



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. SERIOUSLY... [Haykakan Zhamanak, 06/24/08]

While people are trying to understand why on earth President Serge Sarkissian is trying to appoint Hovik Abrahamian in the position of NA Speaker in these tense political situation, the governmental sources are informing that Sarkissian has lost a deal of appointing Abrahamian in gambling.

Abrahamian has been asking for this appointment for months and finally Serge Sarkissian offered him a game of cards: Abrahamian would receive the position if he wins. Certainly, Abrahamian accepted the offer and...won the game.

Armenia is living in cruel times, when the political positions are lost or won in gambling. But that's the truth. Next time, Mr. Sarkissian, offer a chess game.

#### 2. SERGE SARGSIAN: "ARMENIA WILL PROVE THAT ITS DEMOCRATIC GOVERNING IS IRREVERSIBLE" [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

Serge Sargsian, the President of the Republic of Armenia, has made an exclusive commentary for the internet service of the radio Liberty, the full text of which has been provided to Noyan Tapan by the RA President's Press Office.

"For the past few months Armenia appeared on the first pages of the European press for two reasons: good and bad. The first are the disorders, which took place in our capital after the presidential elections held in February, and the second one is the meeting, which took place on June 7 between me and my Azeri colleague. Both of them stressed that Armenia is a country, which is in the transition period of the European Neighborhood. Irrespective of the numerous obstacles, existing on our way, Armenia deepens its reforms and strengthens its democratic institutions as part of its way leading to a stable and good governing.

The post-election disagreements among the political forces gave me an opportunity to form a large political coalition, uniting four out of the five factions represented in the parliament. The important part of the mission of that coalition are the social and economic reforms of democratic trend, which are being implemented at this moment. We are working together in keeping with the letter and spirit of Resolution 1609 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The considerable reforms in conformity with international standards include the liberalization of the law on "Holding of Meetings, Rallies, Marches and Demonstrations", the expansion of the rights of the parliamentary opposition through special legislative amendments, which guarantee a role of involvement in the political system and decision making process, the complete package of the amendments of the Electoral Code in conformity with the OSCE recommendations, which include provisions with regard to the participation of represented, as well as not represented forces in the parliament and essential amendments in the law on "Television and Radio". All these amendments have been implemented with the positive marks of the experts of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe.

Anyway, these are decisive steps in the direction of long-term reforms, which will be addressed to the dissatisfaction, which has been brought forth as a result of the recent elections and will guarantee greater freedom for the people of Armenia. We welcome any suggestion from the European Union and France, which assumes its presidency, in the direction of assisting these reforms and guaranteeing their productive implementation.

Besides the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we have initiated serious reforms of the law enforcement system, as well as a special parliamentary commission has been created, which will be engaged in the study of the post-election tragic events. This commission will enjoy the largest possible authority to study the facts and introduce its own independent conclusion. We call extra-parliamentary groups and international experts to join these efforts.

Jointly with the PACE Monitoring Commission we have observed important progress up to now. However, there is much work to be done. Fortunately, there is political will for advancing our pretentious plans in our coalition. We accept that the issue of being attractive for Europe and the larger international community is set in front of us.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

The history has been severe towards Armenia. Our people has overcome numerous difficulties both in remote and near past. However, we are inflexible that our country should not always be stuck into the transitional stage. Taking the USA movement of human civil rights as an example, I am sure that irrespective of the coming challenges, we will overcome. As one of the enthusiastic members of the European Neighborhood, Armenia will finally prove that its democratic governing is irreversible."

### 3. JOINT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RA MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATO/ EURO-ATLANTIC PARTNETSHIP COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia jointly with the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council will hold an international conference titled "Prevention and Confrontation of Attacks in Cyberspace" in the "Ani PLaza" hotel of Yerevan on June 24-25.

The representatives of the NATO member states, Partnership for Peace, the countries of the Mediterranean dialogue and Istanbul initiative, the RA Ministries and departments, the foreign embassies accredited in the Republic of Armenia and international organizations will take part in the conference.

According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the Press and Information Department of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the conference will be held within the frameworks of the regular "NATO's week" in Armenia.

### 4. COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN RA LORI REGION AND PROVENCE-ALPES-COTES D'AZUR REGION OF FRANCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

A bilateral Cooperation Agreement, as well as a Cooperation Activities Contract between Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur and Lori regions, which have been friends since 1997, were signed by Michel Vauzelle, the Chairman of the Regional Council, and Aram Kocharian, the Regional Governor of Lori, under solemn conditions in the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur (Marseilles) on June 19. With the agreements it is envisaged to deepen the cooperation at a decentralized level in the spheres of health, education and culture, as well as in the joint implementation of a number of other programs.

In honour of the signing of the cooperation agreement, as well as the French Armenians of Provence-Alpes-Cotes region, Michel Vauzelle organized a solemn evening on the same day, which was attended by Mher Shahgeldian, the RA Minister of Emergency Situations, Aram Kocharian, the Regional Governor of Lori, Hamlet Gasparian, the Charge d'Affaires of Armenia to France, Lieutenant-General Edik Barseghian, the Head of the Rescue Service of Armenia, NA deputies of France, representatives of Marseilles, Nice and representatives of the authorities of other neighbouring cities, Armenian spiritual leaders, heads of French-Armenian organizations and hundreds of French Armenians.

