



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

1. SUKIAS AVETISIAN: IF THERE ARE PLACES WHERE OPPOSITION'S POWERS ARE LIMITED, LET THEM ASK US TO EXTEND THEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

"The dialogue has started just after the presidential elections and if some person or political force does not wish to take part in it, it does not mean that there is no dialogue in the political sphere," Sukias Avetisian, a member of the RA National Assembly RPA faction, stated at a press briefing held on Friday. "If only one political force or personality is meant, we should not focus our attention on that problem much. If that person does not accept the elected President, it is no use starting a dialogue with him. And we have started a dialogue with all other forces long ago," he stated.

In response to the question of whether dialogue only inside the ruling coalition is sufficient, S. Avetisian said: "There was no coalition during the February 19 elections, there were sides, which started a dialogue afterwards, and a coalition was born as a result of it." Besides, according to him, there is the Zharangutun faction in the National Assembly, with which the power wing is carrying out a dialogue. "What powers doesn't the opposition have? If there are places where opposition's powers are limited, let them ask us to extend them," the RPA member stated.

As regards first President Levon Ter-Petrosian, as the deputy affirmed, most of the voters voting for him not shared his political views, but had problems with other power wings. The deputy is convinced that today there is also a dialogue with the people, the evidence of which is the bills adopted by the parliament during the last four-day session.

2. ACCORDING TO PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF MAY 25 ELECTIONS OF MAYOR OF HRAZDAN REPUBLICAN, CURRENT MAYOR ARAM DANIELIAN RE-ELECTED [Hayastani Hanrapetutun, 05/27/08]

According to the preliminary results of the May 25 elections of the Mayor of Hrazdan Republican Aram Danielian, the current Mayor, has been re-elected. 14 784 electors have voted for him and 6 042 electors for non-party Mesrop Mesropian, the Chief specialist of the Production-Technical Department of the ArmRusGasProm CJSC (Hrazdan - 5). This information was provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Tatev Ohanian, the Spokesperson of the Central Electoral Constituency.

21 467 or about 51 percent out of the 41 939 electors took part in the election. 639 ballot-papers were found invalid. The number of inaccuracies makes 38.

3. RA CEC REGISTERS BH MEMBER RUBIK HAROUTIUNIAN DEPUTY BY PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

Rubik Haroutiunian was registered a deputy from the Bargavach Hayastan's (Prosperous Armenia) electoral roll by the National Assembly proportional system at the May 26 sitting of the RA Central Electoral Commission (CEC). The basis of the decision was the NA protocol on stopping the deputy powers of Vahe Hovhannisian elected from the party list, as well as the applications on withdrawal of Ofelia Petrosian and Gagik Santrosian from the BH list.

4. SERGE SARGSIAN CALLS U.S. CONGRESSMEN FOR ASSISTING QUICK APPROVAL OF CANDIDATURE OF NEW AMBASSADOR OF U.S. TO RA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

RA President Serge Sargsian received U.S. Congressmen Adam Schiff, Allyson Schwartz, Wayne Gilchrest and the delegation led by them on May 24.

The President attached importance to deepening of Armenian-American relations considering them an important guarantee for Armenia's development and establishment of stability in the region. He expressed gratitude to the United States for its large-scale assistance provided to Armenia since independence.

Serge Sargsian also welcomed the Congressmen's activities and their warm relations with the Armenian community and stressed that they raise very important and delicate subjects.



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Congressman Schiff said that for him it is always a pleasure to be in Armenia, as he considers himself Armenia's friend and a representative of Armenians' interests in United States Congress.

The post-electoral developments were also touched upon at the meeting. "We consider Armenia an important partner and ally, therefore, we wish to assist its political and economic progress as far as possible," the members of the U.S. Congress said.

Mentioning that Armenia has undertaken serious steps in the direction of its democratization in the short period of its independence, Congressman Schiff said that it is a permanent process and the United States has been perfecting democracy in the country for two hundred years. Agreeing that deepening of democracy is a permanent process and it has never been stopped, President Sargsian emphasized that it should be estimated in comparison. From this point of view the last elections no doubt were more progressive compared with the previous ones, which has been also registered by international observers. We will strive for holding the next elections better," head of the state emphasized.

At the suggestion of the Congressmen the President presented his point of view on possibilities of settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

The President called the Congressmen for assisting to approval of the candidature of the new U.S. Ambassador to Armenia mentioning that it proceeds from the interests of development of Armenian-American many-sided cooperation.

## 5. SLOVAKIA CAN BECOME SECOND COUNTRY IN EUROPEAN UNION, WHICH HAS DEFINED CRIMINAL PUNISHMENT FOR DENIAL OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

Stefan Harabin, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of Slovakia, taking as basis the resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide adopted in 2004 in the National Council of Slovakia has suggested a draft law, according to which the denial of genocides is considered as criminally punishable. He has taken the idea of considering the denial of the Armenian Genocide as punishable as a basis for the document. This information was provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Ashot Grigorian, the Chairman of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe and the Head of the Armenian community of Slovakia.

Ashot Grigorian clarified that if there is no precedent of the denial of the Holocaust, there are precedents of the denial of the Armenian Genocide and the whole Europe should lead a serious struggle against its repetition. According to him, in this respect Slovakia will serve another example after France after the adoption of the law envisaging up to five years of imprisonment for denying the Armenian Genocide. He expressed hope that the adoption of the law will not take much time.

