



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, May 30, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF POPULAR MOVEMENT CENTER PRESENT LEVON TER-PETROSIAN'S POSITION TO U.S. CONGRESSMEN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/26/08]

Representatives of the Center of the Popular Movement Levon Zurabian, Avetis Avagian and Arman Musinian on May 25 met with U.S. Congressmen Adam Schiff, Allyson Schwartz and Wayne Gilchrest. They presented the political situation in Armenia and the position of the Movement's leader Levon Ter-Petrosian on the ways of overcoming the current political crisis.

According to a press release of the Center, special attention was paid to immediate release of the political prisoners, conducting an independent investigation into the March 1 events and the restoration of democratic freedoms in the country.

2. ARMENIAN YOUNG PEOPLE MAY STUDY IN JAPAN FROM NEXT YEAR [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

The Armenian president Serge Sargsian on May 26 received the Japanese ambassador to Armenia Yasuo Saito (residence in Moscow), who came to Armenia in order to sign the agreement on allocation of additional credit resources for technical reconstruction of the Yerevan Thermal Power Plant.

According to a press release of the president's press service, the sides expressed satisfaction at the current level of Armenian-Japanese cooperation, noting that the relations between the two countries have been actively developing since the establishment of diplomatic relations. S. Sargsian said that Armenia intends to open a representation in Tokyo next year, which will become a serious stimulus for further deepening of bilateral cooperation.

He appreciated the technical assistance programs implemented by Japan in Armenia, as well as various credit and grant projects which include the sectors of vital importance to our country, especially the energy sector.

The ambassador informed S. Sargsian that the Japanese government made a decision to provide musical instruments to the Yerevan Conservatory and that starting from next year, Armenian young people will have an opportunity to study at higher educational institutions of Japan.

The sides exchanged ideas on developing the cooperation in international organizations.

3. HOVHANNES HAROUTIUNIAN'S CHARGE KEPT UNCHANGED [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

On May 26, the Appeal Criminal Court kept unchanged the March 28 judgement of general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeytun communities, by which Hovhannes Haroutiunian was found guilty by part 1, Article 235, RA Criminal Court, Purchasing, Selling, Keeping, Transporting or Bearing Illegal Arms, Ammunition, Explosives or Explosive Devices and was sentenced to imprisonment of one year and six months.

The general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities, presided over by judge Armen Danielian, sentenced Soghomon Yeritsian accused of using not dangerous violence to a power representative on March 1 to one year's suspended imprisonment with a probation term of a year and a half. The case examination proceeded by the order of speeded-up judicial procedure.

4. "AT LEAST ONE-YEAR HARD LOBBYIST WORK IS NECESSARY FOR REACHING RECOGNITION OF INDEPENDENCE OF NKR BY SLOVAKIA," HEAD OF ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF SLOVAKIA DECLARES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

It is envisaged that official delegations of Slovakia will visit the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh at the beginning of July and in September 2008. According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Ashot Grigorian, the Head of the Armenian community of Slovakia and the Chairman of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe, the organization of those visits is attached importance to as a step directed at the solution of the recognition of the independence of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh by Slovakia. According to Ashot Grigorian, that process will need at least one-year hard lobbyist work. In this respect, special importance was attached to the conference to be held by the Forum of the



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Armenian Unions of Europe in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, on May 29-30, where a call will be made to the Armenian communities of different countries to be after the recognition of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh with the same activeness, which is used with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In case of the absence of that activeness, in the estimation of the Chairman of the Forum of the Armenian Unions of Europe, it will be impossible to confront the Azerbaijani lobbying with respect to the Karabakh issue. According to him, the volume of the military expenses of Azerbaijan surpasses the budget of Armenia and the Armenian communities should find ways for compensating that inequality. In addition to this, the Armenian communities can reach equality in the arms of armies of Azerbaijan and Armenia with smaller expenses than those, which have provided the current advantage of Azerbaijan.

"During the conference the problem of supporting the process of the recognition of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh abroad will be set in front of the whole Diasporan Armenians as a compulsory problem equal to the support for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. We will also speak to Stefan Harabin, the Minister of Justice of Slovakia, within the frameworks of the visit to Yerevan on May 26-28 on that subject in order to make his knowledge in the Karabakh issue deeper," Ashot Grigorian mentioned. According to him, Stefan Harabin has declared in the Slovakian press that he was categorically against disposing air space for the planes of the United States of America for bombarding Serbia. That was a meanness committed by Slavonic country Slovakia towards another Slavonic country: Serbia. At the same time, the Slovakian Minister was categorically against the creation of another moslem state, in the face of Kosovo in Europe, which he considered to be a criminal crime by the countries and the political figures, who have contributed to it. During the conversations with Ashot Grigorian he also spoke for adding another Christian state in Europe as the Nagorno Karabakh country has a three-thousand-year history, in difference to Kosovo, the history of which is not basis for proclaiming it independent.

The Head of the Armenian community of Slovakia added that during the meetings held in Yerevan on January 19, 2008 by the delegation headed by Georgi Petrosian, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, and Yan Charnogurski, the former Minister of Justice of Slovakia, the latter referred to a number of interviews published in the Slovakian press. The results of the meeting have been introduced to the government and the Prime Minister of Slovakia. According to Ashot Grigorian, the circumstance of the meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh has received great response in Bratislava, in connection with which corresponding explanations were given.

5. CIRCUMSTANCES OF UNPLEASANT INCIDENT BETWEEN POLICE AND PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE EMPLOYEES WILL BE CLEARED UP, THOSE GUILTY WILL BE CALLED TO LIABILITY, RA PRESIDENT'S SPOKESPERSON ASSURES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

"An unpleasant incident happened between a policeman and a deputy's son, an employee of the Prosecutor's system, and that fact in itself is unintelligible and unacceptable," Samvel Farmanian, RA President's Spokesperson, gave such an estimation to the fact of the argument that happened lately. "You can be sure that the circumstances of the incident will be cleared up and those guilty will be called to liability," he said emphasizing that the RA Constitution, RA legislation does not establish any privilege for any one, be he a policeman, Prosecutor's Office representative, deputy's son, "or a cousin." "All of us should understand that the times of solving problems in the street with the force of one's arms have passed, it is not the way of the future we, our compatriots expect. The force of the thought and intellect is most worthy of respect and is stronger in the 21st century," RA President's Spokesperson said.

A criminal case has been instituted in the Police on the basis of a policeman's application on beating him, lately, by the instruction of RA Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepian the case has been passed to the RA Special Investigation Service for examination.

6. ARFD MINISTERS' RESIGNATION IS THEIR PERSONAL DECISION, REPRESENTATIVE OF ARFD BUREAU HRANT MARGARIAN ASSURES [HAYASTANI HANRAPETUTIUN, 05/27/08]

A new staff of Bureau has been elected after the 30rd general meeting of ARFD held on May 21-26. The new Bureau consists of 11 members. The newly elected Bureau members are, in particular, Hrant Margarian, Vahan Hovhannisian, Aghvan Vardanian, David Lokian, Levon Mkrtchian. The last three take the posts of RA Ministers of Labor and Social Issues, Agriculture, Education and Science, respectively. As Hrant Margarian, a representative of the ARFD Bureau, said at the May 27 press conference, it was a surprise for them that the Ministers were included in the Bureau as a result of the election held during the meeting. He said that the Ministers-Bureau members will resign their posts in the



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coming week. "It is their personal decision, not the decision of the general meeting and not a regulations requirement," H. Margarian assured.

He also said that in the several coming days the ARFD Supreme Body will be engaged in the issue of nominating new Ministers.

7. 51 FREEDOM-FIGHTERS AND CITIZENS TO GO ON 24-HOUR WARNING HUNGER-STRIKE IN SHIRAK REGION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

Over 51 RA citizens and freedom-fighters of Shirak region's Gyumri department of the Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union go on a 24-hour warning hunger-strike from May 27, 18:00 demanding changing the restraint, arrest to defendants A. Zakarian, S. Saghatelian, P. Makeyan. The latter are accused of deliberately hindering the proceedings of polling station commission N 34/06 during the February 19 RA presidential elections. That was mentioned in the application addressed to V. Khalatian, a judge at the Northern Criminal Court of the RA Shirak region, examining the case.

The participants of the action of protest also warn that unless their demand is satisfied, the warning action will be turned into a mass termless hunger-strike and even a water-strike. "Take into consideration the fact that there are freedom-fighters, disabled of 1st and 2nd category, old people and women among the hunger-strike participants, therefore the whole responsibility for the unpredictable consequences falls on you."

The authors of the statement as evidence of the criminal case's being forged mention the fact that 8 out of 11 witnesses subject to being called to court so far have asked to take as a basis the testimony given in the court hall, as during the preliminary examination the investigator "by guiding them extorted testimony for the purpose of creating legal and judicial bases for the case."

Freedom fighters of the RA Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union Gyumri department and citizens sent an application of the same content to Mrs K. Ghazarian, a judge at Yerevan Criminal Court. They mediate to change the restraint, arrest, chosen to Gevorg Ghazarian, their "law-abiding and patriotic companion-in-arms."

The council of the youth structure of Shirak region's Gyumri department of the RA Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union has also made a statement, in which they express readiness to join the extreme measure of struggle, hunger-strike. "We leave the responsibility for difficulties that arose because of unpredictable consequences on state structures," their statement read. "The arrests and political persecutions of RA Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union freedom-fighters due to the March 1 events, as a result of which freedom-fighters giving us example of fairness, freedom and national liberation awakening have appeared in prisons with unfair and false accusations, break our belief to tomorrow, as those bearers of victory for the RA statehood, independence, and freedom at the price of their life and blood are imprisoned, and it is that spirit that led us to the Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union, therefore we join and support our elder friends' struggle for the sake of release of the Yerkrpah Volunteers' Union members," the statement read.

8. PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARKISIAN'S MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF FIRST REPUBLIC DAY [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

On the Occasion of the First Republic Day Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian issued a congratulatory message today. According to the government press service, his message reads as follows.

"Dear compatriots, I congratulate you on the occasion of the 90-th anniversary of declaration of the First Armenian Republic. Restoration of the independent Armenian state on May 28, 1918 was the result of glorious battles which the Armenian nation fought in Sardarapat, Bash-Aparan and Karakilisa.

We must never forget the victories we celebrated in May, which were won due to our unity and exclusive combination of our strength which became later the basis for new manifestations of our people's freedom loving spirit and new heroic deeds in the Artsakh war.

Military battles increase our trust in our strength giving us will and resolution to maintain and develop what has been achieved by previous generations, to strengthen our independence, to withstand modern challenges and build a more prosperous life for our people.

I once again congratulate you on the occasion of this beautiful holiday and wish you all good health, peaceful skies and strong belief in the future of our independent state and our people."



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9. ILHAM ALIYEV SAYS AZERBAIJAN WILL MORE CLEARLY STATE ITS VIEWS OVER KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION IN THE COMING MONTHS [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said today at a celebration dedicated to the Day of Republic that the only serious problem Azerbaijan is facing is Karabakh conflict. He said the issue may exclusively be solved within the frameworks of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. According to Aliyev, "the reason of such a long delay is that Azerbaijan does not step backward from its principle position", though he said "there are sides which try in different ways to make Azerbaijan go to essential compromises."

"I think that in the coming months, probably by the end of the year, and in 2009 we will more clearly state our thoughts over the regulation of the conflict as the delay of the issue is unacceptable," Azerbaijani president said and added that "On one hand we are called for peaceful negotiations, and we, displaying good will, participate in them. On the other we cannot reach progress though during discussions some changes have been achieved".

Ilham Aliyev stated that "Azerbaijani territorial integrity is the main topic in the negotiations", which according to the Azerbaijani president a positive phenomenon and lets reaching peaceful regulation of the conflict.

10. STEPAN SAFARIAN: "HERITAGE" HAS NO MORE EXPECTATION IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PACE RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS UNTIL JUNE 20 [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/28/08]

Quite a long time has passed since the adoption of resolution No 1609 by the PACE, but, except for some discussions and failed attempts, there have been no developments in Armenia in terms of implementation of the resolution requirements, secretary of NA "Heritage" faction Stepan Safarian stated at the May 27 press conference. According to him, the leader of "Heritage" party Raffi Hovannisian took a step on implementation of one of the PACE requirements, namely, the requirement on starting a dialog of political forces. However, his letter to the president Serge Sargsian and the head of the Popular Movement Levon Ter-Petrosian with the appeal to engage in dialog has given no result.

Speaking about creation of three new standing committees at the National Assembly (this is presented as a step aimed at increasing the rights of the opposition), S. Safarian said that the fact that the function of territorial development is given to one committee, while that of territorial administration to another shows that no serious approach is taken to these committees in the NA. The existence of new committees, in his words, will just provide some people with the opportunity to have a new woman secretary, an office car, etc.

As for the PACE requirement on immediate release of the political figures and activists who were arrested for political reasons, S. Safarian noted that the authorities understand "release of those arrested" as "giving a suspended sentence to them". He said that "Heritage" has no more expectation that Armenia will fulfill the requirements of resolution No 1609 until June 20.

Safarian also expressed mistrust towards the idea of establishing "Public Council" which was put forward by advisor to the RA president Garnik Isagulian. In his words, "Heritage" cannot understand what such a public council is. "Besides, we have no faith in G. Isagulian," he added.

11. EVERYBODY RESPONSIBLE FOR STRAINED ATMOSPHERE IN COUNTRY, HRANT MARGARIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/28/08]

Everybody is responsible for the strained atmosphere in the country in recent period, ARF Bureau member Hrant Margarian said at the May 27 press conference. "We did our best to prevent the confrontation. Unfortunately, it happened, but we are not trying to make it a subject of political speculation because it was a misfortune for our statehood and nation," H. Margarian added. In his opinion, one way to get out of the current situation is Armenian intellectuals' impartial assessment of recent events. "We need to create a moral climate in which every person will feel responsible for his attitude and behavior," he noted. Describing today's atmosphere, he said that a group of aggressive press ready to squabble has formed.

H. Margarian expressed an opinion that what has happened in Armenia recently is an Armenian National Movement (ANM) rather than a popular movement. "Every force, organization, even person permitted itself to speak on behalf of the people. However, if a person uses the word "people", it does not mean that his direction is popular," he pointed out.



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He considered dialog as an important step for forming a culture of political struggle. "Some already noticeable practical steps should become more real, with more favorable conditions for a dialog to be created," H. Margarian said.

Responding to a question, the ARF Bureau member said that they served as a support for neither Robert Kocharian nor Serge Sargsian. "The ARF has its direction and it cooperates with the authorities based on its convictions and requirements," H. Margarian stated, adding that the ARF may become a support for the people and statehood.

12. ARF CANNOT OBJECT TO GRANTING ARMENIAN CITIZENSHIP TO ANY ARMENIAN, HRANT MARGARIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/28/08]

"The ARF cannot object to the granting of Armenian citizenship to an Armenian: any Armenian has the right to receive Armenian citizenship," ARF Bureau member Hrant Margarian stated at the May 27 press conference, referring to Lebanese citizen, azatamartik (freedom fighter) Zhirayr Sefilian's application for Armenian citizenship. According to him, the ARF was also against the police decision to deport Z. Sefilian from Armenia. He announced that the ARF informed the Armenian president about its opinion. "We disagree but one should understand the situation. I think it is not a final decision and I hope that like any other Armenian, Zhirayr will be granted Armenian citizenship," H. Margarian noted.

To recap, the RA police made a decision to start the process of deporting Z. Sefilian. On May 23 it filed a claim to the Administrative Court with the request to take a decision on deportation. Coordinator of the civil initiative "In Defence of Liberated Territories", azatamartik Z. Sefilian was sentenced to imprisonment for keeping illegal weapons. His prison term expires on June 7.

13. ADMINISTRATIVE COURT RETURNS POLICE CLAIM ON DEPORTATION OF ZHIRAYR SEFILIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/28/08]

In accordance with the order envisaged by the Code of Administrative Procedure, the RA Administrative Court made a decision to return the police claim on deportation of Zhirayr Sefilian from Armenia, NT correspondent was informed by spokeswoman for the RA Cassation Court Alina Yengoyan. The Administrative Court explained its decision by the fact that the claim has some flaws.

To recap, the RA police made a decision to start the process of deporting Lebanese citizen Zhirayr Sefilian from Armenia and filed on May 23 a claim to the Administrative Court with the request to take a decision on deportation. The coordinator of the civil initiative "In Defence of Liberated Territories", azatamartik Zhirayr Sefilian was sentenced to imprisonment for keeping illegal arms. His prison term expires on June 7.

14. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN RECEIVES REPRESENTATIVE OF JEWISH COMMITTEE OF AMERICA, AMBASSADOR PETER ROSENBLAT [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

President Serzh Sarkisian received today a representative of the Jewish Committee of America, ambassador Peter Rosenblatt, Barry Jeitobs, the Jewish Committee of America's director for strategic studies, and Ross Vartian, the executive director of the American-Armenian Public Committee.

The presidential press service quoted Serzh Sarkisian as saying that Armenia is interested in deepening relationships with the USA regarding it as an important guarantee of economic success, democratic advancement and regional stability.

Ambassador Rosenblatt was quoted as saying that the Jewish Committee of America is one of the leading organizations of the Jewish community of USA being actively involved in international relations.

He said also that beginning since 1990-s they are paying greater attention to the South Caucasian region watching closely all processes and developments taking place here. He said representatives of the Committee visited Armenia last in 1999.

Peter Rosenblatt attributed the interest of the Jewish Committee of America in Armenia and Armenia-related issues to close ties with the Armenian community of the USA.

The press service said the focus of their conversation was largely on Armenian-Turkish relations and the opening of the border.

President Serzh Sarkisian once again stressed that Armenia is interested in building natural relationships with all its neighbors, adding also that the official Yerevan has many time come out for unconditional normalization of ties with Ankara.

The presidential press office said they also exchanged ideas on Israel-Armenia relationships.



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15. ALI BABAJAN SAYS COMING MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENTS IS INSPIRING HOPE [Aravot, 05/29/08]

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babajan stated today in Brussels that the “continued occupation of the Azerbaijani lands by Armenia affects Armenian-Turkish relations,” Turkish Hurriyet writes today.

According to the newspaper, Babajan said that “Ankara has not received a response from Armenia about opening the archives for studying jointly the issue of the 1915-1918 Armenian genocide.”

Speaking in front of the members of the EU International Affairs Commission, Babajan stated that search of the ways of the regulation of the Karabakh conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group and the June meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents are inspiring hope.

16. ALIK SARGSIAN APPOINTED CHIEF OF THE POLICE [Azg, 05/30/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed today a decree dismissing Hayk Harutyunian from the office of the chief of the police. Presidential press service told Armenpress that with another decree the president appointed Alik Sargsian the chief of the police. By the decree of Serzh Sargsian Alik Sargsian has been granted title of General-Mayor.

