



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, May 23, 2008

## **TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES**

### **1. THE NEW BUILDING OF DIVANATOUN OF THE HOLY SEE OF ST. ETCHMIADZIN OPENED [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/22/08]**

The Holy See Divanatoun will from now on work in a new building, which was opened yesterday during a ceremony presided by His Holiness Karekin II.

Explaining that the Divanatoun is the office of the Catholicosate, His Holiness assured that the new building will make the activities of the Divanatoun more productive. "Different departments for each field will operate under this roof, so that the Holy See is able to face all the new challenges on time", His Holiness said, expressing hope that the activities of the Divanatoun will very soon register new progress.

The construction process of the new building started in May 2005. Today the construction is finished and they only have to improve the surrounding. This year they are also planning to renovate the Veharan, which was last renovated during the first years of Catholicos Vazgen I's tenure. It is envisaged that Catholicos Karekin II will also temporarily work in the new Divanatoun.

As the Holy See Divanapet Bishop Arshak Khachatryan mentioned, in the past the works of the Divanatoun were carried out in 4-5 rooms of the Veharan. In the new building the office will continue working towards developing new active mechanisms of propagating the activities of the church.

"Parochial system is the only effective way of bringing the mission of the church to the people", he said.

Until now only 13 people worked in the Divanatoun, who sent annually 4000 letters and notes, not counting the kondaks and messages of the Catholicos. The new building also provides opportunity to increase the staffs of the six departments working at the Divanatoun.

His Holiness Karekin II expressed gratitude to Nazar and Artemis Nazarians, who, as the Catholicos said, have spread everywhere the result of their honest merits. His Holiness also thanked "Horizon 95" construction company and handed in "St. Nerses Shnorhali" medal to Gagik Galstian, the Head of the company.

The Catholicos also informed that they are planning to construct "Srbots Hreshtakats" church in front of the Gevorkian Seminary, plus a gym and an events hall near the seminary. The same construction company will also renovate the Veharan.

Chief Architect of the Holy See Artavazd Nazaretian mentioned that the architect of the building is Armand Sahakian, who has tried to create a new building consonant with the buildings Veharan and treasury buildings.

"The building is constructed using the contemporary style with mixed elements of Armenian architecture of the Middle Ages", he said. The Chief Architect also informed that they are currently working in the center of the city, on Abovian Street: St. Katoghike Church will be renovated, the Yerevan residence of the Catholicos and another church will be built. Planning is currently underway.

P.S. Bishop Arshak Khachatryan rejected the rumors that 10 students have been dismissed from the Gevorkian seminary because of political views. They were dismissed for violating the regulations of the seminary.

## **POLITICS**

### **2. ECONOMIST AND POLITICAL FIGURE EDUARD AGHAJANOV DIES OF APOPLEXY OF HEART [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]**

Economist Eduard Aghajanov, the former Head of the State Statistics Committee and a member of the Democratic Way party for the recent years, died on May 19 evening from apoplexy of the heart at the age of 56. He was in the first three of the proportional list of the Democratic Way party in the latest parliamentary elections. Eduard Aghajanov often made speeches about his economic analyses for the public and journalists. His analyses were peculiar with their professional quality, they often became valuable counterbalance for official viewpoints.

### **3. ACCORDING TO TRANSPERANCY INTERNATIONAL CHAIRPERSON, ARMENIAN SOCIETY HAS BECOME VICTIM OF LAW ON RALLIES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]**

According to Amalia Kostanian, the Chairperson of the Transperancy International non-governmental organization, the steps of the RA authorities directed at the implementation of Resolution



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1609 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) give rise to preoccupation. As she declared at the press conference held on May 21, the organization she heads together with the experts of a number of other organizations will create a task group one of these days, which will see to the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution and "will not allow the authorities to throw wool over their eyes."

Touching upon the amendments and addenda made to the RA Law on "Holding of Meetings, Rallies, Marches and Demonstrations" by the National Assembly on May 20, A. Kostanian stressed that those amendments have not been discussed with the Armenian society at all and the ballot was "behind closed doors". "Thus, the authorities try to restrict the activities of the political opposition with the above-mentioned law, however, in fact, the society as well has become the victim of this law," A. Kostanian said. In her words, the Venice Commission, which has contributed to the adoption of the amendments, when giving advice to RA authorities meant that there are normal democratic institutions, independent courts in Armenia, which, however, do not exist in the country. A. Kostanian brought as an example one of the amendments, according to which the organizers of the event can apply to court in case the municipality does not authorize the mass event. In the conviction of the speaker, it is quite senseless to apply to court as Point 6.3 of PACE Resolution 1609 records: "Courts [in Armenia] do not have the necessary level of independence yet to fill society with confidence towards them as unbiased court bodies."

#### 4. DAVID HOVHANNISIAN: "ARMENIAN-TURKISH CONCILIATION COMMISSION WAS OF MERE FORMAL CHARACTER" [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

It is not advantageous for Turkey to establish relations with Armenia. This opinion was expressed by David Hovhannisian, the Head of the Center for Civilization and Cultural Researches of the Yerevan State University and a member of the Armenian-Turkish Conciliation Commission before, at the international conference dedicated to the Armenian-Turkish relations on May 20.

According to him, Turkey is seeking to take a central position for the infrastructures, energy carriers and financial flows crossing the region. The isolation of Armenia from regional programs serves that purpose as it decreases the role of Russia in the region. D. Hovhannisian mentioned that the activities of the Armenian-Turkish Conciliation Commission was of mere formal character.

#### 5. ACCORDING TO REPUBLICAN MP, EU CAN BE BEST PLATFORM FOR ARMENIAN-TURKISH DIALOGUE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

If the declared interests of Armenia and Turkey can be compared, the real interests of the two countries are incompatible. This opinion was expressed by Armen Ashotian, an NA MP and a member of the Republican Party of Armenia, during the discussions concerning the Armenian-Turkish relations held on May 20. According to him, being an apologist of the Turkish unity, Turkey cannot establish relations with Armenia under the circumstance of the existence of the Karabakh problem and the possible endangering of the territorial integrity of the country forces Turkey to struggle against the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Both of the countries have challenges threatening their statehood (in case of Armenia that is the Karabakh conflict and for Turkey the Kurdish issue), which as well make the establishment of bilateral relations more difficult. The MP also mentioned that if Armenia itself is interested in the establishment of relations with Turkey, the latter is forced by the United States of America and the European Union.

In the words of A. Ashotian, the Armenian-Turkish relations are not the problem of the two peoples only, otherwise it would have been settled long before. According to him, the United States of America, which is interested in the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations, should make efforts in the direction of decreasing the tension existing between the two countries. The MP stressed that as far as there are no security guarantees from Turkey, the United States of America will have to tolerate the presence of the Russian army in Armenia. By the way, Russia, which has made big investments in Turkey, has taken no steps in the direction of the improvement of the Armenian-Turkish relations.

Irrespective of the unfavorable conditions, both of the countries, according to the MP, can find possible verges of cooperation in the spheres of the provision of stability and peace, economy, environmental protection, preservation of cultural values, development of national values, terrorism and struggle against extremities, as well as other spheres. In the conviction of A. Ashotian, the European Union can be the best platform for the Armenian-Turkish relations and dialogue.



## 6. GNEL TOVMASIAN SUSPECTED OF DISTRIBUTING FLAMMABLE LIQUID TO MASS DISORDER PARTICIPANTS ARRESTED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Gnel Tovmasian was arrested on May 20 under the criminal case opened in connection with the March 1 events in Yerevan. NT correspondent was informed by the RA prosecutor general's office that he is suspected of organizing and instigating the March 1 mass disorder in Yerevan, that is, of distributing bottled flammable liquid, in particular, gasoline to mass disorder participants. According to the same source, the bottles filled with gasoline were used to burn cars in the area adjacent to Yerevan municipality and to inflict bodily injuries on police troops.

## 7. ARFD 30th GENERAL MEETING OPENS IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The official opening of the ARFD 30th general meeting took place on May 21 in the RA government sitting hall. Nearly 100 deputies from 30 countries, as well as representatives of government and parties making a coalition took part in the general meeting.

The RA President's greeting speech was read during the meeting, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Chairman of Bargavach Hayastan Party Gagik Tsarukian, RPA Vice-Chairman Galust Sahakian, Chairwoman of NA Orinats Yerkir faction Heghine Bisharian spoke. Hrant Margarian, a representative of the ARFD Bureau, made a greeting speech at the meeting. After the end of the official part the ARFD 30th general meeting will continue its proceedings in Tsakhkadzor, behind closed doors.

The general meeting is the chief meeting of Dashnaktsutiun, which is held once every four years. As Armen Rustamian, a representative of the ARFD Supreme Body, said, after Armenia's independence the ARFD 28th (in 2000) and 29th (in 2004) general meetings have been convened in the country. The ARFD 25th general meeting that opened in 1992 in Yerevan was hampered by the authorities and compulsorily continued in France.

## 8. HRANT MARGARIAN: COALITION IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF FOR DASHNAKTSUTYUN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

In the opinion of representative of the ARF Dashnaktsutyun Bureau Hrant Margarian, Dashnaktsutyun failed at the presidential election but not because of its wrong policy or incorrect activities. According to him, there were bloody clashes during the presidential elections in 1996 and 2008 in an atmosphere of social polarization. "Was it an accident that the same person was the same major player - participant in both elections," H. Margarian asked at the 30rd general assembly of the ARF on May 21.

In his words, after ten years of silence, a person whose presidency years people recall with hatred, came to the political field. Having united the opposition around himself, this person, according to H. Margarian, created a strained and polarized atmosphere instead of starting an ideological struggle. "The election was no longer among the candidates, it was between the former and current authorities. Those, who feared the return of the former authorities, voted for the current ones, while those displeased with the current authorities, voted for the former ones," the ARF Bureau member said.