In the words of the Chairman of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe, if they take into consideration the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey does everything for the organization of the dismantling of the monument-khachkar placed in Bratislava in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, it will become clear what a blow the adoption of the given law will become for Turkey. Besides, Ashot Grigorian is taking lobbyist steps so as the government of Slovakia is not against the adoption of that law as the circumstance of the development of the given draft law by the Minister of Justice does not mean at all that the Ministers representing other parties making part of the government will defend the idea on the adoption of the law. Even the Christian-Democratic Movement party, the representatives of which were the initiators of the adoption of the law on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the parliament of Slovakia in 2004, can be against the adoption of the law considering the denial of the Armenian Genocide as criminally punishable because of being opposition.

According to Ashot Grigorian, Stefan Harabin is in Armenia on May 26-28 at the invitation of Gevorg Danielian, the RA Minister of Justice. The Head of the Armenian community of Slovakia reminded that he organized the visit of Yan Charnogurski, a founder of the Christian Democratic Movement party and the Minister of Justice of those times of that country, to Armenia, then the visit of RA former Minister of Justice David Haroutunian to Bratislava. S. Harabin will be in Yerevan for the purpose of providing the productiveness of the action of the provisions stipulated by the contracts concluded during those visits. "In addition to this, the visit of S. Harabin is a serious political act as any similar visit is an active incentive for the provision of the settlement of the Armenian issues in Europe," the Chairman of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe stressed.

He added that the Minister of Justice of Slovakia will take part in the conference of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe to be held in Bratislava on May 29-30 and the ceremony of laying wreaths on the monument khachkar (crossstone) placed in Bratislava in the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. It is expected that at the invitation of S. Harabin, Slovakian current world-famous hockey player Zigmund Palfin, who is in the Hockey National League, will take part in the ceremony. Within the frameworks of the Conference dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the First Republic of



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Armenia and the 10th anniversary of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe besides S. Harabin, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Culture of Slovakia, the leaders of the parliament and other officials have affirmed their participation. According to Ashot Grigorian, famous violonist Sergey Khachatryan and the Eurasia band with Vladimir Khachatryan at the head will perform during that solemn event.

## 6. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN RECEIVES U.S. CONGRESSMEN [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

On May 24 President Serzh Sarkisian received U.S. Congressmen Adam Schiff, Ellison Schwartz, Wayne Gilkrest and members of their entourage.

The government press office told Armenpress that during the meeting President Serzh Sarkisian underscored the deepening of Armenian-American relations saying they are an important guarantee for Armenia's development and establishment of stability in the region. He expressed his gratitude to the USA for its large-scale assistance to Armenia since its independence.

Serzh Sarkisian also hailed the work of the Congressmen and their warm ties with the American Armenian community stressing that they are highlighting very important and sensitive questions.

Congressman Adam Schiff said it is always a pleasure for him to visit Armenia because he regards himself as a friend of Armenia and a representative of Armenians' interest in the U.S. Congress.

During the meeting the sides referred also to post-election developments in Armenia. "We consider Armenia as an important partner and an ally, therefore I would like to promote as much as I could its economic and political progress," he was quoted by the press service as saying.

Noting that Armenia has made serious steps towards democracy development during a short time since its independence, Congressman Schiff said it is a permanent process. He said the USA has been perfecting democracy for over 200 years.

Sharing this opinion President Serzh Sarkisian said this process can never stop stressing also that it should be assessed in comparisons. In this sense he said the past election marked a step towards as compared to the previous one, which was registered also by international observers.

"We shall strive to conduct next elections better," Serzh Sarkisian said.

At the request of U.S. Congressmen President Serzh Sarkisian expressed his opinions over the current stage of efforts for resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He called on Congressmen to help step up the process of appointment of a new U.S. ambassador to Armenia saying it is in the interest of the development of diverse mutual relationships between Armenia and USA.

## 7. THREE NEW PERMANENT COMMISSIONS TO BE SET UP IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Urgent session of the Armenian National Assembly approved today the draft on making changes in the "NA Regulation" authored by the representatives of the coalition forces.

By the draft it is suggested to increase the number of permanent commission and make them 12 from the existing 9. To remind, by the Armenian Constitution at least 12 permanent commissions may be set up in the NA.

Particularly, it was decided to separate territorial governance and local self-governance issues from the state-legal permanent commission. The newly created regional governance and local governing affairs permanent commission will hence deal with the issue.

The NA's social, health and environment protection affairs permanent commission is also being divided and new health affairs permanent commission and a social affairs permanent commission will hence function.

NA's agriculture and nature protection commission will deal with environment protection issues.

Hovhannes Margarian, from the Orinats Yerkir faction, said the increase of the number of commissions is agreed with the overloading of the state-legal and economic affairs commissions and noted that with it the issue of equal overloading of the commissions will be solved.

Members of the "Heritage" faction voted against the draft. They said that by the increase of the number of commissions the issue of the efficiency of the work will not be solved and if according to them the issue is connected with the political arrangements they may be solved within the circle of existing commissions.

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Tigran Torosian said that the draft law has no connection with the efficiency of the work as the same people will be working. He said with it they will limit the circle of issues on which the people are working by that increasing the efficiency of their work.

The second reading of the draft is expected to be conducted at the going urgent session.



## 8. ELECTIONS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTAL BODIES HELD IN A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES ON MAY 25 [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/27/08]

Aram Danielian has been elected mayor of Hrazdan in the elections which took place there on May 25.