Alik Sargsian was born in 1957, June 1, village Kanachut, Artashat province. He graduated from the Khachatur Abovian Pedagogical Institute and high school of the Armenian Home Affairs police.

From 1979-1980 served in the Soviet Army. From 1982-1986 worked as an officer in the Shahumian Home Affairs Department on teenager affairs.

From 1991-1992 worked as the head of the criminal investigation department of the Artashat Home Affairs Department. A. Sargsian was awarded medals of peace of nations, Fritjof Nansen, Anania Shirakatsi, Nerses Shnorhali.

On June 1, 2007 has been awarded medal of the Armenian prime minister for his long-term conscientious activity. From 2000 until new appointment was the governor of Ararat.

17. V. HOVHANNISSIAN: “WE WILL DO EVERYTHING SO THAT COALITION SUCCEEDS” [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

In the end of the coming week it will be clear who will replace the three ARF ministers. Member of the ARF Bureau, head of the party’s parliamentary faction Vahan Hovhannissian told today at a press conference that the new ministers must be clean, young and experienced, and their activity must do good to the ministry and program of activity of the government.

He did not exclude that even non-party people may be appointed. “It may not be excluded but first of all we are studying our own staff bank.” V. Hovhannissian said that some of the names mentioned in the press will be confirmed some not.

V. Hovhannissian declined the opinion that the resignation of the functioning ministers is connected with their being member of Robert Kocharian’s government.

Speaking about why he himself being member of the Bureau, at the same time was deputy speaker of the parliament, while the resignation of the ministers is connected with their being elected member of the Bureau, V. Hovhannissian said that the work of a parliamentarian and minister differs greatly. “One is free to deal with political activity, the other no. Person working in the parliament being busy with his legislative work bears political responsibility and is in political work. Minister being a part of executive power is working within the program of the government and cannot step outside of it. Political work pre-supposes greater flexibility and freedom though our statute does not forbid any official to be member of a political body but the ministers, realizing that it is difficult to combine decided to resign,” he clarified.

V. Hovhannissian said that the issue of the urgent parliamentary elections is not up to date. “We must try to implement the points registered in the agreement of the coalition and if coalition fails to justify itself in that case such a motive may raise,” he said, adding that some will be very much concerned with the success of the coalition and some with its failure. “I belong to the second part and that is why I and the coalition will do everything to reach success as the resolutions registered in the agreement of the coalition was suggested by us as well,” Hovhannissian said.

According to him, there are some oppositional forces for who “the worse the better” principle is functioning, they do not want coalition to succeed. “PACE resolution does not much differ from the agreement of the coalition,” he said.



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18. FINLAND AS OSCE CHAIRMAN TO EXERT ALL EFFORTS FOR REGULATION OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Finland will exert all its efforts for the peaceful regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, president of the country Tarja Halone stated summing up the results of the meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev today in Helsinki.

"Finland as chairman of the OSCE has an opportunity to contribute to the regulation of the Karabakh conflict and will exert all the efforts in that direction," T. Halone said.

On his part the president of Azerbaijan said that "only after the restoration of the Azerbaijani territorial integrity peace may be established in the region".

19. ARF SUPREME BODY EXPELS RUBIK HAKOBIAN FROM THE PARTY [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

ARF Senior Body made a decision to expel Rubik Hakobian from the party. The information was confirmed today by member of ARF Bureau Vahan Hovhannissian. He noted that R. Hakobian has applied for leaving the party but during that period "he was involved in anti-party process".

R. Hakobian was member of parliament and during the recent years he was Armenian consul in Saint Petersburg.

20. FESTIVE EVENTS HELD ON OCCASION OF 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF SARDARAPAT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

Festive events were held in the memorial complex of Sardarapat on May 28 on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the heroic battle of Sardarapat. Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, Tigran Sargsian, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Tigran Torosian, the RA NA Speaker, Bako Sahakian, the President of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, the RA government members and others were present at the event.

They laid flowers at the memorial wall perpetuating the memory of the victims of the heroic battle, after which there was an entertainment and a festive concert. Headed by the RA President, the high-ranking guests also visited the museum of Sardarapat, where a new collection of pictures and other accessories well representing the events of 1918 are exhibited.

"The May 28 of 1918 is of exceptional value in the history of the Armenian people, as it bears the symbol of unity," Hasmik Pohgosian, the RA Minister of Culture, said in her interview with a Noyan Tapan correspondent. According to her, if there was not unity on May 28, there would not be either the Soviet Armenia or the current independent state "and we today should be proud of being the worthy successor of the values preserved as a result of that unity."

21. POLICEMEN ONCE MORE PROHIBIT OPPOSITIONISTS TO ENTER LIBERTY SQUARE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

Hundreds of activists of radical opposition, during the May 28 "political walk," led by freedom-fighter Arshavir Bozinian, made an attempt to enter Liberty Square from Northern Avenue. However, the policemen guarding the square quickly made a wall and moving towards the demonstrators, closed their way and pushing people, step by step drove them away to the middle of the avenue. Those gathered, among which there were a great number of children, started singing patriotic songs, the young people made a "stronghold." The crowd was constantly voicing "Levon!," "Struggle, Struggle Till the End!," "Free, Independent Armenia!," "Serzhik, Go Away!. It should be mentioned that a day ago law enforcers did not permit oppositionists to enter Liberty Square, either and beat some of them.

The same day, earlier opposition activists, led by first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian, Chairman of the People's Party of Armenia Stepan Demirchian, and leader of the Hanrapetutiun (Republic) party Aram Sargsian, visited Sardarapat memorial complex, on the way to which they organized a small march. After that L. Petrosian and the crowd visited Yerablur, laid flowers to the graves of martyrs perished in the Artsakh war and inquired about the health of 20 freedom-fighters, who went on hunger-strike from May 27.



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22. ARMENIAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND NGOs CALLED FOR EXPRESSING THEIR POSITION OVER ISSUE OF BANISHING ZHIRAYR SEFILIAN FROM ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

The Council of Elders of Armenian Forum of Intelligentsia and its Coordinating Council sent an open letter to all political parties and NGOs of the Republic of Armenia asking them to express their position over a number of issues connected with Zhirayr Sefilian. "The term of imprisonment of Zhirayr Sefilian, first-class Combat Cross holder, Lieutenant-General, a Diasporan Armenian voluntary freedom-fighter, expires on June 9, 2008," the letter read. It mentions the issues, about which the parties and organizations are asked to express their position: they are issues of immediately granting RA citizenship to Z. Sefilian and banishing the latter from Armenia.

"Taking into consideration these issues' urgency for Armenia and all Armenians, we ask you to briefly express your opinion in press, as well," the letter of the Council of Elders of Armenian Forum of Intelligentsia and its Coordinating Council read.

23. ACCORDING TO SHAVARSH KOCHARIAN, OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS HAVE NO POLITICAL VISION AND ARE GUIDED BY LEVON TER-PETROSIAN'S PERSONALITY [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

As Shavarsh Kocharian, the Chairman of the National Democratic Party (NDP), affirmed, Armenia cannot resist regional challenges until the home political tension and public "split" are liquidated. As Shavarsh Kocharian said at the May 29 press conference, establishment of a dialogue between the authorities and opposition is almost impossible, as the culture of disputing over programs, ideas has not been formed in the country yet.

According to the NDP leader, opposition supporters do not have an ideological basis or a "vision," either. They are only guided by antipathy to the current authorities and sympathy to first President Levon Ter-Petrosian's personality. Being discontent with the activity of the authorities, according to S. Kocharian, is natural, but people having no vision finally turn into an instrument in the hands of some political forces.

In response to an observation of one of the journalists that in consequence of the authorities' policy the current vision of the oppositionists is entering Liberty Square and in response to the question of why, nevertheless the policemen do not permit people to enter the above mentioned square, S. Kocharian said that there are many questions at present. "Why the person, who led the country to this situation, who was the architect of the current governmental system and is not sorry for his acts, became the opposition leader?," the speaker said.

As regards PACE Resolution N 1609, as S. Kocharian predicted, its requirements will be fulfilled in Armenia partially, and the Armenian delegation will not be deprived of vote in the Assembly.

24. IN DIFFERENCE TO SOME POLITICAL FORCES, ARFD IS FINANCED BY ARMENIANS LIVING ABROAD, VAHAN HOVHANNISIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

The 30th general meeting of ARFD calls Diasporan Armenians for receiving RA citizenship. As NA deputy, ARFD Bureau member Vahan Hovhannisian said at the May 29 press conference, all foreign members of ARFD Bureau have already launched the process of being granted RA citizenship.

Touching upon the assertions of the media supporting the Armenian National Movement (ANM) that ARFD receives financial assistance from "outside," V. Hovhannisian said that wherever they live, ARFD members are Armenians and have joined the party giving an oath to serve the Armenian people. "And the centers that have been financing some Armenian political groupings have nothing in common either with Armenians or with our national interests," V. Hovhannisian said adding that it is the supporters of first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian and the newspapers supporting him that should first of all see that difference. He also said that the party is financed by membership fees and donations aimed at implementation of concrete programs.



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BUSINESS

25. HSBC BANK ARMENIA INTENDS TO TURN ITS NATIONAL SERVICE CENTER INTO REGIONAL ONE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

HSBC Bank Armenia CJSC intends to turn its National Service Center to open soon into a regional center providing practical services, deputy CEO of the bank Irina Seylanian stated.