According to him, what happened in the country was an attempt to carry out a colored revolution, which was organized by outside forces and headed by the opposition candidate for presidency. When this attempt failed and all means of peaceful struggle were exhausted, the tragic March 1 events occurred, from which neither the people nor the authorities benefited. "There was only one person (NT: Levon Ter-Petrosian) to benefit from it, and, unfortunately, he achieved it".

H. Margarian said that two poles formed in the country: on one pole there was the opposition whose goal was not power but "getting rid of the Karabakh problem", while on the other pole were the authorities which "did not win through clean election", but the international community did not object to their election. According to H. Margarian, it was the necessity to confront both external pressure and domestic dangers that made Dashnaktsutyun form part of the ruling coalition. At the same time he pointed out that the coalition is not an end in itself for the Dashnaktsutyun. "While the danger is not over, our remaining in the coalition is understandable. However, the duration of the coalition is conditioned by clear-cut tasks, and from time to time we will assess the efficiency of cooperation," he said.



## 9. VIDEO SHOWING BODIES OF 79 AZATAMARTIKS FOUND [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

It turned out recently that 79 Armenian azatamartiks - participants in a military action near the village of Hasankaya in Artsakh on June 29, 1992, all of them have been so far considered missing - died on the battlefield on the same day. A video showing the bodies of these azatamartiks has recently been obtained by efforts of members of Arabo NGO.

The commander of "Arabo" detachment, head of Arabo NGO Manvel Yeghiazarian announced this at the May 21 press conference. According to him, over the past 16 years, they did not cease seeking information about these men. The video bears evidence of the fact that the azatamartiks fought and died as heroes. "The guys who were at our rear - 3-4 km away preferred death to escape and being taken prisoners," he said. 22 of the azatamartiks were from "Arabo" detachment, 29 - from "Artsiv" (Hoctemberian) and 7 were from "Zeytun" detachment.

The chairwoman of the council of the Organization of Missing Azatamartiks Rima Arakelian, whose son was one of the indicated azatamartiks, stated on behalf of their relatives that the deeds of these men must be appreciated: the rank of National Hero must be conferred on them. According to her, they put forward their demand to the RA minister of defence during the May 20 sitting of the council. Besides, the relatives demand that the identities of the killed azatamartiks be established, and their bodies be brought to Armenia and buried in the common grave at the Yerablur Pantheon. They also demand a meeting with the commanders of that battle in order to get some explanation. "After 16 years, the parents must know what happened to their sons," R. Arakelian said.

In her opinion, the place where the azatamartiks were buried is in a neutral zone. It was announced that more than 300 persons who are considered as missing after military operations have been registered in Armenia.

## 10. DRAFT LAW ON YEREVAN TO BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT IN FALL [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

At the fall session of the National Assembly the government will present to the parliament a supplemented draft law on Yerevan, prepared for the second reading.

Armenian Deputy Prime Minister, Territorial Governance Minister Armen Gevorgian said today at NA-government Q&A (question & answer) that during the last week a long work has been conducted with the experts of Council of Europe over the draft law. They suggested that Yerevan, as a separate, independent community, has more authorities. The task group is already working in that direction. He said the works will soon be completed.

As to implementing state functions towards Yerevan, A. Gevorgian said that the discussions are still going on and informed that the international experts suggested that part of the functions be passed to state bodies located in Yerevan – ministries, agencies. Currently the international experience is being studied.

## 11. ARMENIA TO CONTINUE BOOSTING COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received today Israeli ambassador to Armenia Ehoud Gol.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the minister underscored the developing relations between the two countries and noted that Armenia is planning to continue the steps directed towards deepening of cooperation. The minister pointed out that a tendency of dynamic development of bilateral relations is notable during the recent times particularly in agricultural and health spheres. Minister Nalbandian also underscored the necessity of carrying out steps for activation of political dialogue, partnership in cultural, high technology and tourism spheres.

The ambassador on his turn noted that his country is also aimed at consolidating friendly relations with Armenia and conveyed to the Armenian minister the congratulatory message of Israeli Foreign Minister Tsipi Livni, in which the latter expresses readiness for joint work towards consolidation of cooperation between Armenia and Israel.

During the meeting the sides also discussed a number of issues on regional security and referred to the Karabakh conflict regulation issue.



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## 12. NEW CONCEPT REGULATING WORK WITH MASS MEDIA TO BE DEVELOPED [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The studies made by international specialists in Armenia show that we have serious issues with contacting with mass media and negative traditions. Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian said today at the government's session that for improving the quality of work of mass media with state bodies, it is necessary to have the suggestions and remarks of the representatives of the mass media.

He called on the latter to present their approaches over the issue. The prime minister said that for increasing the efficiency of the work with mass media the experience of the European countries has been studied and technical support will be provided by the European partners. By this, it is aimed to apply rules of ethics in the work of mass media and give legislative regulation to the work of mass media.

Tigran Sargsian said that if a journalist does not get an answer from the minister to his/her question, he/she states that the ministry is not working transparently, but that, the prime minister said, does not have any connection with the transparent or not transparent work of the ministry. Such negative traditions, according to the prime minister, promote the creation of yellow press as a result of which serious media is dropping out of the attention. He said the creation of new concept which will regulate the sphere will promote the process of curing the moral and psychological atmosphere in the country. Tigran Sargsian said that heads of ministries and media services must also participate in the creation of the concept.

## 13. PRIME MINISTER ORDERS CREATION OF FOUR NEW COMMITTEES [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian ordered to establish 4 ministerial committees- on financial-economic, social, regional development and ecology, and state and legal issues.

Prime minister told at the government session today that all issues which are to be discussed at government sessions will have to initially go through these committees. These committees must plan their meetings every Friday. They will have to consider also conceptual issues.

"Only by collective thinking we shall be able to work as a common team," Tigran Sarkisian stressed. In his words, the efficiency of the government's performance is contingent on the pace of the ongoing reforms.

The prime minister noted that a technical assistance was received from Great Britain for improvement of Armenia's administration system. He said based on it a comprehensive program was developed to improve the administration system.

## 14. REPRESENTATIVE OF "HERITAGE" PARTY SAYS DIALOGUE WILL PROMOTE THE INTEGRATION OF THE PUBLIC [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Authorities-opposition dialogue will promote the restoration of integral public. Member of the Heritage party's parliamentary faction Vardan Khachatryan said today at a press conference, adding that such process must start which will have the complete trust of the public.

"A wall has been raised today between the sides, thus it is necessary to quickly establish a dialogue," he said.

According to him, "Heritage" is trying to do relevant steps in that direction. He said the leader of the party Raffi Hovhannissian sent a letter to the opposition and coalition forces which suggested going for a dialogue. He said the step was not directed towards the increase of the role of the party at all.

"The thing is what the relations between authorities and opposition must be so that either side has equal opportunity to control the policy in the country and interfere in it," he said.

The representative of the party stated that if the authorities suggest them offices or cooperation they will not accept it.

## 15. RUSSIAN VERSION OF "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 1918-1920" WORK BY RICHARD HOVHANNISIAN PUBLISHED, TOO [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The launching of the Russian translation of the "International relations of the Republic of Armenia in 1918-1920" work by academician Richard Hovhannissian, a prominent historian and the Head of the Department of the Armenian History of the University of Los Angeles, California, was held in the RA National Academy of Sciences on May 20.



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As Ashot Melkonian, the Head of the Institute of History of the RA National Academy of Sciences, mentioned, the book is the compilation of the "Republic of Armenia in 1918-1920" five-volume of the author published in English. According to him, Richard Hovhannisian has wanted the Russian speaking reader as well to become acquainted with this important work, however, the book mainly comprises extracts concerning the international relations of Armenia in the above-mentioned period.

According to Ashot Melkonian, after the collapse of the first Republic of Armenia state-political figures introduced the history of that period to readers. But, however weighty those works were, there were issues, which have been disregarded. In the estimation of the historian, in 1960-70s Richard Hovhannisian set to the creation of this work in the United States of America, realizing that the history of the statehood of the modern times should be treated seriously. "If we speak about the May heroic battles of 1918, the declaration of the first Republic of Armenia, we should understand that there is the symbol of statehood here. And it is impossible to refer to the modern history without attaching importance to the problem of statehood. One of the greatest contributions made by Richard Hovhannisian was the fact of attaching importance to the idea of statehood," A. Melkonian stressed.

In the characterization of Raffi Hovhannisian, an MP of the RA National Assembly and the Chairman of the Zharangutiun (Heritage) party, his father devoted all his life to the study of the history of Armenia. The study of the history of the modern period, according to him, was, first of all, made for generations, so as both the current and future generations are taught lessons from the history and do not repeat the mistakes of the past. "We are once again passing through a national crisis with tragic reflections. And the 90th anniversary of the first Republic of Armenia should become that symbol, that impulse, that light, so as we are able to unite and find a way out of that crisis," Raffi Hovhannisian mentioned.

## 16. MEANS FROM STATE BUDGET TO BE ALLOCATED TO RA FORMER PRESIDENT ROBERT KOCHARIAN FOR BUILDING PRIVATE RESIDENCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

A certain sum will be allocated from the 2008 state budget to Robert Kocharian, the former President of the Republic of Armenia, for building a private house on his own right. In addition to this, the Mayor of Yerevan has been ordered to give office space and corresponding sum for reconstructing the space to Robert Kocharian. This statement was made by Karine Kirakosian, the Head of the Department of the State Property Management under the RA government, at the May 22 sitting of the RA government.

It should also be mentioned that the allocations will be made according to the amendment recently made to the law on "Payment, Service and Security Provision of the RA President". According to another amendment of the same law, RA former presidents will be given life pension, which will make the 80 instead of former 75 percent of the salary of the current president.