Spokesperson for the Armenian Central Electoral Commission Tatevik Ohanian said that overall 21,467 people participated in the elections 14,784 of which backed Aram Danielian. She said 6,042 voters backed other candidate Mesrop Mesropian. Around 639 voting papers were found invalid, inaccuracies were registered in 38.

Jivan Kamalian backed by 1,469 voters, from 1,507 has been elected head of the Kanakeravan village of the Armenian province of Kotayk. He was the only candidate. Another sole candidate Mushegh Babayan has been elected as head of the Sevaberd village of the same province he was backed by 98 voters from 101.

Zarand Grigorian has been elected head of the Arshaluys village of the Armenian province of Armavir receiving 1,469 votes from 1,495. Other candidate Gagik Avetisian got 14 votes.

Hamlet Petrosian has been elected the head of the Basen village of the Shirak province.

## 9. ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER RECEIVES U.S. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JOSEPH PENNINGTON [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian Defense Minister Seiran Ohanian received today U.S. charge d'affaires Joseph Pennington.

Spokesman for the Armenian Defense Ministry Seiran Ohanian told Armenpress that during the meeting J. Pennington congratulated S. Ohanian on his appointment and expressed hope that bilateral cooperation will expand more during the latter's tenure.

Referring to the activity of Armenian peacekeepers, Pennington said USA greets that Armenia doubled the number of its peacekeepers to Kosovo, noting that it promotes Armenia's involvement in international processes and increase of Armenia's international image.

During the meeting Armenian defense minister pointed out that for Armenia, the peace-keeping mission has both military-political, and strategic importance. The representatives of the Armenian Armed Forces gain experience and skills within the international divisions.

The sides also noted that Armenian-American military cooperation has its role in a number of issues referring to the regional security. They also referred to the organizational works of NATO exercises which will be held in Armenia in October.

At the end of the meeting the sides noted that stemming from the regional security all efforts must be directed for the peaceful regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

## 10. ARMENIAN FM TO LEAVE FOR BRUSSELS AND MOSCOW [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian is leaving tomorrow for Brussels where he, together with Defense Minister Seiran Ohanian, will participate in the 26+1 format session of the North-Atlantic Council during which the pace of implementation of the Armenia-NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan Program will be discussed.

On May 29 E. Nalbandian will pay a visit to Moscow where he will meet with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, head of the State Duma commission on CIS affairs Alexey Ostrovski Secretary General of the CSTO Nikolay Bordyuzha.

The minister is also expected to meet with the representatives of the Armenian community in Russia.

Within the framework of the visit Nalbandian will deliver speech in the Moscow International Relations State Institute. On June 1 Nalbandian will be back to Yerevan.

## 11. GRIGORY SARKISOV DISMISSED FROM THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF STATE PROTECTION SERVICE [Azg, 05/27/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed on May 26 a decree dismissing Grigory Sarkisian from the office of the head of the Armenian State Protection Service, presidential press service reported.



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## 12. SAMVEL FARMANIAN, "EVERYBODY MUST UNDERSTAND THAT TIME WHEN PROBLEMS WERE SOLVED WITH FISTS HAS PASSED" [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

"Everybody must understand that time when problems were solved with fists has passed: it is not the way to future we and our compatriots are expecting. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the strong mind and strength of intellect is much more worthy respect," press secretary of the Armenian president Samvel Farmanian said today, commenting with the request of reporters on the question what steps are being carried out on disclosing and preventing incidents in which, according to press, son of a parliamentarian, policemen or close relative of an official are involved.

According to him, Armenian Constitution and legislation do not give any privileges to anyone – be it a policeman, official of the prosecutor's office, son, or a close relative of a parliamentarian. "The fact that an unpleasant incident took place between a policeman and son of a parliamentarian is by itself unacceptable," Farmanian said, reminding that a criminal case has been opened into the case.

"You can be sure that the details of the case will be disclosed and the guilty will bear the responsibility," he assured.

To remind, the case is connected with beating of policeman Davit Ghazarian who according to chief prosecutor's office official information was beaten by a Garnik Muradian. Some mass media reported that Garnik Muradian is close friend of K. Guloyan, son of member of parliament Murad Guloyan.

## 13. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN APPROVES NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STATUTE [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

On May 26 President Serzh Sarkisian signed a decree to approve the statute of the National Security Council.

The presidential press service told Armenpress that in accordance with its statute the National Security Council brings up all issues in domestic and foreign policies, political, military, economic, social, food, energy, ecological, information, demographic, scientific and other spheres which relate to the country's national security and its national interests. It is also in charge of organization, coordination, supervision of work for implementation of concepts and government programs stipulated by the national security strategy and making relevant decisions.

The National Security Council coordinates the work of government bodies and assesses their efficiency in terms of implementation of national security related decisions, sets the main directions for strengthening the country's strategic development, its national security and competitiveness and makes decisions on their implementation.

In accordance with the national security strategy it implements strategic reforms in the armed forces, law enforcement, tax and customs bodies, and assesses their efficiency.

The work of the National Security Council is headed according to the Regulations, by president of Armenia. The chairman of the National Security Council approves its monthly plan of actions and ratifies its decisions.

The presidential decree also sets the authorities of the National Security Council Secretary, who ensures implementation of issues envisaged by the national security strategy, organization and coordination of related work and their supervision.

The National Security Council has inter-agency commissions which organize the work of government bodies for implementation of issues stipulated by the national security strategy.