In her words, the bank shareholders considered HSBC Bank Armenia's success, its qualified staff and the favorable banking legislation of Armenia as prerequisites for the creation of such a center in the country.

She expressed an opinion that efficient operation of the center may be impeded by the current difference among banking legislations of Armenia and other countries, in particular, CIS states. The matter first of all concerns regulation of the exchange of information.

The conference participant, prime minister Tigran Sargsian explained that the indicated issue is related to the use of stricter rules on the exchange of information in the context of the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing. On the other hand, customers demand that the data on their money not be made public. According to the prime minister, some banks of the Arab world want to move from Lebanon to Armenia - on condition that information about their customers is confidential. He added that this requirement of customers will be a subject of joint discussions of the Central Bank of Armenia and other banks.

The Armenian president Serge Sargsian in his turn assured those present that "we will ensure political and legislative assistance" for implementation of the initiative of HSBC Bank Armenia. "We just need your proposals to know what legislative amendments we should make and what agreements we should sign," he said.

26. FINANCIAL AND BANKING CONFERENCE HELD IN DILIJAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

In implementing the work on making Armenia a regional financial center, those responsible will be required not to compare the country with regional countries but to present facts showing to what extent the Armenian financial and banking system has been brought into line with the standards of the world leaders, the RA president Serge Sargsian stated in his speech of welcome to participants of the first financial and banking conference organized at Dilijan's "Mountainous Armenia" rest home by the Union of Armenian Banks on May 24.

According to him, there is real potential for turning the Armenian financial system into a regional financial center, and the use of this potential should become "a guideline of our work in the upcoming years". The president underlined the importance of using the best experience of foreign financial systems and the need to use these methods in Armenia and in this connection he appreciated the entrance of OMX Swedish-Finnish stock operator into Armenia.

In the opinion of S. Sargsian, development of Armenia's financial system will contribute to proportional territorial development of the country. "It is impossible to efficiently promote proportional development of the country in case of absence of some poles of business activity outside the capital city," he pointed out, adding that a step has already been taken in this direction by the Central Bank of Armenia: it initiated construction of a subsidiary building of the Armenian Stock Exchange and the CBA's education center in Dilijan. It is envisaged that this health resort 70 km away from Yerevan will become a financial center of Armenia in the future.

The prime minister Tigran Sargsian said in his speech that work on making Armenia a financial center should proceed in six directions: 1. Provision of operational services, and Armenia may have an advantage here. 2. Provision of depository services for bonds and other securities issued by organizations of the regional countries. 3. Introduction of the institution of investment funds and asset managers. 4. Provision of financial services in line with Islamic traditions, taking into account the fact that Armenia has always had an ambition to serve as a bridge between the Islamic world and Europe. 5. Implementation of active financial reforms in the country. 6. Provision of financial services in the "Armenian world", which should be Armenia's competitive advantage in the region, and the National Competitiveness Council and the Armenian Development Bank to be founded will contribute to this. The latter can involve both Armenians from various countries and foreigners in investment programs.

Representatives of 20 out of the 22 Armenian banks and about 10 insurance companies took part in the conference.



27. LUSAKERT POULTRY FACTORY CONSIDERED AS ENTITY WITH DOMINATING POSITION ONCE AGAIN

At the May 27 sitting, the RA State Commission on Protection of Economic Competition considered Dvin Holding - Azotinvest group as an entity with a dominating position in the nitrogen fertilizer market and put it on the register of economic entities with a dominating position. By a 2004 decision of the Commission, Dvin Holding was also recognized as an entity having a dominating position in the indicated market.

The studies in 2007 showed that last year 4 economic entities operating in the indicated market imported 25.2 tons of nitrogen fertilizer into Armenia and sold 32.7 tons in the country.

By another decision of the Commission, Lusakert Poultry Factory was once again considered as an entity with a dominating position. The company was recognized an entity with a dominating position in 2003 as well, whereas in March 2007, the company applied to the Commission with the request to revise its decision on its dominating position as some changes had occurred in the market.

According to a study, in 2007 1.8 mln eggs were imported into Armenia, 219.8 mln eggs were produced by 11 economic entities, sales made 206.6 million, exports - 2.02 million. The following 3 economic entities had the largest shares in sales: Lusakert Poultry Factory (42.5%), Arzni Poultry Factory (29.7%) and Yerevan Poultry Factory (13.7%). Thus Lusakert Poultry Factory retained its dominating position. However, during the Commission's sitting, the representative of the company asked to postpone the discussion as he intends to present some important data. The discussion of the issue has been postponed.

28. HEAD OF VTB BANK MEETS WITH ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL BANK [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Head of the "VTB Bank" Andrey Kostin met yesterday with the acting chairman of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian.

Press service of the VTB bank told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed issues on the further development of Armenia's financial market, particularly the issues on the expansion of the banking services offered to the Armenian people.

A. Kostin also spoke about the results achieved in the sphere of modernization of regional divisions of the bank, informing that currently around 90 branches of the bank are functioning in the territory of Armenia. Within the framework of provided services to physical person VTB was among the first which has offered services with favorable conditions.

During the meeting the sides also discussed other issues of mutual interest.

29. RUSSIAN VTB TO GIVE \$275 MILLION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TEGHUT MINES [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Russian VTB bank said on May 27 it will provide a \$275.5 million credit to an Armenian company for development of Teghut copper and molybdenum mines in the north of the country. Part of the biggest ever credit made available by one of the leading Russian banks, will be used for construction of ore mining and processing enterprise.

Speaking to Armenian journalists on Tuesday, president of VTB, Andrey Kostin said the bank's participation in this program is for 12 years. He said the bank will assign its representative to carry out corporate supervision of the program.

"We hope that our cooperation will promote Armenia's economic development and help our bank to expand in this region. VTB plans to actively expand its operations in Armenia by investing in most promising sectors of its economy," he said.

He said the deal is the biggest of the bank in post-Soviet space, supported by the fact that Armenia's government implements a very balanced economic policy.

Valery Mejlumian, head of the Armenian Copper Program company, downplayed warnings of some non-governmental organizations that exploitation of Teghut mines would cause heavy ecological damages. He said the project had been scrutinized by different experts.

He, however, admitted that the development of the mine will inevitably bring up some nature damages, but said that the plan of actions spells clearly out every measure to restore the damages.

Teghut is estimated to be the second largest deposit of copper and molybdenum in Armenia. The copper deposits are estimated at 1.6 million tons and 99,000 tons of molybdenum. The plant will be able to process annually up to 7 million tons of ore.



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30. PRIME MINISTER ORDERS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO OFFER PROPOSALS FOR CURBING INFLATION [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian said today that hiking prices of food and services have become number one concern of Armenian citizens.

Speaking at a recurrent government session he said studies show that prices flexibility is unsatisfactory. As a rule they skyrocket, but go down slowly and insignificantly. According to him, this trend can not be halted without government's intervention.

The prime minister praised the operation of the state commission for protection of economic competition saying that it will be stepped up through involving officials from the state taxation service.

He said prices of wheat and rice are going down in global markets, particularly, wheat price went down 42 percent against April, the price of rice also fell 22 percent in the last 4 weeks.

Both products occupy a significant place in Armenians' subsistence basket creating favorable conditions for bringing their prices down.

"The government will keep this issue in the limelight. It will study pricing trends, especially in those companies whose prices of imported goods are not adequate to global prices," he said.

He said inflation affects also the moral-psychological atmosphere in the country stirring up new social and economic problems.

The prime minister said special instructions were given to economy and finance ministries, the Central Bank and the state commission for protection of economic competition to monitor the situation and submit their proposals about how to curb price hikes.

31. GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA TO RELEASE 30 MILLION DRAMS AS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CHINA'S EARTHQUAKE ZONE [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

The government of Armenia decided today to release 30 million Drams as humanitarian assistance to the people of Chinese province of Sichuan that was hit by devastating earthquake on May 12.

Deputy foreign minister Arman Kirakosian said at the government session that the money in all likelihood will be spent on purchase of tents and blankets.

Finance minister Tigran Davtian suggested that a study be made to learn how other regional countries are going to assist China.

32. NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS IN REAL ESTATE MARKET DOWNWARD SINCE FEBRUARY [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Vruyr Penesian, director of VVP real estate agency, told a news conference today that the number of transactions in the country's real estate market was downward since February. He said some of real estate agencies reported almost a 50 percent decline over the previous year.

However, he predicted that prices will start growing again in a couple of months because several investors are going to invest in construction sector.

According to him, it is mainly Diaspora Armenians who are interested in apartments in so-called elite residential buildings, in which one square meter of space costs from \$2,500 to \$3,500.

He said many people are wrong thinking that apartments in such buildings are not sold. Thus, 90 percent of apartments on North Avenue were sold. Now some of them are put to resale.

33. ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER AND ITALIAN AMBASSADOR UNDERSCORE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian received today Italian ambassador to Armenia Massimo Lavezzo Kasinelli.

Governmental press service told Armenpress the during the meeting the prime minister pointed out that Armenia underscores the ancient-long relations with Italy which today have better prospects of development particularly in economic and educational spheres. From that viewpoint the two sides underscored the visit of that time Armenian president Robert Kocharian to Italy in 2005 which the ambassador and prime minister said, gave new impetus to the development of bilateral relations.

"Nothing makes people closer then the culture does," the prime minister said and considered the conduction of the "Armenian-Italian Friendship Days" festival within the framework of which more then 70 events were held as a good example for consolidating relations. In this pre-context the sides also



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underscored the agreement signed between Armenian and Italian governments in 2003 on cooperation in cultural, educational, scientific and technologic spheres.