## 17. ANDRANIK HOVAKIMIAN, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF ANM ADMINISTRATION, DIED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Andranik Hovakimian, the Deputy Chairman of the administration of the Armenian National Movement party, died all of a sudden at about 19:30 on May 21. He died of heart attack. It should be mentioned that 42-year-old A. Hovakimian, who was one of the activists of the National Movement and was underground for the past months, underwent an operation on the heart some years ago.

## 18. ARMENIA IS READY TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS ON KARABAKH ISSUE ON BASIS OF SUGGESIONS MADE IN MADRID [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Armenia is ready to continue the negotiations on the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh problem on the basis of the suggestions, which were made by the co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group in Madrid.

This statement was made by Eduard Nalbandian, the RA Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his interview with the "Right of Speech" program of the Armenian second TV channel. "We believe that those suggestions are a serious basis and we can find a solution on the basis of the latters, we will take that very way and try our best so as the negotiation process continues and brings peace to the two countries and the two peoples, as we are neighbor countries and should live in solidarity and peace," the Minister said.

Eduard Nalbandian mentioned that it is impossible to settle any conflict if the agitation against each other continues. As an agitation expression hindering the negotiation process, he cited the results of



the polls of public opinion conducted recently in Azerbaijan: 82 percent of Azerbaijanis has a negative opinion about the activities of the co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group and the 29 percent of the population believes that a military solution of the problem is possible. "We cannot invite negotiators on the one hand, ask them to support the negotiation process and at the same time criticize them every day: I do not speak about persons, the following countries are being criticized: the United States of America, Russia, France," the RA Minister of Foreign Affairs finds. And the 29 percent, which finds that a military solution is possible, "is a rather dangerous index, though there were commentaries made on why we are so pacifist, why only 29 percent and not more, it is very difficult to imagine another country, where 29 percent can be for a war." The RA Minister of Foreign Affairs believes that it is a result of an every-day agitation: "The agitation should be stopped in order to make it possible to create a corresponding atmosphere to continue the negotiations in a right way, to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence and keep away from any steps that can hinder the process or create a situation where it will be difficult to think of any results at all."

In response to the question of how often he will communicate with mass media representatives, the Minister gave a brief answer: "As often as I have time."

## 19. LEVIK KHACHATRIAN SENTENCED TO SUSPENDED IMPRISONMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities, presided over by judge Arayik Melkumian, sentenced Levik Khachatrian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative (part 1, RA Criminal Code) to 1.5 years' suspended imprisonment with 2 years' probation term. By the defence party's mediation the judicial enquiry on the case continued by the speeded-up order on May 20, as the defendant has heart problems and is to have medical treatment. L. Khachatrian is a member of the Armenian National Movement Board, is a former NA deputy, and the commander of the Kasakh detachment.

The judicial enquiry on the case against Isahak Malkhasian finished at the general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Shengavit community, presided over by judge Gagik Poghosian. I. Malkhasian is the brother of NA deputy Myasnik Malkhasian, who is a defendant on another case. I. Malkhasian did not admit the accusation brought to him, use of not dangerous violence to a power representative and illegal keeping of cold arms (part 4, Article 235). The defendant stated that he was brought to the Police not at about 20:30, March 1, but from 8:00 to 8:30 am, and those bringing him to the Police are not the people who spoke in the court. Prosecutor Koryun Piloyan persisted on the accusation and mediated to sentence I. Malkhasian in total to 3 years' imprisonment by two articles. The defence party will speak at the May 23 court sitting.

According to the information provided by Alina Yengoyan, the Spokesperson of the RA Cassation Court, the court sitting on the case against Roman Mnatsakanian accused of committing mass disorders (part 2, Article 225) failed in Yerevan Criminal Court due to the absence of the lawyer. The sitting was postponed until June 3. And the court sitting on the case of appeal complaints of Samvel Karapetian and Simon Amirkhanian also failed in the Criminal Appeal Court due to the absence of the lawyer. They have been found guilty by the general jurisdiction court of the Gegharkunik region for involvement in rigging of the results of the RA presidential elections at polling station N 22/21 and have been sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment.

## 20. ARMENIA TO SEND BATTALION CONSISTING OF 70 PEACE-KEEPERS TO KOSOVO [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The RA National Assembly unanimously, with 88 votes for, ratified the protocol On Making Amendments to the Mutual Understanding Memorandum of September 3, 2003 on inclusion of the rifle platoon of RA Armed Forces in the battalion of Greek Armed Forces within the framework of the peace-keeping forces of Kosovo signed on December 19, 2007 and January 21, 2008 between the Republic of Armenia and Republic of Greece. According to it, it is envisaged to extend the RA Armed Forces peace-keeping participation in Kosovo: a battalion of 70 people consisting of two platoons will leave there instead of the rifle platoon of 34 people starting the next shift.

RA Defence Minister Seyran Ohanian told journalists the day before that "negotiations were carried out over increase of the number of Armenian peace-keepers in Iraq, but no final decision has been made by our country's leadership yet." According to the Minister, there is no agreement on sending Armenian peacekeepers to Afghanistan.



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## 21. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS CLAIM THAT SCORE SETTLED WITH MIKAEL DANIELIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The Helsinki Civil Assembly Vanadzor Office, Lawyers for Human Rights NGO, Transparency International Anticorruption Center, Huys NGO, the Armenian Committee of the Helsinki Civil Assembly, MP Zaruhi Postanjian, National Civil Initiative NGO on May 22 issued a statement, according to which on May 21 "a group of men headed by the chairman of the Progressive Party of Armenia Tigran Urikhanian attacked the chairman of the Helsinki Association Mikael Danielian". In the opinion of the statement's authors, "what happened is a settling of scores not only with a person dealing with human rights protection issues but also with the whole activity of human rights protection".

"Condemning the attack made on M. Danielian, we demand that law enforcing bodies conduct an impartial and well-founded investigation and hold those guilty accountable. The restoration of the country's prestige is conditioned by the creation of favorable conditions for human rights protection," is said in the statement.

To recap, at the May 22 press conference the chairman of the Progressive Party of Armenia (PPA) Tigran Urikhanian said that "after swearing badly, M. Danielian was the first to strike with an unknown object" and "a police examination revealed that the members of the other side involved in the incident were under the influence of an excessive amount of alcohol".

A criminal case was opened in connection with the incident, and an investigation is underway.

## 22. ACCORDING TO AZERBAIJANI POLITICAL SCIENTIST, KARABAKH CONFLICT'S PARTIES SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH EACH OTHER WITHOUT MEDIATORS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The parties of the Karabakh conflict should conduct direct negotiations with each other, editor-in-chief of the information and analytical agency "3rd View" (Baku) Rauf Rajabov expressed an opinion at the international conference "Caucasus 2007" in Yerevan on May 22. According to him, henceforth Baku and Yerevan should conduct negotiations without any mediators. In his words, representatives of the Armenian and Azeri communities of Nagorno Karabakh should also participate in negotiations.

In the opinion of Azerbaijani political scientist, in implementing their intermediary mission, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group are not impartial and are guided by their own interests rather than by the interests of the conflict parties. One proof of it is that the three countries - co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group: Russia, the U.S. and France voted against the resolution on Karabakh that Azerbaijan presented at the UN, whereas in case of being impartial they would have abstained from voting.

R. Rajabov spoke in favor of holding a referendum in the NKR in order to decide status of Karabakh. In his view, it is the population of Karabakh (prior to the conflict, it consisted of 120 thousand Armenians and 50 thousand Azerbaijanies) rather than third sides that should solve the issue of Karabakh's status.

## 23. MEMBER OF PROSPEROUS ARMENIA FACTION SAYS IF SIDES WANT TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE NO PRE-CONDITIONS MUST BE FORWARDED [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Each of the point of the 1609 PACE resolution has been discussed according to the schedule, member of the "Prosperous Armenia" party's parliamentary faction Naira Zohrabian said today at a press conference. She reminded that much of the PACE points are registered in the agreement of the political coalition and their solution is a priority first of all for the Armenian authorities.

Referring to the letter of the head of the "Heritage" party Raffi Hovhannissian to the heads of the political forces of the coalition and Levon Ter-Petrosian, N. Zohrabian said that the style of the suggestion was not chosen in a right way. "Secondly, R. Hovhannissian cannot be an unbiased mediator as his party was standing by the side of the first president in pre-electoral period. And how he was going to be a mediator for conducting a dialogue when the other side does not agree to it without pre-conditions, and if a side is forwarding pre-condition there may be no dialogue," she said.

She said she positively assesses the circumstance that there are political forces which are trying to establish a dialogue between the sides. "It is necessary to listen to each other, but when one of the sides is forwarding pre-condition there is no sense in carrying out mediatory activity," she said.

According to her, works towards the implementation of points of the PACE resolution are being carried out incessantly, in the next four-day session of the government a parliamentary ad hoc commission will be set up which will deal with the March 1 investigation, Zohrabian said.

N. Zohrabian said that if the forces are eager to conduct dialogue they must do it without pre-conditions.



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Member of the "Heritage" parliamentary faction Anahit Bakhshian is sure that the forwarded pre-conditions stem from the PACE resolution without the implementation of which dialogue is impossible. She noted that the authorities are carrying out steps towards the implementation of the resolution but is not sure whether it is possible to reach drastic changes after their steps. She is sure that the opposition must also be involved in the process.

"The authorities must greet any initiative of the opposition. Raffi Hovhannissian is concerned with the future of the homeland, he is a patriotic person and tries to help in establishing a dialogue, it stems from the interests of all," Bakhshian said.

## 24. ARMENIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA MEETS WITH SYRIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FINANCE MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Armenian ambassador to Syria Arshak Poladian met on May 21 with the Syrian deputy prime minister Abdallah Dardari.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed prospects of development of political, trade-economic cooperation between Armenia and Syria.

On the same day the ambassador met with the Syrian Finance Minister Muhammad al-Husseyin and discussed issues on the points of the agreement on avoiding double taxation between the two countries. They also spoke about the cooperation between the central banks of Armenia and Syria.