The president has set a staff for the National Security Council whose work is governed by the National Security Council Secretary.

## 14. BAKO SAHAKIAN SAYS COMING MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENTS MAY BE CONSIDERED A PROGRESS [Aravot, 05/27/08]

"I do not think that the coming meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents may be viewed as an achievement, but it may be registered as a progress," President of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakian said today speaking about the importance of the coming meeting of Serzh Sargsian and Ilham Aliyev on June 7 in Saint Petersburg. According to Bako Sahakian, the negotiations are already a progress.

Referring to the situation in the contact zone, the president of Karabakh said shootings are always registered but everything is being done to make them less.



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## 15. PRESIDENT SARKISIAN SIGNS INTO LAW TWO BILLS [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

On May 26 President Serzh Sarkisian signed into law two bills passed earlier by the National Assembly.

The presidential press service said the first was a bill on making changes to the law on official amount of salaries of top leaders of executive, legislative and judicial bodies and the second on the law on the hydro-meteorological activity.

## 16. SAMVEL FARMANIAN SAYS IN CREATION OF PUBLIC COUNCIL PRESIDENT SEES ESTABLISHMENT OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN DIFFERENT LAYERS OF THE SOCIETY [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian highly underscores the formation of the Public Council and its future role. By it he sees the establishment of dialogue between different layers of the society.

Press secretary of the Armenian president Samvel Farmanian said today at a briefing that the president assigned the staff to organize discussions in 10 days with all the stakeholders – political and non-governmental organizations, specialized associations, intellectuals, for setting up a task group.

S. Farmanian said that in this round it is spoken about hearing the opinions of different sides over the formation of a task group. In the coming four-five days this process will end and the suggestions will be presented to the president over the formation of the task group. Here, he pointed out a very important circumstance – the public is the owner of the Public Council and the more it includes different layers of the society, the more the work will gain.

Spokesperson of the president also noted that the expectations from the Public Council are quite great and it is very good that the president's initiative had such a wide response: he said they receive hundreds of letters daily which the staff of the president will try to sum up and present the suggestions to the president in 4-5 days.

S. Farmanian also called on the citizens, all the stakeholders, parliamentarian forces, specialized associations, individuals, intellectuals who want to be involved in the formation of the task group present opinions over the formation of the council.

According to him, they may be useful and make this establishment a mechanism of assembling opinions, suggestions, for finding effective solutions to different issues in short period of time.

The name of the establishment must be specified, the discussions are being held over variants "Public Chamber" and "Public Council".

## 17. EU IS CONCERNED WITH THREAT OF KARABAKH WAR STEMMING FROM ITS ENERGY SECURITY [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

EU is more concerned with the threat of restarting war in Nagorno Karabakh as some of its energy communications are only 20 km away from the conflict zone.

An expert from International Security Forum affiliated to Bundesver Academy of the German Armed Forces Johannes Rau said in an interview to Day.az that Azerbaijan's geopolitical ratio and strength has essentially increased during the recent years. Speaking about the threat of restarting military activities, the expert said that this way of regulation of the conflict is possible but it will be too dangerous.

"All the communications are passing and will pass through the territory of Azerbaijan, thus for the energy security of EU it is necessary that the conflict be solved in a peaceful way," the expert said.

According to him, the war option is very dangerous first of all for EU and USA.

## 18. THREE ARF MINISTERS ELECTED MEMBERS OF ARF BUREAU [Aravot, 05/27/08]

Three ministers from the ARF – Agriculture Minister David Lokian, Education and Science Minister Levon Mkrтчian and Labor and Social Affairs Minister Aghvan Vardanian have been elected members of the ARF Bureau and instead of them ARF will nominate new candidates, Hrant Margarian re-elected member of the Bureau told today at a press conference, noting that in the coming days the ministers will officially announce about their resignation.

Margarian said that if there were not elected members of the Bureau they would have remained in their offices.

In the coming days ARF will publicize the names of the candidates after a relevant decision will be approved in the Supreme Body. Margarian said that it is early to speak about candidates but noted



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that they may be people who are not members of ARF but it will not result in reviewing memorandum of the political coalition and ruling parties.

## **BUSINESS**

### 19. CBA ISSUES "LEO" COMMEMORATIVE COIN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has issued the "Leo" silver commemorative coin under the international numismatic program "The Zodiacal Signs".

NT was informed by the CBA press service that the sign of the Leo is depicted against the background of a starry sky in the middle of the reserve of the commemorative coin. There is a star of yellow zirconium above on the right of the Leo. Colored paints were used for the design of the coin. U. Valezhak is the author of the commemorative coin's design. The coin was minted at the Mint of Poland. Its nominal value is 100 drams. It is made of silver (925 alloy). The coin's weight is 28.28 grams, its diameter is 38.61 mm. The number of the coins is 12 thousand.

### 20. IN OPINION OF CHAIRMAN OF UNION OF GREENS OF ARMENIA, CLOSURE OF ALAVERDI COPPER FOUNDRY REPRESENTS ATTEMPT TO SUSPEND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

The fact of stopping the operation of Alaverdi copper foundry by Armenian Copper Program (ACP) CJSC is an attempt to suspend the industrial development in Armenia, the chairman of the Union of Greens of Armenia Hakob Sanasarian expressed an opinion during a talk with NT correspondent. According to him, over 10 years the plant has worked by using old technologies, which has caused great damage to the environment and the local residents. "In accordance with its obligations, the company shall install modern equipment at the plant and promote the development of this branch of the industry in Armenia - instead of that, it closes the plant," H. Sanasarian noted.