Tigran Sargsian also underscored close partnership in economic and financial sectors, particularly referred to the entrance of Italian banks to the Armenian market. The Italian ambassador said that he also sees a big potential for cooperation in this sphere and noted that the Italian side wishes to increase its direct investments in Armenia. "I think that Your government's program intends such a favorable economic environment which will promote the involvement of businessmen in the Armenian market," the diplomat said.

Assuring that the Italian side is ready and interested in the continuation and development of activities carried out until now in economic and cultural spheres, Lavezzo Kasinelli said that in near future it is expected to cooperate with Armenia in archeology sphere, particularly open a school of restoration.

The prime minister said that on the firm basis of bilateral relations it is possible to ensure new developments in various spheres.

34. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE 1 BILLION 750 MILLION DRAMS FOR STATE SUPPORT TO KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Armenian government decided at its today's session to release 1 billion 750 million Drams from its reserve fund for the state support to the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Finance Minister Tigran Davtian told today at the session that 1 billion 500 million Drams will be provided as a budget credit with January 1, 2010 maturity period, and 250 million Drams will be provided as a grant.

35. DEPUTY HEAD OF EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK SAYS SOON EXTENDED INVESTMENT PROJECTS MAY BE CARRIED OUT IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Armenian deputy foreign minister Arman Kirakosian met today with the deputy chairman of the European Investment Bank Iva Sreyber. During the meeting Mrs. Sreyber referred to the first steps of cooperation of Armenia and the bank and said that they became possible after the agreement signed between the bank and Armenian Finance Ministry.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that presenting the activity of the European Investment Bank, Mrs. Sreyber expressed hope that in near future it will be possible to start the implementation of extended investment projects. Among the primary spheres the sides noted transport, energy and environment protection.

Greeting the entrance of the bank into Armenia, the deputy foreign minister underscored its activity in Armenia and confirmed the interest of the Armenian side to implement joint successful programs.

DIASPORA

36. BULGARIAN COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RECOGNITION [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

On May 24 the District Administrative Court in Bulgaria's Danube city of Ruse rejected the appeals against the declaration of the City Council recognizing the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire. The appeals were table to the Court by the Ruse District Governor Mariya Dimova, and by city counselors from the ethnic Turkish Movement Rights and Freedoms party.

The Court ruling states that the declaration recognizing the genocide over Armenians and Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire could not be disputed because it was not an administrative act, it was only declarative, and had no legal consequences.

The declaration recognizing the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1922 was adopted by the Ruse City Council on April 17.

37. EDWARD MINASIAN TO DELIVER LECTURE ENTITLED "THE FORTY DAYS OF MUSA DAGH: THE TRUE STORY OF A FILM DENIED" [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

Edward Minasian, an author and researcher, will deliver a lecture entitled "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh: The True Story Of a Film Denied" on May 31. As the local Armenian websites report, the lecture will be delivered in the local Ararat-Eskijian Museum.



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38. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND RECOGNIZES ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

A major step forward in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the UK took place this week when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland passed a motion calling on the UK government to recognize the Genocide. The Church follows the example of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, which called on the UK government to recognize the Genocide in 2006. This is the result of an intense work by lobbyists Ara Krikorian, Edgar Danielyan and Eilian Williams, whose activity was instrumental in persuading the Church to take to this decision. Prime Minister Gordon Brown belongs to the Presbyterian Church and will find it hard to resist this declaration by his Church.

39. PIERRE SHAMMASSIAN COMEDY NIGHT TO TAKE PLACE IN TORONTO [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

The Pierre Shammassian Comedy Night will take place in Toronto on June 13. As the Armenian media of Canada report, the comedy night will take place at the Armenian Community Centre.

40. FUNDS RAISED FROM ENTERPRISE 2000 TO BENEFIT ARTSAKH THROUGH HALO TRUST [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

About 250 Armenians boarded the Enterprise 2000 on May 24 night for a Dinner Cruise and an evening of entertainment featuring Adiss Harmandayan from Los Angeles and our very own Harout Bedrossian. The funds raised from the cruise will benefit the HALO Trust which works in the removal of landmines in Artsakh.

41. HOMENETMEN TORONTO REPRESENTATIVES GRADUATE FROM MILITARY ARTS INSTITUTE [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

Martial Arts Graduation Ceremony took place on May 18. About 300 parents and friends came out to watch Homenetmen Toronto's largest group put on their annual Graduation Ceremony and show everybody some of the lessons and moves they have learned over the last year.

42. SHAREHOLDERS OF FORD DISCUSS SELLING SHARES TO KIRK KERKORIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

Ford shareholders are weighing billionaire Kirk Kerkorian's offer to buy their shares at \$8.50 a piece after the company's shares dropped under \$7.

Ford shareholder Russ Stallard of Shelby Township owns 5,000 shares and is ready to sell at Kerkorian's prices. He had thought Ford was a good investment. However, now with the gas prices, I'm not sure," he said. Still, he was considering selling his shares, which he purchased for about \$6.50 a piece, to Kerkorian.

43. LEBANESE ARMENIAN MP CONSIDERS IMPORTANT THAT ARMENIAN COMMUNITY HAS TWO MINISTERS IN GOVERNMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/27/08]

MP of Lebanese parliament Hagop Pakradounian stressed to Voice of Lebanon radio the importance of representing the Armenian sect in the new cabinet with two ministers. According to him one of the ministers would be named by the opposition, and the other named by the majority.

"I prefer not to be a minister myself in order not to mix parliamentary duties with the ministerial ones," Pakradounian said. He denied that the opposition had made the decision to nominate MP Saad Harriri as prime minister, at the same time mentioning: "Personally I don't see anything that prevents him from taking that position since he represents a big parliamentary bloc."



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44. YOUTH CENTER OF ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OPENS IN SHOUSHI [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/28/08]

A youth center of the Armenian Apostolic Church opened recently in Shoushi with the sponsorship of American Armenian benefactor Jack Mazmanian. Billiards and tennis tables have been placed in repaired rooms. Youth of Shoushi may visit the center to play billiards, table tennis, chess, draughts and other games and use computers.

J. Mazmanian and his wife attended the opening ceremony held on May 26. After saying words of blessing, the head of the Artsakh diocese Archbishop Pargev Martirosian thanked the benefactor and the coordinator of Karabakh programs of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Sasun Baghdasarian, with whose assistance the program was implemented.

45. MONUMENT TO THE VICTIMS OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE PLACED IN LARNAKA TOWN OF CYPRUS [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

A monument dedicated to the victims of the Armenian genocide was erected in the Cyprus town of Larnaka. The monument was opened by the President of the Cyprus Republic Dimitris Khristofias.

In his speech the president said that the monument is an expression of gratitude of the Cyprus people to the Armenian community and has been placed in the memory of Armenians who were cut from their roots and survived the great disaster. D. Khristofias pointed out that Armenians are participating in the development of trade, art in Cyprus and from 1960, integrating into the Cyprian-Greek community, voted for being a part of the public of the island.

46. PHONE CONVERSATION TAKES PLACE BETWEEN CATHOLICOS ARAM I AND LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

Phone conversation took place between the Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I and the Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora on May 23. The prime minister expressed his resentment at the negative expression about the Armenian community made by a government official a few days ago. He informed Catholicos Aram I about his high opinion of Lebanese Armenians who play a positive role in the prospering and strengthening of Lebanon.

Catholicos Aram I welcomed the Qatar agreement and wished it would open a significant page in the internal political life of Lebanon. In this connection, Aram I expressed his opinion about the patience and wisdom that the prime minister had displayed in the difficult situation. His Holiness stated that the Armenian community will continue to take an active part in all spheres of the Lebanese life.

The phone conversation took place in the presence of the minister of culture and foreign affairs Tarek Metri.

47. A. VARTANYAN DETAINED IN LOS ANGELES ON SUSPICION OF MURDER OF 2 ARMENIAN YOUNG MEN [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

24 year-old Avetis Vartanyan has been put in custody in Los Angeles on suspicion of murder in the parking lot between Oxnard Street and Whitsett Avenue on May 20. Police were looking for other suspects in connection with the case.

Police sent to the scene found Artak Karamyan, 28, wounded. A short time later, police found Paylak Harutyunyan, 29, wounded. Both men died. Vartanyan was detained with the help of a police dog a short time after the shooting while trying to leave the area. Police recovered a pistol that they suspect Vartanyan had hidden in the yard of a home, along with a second handgun found in an abandoned vehicle at the crime scene.

48. SVETLANA OGANESIAN AND OPHELIA NANAGYULYAN TO PERFORM IN CONCERTS TO BE ORGANIZED IN PASADENA [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

Three free concerts will take place in the Pasadena Central Library on May 30 on the initiative of the Crown City Symphony. Svetlana Oganessian, violinist and Ophelia Nanagyulyan will perform during these concerts. The orchestra, conducted by Marvin Neumann, will also perform works by Beethoven and Mozart.



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49. DJIVAN GASPARYAN TO LEAD DUDUK ENSEMBLE IN LOS ANGELES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

79-year-old proclaimed duduk player Djivan Gasparyan will team with composer-producer Michael Brook to perform in the Royce Hall of Los Angeles on May 30. The additional ensemble of musicians will include Gasparyan's grandson, also named Djivan, playing duduk, and Brook's wife, violinist Julie Rogers.

