kapan, 9 in Goris, 5 in Sisian and 1 in Meghri regions.

An official of the education department at the provincial governor's office told Armenpress that 964 graduates applied for so-called unified examinations which will be held in Kapan, and Goris.



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48. YSU TO MARK ITS 90-th ANNIVERSARY BY ARRAY OF EVENTS [Aravot, 05/19/08]

The administration of the Yerevan State University (YSU) has designed a set of events to mark the 90-th anniversary of its establishment which will be celebrated in 2009.

Karen Grigorian, a press officer for the YSU, told Armenpress that the start of jubilee events will be announced on May 20 by an exhibition of paintings dedicated to the university.

Before 2009 several publications about the University will be released. Karen Grigorian said also the YSU will publish also propaganda materials which will be distributed during these events.

He said the core event will be launched on January 31, 2009 in Gyumri, where the University was started first on May 16, 1919, at the order of then government and only then it was moved to Yerevan.

49. ARMENIAN TECHNOLOGY GROUP TO ESTABLISH VETERINARY LABORATORY IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

The Armenian Technology Group Incorporation, based in Fresno, USA, will help establish a laboratory in Armenia for diagnosing animal diseases which transmit also to human beings.

The lab is supposed to help cattle growers to increase the number of their animals. According to Yerevan office of the organization, the laboratory will be established on the basis of a veterinary laboratory of the agricultural ministry. It said also the new lab will be furnished with modern equipment and comply with international standards.

The lab will also examine milk and dairy products. The fund plans to spend \$1.5-2 million on implementation of this program.

50. YEREVAN MUNICIPALITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT READY FOR UNIFIED GRADUATION EXAMINATION [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

Onik Vatian, head of the Yerevan municipality department in charge of education issues, told a press briefing today that everything is ready for conducting unified graduation examinations of 11-grade secondary school students.

He said this year the graduates will take unified examinations in Armenian language and literature, Mathematics and foreign languages.

The system was introduced last year when graduates had to take only Armenian language and literature examination.

Speaking to journalists Onik Vatian assured that all necessary conditions are in place for proper organization of examinations, even the Italian language examination which will be taken by two graduates only.

The first foreign language examination is set for June 7. Those who will decide to take second foreign language examination may do so on June 17.

He said tests had been printed in England and brought to Yerevan and will be distributed to schools on the examination day.

Unified examinations will be held in special examination centers. In Yerevan 19 such centers are ready with surveillance cameras. Overall schools run by the municipality will issue 11,592 graduates, but the number of those who applied for unified examinations is not clear yet.

51. 4,089 SCHOOL GRADUATES TO TAKE UNIFIED EXAMINATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

Gayane Manukian, a press officer of the Assessment and Testing Center of the Education and Science Ministry, told Armenpress that overall 34,089 secondary school graduates have applied for taking unified examinations.

She said 13,643 will have unified examination in Armenian language and literature, 10,056 in Mathematics.

Also 1,483 have chosen Russian for foreign language examination, 7,806 English, and over 500 German and French. Three will have examination in Italian and 21 in Spanish.

Overall 55 examination centers have been created, of which 19 in Yerevan.

The first batch of tests printed in Great Britain were brought to Armenia on May 17 by air and taken to Ararat Bank's storage facility. The second and third batches are expected to arrive on May 20 and 21.



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Gayane Manukian said the Assessment and Testing Center will set up a commission comprising also journalists that will deal with distribution of tests. Tests for remote regions will be sent a day before the examination and will be kept by the bank's branches.

She said the Assessment and Testing Center is accomplishing a training course for examination organizers. In future parents and representatives of interested organizations will be involved in the process too.

Before June 2 local TV channels will screen an advertising film about preparations and holding of the exams.

SPORTS

52. ARONIAN LOSES TO TEYMUR RAJABOV [ARMENPRESS, 05/17/08]

Armenian grand master Levon Aronian lost to the Azerbaijani Teymur Rajabov in the 8th round of the Master's class international chess championship held in Sofia.

Having 2 points he is the fifth leaving behind only Chinese Bu Syan Chzhi who has 1.5 points.

53. LEVON ARONIAN SHOWS POOR PERFORMANCE IN BULGARIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/19/08]

Armenian grand master Levon Aronian, played a draw with black pieces against Vasily Ivanchuk of Ukraine in the 9-th round of Masters category competition in Bulgaria's Sofia.

With 2.5 points he shares 5-6 places with Bu Sian Chzhi of China, who upset Vesselin Topalov of Bulgaria.

Teymuraz Rajabov of Azerbaijan also played a draw against Ivan Cheparinov of Bulgaria. The top leader is Vasily Ivanchuk with 7 points, followed by Vesselin Topalov and Teymuraz Rajabov.

In another chess news, Armenian grand master Karen Movsisyan came in second in an international tournament in Spanish Salu. He scored 6.5 points out of a possible 9.

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