Whereas, according to him, the damage done by the copper foundry so far has been much greater: the cases of congenital defects incompatible with life and other diseases have become more frequent in recent years. According to the data of the local medical institutions, no cases of congenital defects were registered in Alaverdi before 1992 when the plant did not operate, while in 2001 the number of such defects made 28, in 2004 - 107. The number of cancers in Alaverdi made 411 in 2004 and 456 in 2006. H. Sanasarian pointed out that by the data of the Institute of Occupational Diseases of the RA, the mental abilities of children at local kindergartens are below the norm by 7-10 points.

H. Sanasarian said that the Armenian government has already given considerable privileges to the company in terms of making partial environmental payments, whereas now it does make the company fulfill its obligations. "Under conditions of the current situation in the country, the company is playing games to its own advantage," he said. "Months ago the company stated that it would get the opportunity to re-equip the copper foundry only after the operation of Teghut mine, while after receiving a licence for operation of Teghut mine, it has decided to close the foundry," the chairman of the Union of Greens said.

### 21. FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE 24.9 MILLION EUROS TO THE ARMENIAN SIDE [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

A financial document will be signed between French and Armenian governments on May 27, according to which the French government will provide 24.9 million euros to the Armenian side for improving the drinking water system in Yerevan.

An official from the Armenian Finance Ministry told Armenpress that the document will be signed by the Finance Minister Tigran Davtian and French ambassador to Armenia Serzh Smesov.

### 22. JAPAN TO PROVIDE EXTRA CREDIT TO ARMENIA TO BUILD NEW POWER PRODUCING UNIT [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian and Yasuo Saito, Japanese ambassador to Armenia (seated in Moscow) signed today in Yerevan an agreement according to which Japan will provide Armenia with extra credit to accomplish construction of a new power generating unit near the Yerevan Thermal Power Plant.

Under the 2005 agreement signed by Armenia and the International Cooperation Bank of Japan the latter provided Armenia with a 15.9 billion Yen credit for construction of a new steam-gas energy



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producing unit. The new unit is supposed to produce approximately 2.-2.5 times cheaper electricity and reduce substantially green gas emissions.

The government of Japan agreed to provide extra 10.4 billion yens worth credit in view of the glowing prices of equipment and assembling work between 2004-2007.

The extra credit will be released on the same terms as the main one- with a 30 year repayment period, 10 year grace period and 0.75 percent annual interest rate.

The Armenian minister said the power generated by this unit will be for domestic consumption. He said they have chosen an equipment that will enable to produce power at the lowest possible cost. The new unit is supposed to produce up to 1.5 billion kilowatt/ hours electricity annually.

## 23. PRIME MINISTER INTRODUCES NEW ADA DIRECTOR GENERAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian visited today the Armenian Development Agency (ADA) to introduce its new director general Robert Harutyunian.

The press office of the ADA told Armenpress that while introducing the new director general, Tigran Sarkisian described him as “a good specialist who has showed all his best qualities in previous tenures.”

Tigran Sarkisian emphasized the role of the ADA in implementation of the government's programs saying this structure has a big role in it, especially in attracting foreign investments into Armenian economy.

In Tigran Sarkisian's words, a competitiveness council was set up to enhance the efficiency of the ADA's work and other relating processes. He said the competitiveness council has developed an investment attraction and export promoting strategy. The prime minister assessed also highly the ADA's work saying it has been effective always.

Finance Minister Tigran Davtian, who was head of ADA before his new appointment, said he will continue close cooperation with ADA.

Before his new appointment Robert Harutyunian was executive director of a financial ministry department for management of foreign financial programs.

## DIASPORA

## 24. ATOM EGOYAN DELIVERS LECTURE IN TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY [Azg, 05/26/08]

The Bar-Shira Auditorium at Tel-Aviv University was packed with cinephiles eager to see Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Atom Egoyan's film. In Israel Egoyan delivered a stunning lecture on the Armenian genocide, using his critically acclaimed film Ararat as a springboard for discussing the representation of history in art, and the tragically unending efforts of the Turkish government to deny the atrocities of the past. The lecture was followed by a candid question and answer period.

## 25. KOMITAS CHILDREN'S CHOIR OF NOR JUGHA TO TAKE PART IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEST-FESTIVAL IN POLAND [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

The Komitas children's art school choir of Nor Jugha is in Poland for the purpose of taking part in the international spiritual music contest festival, which is being held in the city of Haynovka on May 22-26. As Alik daily reports, 22 singers aged 10-15, under the leadership of Armen Amirkhanian, are performing Armenian spiritual songs in the festival.

## 26. MEETING OF CHAIRMEN OF CHURCH COUNCIL OF MIDDLE EAST CONVENED IN ANTELIAS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

A sitting of the Chairmen of the Church Council of the Middle East presided over Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great Cilician House, was convened in the Mother church of Antelias on May 23. The details of the congress organized by the Council of Antelias in the passing month were, first of all, discussed in the sitting. His Holiness received the reports of the meeting on the current state of the Council and some work to be organized. In this respect, the complete participation of the member churches and the investment of the Middle East Church Council in the prosperity of the Christian life of the region were considered as necessary.

Issues and programs connected with the administrative structure, economic state and foreign relations of the Council were also discussed.