50. RA AMBASSADOR TO U.S. MEETS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMENIAN ORGANIZATIONS ACTING IN LOS ANGELES [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

Tatul Margarian, the Ambassador of Armenia to the United States, on May 16, received the delegation of leadership of the Ramkavar-Azatakan Party of Armenia in the office of the RA Consulate General in Los Angeles. Ara Aharonian, Gevorg Grigorian, and Hakob Nazarian were members of the delegation.

During the three-day visit, the Ambassador had meetings with representatives of different structures acting in the Armenian colony of Los Angeles.

According to the American office of the Ramkavar-Azatakan Party of Armenia, during the meeting lasting nearly an hour, the most important issues American Armenians are concerned with were touched upon. Armen Liloyan, the Consul General of Los Angeles, was also present at the meeting. The situation formed in Armenia after the presidential elections was also spoken about.

It was instructed within the framework of all Armenian programs of different American Armenian colonies with active and practical steps to continue activities of Armenian request for the sake of recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

51. CATHOLICOS ARAM I CONGRATULATES NEWLY-ELECTED PRESIDENT OF LEBANON [NOYAN TAPAN, 05/30/08]

The Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I on May 27 had a phone conversation with the newly-elected president of Lebanon Michel Suleiman.

He warmly congratulated M. Suleiman on his election as president. Noting that it is a great challenge to assume such responsibility today, Aram I expressed a hope that the newly-elected president will succeed in opening a new page in the history of Lebanon in terms of promoting mutual understanding and developing the country. In this connection Catholicos Aram I expressed his support for M. Suleiman.

ARTS

52. ONE NATION-ONE CULTURE FESTIVAL SLATED FOR AUGUST [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

One Nation-One Culture pan-Armenian festival will be held this year in Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh on August 17-23. The festival will be held under the high sponsorship of Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian

The press information department of the Ministry of Culture told Armenpress that tens of musical groups and individual performers will participate in the pan-national festival for joint presentation of cultural values and joint discussion of cultural problems.

During the festival prominent dancers and singers will conduct master classes.

This festival is held once in two years since 1999. It attracts musical groups from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian Diaspora.

53. MOSCOW HOUSE IN YEREVAN TO HOST INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S WORLD EXPO-2008 [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

The Moscow House in Yerevan will host on May 30-June 1 an international Children's World EXPO-2008 dedicated to the International Day of Children's Protection.

The press division of LOGOS EXPO Center, the organizer of the exhibition, told Armenpress that the exhibition is another step in organization of professional exhibitions of goods and services for school children.

The three-day exhibition will bring together leading domestic and foreign companies specialized in production of goods and services for children.



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The exhibition's organization is assisted by economy, labor and social affairs ministries and the parliament committee on science, education, culture and youth issues.

54. SIRUSHO TO RECORD KELE, KELE IN GREEK [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Armenian singer Sirusho who came in fourth at this year's Eurovision song contest in Belgrade with Kele, Kele song, was awarded the prize of the contest's official club of fans.

Speaking at a news conference she said the club awards each year 4 special prizes.

"Participation in the contest was very important to me. I mixed with many interesting people making new friends. The atmosphere was very warm in Belgrade and all contesters helped each other," she said.

This year's Eurovision Song Contest was won, for the first time, by Russia's Dima Bilan who scored 272 points, the third highest score in the history of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Armenia, which finished 4th, is the country that scored 12 points the most times: eight times. Russia scored 12 only seven times, Greece six times and Ukraine only once.

Sirusho said today that the Greek branch of one of the biggest recording companies, EMI, will offer her to record Kele, Kele (Come on, Come on) in Greek language.

"This sort of offers are very important for Armenian show business representatives. None of them has ever cooperated with that kind of recording companies and the Eurovision Song Contest is an opportunity for it," she said.

The Armenian Haynerart bank, the chief sponsor of Sirusho's participation in the contest, presented her a golden banking card and a watch ornamented with diamonds.

55. ARMENIAN PUBLISHERS PARTICIPATE IN TEHRAN BOOK FAIR [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

Armenian publishers participated in May 1-11 book fair in Tehran, Iran. Eduard Militonian, head of the publishing agency of the Ministry of Culture, told Armenpress that Armenian publishers had a 20 square meter pavilion to showcase their books.

He said Armenian publishers showcased books on Armenian church history, Armenian genocide, Sumgait pogroms of Armenians in Azerbaijan, Armenian culture, geography, tourism, business, also children and fiction books and spiritual literature.

The Armenian delegation also screened a video film about historical and cultural sights. The pavilion showcased also books by American Armenian author William Saroyan. Armenian books were on Armenian, Farsi, Russian, English and French.

Eduard Militonian said also that Armenian publishers will participate in June 5-6 CIS book fair and in September in the traditional Moscow Book Fair.

56. TURKISH SINGER ASKS COURT TO REINSTATE HIS ARMENIAN ETHNICITY [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

A well-known Turkish musician Kyazim Akync living in the city of Malatia announced that he is an ethnic Armenian. He asked a first instance court in Malatia to allow him to change his name and religion.

In an interview with Turkish DHA news agency he said he had to hide his Armenian ethnicity for years for security reasons. He said he decided to regain his Armenian ethnicity after in 2008 January 19 Turkish nationalists plotted and killed Hrant Dink, the chief editor of bilingual weekly Agos published in Istanbul.

Kyazim Akync said he wants to reinstate his true Armenian name-Sargis Nersisian. He said his parents concealed from him his being Armenian for fears that it may damage him.

"I live in Malatia. I am of Armenian descent and have no problems with it. I regret that my family hid it from me for yeas. I want to return to my roots. People love my personality and not my being called Kyazim or Sargis. I see no sense in hiding my Armenian origin," he said.

He added that the court process continues. He asked also Malatia passport registrar to replace the word "Islam" in his passport designating his faith with the word "Christian."

57. BOOK PUBLISHING AGENCY TO RELEASE ENCYCLOPEDIA PUBLICATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

The Book Publishing Agency of Culture Ministry has prepared a series of encyclopedic publications. Its chief, Eduard Militonian, told Armenpress that the agency plans to release this year a



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work by Ararat Aghasian called 'The History of Armenian Painting in 19-20th Centuries,' Argam Ayyazian's 'Happy Province' and Hamlet Petrosian's 'Origin of Khachkars' (cross-stones).

He said the second book of the first volume of Children's Encyclopedia will be published this year too. This publication is supported by 19.3 million Drams government assistance. The agency plans also to publish a book about Armenian national musical instruments.

Eduard Militonian said the agency has helped to release this year 'The History of Armenian Cinematography', a book dedicated to Armenian state symbols and the first book of the first volume of the Children's Encyclopedia.

SOCIAL

58. CATHOLICOS KAREKIN II CONGRATULATES ARMENIANS ON THE DAY OF REPUBLIC [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II congratulated Armenians on the Day of Republic. Press service of the Holy See told Armenpress that in his message the Catholicos particularly said, "On the Day of the Armenian Republic, when we are marking the 90th anniversary of declaration of Armenian Republic, we extend our greetings to our beloved people of Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora.

The restoration of the Armenian statehood on the days of May battles in 1918 was a great event for our people, saved Homeland to which the Armenian people dedicated all their strength giving birth to its national-state life. The memories of that days and achievements encourage and inspire devotion to serve to our homeland with love."

59. ARMENIA'S PERMANENT POPULATION IS 3,230,900 [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

As of April 1, 2008 Armenia's permanent population was 3,230,900 people. Some 2,069, 600 were urban residents and 1,161,300 rural residents.

According to the Armenian National Statistical Service, the capital city Yerevan has 1,108,000 population. The biggest provinces, in terms of population numbers are Armavir and Lori which have 281,800 people each and Shirak which has 280,900 people.

The smallest province is Vayots Dzor that has 55,800 population. Tavush has 134,200 and Aragatsotn has 140,500 population.

The biggest Yerevan district is Nor Nork, which has 144,500 population, followed by Shengavit-143,700, and Malatia-Sebastia-140,500 population.

Arabkir and Kentron districts have 131,100 and 130,000 respectively. The smallest is Nubarashen that has 9,500 population. Nork Marash has 11,400, Davidashen has 40,600 population.

The latest population census in Armenia was conducted in 2001.

60. ARMENIA MARKS 90-th ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST REPUBLIC

Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian, Nagorno-Karabakh President Bako Sahakian, Parliament Speaker Tigran Torosian, Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, Chairman of the Constitutional Court Gagik Harutyunian, other top government officials, foreign diplomats, Former President Robert Kocharian, clergy and thousands of ordinary Armenians gathered today in Sardarapat, a village 40 kilometers west of Yerevan, for ceremonies commemorating the Republic Day, dedicated to Armenia's first republic that emerged 90 years ago from the ashes of the Russian empire.

A military parade marched today saluting the country's leadership and war planes were flying overhead. The country's leadership laid a wreath at the 35-meter high monument erected in memory of Armenians who were killed defending their country's independence. Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicos Karekin II, served a service for repose of souls of the killed soldiers.

The country's leadership and the guests then visited the Sardarapat Ethnographic Museum and the National-Liberation Museum to see a new exposition of documents and other materials about the first Armenian republic.

President Serzh Sarkisian, who is also president of the Armenian Chess Federation watched also a simultaneous game of grandmaster Vladimir Hakobian with best chess players of Armavir province where Sardarapat is.

Then a concert was performed for all.