According to the information provided to Noyan Tapan by the Press and Information Department of the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the evening the Armenian khachkar (commemorative cross-stone), which was presented to Provence-Alpes-Cotes d'Azur region by Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, last October during the visit of Michel Vauzelle to Armenia, was solemnly opened in the large hall of the Regional Council.

### 5. ISSUE OF ARMENIA SPECIALLY INCLUDED IN PACE SESSION'S AGENDA, IT WILL BE DISCUSSED ON JUNE 25 [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The issue of Armenia's fulfilling the requirements of PACE Resolution N 1609 has been specially included in the agenda of PACE session that started on June 23. According to Radio Liberty, it will be discussed on June 25.

It was mentioned that the issue has been included in the agenda without objections, including by the Armenian delegation.

### 6. ISSUE OF NAGORNO KARABAKH CONFLICT FAIR AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IS OF PIVOTAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR ARMENIA'S FOREIGN POLICY, RA FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The issue of Nagorno Karabakh conflict fair and peaceful settlement is of pivotal significance for Armenia's foreign policy. RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said in response to the questions of the Armenpress agency. According to the Minister, the issue of recognition and exercising of Nagorno Karabakh people's self-determination right is the basis of the conflict. According to him, Armenia



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

considers that the Nagorno Karabakh problem settlement should be based on the following principles: NKR cannot be within the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, NKR should have an unimpeded land communication with Armenia under Armenian side's competence, NKR population's security should be guaranteed. The admission of these principles and their stipulation by an agreement, according to E. Nalbandian, will give a possibility to liquidate the consequences of the conflict.

"Armenia pursues problem settlement only peacefully and attaches importance to establishment of atmosphere of confidence to continue the negotiations in a constructive way. The sides should not take steps that can create additional tension and obstacles on the way of the peaceful process," the Minister said. According to him, any attempt to solve the conflict through a war can have unpredictable consequences not only for the conflict sides, but also for the whole region.

According to E. Nalbandian, Azeri side's steps aimed at aggravating the situation are condemnable. They become frequent recently: the incident of NKR Martakert region in early March, refusing to return four Armenian citizens from April, murder of Armenian serviceman in the Tavush region, and murder of two residents of the village of Chinari on June 18. According to him, these steps pose danger for the negotiations process. "A question emerges: maybe it is the goal of the Azeri side, to put new obstacles for continuation of the negotiations. Its evidence is also the demand voiced by a number of NGOs of Azerbaijan to stop the negotiations process. We know from where these organizations' activity is guided," the Minister said.

E. Nalbandian also said that being involved in the negotiations process of OSCE Minsk Group, Azerbaijan parallel to it tries to move the Nagorno Karabakh settlement to other international instances, continues misrepresenting the essence of the conflict at international organizations and propaganda against Armenia. This, according to him, has considerably hindered and continues to hinder the problem settlement. "Armenia is inflexible in the issue of continuing the negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group for the purpose of achieving final settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict," the RA Foreign Minister stated.

## 7. APPOINTMENT OF U.S. AMBASSADOR DELAYED [Aravot, 06/23/08]

The appointment of Marie Jovanovich as U.S. ambassador to Armenia is delayed due to the necessity to answer the written questions submitted to her, the U.S. Charge D'Affaires Joseph Pennington informed reporters on June 23. According to him, during the discussion at the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations the day before, M. Jovanovich answered many questions, but several senators presented written questions to her and the discussion will continue after she gives answers to these questions. In J. Pennington's words, it is the Senate's competence to approve the appointment of the ambassador, and such discussion is normal and makes part of the democratic processes in the U.S.

"We hope that the candidacy of Ambassador Jovanovich will be approved, and she will arrive in Yerevan as soon as possible," J. Pennington said. He underlined that the appointment of ambassador is of great importance for Armenian-US relations. He failed to say if M. Jovanovich's position on the issue of the Armenian Genocide will affect approval her candidacy as ambassador to Armenia.

It is noteworthy that when speaking about massacres of 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire at the indicated discussion at the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, M. Jovanovich said that the Armenians call these massacres the Great Genocide. In her words, the U.S. administration understands that in the opinion of many Americans, such events should be called genocide.

## 8. NEW PROGRAM OF ANTICORRUPTION STRATEGY BEING DEVELOPED [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The process of anticorruption strategy reforms and fulfillment of the obligations, as well as the further steps were discussed at the June 23 regular sitting of the Commission for Monitoring of the Implementation of the Anticorruption Strategy.

The commission chairman, advisor to the RA president Gevorg Mherian informed those present about discussion on Armenia's report at the session of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in Strasbourg on June 6-13. It was noted that the Armenian delegation has done considerable work and achieved significant results.