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## 27. CATHOLICOS ARAM I MEETS WITH MINISTER OF CULTURE TAREK MITRI [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

Tarek Mitri, the Minister of Culture of Lebanon, visited Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great Cilician House, on May 23. The meeting between His Holiness and the Minister, which was held in the office of the Catholicos, was of intimate character. It is mentioned that they are close friends and have worked together for many years within the frameworks of the interchurch movement of the World Council of Churches.

Minister Mitri thoroughly introduced the situation hindering the Qatar meeting of the political forces of Lebanon, and the issues on the inner folds of the consultations during the conference.

His Holiness expressed his content with the victory the whole Lebanon has registered, "where there are no losers, there is only one winner: the whole Lebanon with all its communities and parts, with its people and authority."

## 28. 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDATION OF HOLY NAZARET ARMENIAN CHURCH OF CALCUTTA TO BE CELEBRATED IN NOVEMBER [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

During the week of November 8 to 15 the Armenian community of Calcutta will celebrate the 300th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Holy Church of Nazareth with a delay of one year. The Church was initially built in 1707. Under the auspices of the Armenian Church Committee it has recently been fully restored and renovated. The church will be re-consecrated during this event.

## ARTS

## 29. ARAM KHACHATRIAN INTERNATIONAL CONTEST OF VIOLONISTS TO BE HELD FOR FIFTH TIME IN YEREVAN [Azg, 05/26/08]

The Aram Khachatrian international contest of violinists will be held in Yerevan for the fifth time between May 30 and June 6. Over twenty musicians aged 16-32 from Armenia, Russia, Georgia, Japan, Poland, Korea, France, Italy, Spain, Mexico, the United States of America and Turkey will take part in this contest.

According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Anna Ter-Hovakimian, the responsible secretary of the contest, the contest will be held in three stages. 15 thousand U.S. dollars is envisaged for the first place, 10 thousand dollar for the second and 5 thousand dollars for the third place. There are also three encouraging prizes set making 2000 dollars each.

The organizers of the contest are the RA Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs, the "Aram Khachatrian - contest" cultural fund and the Komitas Conservatory of Yerevan.

Anna Ter-Hovakimian stated that the Aram Khachatrian international contest of violoncellists will be organized in 2009.

## SOCIAL

## 30. CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS RECEIVES MINISTER OF CULTURE OF BELARUS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, received Vladimir Matveychuk, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Belarus, accompanied by Gagik Gyurjian, the RA Deputy Minister of Culture, and Marina Dolgoplova, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Armenia, in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin on May 21.

During the meeting His Holiness welcomed the cooperation program signed between the Ministries of Culture of the two countries and wished productive process for the implementation of the program. His Holiness Patriarch referred to the warm friendly relations existing between the two peoples with content and attached importance to the intercultural contacts and relations in their development.

They also referred to the life of the Armenian community of Belarus and the religious mosaic picture of the latter.



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## 31. NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY YEREVAN INHABITANTS TO MAYOR'S OFFICE IN JANUARY-APRIL, 2008 EXCEEDS INDEX OF PREVIOUS YEARS THREE-FOLD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

The "one window" automated system of acceptance and studying of citizens' applications and the ELPAS automated system of electronic document circulation work efficiently at present. As Grigor Melkumian, the Head of Yerevan Mayor's Office Staff, said at the May 26 press conference, the introduction and efficient operation of "one window" resulted in considerable activation of document circulation, quality and efficiency of discussion of citizens' applications.

According to him, after systems' introduction the number of applications introduced by citizens to the Mayor's Office in 2007 grew compared with the previous years and made 57.6 thousand. The head of the staff said that nearly 57% applications regard problems of communal sphere, 17% property, 14% urban development, 5% legal problems. More than 80% answers to all applications, according to G. Melkumian, is positive. It was also mentioned that the number of application-complaints submitted for the second time reduced three-fold.

G. Melkumian also said that the number of applications submitted in January-April, 2008 made 28102, which exceeds the index of the same period of the previous two years three-fold.

## 32. 2007 ARMENIAN PRESIDENT'S AWARD-GIVING CEREMONY HELD [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

The ceremony of handing the 2007 RA President's Awards to 26 recipients took place on May 26. Prof. Yuri Barseghov received the award in the category "Award for Significant Contribution to the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide" for his 3-volume book "The Armenian Genocide: Turkey's Responsibility and the Obligations of the International Community". The scientist has allocated his 10 thousand dollar award to "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund for setting up a fund to provide assistance to the disabled and the children of azatamartiks who died in the Artsakh war. The French historian Yves Ternon also received the award in the same category for his significant scientific contribution to the recognition of the Genocide.

Awards in the category "Natural Sciences" were given to the series of scientific articles "The Obtaining and Study of New Optically Nonlinear Crystals" and the work "Computer Biology. The Modeling and Study of Red Cell Membranes through Computer Experience and Molecular Dynamics". An award in the category "Physics" was given to the series of articles "A Theoretical Study of Electronic and Optical Properties of Semi-Conductor Nanostructures". The award in the category "Medicine" was handed to the group of Prof. Georgy Okoyev for the introduction and use of the method of insemination outside the mother's body in Armenia, thanks to which 89 babies were born. No award was given in the category "Technical Sciences".

Prof. Nikolai Hovhannisian was presented with an award in the category "The Humanities" for his 4-volume work "The History of the Arab Countries" (from 7th century to 2005).