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61. BARONESS CAROLINE COX AWARDED NAGORNO-KARABAKH MEDAL [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Chairman of Nagorno-Karabakh parliament, Ashot Ghulian, received on May 27 deputy speaker of the British House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox.

The press division of the Nagorno-Karabakh parliament told Armenpress that Caroline Cox congratulated the National Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh on moving to new premises, noting that new buildings and structures are mushrooming in Nagorno-Karabakh.

She recalled that in the early 90-s the basement of the government building was used as a hospital. She said she was happy to see Nagorno-Karabakh progress.

For his part Ashot Ghulian in recognition of Caroline Cox's humanitarian services to Nagorno-Karabakh and its people and her devotion to them awarded her with a medal issued on the occasion of the 20-th anniversary of the liberation movement.

"I appreciate this medal greatly and will keep it close to my heart," she said.

This time she arrived in Nagorno-Karabakh with members of her family. Her grandchild said they will not cut their contacts with Nagorno-Karabakh and have plans to expand them.

62. YOUNG ARMENIANS AND TURKS TO CREATE ONLINE CLUB [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Young Armenians and Turks will use Internet in September to create an online Armenian-Turkish Youth Club. Their endeavor will be part of a program designed to promote dialogue and cooperation between the two countries.

Artak Barseghian, coordinator of this program, told Armenpress that preparations for the project are underway. He said a great deal of information on culture, ecology and other spheres which interests young people on both sides of the border was collected.

He said joint web-resources will be developed for management of online forums. Young people from other countries are expected to take part in these forums as well. They will also issue an online quarterly to be called Club Zone and organize joint round table discussions and mutual visits.

This program is supported by Eurasia Partnership Foundation.

63. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT HANDS MEDALS AND HONORARY TITLES TO SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL, HEALTH AND EDUCATION FIGURES [ARMENPRESS, 05/28/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian personally handed today medals and honorary titles to cultural, scientific, health and education figures. The decree was signed by the president on May 26 on the occasion of the First Republic holiday.

Honorary title of People's Artist was awarded to Robert Sahakian, a cartoon director. Robert Elibakian was awarded the title of the People's Painter. The titles of Honored Artists were awarded to Marine Abrahamian, a pianist, Armen Babakhanian, a pianist, Norayr Davtian, art director and chief conductor of the Armenian folk musical instruments ensemble, Artyom Khachatryan, head of the instruments section of Sayat Nova bard ensemble, Asatur Karapetian, chief dance teacher of Armenian state dance ensemble, Alexander Kosemian, viola player of Komitas state quartet and Anna Mailian, singer. The title of Honorary Painter was awarded to Hrant Tadevosian.

The title of Honored Teacher was awarded to Daniel Tadevosian, military instruction teacher of number 158 secondary school of Yerevan named after M. Gorgisian. Titles of Honorary Workers of Art were awarded to Karen Aghamian- painter, head of the Union of Armenian Painters, Ararat Aghasian, director of Institute of Art of the National Academy of Sciences, Armen Tutunjian, art director of Chico and Friends jazz group, Araks Sarian, a musical critic, professor.

Titles of Honorary Workers of Culture were awarded to Levon Ananian, chairman of the Union of Armenian Writers, Karen Gevorkian, chief dance teacher of Berd ensemble, Murad Hakobian, art director of Sardarapat dance ensemble of the House of Officers of the Defense Ministry, Armen Manukian, a pianist, art director of One Nation-One Culture Foundation, Gevork Chakmanian, art director of Taron children bard ensemble.

Tigran Liloyan, correspondent for Itar-Tass news agency, was awarded the title of Honored Journalist.

With the decree of the president St. Mesrop Mashtots medals were awarded to academician of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences Sergey Mergelian, chief surgeon of the "Nork-Marash" medical center Hakob Hovakimian. Armenian deputy culture minister Gagik Gyurjian was awarded Anania Shirakatsi medal.



Mkhitar Heratsi medals were awarded to doctor-oncologist of the Gyumri oncological dispenser of Alexan Grigorian, pediatrician of the Martuni hospital Atom Manukian, doctor-cardiologist of Noyemberian medical center Susanna Sahakian, director of Agarak hospital Tsaghik Vardanian.

Rector of the Vanadzor Tumanian State Pedagogical Institute, professor Gurgen Khachatryan, trumpeter of A. Merangulian folk musical instruments ensemble of Armenian public radio Seryozha Karapetian and art critic, deputy director of the Armenian National Gallery Hasmik Harutyunian were awarded Movses Khorenatsi medals.

"Today we award those people who have notable contribution to the development of science, education, culture and health in our country. I am convinced that this is a very responsible moment as not all succeed in reaching such creative, professional achievements," Serzh Sargsian said congratulating them.

He noted that it is necessary to have not only talent and bright skills but also ability to work hard, high civil responsibility and love towards the homeland.

"Your personal victories are assessed by the state and the public and your way will be an example for many those who devoted themselves to creative work and helping the people. With your work you help to raise the image of Armenia, and give new quality to the spiritual, mental and humanitarian potential of our state. I wish that the cultural figures create more valuable works to bring up more prepared and patriotic generation and that the doctors cure our compatriots with more love. If it is so no one can win us, our country will be flourishing. I warmly congratulate you on receiving high state awards, and I am sure that we are united towards the general goal of development and progress of Armenia," the Armenian president pointed out.

64. PLANTS IN LORI AND KOTAYK TO PRODUCE GARLIC POWDER AND MUSHROOMS [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

A small factory in the village of Ghursal in the northeastern province of Lori will resume soon production of garlic powder after new modern equipment is installed.

This project is part of a bigger program for development of small agricultural enterprises and trade supported by World Bank. The cost of this project is 11.8 million Drams.

Armen Galoyan, head of the plant, told Armenpress that last year a pilot project was launched for cultivation of garlic on 1.5 hectares of land. The yield was quite high. Powder produced from last year's harvest was sold to food and pharmaceutical companies and the Defense Ministry.

This year the expected yield is about 18 tons and 12 tons will be processed to produce 2 tons of powder. The plant will be able to process some 300 kg of garlic daily and in this sense it will be the only plant in the region and part of its produces will be sold outside Armenia.

According to Armen Galoyan next year the land under garlic will be expanded.

The World Bank also helps to carry out another agricultural project for growing mushrooms in the village of Kaputan in central Kotayk province. The cost of this project is estimated at 11.7 million Drams.

Andranik Grigorian, chief manager of Amexon company, said they tested two kinds of ecologically clean mushrooms last year. The company plans to sell its produces in fresh form and as preserves.

He said the company is developing its own website to post information to all potential buyers about its produces.

Gagik Khachatryan, coordinator of the World Bank supported program, says as a result locally produced goods will drive imported ones out of market.

65. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSION OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL YOUTH REPORT TO BE RELEASED SOON [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

The English-language version of the Armenian National Youth Report will be released soon.

Arsen Soghomonian, head of youth policy department of the Sport and Youth Issues Ministry, told Armenpress that the report will be submitted to the Council of Europe in October.

The report will be printed in 500 copies and will be sent to interested international organizations.

The Armenian version of the report was released in 2007. It is a comprehensive study of the current situation of young people in Armenia. The preparation of the report was launched in 2005 by a group of Armenian experts, who were assisted by Council of Europe experts on youth issues.



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66. FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF SHIRAK AND LORI AWARDED MEDALS OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

On the occasion of the 16-th anniversary of liberation of the town of Shushi 17 freedom fighters (veterans of Nagorno-Karabakh war) of Shirak and 10 of Lori provinces in Armenia were awarded 'Bravery' and 'Military Services' medals at the order of Nagorno-Karabakh president.

Artashes Mkhitarian, a Colonel of the Nagorno-Karabakh defense army, who was commander of the ARF Gyumri squad during the war, said that victories are registered on the basis of statehood.

"If we realize that all shortcomings (in the past) were because of lacking statehood, then from this perspective the significance and the historical role of May battles become more important," he said.

Other freedom fighters said the most important thing for them is liberation of Armenian lands, establishment of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and its army.

Rafik Ghazinian, one of freedom fighters, told Armenpress that the award is binding, but for them is more important to keep bright the memory of their friends killed in the battle fields, although each of freedom fighters should be assessed properly during his lifetime.

67. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TRANSPORT JUNCTURE IN DOWNTOWN YEREVAN TO BE COMPLETED IN MID-JUNE [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

A deputy Yerevan mayor, Karen Davtian, said today construction of a new transport juncture at a downtown Yerevan crossroad where Khanjian, Tigran Mets and Agatangeghos streets meet, will be completed in mid-June, in accordance with the original schedule.

He said a two-level tunnel is being built on the site.

Other road facilities launched last year stretching from Davidashen Bridge to Ayrarat Cinema will be accomplished in August-September. These transport facilities are expected to relieve traffic in central Yerevan streets.

68. FAR TO TRAIN 48 MORE DOCTORS THIS YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Forty-eight Armenian doctors will have an extensive training course this year as part of Continued Medical Education program initiated and supported by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Hambardzum Simonian, program coordinator, told Armenpress that 22 doctors from different regions had been already trained this year at leading Yerevan clinics.

The selection of doctors wishing to have the course is carried out based on several preliminary studies.

"We pay visits to different hospitals and clinics to learn the situation on the ground and find out who of their staff participated in recent years' similar trainings and then we select those who will participate in our course," he said. He said the training course lasts for one month.

All trained doctors meet once a year with program's coordinator for a certification course. As part of this program some hospitals outside Yerevan will get urgently needed medical equipment.