## 25. AZERBAIJAN GREETES EFFORTS OF RUSSIA DIRECTED TOWARDS REGULATION OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

Deputy speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament Bahar Muradova stated that Baku greets the efforts of Russia, both as a separate state and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, directed towards the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

"Russia has many times tried to use wider opportunities for the regulation of the conflict but unfortunately those attempts did not succeed," she said.

Nevertheless the deputy speaker of the Azerbaijani parliament said that "their mediatory mission corresponds to the interests of Azerbaijan".

## 26. ARMENIAN, AZERBAIJANI AND GEORGIAN MPs TO MEET IN LONDON [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

Regular meeting of the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian parliamentarians will take place in London in June, the head of the South Caucasian Parliamentary Initiative affiliated to the British "Links" non-governmental organization Dennis Samout stated in Baku.

The Initiative has been created by the parliaments of the three countries on the basis of the memorandum signed in 2003. It is aimed at supporting the exchange of opinions and development of dialogue among Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian parliamentarians.

## 27. RICHARD HOVHANNISSIAN SAYS AUTHORITIES AND OPPOSITION MUST BE INDULGENT FOR GETTING OUT OF THE TENSED POLITICAL SITUATION [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

For getting out of the existing tensed political situation in Armenia it is necessary that the authorities and opposition be indulgent, professor of California University, historian Richard Hovhannissian said today at the meeting with reporters. He noted that everyone has its part of guilt in March 1 tragedy.

"It is necessary to stop blaming each other, what happened on March 1 is a tragedy, and we all are guilty in it – we let it happen," R. Hovhannissian said.

He said Armenian citizen must feel secure in his/her country, be satisfied and know that he/she is not ignored. "The state must undertake serious steps in that direction, carrying out right economic policy," he said.

Referring to the way Armenia passed in 90 years, Hovhannissian said that the most important achievement of the Armenians is the survival and development during these 90 years. In this period of time the majority became educated, literate, rights of women were being voiced.

"Today women are functioning in different spheres though issues in this direction still exist, but I am sure that they will be solved very soon, and we will see more women in the parliament," he said.



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Referring to the recognition of the Armenian genocide he said the process still continues. He greeted the circumstance that the Turkish scientists started to voice the issue not believing in the legends made up by their government.

## 28. DEFENSE MINISTER SAYS ARMENIA WANTS TO REBURY 79 FREEDOM FIGHTERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian said today that the place where 79 Armenian fighters are thought to have been buried by Azeris back in 1992 is situated in no-man's land on the line of contact between Armenian troops of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan troops.

Seventy-nine Armenian freedom fighters were reported missing in 1992 after a heavy battle with Azeris. Their whereabouts were not known until lately when a video was posted on www.youtube showing Azeris burying the killed Armenians.

During a meeting today with students and faculty of Yerevan Khachatur Abovian University, the defense minister said the Armenian side will try to specify the burial place and negotiate with the Azerbaijani side on the reburying of the soldiers' remnants.

"I was not a witness to that battle, but according to field commanders the Armenian group came under strong attack and was eventually surrounded and eliminated by the enemy. They fought until their last drop of blood. It is my duty to meet with their parents and explain them everything," he said.

Seyran Ohanian said also Armenia continues negotiations with the Azerbaijani side to have back four civilians who were arrested in April after losing their way and crossing into the Nakhichevan autonomous region of Azerbaijan.

He said the Azeris first agreed to return Armenian civilians, but then began to drag it on grounds that they had to investigate all details of the incident and then only repatriate them.

## **BUSINESS**

## 29. OPENING CEREMONY OF DENO GOLD MINING COMPANY'S GEGHANUSH TAILING PIT TAKES PLACE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Despite the fact that the Geghanush tailing pit of Deno Gold Mining Company (DGMC) - the former Kapan ore mining and processing enterprise - was put into operation on April 25, its opening ceremony took place on May 20, after solution of some technical problems. The director general of the enterprise Robert Faleta said that the design solutions of the Geghanush tailing pit were developed, taking into account the best international experience, which allows to reduce the tailing pit's impact on the environment to a minimum. The construction cost about 6 million dollars and lasted two years. The circulation system of cleaned water enables the enterprise to use this water in the plant's technological processes. The waste waters will flow not into a river but back to the enterprise and will be used again for technological purposes. So, in the words of R. Faleta, natural resources will be saved.

The enterprise is doing large-scale geological survey in Kapan region, and R. Faleta took the opportunity to offer the representatives of the local authorities to get acquainted with the work done at the north site of Shahumian mine. In all likelihood, this area will become an open mine, and drilling work is being done there. Modern drilling equipment has been brought from abroad, about 100 jobs have been created. The regional governor of Syunik marz Surik Khachatryan and the mayor of Kapan Armen Karpetian showed interest in the land allocation agreements and land categories.

R. Faleta assured them that everything is done in accordance with the Armenian legislation.

## 30. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMPLETES DISCUSSION OF 2007 STATE BUDGET'S EXECUTION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The RA National Assembly on May 21 completed the discussion of the annual report on execution of the 2007 state budget. By the report, the actual revenues made 588 bln drams, the execution - 104.6% as compared with 2006, the growth made 33.2%. The expenditures made 634.7 bln drams, the execution - 100.3%, the growth as compared with 2006 - 31.9%. The deficit amounted to 46.7 bln drams, the execution - 66.2%, the growth as compared with 2006 made 17.6%.

In his concluding speech the prime minister Tigran Sargsian thanked the NA deputies for thier active discussions and assured them that no comment and proposal has escaped the government's attention. He said that during discussions of the draft budget of next year, the government will try to give detailed and exhaustive answers to all the issues of interest to deputies.



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The vote on the 2007 state budget's execution will be held on May 22. "Heritage" is the only faction that intends to vote against the execution. The faction's representative Armen Martirosian explained their position by the fact that the 2007 state budget failed to solve the social problems of ordinary citizens and outline the steps for the further economic development of Armenia.

## 31. 415 PEDIGREE CALVES WITH HIGH MILK YIELD CAPACITY TO BE IMPORTED FROM EUROPE INTO ARMENIA THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

415 Holstein, Simmental and Schvitz pedigree calves with a high milk yield capacity will be imported this year from Europe into Armenia with state budgetary allocations of 500 mln drams (about 1.6 mln YSD). NT correspondent was informed by the head of the Cattle Breeding and Pedigree Stock Farming Department of the RA Ministry of Agriculture Ashot Hovhannisian that as of May 8, 258 calves were already brought into Armenia and given to 4 big cattle breeding farms of the country. In his words, another group of 157 calves will be imported into Armenia in June.

In his words, the calves will be leased to farms. In particular, farmers will have to pay the cost of animals during 4 years: 10% of the cost in the 1st year, 20% - in the 2nd, 30% in the 3rd year and 40% - in the 4th year.

The department head said that big farmers of Armenia have expressed an intention to import another 136 pedigree calves with their own resources. The ministry of agriculture will assist the farmers with selecting the calves on the spot and transporting them.

According to him, 196 calves were imported into Armenia in 2007. Their average daily milk yield made 23-25 kg, exceeding threefold the average milk yield of domestically bred cows.

The government-approved Program on Cattle Breeding Development envisages increasing the annual number of imported calves to two thousand by 2015.

## 32. MINISTER OF ECONOMY: AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN CASE OF COOPERATION OF EXECUTIVE BODY AND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF SOCIETY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

"The society is concerned about how realistic the Armenian government's programs are and how these programs will be implemented. I think that in terms of calculation of resources, the goals of the programs are realistic but they will be accessible in case of participatory cooperation of the Armenian government and the participants in these programs, various sections of the society, which in its turn will contribute to an increase of resources for the programs' implementation," the RA minister of economy Nerses Yeritsian said on May 21 when presenting, at the invitation of the Club of Economic Journalists, the economic provisions of the 2008-2012 RA government program which was recently approved by the National Assembly.

In his words, international experience also shows that a participatory process is more efficient in case of implementation of ambitious projects. "People should realize how the changes will affect them," the minister said, adding that the ministry of economy should play a serious role in at least two of the 5 national projects subject to implementation - the project of the Business Environment Superiority Center and the tourism development project.

According to the speaker, in 2008 the ministry of economy will formulate the conceptual approaches to solution of the RA government program's issues related to the ministry, indicating the results and the extent of their influence on the society. The matter concerns innovation policy, support for small and medium business, copyright and consumer rights protection, and industrial policy. N. Yeritsian said that in 2008 "the ministry will try to form the frame of the economic policy, especially microeconomic policy". The costs of various national economic programs will be calculated and they will be compared with other programs in order to decide the sequence of their implementation. This work will be combined with reforms of the ministry's governance system. "They should be linked to annual programs of the ministry and its strategy which is now being developed," N. Yeritsian said.

He added that one of the goals of improving the business environment in Armenia is to transfer businessman-state relations to the electronic sphere. It is envisaged developing a major program on creation of infrastructures of the innovation economy, as well as one or two respective action plans. One of them will be related to Gyumri technopark, another - to formation of the health center of oncology and radiology.



### 33. ARMENIAN ECONOMY MINISTER SAYS GOVERNMENT DISPLAYS SERIOUS APPROACH TOWARDS INCREASE OF PRICES [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

The increase of prices in Armenia is agreed with international tendencies as it has been noted many times, Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian said yesterday to reporters.

He noted that it is impossible to fully eliminate the consequences but the Armenian government is currently discussing the issue and will show that it displays a responsible approach towards it.

There is already a certain stability in respect of international prices which may have its impact on these goods inside Armenia. In any case, he said, the studies of the prices must continue.

Referring to the statement of "Gasprom" that from 2011 Armenia must pay the same price for gas as European countries, Yeritsian said that Armenia must be ready for it. "We must be able to apply right strategy to spend less," he said.