Two awards were handed to participants in the navigation of "Cilicia" sailer: the captain of "Cilicia" sailer, chairman of Ayas club of sea studies Karen Balayan received an award in the category "Activity and Programs on Dissemination of Humanitarian Values" for the program "Navigation across Seven Seas", and publicist Zori Balayan was given an award in the category "Literature" for the trilogy "Cilicia".

An award in the category "Art" was given to the Honored Artist of the RA Aramazd Karapetian-Shiraz for 7 "Spiritual Calls" sculptures.

RA President's Youth Awards were handed to the following artists:

- The category "Painting and Cinema": to designer of the Atex fashion center Lilit Kankarian for the collection of clothes "Armenian Renaissance", to Narek Arzumanian for the series of paintings "Images", and to Narine Manucharian - for the series of graphic works "The City".

- the category "Literature": to Ruzanna Voskanian - for the collection of poems "Transparent Rains".

- the category "Instrumental Performance" - to pianist Lilit Grigorian,

- the category "Singing" - to Asatur Baljanian.

RA President's Awards have been given by the "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund since 2001 with financing of the Poghsian Foundation.

The RA president Serge Sargsian thanked the Poghosian family for initiating the idea of presidential awards and ensuring their continuity. "We are waiting impatiently for new achievements of the Poghosian Foundation, in particular, the reopening of the park in front of the president's residence, a place popular with many residents of Yerevan," he said.



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The president congratulated those present on Day of Republic, adding that the independent statehood presupposes development of the people's system of values and culture, which have been the pivot of our identity for centuries. "I am sure that the Armenian state has a special mission of preserving and developing the Armenian culture. We have much work to do in order to implement this important mission. In parallel with economic development of Armenia and raising its international prestige, we need a scientific and spiritual-cultural awakening. You should play a great role in the formation of a moral atmosphere and social ideals in our country, I am sure that improving the role and image of the intellectual has become an urgent issue. When our schoolchildren start to dream of becoming a scientist or a musician - and not only a lawyer or businessman, I am sure then the affairs in our country will take a normal course. For this purpose our new generation needs exemplary people and deeds, and today you are such an example," the president said.

## 33. KAPAN CHILDREN TO TAKE PART IN ONE CHILDHOOD DAY IN DILIJAN EVENT [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

A group of children from the southern province of Syunik will participate in the pan-national 'One Childhood Day in Dilijan' event to be held on June 1. It will be dedicated to the International Day of Children Protection. The 40-member group of children from Syunik will comprise 36 children aged 8-12.

Sarkis Davtian, head of the culture department at the provincial governor's office, assigned to head the group, told Armenpress that the group comprises gifted children from Kapan, Goris, Sisian and Meghri who will sing, dance and recite in Dilijan.

The governor's office bought special clothes for children. This event is the initiative of First Lady, Mrs. Rita Sarkisian and Bella Kocharian.

## 34. CILICIAN CATHOLICOS RECEIVES ARMENIAN AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Cilician Catholicos Aram I received today Armenian ambassador to Lebanon Vahan Ter-Ghevondian. The ambassador met with the Catholicos to say farewell as he is ending his mission in Lebanon.

An official from Anthelias Catholicosate told Armenpress that during the meeting Aram I highly assessed the two-year long activity of the ambassador in Lebanon and said that it is necessary to continue the economic relations between the two countries on the same level.

At the end of the meeting the Catholicos wished V. Ter-Ghevondian success in his further activity.

## 35. ARAM KARAPETIAN RELEASED UNDER CONDITION OF NOT LEAVING THE COUNTRY [Aravot, 05/27/08]

Armenian chief prosecutor changed the punishment of the leader of the "New Times" party Aram Karapetian and released him from the prison under condition of not leaving the country, spokesperson for the chief prosecutor's office Sona Truzian told Armenpress.

The decision was made taking into consideration the health condition of Karapetian.

## 36. CHIEF COUNCIL OF SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CALLS ON BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

The Chief Council of the Scottish Presbyterian Church has called on the government of Great Britain to recognize the Armenian genocide.

By the way, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Gordon Braun is the follower of the Presbyterian Church.

## 37. 20 SEMI-FINISHED HOUSES IN SHIRAK TO BE COMPLETED THIS YEAR [HAYastani Hanrapetutiun, 05/27/08]

A program designed for completing semi-finished rural homes was launched in the northwestern province of Shirak. The government has allocated 175 million Drams to support its implementation. Some 20 houses are planned to be finished this year.



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Albert Margarian, head of urban department at the provincial governor's office, told Armenpress that these houses are 40-70 percent accomplished. They were selected by an urban department's commission.

In the last 3 years 112 semi-finished houses were completed thanks to this program.

## 38. FAR TO RAISE PROCEEDS FOR CHILDREN CENTER [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

On June 2 representatives of Armenian show business will participate in a fair dedicated to the International Day of Children's Protection.

The fair will be organized by the Center for Reception and Orientation of Unaccompanied Children run by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Ramona Ktakian, deputy director of the center, told Armenpress that Armenian stars will be selling products of local companies-Ashtarak Kat (dairies), grand candy, ASA (ice cream and candies) Coca cola and others.

The proceeds will be given to the center for resolution of the children's social problems. A concert will be held for children after the fair is over.