69. BOOK ABOUT ISLAMIZED ARMENIANS PRESENTED [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

Rubina Pirumian, a professor of California University, USA, presented today in Yerevan the latest of her monographs which is about Armenians who had to convert into Islam not to be killed during the 1915-1923 Armenian genocide committed by the government of Turkey.

The book called 'Those Who Continued to Live in Turkey' is a unique study of the psychology of these and other Armenians who fled to Europe, Middle East and Americas.

Speaking at the presentation, Rubina Pirumian said she tried to analyze these people's psychology, their lifestyle and their efforts to maintain their deeply-hidden Armenian identity.

According to Hayk Demoyan, director of the Genocide Museum and Institute, the subject of genocide is urgent now being presented in different ways, but Rubina Pirumian scrutinized this topic in genocide literature.

According to Demoyan, there are still untapped subjects in the Armenian genocide and one of them is the fate of thousands of Armenian women, girls, children and men who had to adopt Islam not to be killed.

Rubina Pirumian said she had been studying the literature about the Armenian genocide for 25 years which helped her to look deep into Islamized Armenians' psychology and try to analyze it.



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She said her objective was to find out whether young women and girls that were abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and get married to Islam men, the children that were adopted by Muslim families, whether they could maintain their identity.

She said one thing was apparent. Only those of Islamized Armenians who moved from Turkey to Europe can openly admit their Armenian identity, while those living in Turkey are tight-lipped on this because of fears and pressure.

This book is in English with a 22-page Armenian supplement.

70. NORTH AVENUE IN YEREVAN TO HOST "NEW YEREVAN" REAL ESTATE EXHIBITION [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

On May 31 North Avenue in central Yerevan will host 'New Yerevan' real estate two-day exhibition to be held by Yerevan municipality and VVP real estate agency.

The goal of the exposition is to present the latest trends in local real estate market.

Vruyr Penesian, head of VVP agency, told a news conference today that the best newly-built residential blocks will be featured, as well as best street junctures and zoning projects.

The municipality will present a new quarter that will be built in Southwestern district of Yerevan.

71. NINTH SHIFT OF ARMENIAN PEACEKEEPERS TO LEAVE FOR KOSOVO IN FIRST HALF OF JUNE [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

The ninth extended shift of the Armenian Armed Forces will leave for Kosovo in the first half of June for a peacekeeping mission. The Commander of the troops Artak Tonoyan told Armenpress that the Armenian peacekeepers will carry out their mission within the Greek battalion with a 6-month term within the multinational division not far from Prishtina town. Currently 34-member troop is implementing its mission there. In June 70 peacekeepers will leave for Kosovo.

Overall, 272 Armenian peacekeepers carried out their mission in Kosovo.

Armenian 46-member peacekeeping mission is in Iraq. Tonoyan said that the eighth shift will leave for Iraq in the second half of June.

72. OFFICIAL WEBSITES OF ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO POST NOT ONLY STANDARD ACTS BUT ALSO INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS [ARMENPRESS, 05/29/08]

The official websites of Armenian government agencies will post from now on not only standard acts but also individual decisions.

This instruction was issued today by Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian during the recurrent government session. He said this is to raise the public's awareness of the government performance.

According to him, that will become the best tool to raise the public's awareness and step up crackdown on corruption.

"If the information is not confidential and becomes a subject of discussions, it must be accessible to the public at large. We shall only benefit from it. Sooner or later all adopted decisions become known to the society," Tigran Sarkisian said, adding that "inaccessibility of information creates good environment for rumors."

73. ADMINISTRATIVE COURT CONSIDERS SUIT OF FORMER OFFICIALS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY UNGROUNDED [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

Armenian administrative court considered the suit of the former four officials of the Foreign Ministry ungrounded. They were demanding that February 25 decision of former minister Vartan Oskanian be eliminated and restore them in their offices compensating the harm. More probably they will file an appeal to Court of Cassation.

74. MONUMENT TO WILLIAM SAROYAN TO BE PLACED IN CENTER OF YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

At the initiative of the "Pan-Armenian Geographical Association" NGO in the park where Yerevan Moskovian and Mashtots Avenues meet – near the monument of Sayat-Nova – the monument of American-Armenian writer William Saroyan will be placed.



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The head of the organization, Rafael Hovhannissian, said that currently the monument is being prepared in Prague, the author is distinguished sculptor living in France David Yerevantsi who is also the author of Komitas monument placed in Paris.

The monument is being prepared by the funds donated to the organization.

75. GOVERNMENT RELEASES 41.5 MILLION DRAMS FOR CLEANING UP COASTAL AREAS OF LAKE SEVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

The government has released 41.5 million Drams for cleaning up coastal areas of Lake Sevan this year.

The money will be spent on cleaning of 95 hectares of lake's areas in Martuni and Vardenis regions of Gegharkunik province. Trees and bushes which are partly under water will be cut and removed. These areas will be simultaneously zoned and mapped for future management.

At the same time trees and bushes will be planted on areas close to the lake's shore that are safeguarded against being covered with water.

Harutyun Galoyan, deputy head of a Nature Protection ministry's department in charge of bio resources, said as the lake's level rose 2.26 meters in the last three years about 300 hectares of coastal areas went under water.

In 2006-2007 about 200 hectares of such areas were cleaned and the rest will be cleaned before September. The job is assigned to Whitegate company that won this right in a competition. It will recruit residents of coastal villages to do the job. The collected wood will be distributed to insecure families as winter heating fuel.

According to Harutyun Galoyan, some 200,000 young fish (local trout) weighing from 5 to 50 grams will be let into the lake this year to restore its population of endemic species. Last year 135,000 newly-hatched fish were let into the lake.

This program, supported by an 80 million Drams government assistance (up from 30 million last year) is being implemented by Sevan National Park, the Nature Protection Ministry and Gegharkunik governor's office.

76. DOWNTOWN GAVAR TO BE REDEVELOPED [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

The municipality of Gavar, the administrative center of Gegharkunik province, plans to redevelop the town's central square.

Grigor Dashtoyan, chief specialist of the culture department of the municipality, told Armenpress that under the master plan some parts of the road close to Saint Virgin Church will be closed for traffic, a circle road will be build for traffic to circumvent the square, fountains system will be replaced, benches will be installed and the green zone will be expanded. The exterior of structures erected close to the square will be changed too.

A public park named after prominent designer Samvel Kocharian will undergo sweeping redevelopment. New buildings will be built on both sides of a road that stretches from central square to Kabelagortsneri quarter of the town.

This landscaping was designed by Yerevan Design firm. The project is being discussed by the town's population now.

77. PROTECTION OF MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH CONFERENCE BEGINS IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

A two-day conference on Protection of Mother and Child Health began today at Yerevan State Medical University. The conference in Armenia is being held within the frameworks of Salzburg medical seminars.

It is organized by Yerevan State University and the Union of Doctors and Alumni of the Fund for Armenian Relief.

Mikael Narimanyan, Yerevan Medical University pro-rector, said in his opening speech that such conferences are very important for doctors in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. He underscored the importance of continued education.

The conference is available to doctors in Nagorno-Karabakh through a tele-bridge to give them an opportunity to listen to reports and papers and participate in discussions. Present were today representatives of Armenian public and private medical establishments and international organizations.

Professors Julian Robinson and John Lorenz of the U.S. Columbia University presented lectures.



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Tomorrow Julian Robinson will deliver another lecture. A round table discussion is supposed to take place too.

The goal of Salzburg medical seminars is to educate medical personnel of countries in transition and to enhance their professional skills.

Armenia was involved into this program in 1994 with over 300 Armenian doctors having participated in these seminars.

They usually last for one week with the focus on neurology, urology, mother and child health protection, intensive pediatrics, family medicine and infectious diseases.

78. SECOND INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S WORLD EXPO-2008 OPENS IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

The second international Children's World EXPO-2008 dedicated to the International Day of Children's Protection opened today at The Moscow House in Yerevan.

The exhibition is organized by LOGOS EXPO Center in cooperation with economy, labor and social affairs ministries and the parliament committee on science, education, culture and youth issues.

The three day-day exhibition has brought together leading domestic and foreign companies specialized in production of goods and services for children.

The organizers say the exhibition is another step in organization of professional exhibitions of goods and services for school children.

The exhibition participants were welcomed by Mekhak Apresian, head of tourism department of Economy Ministry. It showcases clothes, shoes, linen, furniture and other goods for children.

79. HAKHTANAK (VICTORY) PARK TO HOST UNPRECEDENTED EVENT DEDICATED TO INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CHILDREN'S PROTECTION [ARMENPRESS, 05/30/08]

On June 2 the Hakhtanak (Victory) park in Yerevan will host an unprecedented event dedicated to International Day of Children's Protection.

This will be a two-part event. During the first one about 40 representatives of Armenian show business will be selling sweets, ice cream and candies donated by Ashtarak Kat, Asa, Sofi, Coca Cola and Grand Candy companies. The proceeds will be given to Children Reception and Orientation Center run by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

The second part will feature sale of needlework and handicraft. The event will end up with a live concert and fireworks.

Mira Antonian, director of the Children Reception and Orientation Center (it is for unaccompanied children) said at a news conference today that the goal of this event is to draw the society's attention to dire situation of these children and their families.

Mira Antonian said though FAR and other organizations carry out programs to help unaccompanied children, children who are subjected to domestic violence and vagabond children, their number does not decrease.

She expressed hope that the society will turn its attention towards solution of at least part of these children's problems.

The Children Reception and Orientation Center has helped 4,000 children so far.

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