### 34. ECONOMY MINISTER BELIEVES THAT CHEAP TOURISM MUST NOT BE MADE TARGET IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

There is no need to make cheap tourism in Armenia as a target, it is just necessary to increase the quality of services so that people get relevant service against the prices they pay, Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian said yesterday responding to the viewpoint that in Armenia's tourism sphere the prices are higher than in other countries of the region.

According to Yeritsian, the concept of the tourism development in Armenia has already been developed for several decades, and currently works are being carried out for the implementation of a number of master-programs. He said the issue on increase of the quality of tourism services is one of the challenges registered in the concept.

Several factors may result in decrease of prices in the tourism sphere, among them the minister singled out the improvement of business environment in Armenia, finding more available transport and particularly air communication routes. N. Yeritsian said these issues are under the limelight of the government.

"As to the prices of tourism services in regional countries, they are offering almost the same as Armenia does but the increase of prices in these countries is registered with higher percentage than in Armenia. It is an obvious fact proved by statistics," the minister said.

### 35. STARTING MINING INDUSTRY WORKS IN TEGHOUT MAY RESTORE HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN REGION [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Different spheres may be developed in the Teghout village of the Armenian province of Lori, but it does not mean that mining industry works must not be carried out there. Armenian Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsian said yesterday to reporters that "From the economic point of view it may become an engine of restoration of high technology industry in the region if we are able to direct the investments in a right way. It will create a greater value. It is also possible to develop tourism in that region but if there are conditions for mining industry it must also be carried out," he said.

Nerses Yeritsian said that the necessary studies for starting the process were made with the best international standards.

### 36. GOVERNMENT TO AUCTION 50 TRACTORS [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The government of Armenia spent the 5-th Chinese grant of 12 million Yuans on purchase of 50 tractors which are now in Nurnus company waiting to be auctioned.

An official of the Agricultural Ministry told Armenpress that the tractors and auxiliary machines are auctioned to prevent their export to other countries.

The starting price of one tractor is 2.5 million Drams. Tractors will be auctioned to farmers who will provide certificates that they have privatized agricultural land. The raised proceeds will be used to buy new agricultural machines.

Since 2004 when China began to provide grants to Armenian agriculture the government bought 169 tractors and 51 harvest combiners. Part of the 5-th grant will be used to buy a corn harvesting combiner and some auxiliary machinery. The ministry will buy more agricultural machines on a Japanese grant.



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## 37. MINISTRY OF ECONOMY TAKES STEPS ON CREATION OF VENTURE FUND [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The RA ministry of economy has developed a draft document, in which, based on experience of Poland and Hungary, the idea of creating a venture fund with mixed capital is put forward. The draft has not yet been discussed by the sector's companies and the Armenian government, the RA minister of economy Nerses Yeritsian said when presenting, at the invitation of the Club of Economic Journalists, the economic provisions of the 2008-2012 program of the Armenian government.

He reminded about the provision of the draft concept of development of Armenia's IT sector, according to which a venture fund with capital of up to 700 mln dollars shall operate in the IT sector of Armenia 10 years after the concept's adoption.

In accordance with international experience, the state's share makes up to 20% of the venture funds in various sectors, while the remaining share is private. The ministry's research showed that the Armenian venture fund should have capital of at least 30 mln dollars in order to have skilful management and ensure the profit of venture financing.

N. Yeritsian said that a conference on development of Armenia's IT sector will be held in Silicon Valley in October 2008. The issue of an Armenian venture fund will also be considered at the event. "The subject of investors' interest may be the realization of the whole concept of IT sector's development through business participation rather than of the idea of a venture fund. At the moment there is some optimism regarding this issue," he said.

## 38. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES 2007 STATE BUDGET [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The RA National Assembly on May 22 approved the annual report on execution of the 2007 state budget with 84 votes for and 4 votes against. In accordance with a previously expressed position, the members of "Heritage" faction voted against the report's approval.

The National Assembly adopted in the first reading the bill on property of members of an apartment cooperative society with invalid foundation documents and the bill on status of private residential houses in Yerevan with no documents confirming their right. The latter bill, in particular, solves the issue of further status of 15-20 thousand residential houses and annexes, which were registered as of May 15, 2001 and the documents confirming the right of these houses and annexes are either not retained or absent.

## 39. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT DEVELOPS "SCHOOL CONNECTION" AND "COMPUTER TO EACH" PROGRAMS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The Armenian government is developing "School Connection" and "Computer to Each" detailed programs, which are being turned into business programs with the assistance of Armenian branches of Microsoft and Intel, the RA minister of economy Nerses Yeritsian said on May 21 when presenting, at the invitation of the Club of Economic Journalists, the economic provisions of the 2008-2012 program of the Armenian government.

According to him, it is planned to determine the share of financial participation of the state and foreign businessmen-benefactors, in particular, Diasporan ones, in the above mentioned two programs. In the minister's words, these programs also have a business context. "If people have computers connected to the Internet, they can manage their pension accounts via the Internet, while banks and postal organization can provide their services and trade companies can sell goods to them," N. Yeritsian said.

He added that the program on formation of an information society in Armenia, which will be worked out in 2008, will become a stimulus for the implementation of the indicated programs.

The current practice in Armenia is that businessmen and representatives of various companies incur expenses by applying to state government bodies in person and receiving services from there. In countries with a developed information society, the automation of such services' provision was done by the model called "2 dollars for each transaction". "I think our businessmen will pay with pleasure 2 dollars for a transaction," in order to solve their problems with the state without going to a state government body.



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## 40. ARMENIAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWELERS AND GOLDSMITHS JOINS IDMA [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

During an international congress held in Shanghai (China) the International Diamond Manufacturing Association (IDMA) discussed among other issues also the question of the Armenian Association of Jewelers and Goldsmith's (AAJG) joining the IDMA and approved it.

IDMA is the most influential organization of this sector. Among its members are the USA, Canada, India, China, Israel, Belgium, the Netherlands and Russia.

The Armenian Association of Jewelers and Goldsmiths told Armenpress that by joining IDMA Armenian jewelers and goldsmiths will become full members of the world market. The Russian Association of Diamond Manufactures acted as a voucher for Armenia's membership.

The Armenian Association of Jewelers and Goldsmiths unites 20 enterprises and individual entrepreneurs.

## DIASPORA

## 41. ALREADY FIVE THOUSAND TOURISTS VISIT AGHTAMAR SURB KHACH CHURCH THIS YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Already five thousand tourists visited Aghtamar Surb Khach Church in the first four months of this year, five hundred of which were foreigners.

According to the Cihan agency, Izzetin Kutukoglu, the Executive for Tourism and Cultural Issues of the state of Van, emphasized that this year they expect a larger flow of tourists.

## 42. UAF'S 147TH AIRLIFT DELIVERS \$4 MILLION OF AID TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The United Armenian Fund's 147th airlift arrived in Yerevan on May 17, delivering over \$4 million of humanitarian assistance.

The UAF itself collected \$3.9 million of medicines and medical supplies for this flight, donated by the Catholic Medical Mission Board (\$2.4 million); AmeriCares (\$1.4 million) and Direct Relief International (\$76,000).

Other organizations which contributed goods for this airlift were: Dr. Stephen Kashian (\$88,000); Foundation Semra Plus of Switzerland (\$30,000); Orthopedic Technique & Rehabilitation of Switzerland (\$25,000); Gregory H.J Park (\$24,000); Harut Chantikian (\$22,000) and Howard Karageusian Commemorative Corp. (\$22,000).

Also contributing supplies to this airlift were: Armenian Relief Society (\$12,000); Fund for Armenian Relief (\$5,000) and Armenian General Benevolent Union (\$5,000).

Since its inception in 1989, the UAF has sent \$526 million of humanitarian assistance to Armenia on board 147 airlifts and 1,575 sea containers.

## 43. ARMENIAN CITIZEN SHOT DEAD IN CENTER OF MOSCOW [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

A 46-year-old Armenian citizen was shot dead in the center of Moscow on May 20 night. The police said unknown fired a shot into his head and escaped. A criminal case has been initiated. Earlier that day, two unknown shot and then robbed a man near Neva Cinema.

## 44. ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF CYPRUS TO CELEBRATE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The ARF Dashnaksoutiun Cyprus Gomideh has announced a May 28 Grand Fiesta on the occasion of the rebirth of the Armenian nation by marking the 90th anniversary of Armenian independence with the participation of ARF Dashnaksutiun Bureau representative Vahan Hovhannessian and singers Karnig Sarkissian and his band, as well as Sahag Sahagian. The celebrations will begin at PASYDY on 8 June and will continue with a Banquet with the participation of the popular singers from Armenia. The raffle of The Armenian National Committee of Cyprus - giving out three major prizes will take place during the Banquet. The two events on the same day are being organised by the ARF Dashnaksoutiun Cyprus Gomideh, Hamazkayin "Oshagan" Cyprus Chapter and The Armenian Relief Society (HOM) "Sosse" Cyprus Chapter.



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## 45. MONUMENT TO DEPORTATION VICTIMS ERECTED IN SEVASTOPOL [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Events dedicated to the 64th anniversary of deportation of nations from Crimea were held in Sevastopol. A monument to Deportation Victims was unveiled. The monument erected in front of the bus terminal corresponds a 7-meter high obelisk divided into black and white, the colors symbolizing the life of peoples before and after deportation. An inscription "Your sufferings will never be forgotten in the name of life and justice" in the languages of five nations subjected to deportation - Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Germans- will be made at the foot of the obelisk.

## 46. CELEBRATION DEDICATED TO INDEPENDENCE AND CULTURE OF ARMENIA TO TAKE PLACE IN HOLLYWOOD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Los Angeles Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa, prominent state figures and congressmen will take part in the celebration dedicated to the first Republic of Armenia and Culture, which will take place in the Little Armenia district of Hollywood. The Armenian Cultural Foundation reports that the third annual celebration dedicated to the Independence Day of Armenia organized in Little Armenia is being sponsored by California Assemblymembers Paul Gregorian and Kevin de Leon. The annual celebration will take place on Hollywood Boulevard on June 1.