## 39. COMMISSION RULES TO RECOGNIZE TWO COMPANIES DOMINATING IN MEDICATIONS MARKET [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

The state commission for protection of economic competition ruled today to recognize Alfa Farm and Pharmatech companies with dominance in supply of medications against allergies and anaphylaxis.

The ruling was objected by representatives of these companies, however the commission's chairman Ashot Shahnazarian told journalists that they were groundless.

The commission conducted a study of this market in 2006 and 2007 finding that these companies accounted for 75 and 61 percent of import of these medications respectively. The rest of imports were handled by 22 companies.

Overall 17 companies were licensed in Armenia to produce medications.

Alfa Farm was found also to dominate in the market of pain-killing, cardiovascular and some other medications.

## 40. JERMUK RESORT TOWN TO HOST BAZE –2008 YOUTH JAMBOREE [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

This year's pan-Armenia Baze-2008 youth jamboree will be hosted by the resort town of Jermuk in the province of Vayots Dzor. The week-long event will bring together up to 650 young Armenians aged 18-30 from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Diaspora.

Participants of previous jamborees are not eligible to take part in this one.

Arthur Soghomonian, director of Baze -2008 gathering, told a news conference today that the goal of the event is to bring together young Armenians from across the world and give them an opportunity to mix and take part in cultural, quiz and sporting games.

The participants will be divided into three major groups- the red, the blue and the orange, symbolizing the colors of the Armenian flag.

According to Arthur Soghomonian, one of the highlights of the gathering will be to advocate Christian faith. He said there is a preliminary agreement with Catholicos Karekin II, head of the Armenian Apostolic Church that he will meet with young people to give his blessing to their gathering.

Besides, a pilgrimage will be made to Saint Gayane church. Arthur Soghomonian said President Serzh Sarkisian and Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian will also meet with participants of the gathering.

## 41. 17<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF "HAYASTAN" PAN-ARMENIAN FUND HELD TODAY [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian President, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of "Hayastan" Pan-Armenian Fund Serzh Sargsian chaired today the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Board of Trustees. The aim of this annual gathering is to discuss the work carried out during the past year, specify the steps which must be undertaken in the coming year. After the blessing of the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II the president declared the opening of the session.

"I highly underscore the activity of the "Hayastan" pan-Armenian fund and as a head of the Board of Trustees will do everything to keep the efficiency of this important for Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora relations institution high. The fund has passed a long way to and while preparing to this session I tried to



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get acquainted in details with its activity, issues and thought over the future steps. I highly underscore today's session as an opportunity of frank and open discussion. I think we have serious work to do to analyze the way we passed and plan the future actions," Serzh Sargsian said to the participants of the session.

He congratulated the new members of the Board of Trustees – Karabakh President Bako Sahakian, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Prime Minister of Nagorno Karabakh Arayik Harutyunian, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, Finance Minister Tigran Davtian, head of the State Tax Service Vahram Barseghian, representative of the Ramkavar Azatakan party George Manukian. Serzh Sargsian also thanked Robert Kocharian for heading the Board of Trustees for ten years.

During the past year the list of donators of the fund has been enlarged. The president said that a certificate of the donator member will be granted to Martin Liederman from Germany. The local donator members have become "VivaCell", "ACBA Credit Agricole", "Ardshininvest" banks, "Karabakh Telecom" and businessman Michael Baghdasarov.

The executive director of the fund Vahe Aghabekyants said that last year about 11 million USD from the 22 million was provided for the implementation of programs in Artsakh, another 11 million were directed towards implementation of programs in Armenia. All the programs are in the process currently, but because of exchange rate fluctuations and increase of prices for building materials two important programs have been suspended – construction of Martakert hospital and a water pipeline.

During the coming year the implementation of programs will continue and according to Aghabekyants the main focus will be on the implementation of programs necessary for Armenia and Artsakh. Works will also continue towards the implementation of rural development programs.

The executive director suggested the Board of Trustees to set up a task group which during the three years will study the structure of the fund and will prepare a package of suggestions of reforms. "Though the establishment has rich experience but it needs to be renovated just like any living organism so that it will be able to confront new challenges," he said.

Aghabekyants also noted that the structure, statute of the fund need to be changed. This year too he said the annual telethon will be held in November. The report of Aghabekyants on the activity of the fund in 2007 was heard behind closed doors.

Karabakh President Bako Sahakian said the fund has been created for the implementation of programs of pan-national importance and during the past years the establishment managed to implement its mission.

He said Karabakh has transferred from the humanitarian programs but the elements of social tension still exist. "The board is the best place to raise issues and discuss them," Bako Sahakian said, noting that they also spoke about the programs of development of villages.

During the session the sides also watched a film telling about the activity of fund.

## **SPORTS**

### 42. ARMENIA WINS 23 OLYMPIC GAMES QUALIFICATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/27/08]

Armenian athletes have participated this year in 25 European championships and 46 international competitions having won 23 licenses for Olympic Games in China.

According to Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Armen Gregorian, Armenians may win two more licenses for the Games. He meant so-called blanche cards which may be given to Armenian swimmers and athletes to compete in the Games with a special status.

The minister praised the government for paying greater attention to mass sports, including children sports.

He said the National Olympic Committee headed by Gagik Tsarukian is making all necessary preparations for the Games. Armenian teams will be flying to China from July 1 to August 6.

The minister said the Armenian team will be headed by legendary sportsman, Olympic and world champion Albert Azarian.

The uniforms for Armenian team were manufactured by Russian Bosko, German Addidas and Armenian Arevik firms.

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