## 47. CATHOLICOSATE OF THE GREAT CILICIAN HOUSE TAKES PART IN 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF DIALOGUE OF RELIGIONS OF DOHA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The sixth international conference of the Dialogue of Religions was convened in Doha, the capital of Qatar, on May 13-15 under the patronage of Qatar Emir and with the participation of over 200 guests, who had arrived from 30 countries. The conference was organized by the Interreligious Dialogue Center of Doha.

The Catholicosate of the Great Cilician House, which was represented by Archbishop Sepuh Sargsian, the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Tehran, was also invited to the conference. The main subject of the conference was "The religious values with a prospect for peace and respectful life."

Primate Sepuh took an active part in the proceedings of the conference, at the same time met with the representatives of the delegations arrived from different countries, telling them about the positive role of the Catholicosate of the Great Cilician House in the development of the interreligious dialogue and increase in productiveness.

## 48. "ARMENIANS AND PROGRESSIVE POLITICS" CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE IN GLENDALE IN JUNE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

The ARF Dashnaksoutiun Western USA is hosting an "Armenians and Progressive Politics" Conference on June 6 and 7. The conference will be a critical examination of subjects pertinent to Armenians' political, social, and economic situation within a global context. The panels' topics are Raising Social Consciousness Through Art and Music, Women's Issues, Social and Democracy Issues in Armenia, and Media Democracy and Reform to name but a few.

Some of the noteworthy speakers who will be participating in the conference are: Vahe Berberian, Levon Marashlian, David Barsamian and Roger Waldinger.

The two-day conference will take place in the Glendale Public Library.

## 49. ARMENIAN SCHOOL TO BE BUILT IN GLENDALE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

An Armenian High School will be built in Glendale in the near future. Armenian Benefactor Raffi Manoukian has committed six million dollars to this end, the Gybrahayer internet periodical reports.

## 50. RECEPTION HELD IN RA EMBASSY IN GERMANY IN HONOUR OF VEIDEMAN FAMILY SPONSORING HAYASTAN FUND [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

A reception in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Veideman was held in the RA Embassy of Germany on April 25.

As they inform from the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, receiving the guests Karine Ghazinian, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to Germany, expressed gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Veideman for



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the assistance they have shown to Armenia for the past years. These donations, which are directed at the educational and health programs in Armenia and Artsakh, are being implemented through the Hayastan Fund local body of Germany.

Jilber Momjian, the Chairman of the local body of Germany of the Fund once again thanked the benefactors for supporting Armenia, handing a silver plate to Mr. and Mrs. Veideman on behalf of the local body of Germany of the Fund as a sign of gratitude.

Representatives of the local body of Germany of the Hayastan fund and the Armenian community of Germany also took part in the event. "We feel proud and glad that due to the assistance of the Veidemans we enjoy the opportunity of bringing to life programs of vital significance in the spheres of health and education," Vahe Aghabekian, the Executive Director of the Hayastan fund, said.

## 51. MONUMENT OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE TO OPEN IN LARNACA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

On May 28 the official inauguration of the Armenian Genocide Monument will take place in Larnaca with the participation of the President of the Cyprus Republic Demetris Christofias. A high-level delegation from the Armenian Republic will also be present.

## 52. ARMEN AYVAZYAN TO DELIVER LECTURE ON ARMENIAN IDENTITY IN GLENDALE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

A lecture and a public discussion on " The Cornerstones of Armenian Identity or Who Is An Armenian " by Armen Ayvazyan, the director of " Ararat " Center for Strategic Research in Yerevan will be held in the Glendale Central Library on June 1.

"The Cornerstones of Armenian Identity or Who Is An Armenian ", a newly 29-page publication in Armenian, English and Russian will be presented to the public on the same day.

## 53. ARMENIAN THEATER TROUPE SET UP IN NEW YORK [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Some members of the Armenian community of New York, USA, have established a theater group with the support of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The troupe is named after Hrachya Ghaplanian, a famous Armenian theater director.

The main founder is a young director and actor Vahram Khojoyan. The main goal of the troupe is to stage the works by Armenian authors.

It had its premier on May 17 by staging a play by Yervand Otian called "Love and Laughter." According to Vahram Khojoyan, they plan to stage some works by William Saroyan and H. Paronian.

The group comprises 20 actors, some of them are professional actors, others are amateurs. Vahram Khojoyan said he plans to set up in New York the Armenian Culture Center.

## ARTS

## 54. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO WILLIAM SAROYAN'S 100th ANNIVERSARY TO BE HELD IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

An international conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of great writer William Saroyan is envisaged to be organized on October 6-10 in Armenia on the initiative of the RA Ministry of Culture, Yerevan B. Brusov State Linguistic University, and the Union of Writers of Armenia.

As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by the Public Relations Department of the RA Ministry of Culture, the conference's goal is to cover different aspects of W. Saroyan's creative heritage, considering it as a cultural value.

Specialists from the RA National Academy of Sciences, Yerevan State University, K. Abovian State Pedagogical University, V. Brusov State Linguistic University, writers, specialists in Saroyan studies, art critics will take part in the conference. Reports are planned on a number of subjects: Saroyan's Aestheticism, Armenia's Fate in Saroyan's Creations, Saroyan and the American Literature of His Time, Saroyan's Language and Style, Saroyan's Plays, Saroyan and Cinema.

Attaching importance to W. Saroyan's literary heritage's world significance, the organizers wish to invite specialists from the United States, Europe, CIS countries. The conference will proceed both in Yerevan and in Tsakhkadzor, and the conference's materials will be published in an individual brochure.



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## 55. FILM SHOT ABOUT NEMRUT MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

The Education and Science Ministry said film director Vahe Sukiasian and Yerevan State University assistant professor Artem Movsisian have completed shooting of a film called Nemrut-the Big Sanctuary of Sun King.

It tells about one of the biggest pre-Christian Armenian monuments-the sanctuary of Nemrut Mountain.

This is the second film by these authors. Last year they produced the first film about Tigran the Great, Armenia's most famous king.

The ministry said the film will be recommended for screening by Armenian schools in Armenia and abroad.

## 56. GAVAR REGIONAL MUSEUM HAS 500 VISITORS THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The regional museum of Gavar, the administrative center of Gegharkunik province, has had 500 visitors this year – university and school students, intellectuals. Visitors from Yerevan and abroad come usually in summer and September.

Byureghik Hoveyan, the director of the museum, told Armenpress that the museum provides students and researchers with archival materials if they ask for them.

This year the museum has obtained 40 new items which were donated by citizens.

## 57. ARION THEATER TO REPRESENT ARMENIA AT PRAGUE FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

An Armenian theater "Arion" will represent the country at the 10-th theatrical festival "Apostrophe 2008" in Prague, the Czech Republic, that will be held on June 27-July 2.

Gayane Durgarian, a press officer for the Armenian Ministry of Culture, told Armenpress that the Armenian theater was included by the festival organizers into the list of best ten participating companies. The Armenian theater will stage a play called "Will you dance with me."

Some 70 theaters are expected to participate in the festival.

## 58. RECTOR OF CONSERVATORY SERGEY SARAJIAN REELECTED ON HIS POST [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Sergey Sarajian has been reelected rector of the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. This information was provided by Ara Avetisian, the Deputy Minister of Education and Science, in the May 22 sitting of the RA government. He added that there were no complaints during the elections. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian expressed his happiness on the occasion of the free and transparent elections of the rector of the conservatory.

## 59. GOVERNMENT RELEASES MONEY TO CULTURE MINISTRY FOR ORGANIZATION OF DIFFERENT EVENTS [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The government session today decided to release 170.4 million Drams from its reserve funds to the Culture Ministry for organization and conduction of One Nation-One Culture pan-Armenian festival.

The government press office said the ministry was instructed to distribute the money to non-governmental organizations based on donation contracts.

The government decided also to release 96.8 million Drams from its reserve funds to Culture Ministry for organization of events dedicated to the centenary of American Armenian author William Saroyan.

The government decided also to release 21 million Drams to Engineering (Politechnic) University for repair of the facade of its main building and 22 million Drams for repair and furnishing of its administration's hall.

The government decided to release 6 million Drams from its reserve funds to Emergency Ministry's rescue service for replacement and neutralization of Yerevan Nubarashen chemical cemetery.



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## 60. EXHIBITION OF WORKS OF SCULPTOR BENIK PETROSIAN OPENS IN NATIONAL GALLERY [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Exhibition of works of deceased sculptor Benik Hakobian opened today in the Armenian National Gallery. His daughter artist Arevik Petrosian and son sculptor Areg Petrosian also participated in the exhibition presenting their own works.

The chairwoman of the NA's science, education, culture and youth affairs permanent commission Hranush Hakobian, aide to Armenian president Vigen Sargsian, Armenian deputy culture minister Gagik Gyurjian, art critics and art lovers were present at the opening of the exhibition entitled "Devotion".

Director of the National Gallery Paravon Mirzoyan noted that sculptor Benik Petrosian is well-known and the nation may be proud of having such artist.

"This exhibition is also interesting because it displays the works of the children of the sculptor. It is such a family of artists which will bring honor to humanity," he noted.

Armenian deputy culture minister Gagik Gyurjian greeted the idea of the organization of the exhibition and said it presents a cultural harmonic change of generation within one family.

Hranush Hakobian said that "The nature was lavish towards this family and now we are able to enjoy pieces of art made by them," she said, adding that though Benik Petrosian is not physically present but his presence is felt as his spirit, works and friends are with us.

B. Petrosian is author of more than 500 sculptures. He wished very much that an international center of sculptures be established in Armenia where he would leave his works which would serve for the future.

On May 20, 2003 with the support of former Prime Minister Andranik Margarian museum of Benik Petrosian has been established.

The exhibition will last until June 3.

## 61. ARMENIAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES TO HOLD SEVERAL EXHIBITIONS THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

Armenian National Archives in cooperation with Ukrainian Archives will hold an exhibition this year. It will be entitled 'Armenian Communities of Ukraine: the Past and the Present.'

Amatuni Virabian, Armenian National Archives director, told Armenpress that the exhibition will be held in Kiev, Ukraine, in September and will move to Yerevan in October. It will have on display archival documents about Armenians in Ukraine dating back to 15-th century and up to now.

In December the Armenian National Archives and Russian Archives will hold a joint exhibition to be entitled 'Your Pain is My Pain.' It will be dedicated to the 20-th anniversary of the destructive 1988 Spitak earthquake.

Within this year the Armenian National Archives will organize also exhibitions dedicated to the 100-th anniversary of American Armenian author William Saroyan and the centenary of late Catholicos Vazgen I.

According to Amatuni Virabian, the first volume of History of Armenian Cinema will be released soon. It tells about Armenian cinema between 1910-1934. The second and third volumes will be released later.

## 62. ARMENIAN WRITERS TO VISIT GEORGIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

A delegation of Armenian writers and poets, headed by the chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, Levon Ananian, will leave tomorrow for Georgia to participate in a series of cultural events there that will run through May 29.

Armenians will visit Tbilisi, Gori and Batumi and will meet with Georgian peers and readers.

Levon Ananian told Armenpress that the 10-member delegation will comprise poets Levon Blbulian, Ignat Mamian, Gagik Davtian, as well as younger authors.

According to Ananian, the participation of young authors is necessary because they are to further Georgian-Armenian cultural ties in future.

On May 24 the Hovhannes Abelian Armenian theater in Tbilisi will host a ceremony to mark the 110-th anniversary of a literary club called Vernatun that was founded by prominent Armenian author Hovhannes Tumanian and the 10-th anniversary of New Vernatun established by Armenian writers of Tbilisi.

The Armenian authors will then participate in annual festivities in Tbilisi dedicated to famous Armenian poet and singer of the 18-th century Sayat Nova.



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On May 26-29 the anthology of modern Armenian poetry in Georgian will be presented to Georgian poetry lovers.

The anthology of Georgian poetry in Armenian was presented in Yerevan last year.

## 63. EUROVISION SONG CONTEST FINALISTS KNOWN [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

Eurovision-2008 second semi-final ended last evening at the Belgrade Arena. 19 countries - Iceland, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, Lithuania, Albania, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Belarus, Latvia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Georgia, Hungary, Malta, Cyprus, Macedonia and Portugal competed for ten final licenses. Ukraine, Croatia, Albania, Iceland, Georgia, Denmark, Sweden, Latvia, Turkey and Portugal were qualified for the final stage.

First semi-finalists - Azerbaijan, Russia, Greece, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Israel, Armenia, Poland and Norway were also qualified for the final, which will take place on May 24 at the Belgrade Arena.

Twenty countries-winners of semi-finals and five directly-qualified countries – Serbia, France, Great Britain, Germany and Spain are the final stage.

## 64. GERMAN QUINTET TO PLAY FOR ARMENIAN MUSIC LOVERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

A German quintet 'Aliage' that has won many accolades across the world, will play tomorrow for Armenian music lovers within the frameworks of the National Picture Gallery international fourth festival. This is their first performance in Armenia.

During this exclusive concert the quintet will perform the works by Armenian, Russian and European composers.

Koryun Asatrian, the ethnic Armenian saxophonist of the quintet, told a news conference in Yerevan that he had been telling his colleagues a lot about Armenia and the festival.

"The quintet's interest in Armenia is big. They want to play beautiful works here," Asatrian said.

He said the quintet has toured recently in Turkey, Estonia and the next stops will be in Italy and Switzerland.

The Aliage quintet was founded by Daniel Gothier some 10 years ago.

The fourth National Picture Gallery musical festival began on April 17 and will end on June 15.

The festival is held with the support of the Armenian Culture Ministry, Hayastan pan-Armenian Fund and VivaCell mobile phone operator.

## RELIGION

## 65. RECONSTRUCTION OF SAVIOR CHURCH IN GYUMRI CONTINUES [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

Reconstruction of Savior Church in the second largest town of Gyumri continues, Armenpress corresponded in Gyumri reported.

The reconstruction has been going on for the last two years. It is funded by the local government and Nor Gyumri (New Gyumri) Fund. For its part the government has released this year 200 million Drams.

Vaghinak Farzadian, who supervises the reconstruction of the church that was damaged by the 1988 earthquake, told that the reconstruction is expected to be completed in 2010.

## 66. ARMENIAN CATHOLICOS RECEIVES BELARUS CULTURE MINISTER [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II received today Belarus Culture Minister Vladimir Matveichuk accompanied by the Armenian Deputy Culture Minister Gagik Gyurjian, Belarus ambassador to Armenia Marina Dolgopolova.

Press office of the Holy See told Armenpress that Catholicos greeted the program of cooperation signed between the culture ministries of the two countries and wished its successful implementation.

Karekin II referred to the existing warm and friendly relations between Armenian and Belarus peoples and underscored the inter-cultural contacts and ties for their further development.

During the meeting the sides also referred to the life of the Armenian community in Belarus.



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## 67. METS MASRIK VILLAGE IN GEGHARKUNIK TO HAVE CHAPEL [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The village of Mets Masrik in Vardenis region of Gegharkunik province will have a new chapel. Misha Khloyan, the community head, told Armenpress that the initiative came from young people of the village who want it to be built close to the rundown 7-th century church.

He said the initiative was endorsed by the elders council and the community. A fund was set up, a master plan and an estimation were made too. Over 1 million Drams have been raised.

The construction of the chapel will cost some 10 million Drams. The community leader called on all residents of the village and natives of it living outside to make their donations.

The village is known for its medieval cemetery with tens of beautifully made cross-stones.

## 68. THE ADVENTURES OF THE CATHOLICOS [Haykakan Zhamanak, 05/22/08]

His Holiness Karekin II has dismissed the majority of the four year students of the Sevan Seminary. Here are the details of the incident. The situation in the Sevan Seminary was tense even before the presidential election. To leave the seminary to go somewhere the students were forced to give signatures that they were not going to participate in the opposition rallies. So when the students of the first, second, and third years expressed their discontent regarding their vacations, the inspector of the seminary decided to punish them. He assigned a whole notebook of handwritten copy until the time of evening prayer. And when the students refused to do the assignment, the inspector pointed out some of the students and announced that they were dismissed from the seminary. Then a group of fourth year students left the seminary and decided to walk to Etchmiadzin in the middle of the night and express their dissatisfaction to His Holiness. The inspector asked the second year students to make them return, swearing on the cross in his hands that he will solve the matter. However, when the students returned the inspector murmured, "Good trick". During a conversation the inspector insulted the students and they cursed him back. The story continued at the Holy See Veharan where the inspector took the students. He said that he is dismissing some of the students because they are pro-opposition and are manipulated from outside. His Holiness dismissed many of the fourth year students and sent the others to the third year groups. Thus, today the Sevan Seminary does not have graduating students. The thing that having oppositional points of view is a serious ground for Vehapar to dismiss students is not a secret anymore.

## SOCIAL

## 69. FORMER CHIEF ARCHITECT SAYS APPEARANCE OF YEREVAN DISRUPTED BECAUSE OF CUSTOMERS [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

Narek Sarkisian, the former chief architect of Yerevan, said today that the architectural appearance of Yerevan is disrupted at the demand of customers.

Speaking at a news conference he said every developer tries to gain the maximum benefits, which puts architects before a very serious problem.

He recalled that under the Soviets development projects were to be approved by the government only, which is not the case now when every licensed architect can design anything in the downtown Yerevan to please the customer.

According to him, the two major problems are the density of high-rise buildings and their disrupted appearance.

He said the most alarming is the density of high-rise so-called elite buildings. He said the old Soviet times standards should be revised to make them comply with internationally accepted ones.

He predicted that it will be more difficult to cooperate with customers in future as many foreign developer companies from the USA, Russia, Iran and Europe have set their eyes on Armenia and all dictate their conditions.

He said this makes urgent introduction of government supervision and restoration of the architectural committee that has been idle since 1990.

Narek Sarkisian is known for design of North Avenue in central Yerevan.



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## 70. APARAN BATTLE ANNIVERSARY TO BE MARKED ON MAY 25 [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

"If we had lost the Aparan battle in 1918 we would not have had either the First or Third Armenian republics. The Aparan, Vanadzor (Karakilisa) and Sardarapat battles (against the invading Turkish troops) gave birth to our republic," said Tigran Petrosian, a senior member of Nig-Aparan non-governmental organization.

He said Armenia will mark on May 25 the Aparan battle anniversary. On that day the town in central Armenian Aragatsotn province will hold a series of events.

One will be a march towards Revival monument. Also monuments to Drastamat Kanayan and Sedrak Jalalian, two heroes of the battle, will be unveiled in the town.

He said the Aparan battle was as significant as the Sardarapat battle, but unlike in Sardarapat where the Turkish troops were stopped and thrown away by regular army, the Aparan battle was fought by volunteers and militia.

He said Armenians must avoid referring to two of the battles as Bash-Aparan and Karakilisa as these words are of foreign origin.

Gagik Manasian, director of the State Philharmonic Hall, said the majority of the events dedicated to the 90-th anniversary of these battles were conducted, but the major ones are scheduled for May 25-28.

## 71. "CAUCASUS 2007" INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE KICKS OFF IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The "Caucasus 2007" international conference which kicked off today in Yerevan will sum up the tendencies of economic development of the South Caucasian countries in 2007, as well as the influence of international events on the regional security issues.

Director of Caucasian Media Institute Alexander Iskandarian said that each global event which takes place in the world has its political and economic impact on the South Caucasian region.

"It is a difficult and special region where not only the conflict of interests of big states exists but also here are many unsolved issues which continued to be contemporary during the 2007 and now as well," he said.

Scientists, journalists and political figures from Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey and USA participating in the conference will present during the discussions the achievements of each of the country in 2007 as well as the existing challenges inside the region.

The policy of western powers and Russia in the North and South Caucasus in 2007 will be a special topic of discussion during the conference. The participants will also have a special discussion over the issue on unrecognized republics of the South Caucasus and its impact on ensuring security of the region.

On May 23 head of the International Relations Department of the Ankara Economy and Technology University Mustafa Aydin will present a report on "Turkey's Policy in the South Caucasus in 2007".

The conference has been organized by the Caucasian Media Institute and Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency in collaboration with the Eurasian Cooperation Foundation and Henrich Byol Foundation. It will last until May 23.

## 72. NAREK SARGSIAN: PROGRAM OF GATHERING HISTORIC MONUMENTS IN BUZAND STREET IS "NOTHING MORE THAN CEMETERY OF MONUMENTS" [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/22/08]

Narek Sargsian, the former Yerevan Chief Architect, in Yerevan Urban Development Council has voted against approval of the program of gathering historic monuments in Buzand street. He is convinced that the program is "nothing more than a cemetery of monuments." Moreover, the Chief Architect of Yerevan considers these monuments repetitions of Russian provincial architecture in Yerevan and in other places, which were designed in the late 1800-s in Minvody, Kislovodsk by "engineer-technicians." "I am for that cultural layer's preservation in Yerevan as a historic and not architectural value," he emphasized.

Narek Sargsian said in his interview to Noyan Tapan correspondent that there was such a part for restoration of historic monuments in Alaverdian street. "We considered that the monuments should be gathered in that part of Yerevan. However, I consider absolutely inadmissible placing them in the middle of Main Avenue envisaged by Tamanian's Major Plan, in the territory of three hectares."



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"Fortunately, nothing has been done yet. The city's architectural solutions and junctions should arrange so that its blood vessels will be opened like, for instance, Northern, Miasnikian Avenues, Italian street. Main Avenue, which is 90 meters wide and should be entirely a park, will be closed with the implementation of this program," he emphasized.

The former Yerevan Chief Architect stressed that he will do his best for that program adopted and approved two years ago not to be fulfilled.

## 73. ARMENIAN GEGHARKUNIK COOPERATES WITH FRENCH IZER [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Governor of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosian received today the representatives of the French province of Izer – director of the “Afrat” international tourism company Dominique Zyoupan and his deputy Michele Kuba.

D. Zyoupan said that since the signing of cooperation agreement between Gegharkunik and Izer provinces a notable work has been carried out in development of education, health and tourism spheres. The French side considers the tourism sphere as one of the prospective and developing direction, thus “Afrat” is continuing its studies and developing programs in that direction.

During the past years the company cooperated with Gegharkunik governor's office and Sevan municipality as a result of which specialists of tourism service sphere were trained and a booklet-guideline about Sevan has been published in French. Many people in Izer are already aware about Lake Sevan and attractiveness of the Armenian nature. In spite of that the director of “Afrat” said there is still a lot to be done.

Governor of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosian expressed readiness to support all the joint steps directed towards the development of tourism which will be carried out as a result of mutually beneficial cooperation. He also underscored the necessity of development of winter tourism and expressed hope that Gegharkunik-Izer cooperation will bring the peoples of the two provinces closer.

The next visit of French guests to Gegharkunik has been scheduled for June and it is possible that at that time first groups of French tourists will arrive in Sevan.

## 74. TURKISH COACH IMPRESSED BY HOSPITALITY OF ARMENIANS [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The chief coach of the Turkish football team under 19-years old Ahmet Cheihan said he is very glad and thankful to the Armenian people for the good attitude displayed towards them. In a conversation with Armenpress he said that they are in Armenia for already three days and no undesirable or unpleasant incident occurred.

He said several football games which must take place between the teams of the two countries will greatly promote the normalization of relations between the two countries.

“During the contacts with Armenians I noted that we and you are very alike both by hospitality and characters,” he said.

The Turkish coach also said that they have not had yet an opportunity to be in Armenian picturesque places but have heard about them from mass media and acquaintances. He said they liked Yerevan a lot, especially the center of the town.

## 75. BULGARIAN VARNA ADOPTS SPECIAL DECISION ON RECOGNITION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

The council of communities of the Bulgarian town of Varna adopted on May 21 a special decision on the recognition of the Armenian genocide. Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that the decision was backed by 27 members, 9 abstained from voting. Overall 36 people participated in the voting.

Bulgarian Plovdiv, Rusen and Burgas also recognized the Armenian genocide. The Bulgarian opposition has several times raised the issue on recognition of the Armenian genocide in parliament, but the parliamentary majority has refused to include the issue in the agenda, not wanting to harm relations with Turkey.



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## 76. GOVERNMENT SETS LIFE PENSION FOR FORMER PRESIDENT ROBERT KOCHARIAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

The government of Armenia decided on Thursday to set a lifetime pension for former president Robert Kocharian in the amount of 80 percent of presidential salary.

The session also instructed head of the state property management department to make offers on allocation of funds for providing R. Kocharian with free housing and establishing his office. The offers must be made during the second quarter of the year.

The government has released 500 million Drams to the Urban Ministry to carry out the decisions.

## 77. GOVERNMENT ALLOCATES 80.6 MILLION DRAMS FOR FOREST RECOVERY [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

The government decided on Thursday to allocate 80.6 million Drams from its reserve funds to Agricultural Ministry. The first disbursement of 51.8 million will be made in the second quarter and the rest - 28.8 million in the third quarter.

The government press office said this money is earmarked for HayAntar (Armenian Forest) organization for restoration of forests near the thermal power plant of Nubarashen forestry.

The project is to be implemented by Armenian Forests Rehabilitation and Development Fund.

## 78. YEREVAN MUNICIPALITY INVITES SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR CONCERT [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

The Yerevan municipality has invited all secondary school graduates for a festive, Last Bell, event on May 24 at 7 pm.

The municipality told Armenpress that the event will be on Freedom Square. It said the event will feature well-known singers. The concert will be wrapped up by fireworks.

## 79. STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE TO ORGANIZE THREE JOB FAIRS [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

The State Employment Service of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry will hold three successive job fairs to help university graduates and all young men to find employment.

The first of these fairs will be held in the town of Abovian on May 24, the second in Goris in Syunik province on May 31 and the third in Yerevan on June 14.

The fairs are supposed to help also employers find and recruit young professionals and reduce unemployment level. By participating in fairs employers get an opportunity to advertise their companies and fill in vacancies with skilful professionals.

Fairs are held within the frameworks of World Bank's Social Security Management program with the support of the German GVG organization.

They are organized with the support of the National Union of Employers, Armenian Commerce and Industry Chamber, Armenian American Commerce Chamber, DVV International, Tempus and some other organizations.

## 80. NEW BOOK ABOUT NAGORNO-KARABAKH WAR RELEASED [ARMENPRESS, 05/23/08]

The first volume of a series of books dedicated to heroic battle of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), authored by Bakur Karapetian, chairman of Shushi Foundation, was presented today at the National Academy of Sciences. The book is based on true stories.

This publication was welcomed by Levon Ananian, chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, who said that it reflects the clean truth about the Nagorno-Karabakh war.

"We have raw material that can be used by scientists, film directors to become a cultural value," Ananian said, adding that this book should be translated into foreign languages so that foreigners also learn the real truth about that war.

Primarily, Bakur Karapetian plans to release 12 volumes of the book. He hopes that sale of the first volume will raise enough proceeds to back up the publication of the second and successive volumes.



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## SPORTS

### 81. STIAUA FC WILL NOT PAY 3 MILLION EUROS FOR KARAMIAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/21/08]

Romanian Stiaua FC said it is ready to pay 1 million euros to Polytechnic FC of Timisora to have Artavazd Karamian.

Artavazd Karamian plays also for Armenian national team. In an interview with a Romanian sporting weekly 'Sportulio', Stiaua's owner, Jiji Bekalin said he had met with Karamian's agent who wants 3 million for Karamian.

"I would not say that 3 million euros is big money, but I will not pay that much for him. I am ready to pay 1 million, but I will never pay 3 million," he said.

According to Romanian newspaper, Stiaua offered Karamian a 5 year contract with 400,000 euro annual salary.

According to a poll in Romania, Karamian was recognized Romania's best half-back of this season.

### 82. TURKISH FOOTBALL TEAM UPSETS THE ARMENIAN BY 2:1 [ARMENPRESS, 05/22/08]

Armenian football team under 19 years old lost today at the Euro Cup's elite-round game with the Turkish team by 1:2.

The chief coach of the Armenian team Armen Gyubudagyants told at a press conference followed after the game that the game was quite active and despite of defeat of the Armenian team he is glad with the devotion displayed by them. He also confessed that the Turkish team was stronger than the Armenian. "Five core football players were absent in our team, their presence might have brought to other result".

Chief coach of the Turkish team Ahmet Cheyhan said he liked the game of the Armenian team and said that the Armenian football players are quick and technically well prepared. He said before this he was not aware of the Armenian team and Armenian football. "Today we saw that you have quite good football players who in future will become high-quality players," he said.

In another game Spanish football team upset the Ukrainian with 3:1 point. After the first tour the list is topped by Turkey and Spain. The Armenian and Ukrainian teams are third and fourth respectively.

On May 24 our team will play with the Ukrainian. On the same day the Turkish team will play with the Spanish in Yerevan "Mika" stadium.

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Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

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*Established in 1906, AGBU ([www.agbu.org](http://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.*