The head of the Armenian delegation in the GRECO Arthur Osikian said that thanks to a number of arguments, the Armenian delegation succeeded in making essential corrections in the GRECO experts' preliminary report on Armenia. Finally, it was established that in 2006-2007, 12 out of the 24 obligations by Armenia were fulfilled completely (50%), 9 were fulfilled partly (38%) and only 3 were considered as



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

unfulfilled. The group's head stated that it is for the first time in GRECO's history that a country has ensured a 50% fulfillment at the 1st and 2nd stages.

G. Mherian has informed the RA president about the 3 unfulfilled proposals. The president has given instructions to the appropriate departments and coordinated work is underway on implementation of these instructions.

The head of the working group of the Commission for Monitoring of the Implementation of the Anticorruption Strategy Armen Khudaverdian spoke about the development of a new program of strategy. According to him, the new program will pay more attention to contents of the problems' formulation, and active cooperation with NGOs will continue.

In this connection G. Mherian said that the RA president instructed them to work out a document that will create real bases for the fight against corruption rather than will be intended for presentation to the respective international structures.

## 9. "HERITAGE" FACTION PROPOSES ENVISAGING CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OFFICIALS WHO ABUSE HUMAN RIGHTS [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 06/23/08]

The National Assembly "Heritage" faction on June 23 sent a letter to the prime minister Tigran Sargsian concerning the problem of material and political damage done to the state, state budget and tax payers as a result of satisfaction of the suits filed by Armenian citizens to the European Court of Human Rights in recent period.

In particular, the faction proposes that the Armenian government submit to the National Assembly amendments to the respective law, by which in case of criminal activity and abuse of authority by various state officials, criminal cases will be opened against such judges and state officials for causing damage to the state, state budget and tax payers, while the whole amount of damage will be compensated from the pocket of the official to have done this damage.

According to the press service of "Heritage" party, the faction expects to be informed about the political position of the prime minister and practical steps of the government.

## 10. PRESIDENT SERZH SARKISIAN APPROVES STRUCTURE OF NEW GOVERNMENT [Azg, 06/24/08]

On June 21 President Serzh Sarkisian signed into law a bill on 'The Structure of the Government of the Republic of Armenia' adopted earlier by the National Assembly.

The presidential press service told Armenpress that the new government of Armenia comprises the ministries listed below.

- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs,
- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Justice,
- Ministry of Emergency,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ministry of Nature Protection,
- Ministry of Agriculture,
- Ministry of Economy,
- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources,
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Ministry of Culture,
- Ministry of Defense,
- Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs,
- Ministry of Diaspora Issues,
- Ministry of Territorial Management,
- Ministry of Transport and Communications,
- Ministry of Urban Planning,
- Ministry of Finance.

The law goes into effect on July 1, 2008. The Ministry of Diaspora issues, according to the decree, will become effective on October 1, 2008.

By another decree signed on the same day President Serzh Sarkisian invalidated a section of the old, 2002 law on the structure of the Armenian government. The second decree will take effect on July 1.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

## 11. PRIME MINISTER APPOINTS ARTHUR AFRIKIAN NEW DEPUTY CHIEF OF CUSTOMS COMMITTEE [Haykakan Zhamanak, 06/24/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian decreed to dismiss Karen Matevosian from the office of deputy chief of the government affiliated state customs committee.

The government press office told Armenpress that by another decree the prime minister appointed Arthur Afrikian as deputy chief of the government affiliated state customs committee.

## 12. ON JUNE 25 PACE TO DISCUSS IMPLEMENTATION OF 1609 RESOLUTION BY ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

The summer session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe started today its work. The agenda of the session also included the issue on the Armenia's implementation of the PACE 1609 resolution to which the Assembly will refer on June 25.

Council of Europe press service told Armenpress that among the urgent issues of the session are the issue connected with the activity of the Turkey's democratic institutions the discussion of which will take place with the participation of the foreign minister of Turkey. The agenda also includes issue on the activity of Azerbaijani democratic institutions. The works of the session will last until June 27.

Armenian delegation headed by David Harutyunian participates in the PACE work.

## 13. SPOKESMAN FOR THE ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SAYS CIRCLE OF ISSUES DISCUSSED BY SERZH SARSGSIAN IN MOSCOW IS VERY LARGE [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

"The circle of the issues which will be discussed by the Armenian President Serzh Sargsian during his official meetings in Moscow is quite wide which reflects the high level of inter-state relations between Armenia and Russia. The agenda of the discussed issues includes the further expansion of the Armenian-Russian strategic cooperation, peaceful regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, trade-economic relations between the two countries," spokesman for the Armenian President Samvel Farmanian said to Interfax news agency.

This is the first official visit of the President Sargsian to Russia in the status of President of the Republic of Armenia. S. Farmanian said that within the framework of the visit S. Sargsian will have a face-to-face conversation with his Russian counterpart Dmitri Medvedev, which will be followed by the extended meeting with the participation of the two presidents. The Armenian president is also expected to meet with the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Chairman of the Federation Council Sergey Mironov and State Duma Boris Gрызlov.

The delegation headed by the president comprises of Deputy Prime Minister Armen Gevorgian, who is also territorial governance minister, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian, head of the NA's science, education, culture and youth affairs permanent commission Hranush Hakobian and other officials.

## 14. SERZH SARSGSIAN: "HENCE EACH ARMENIAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY WILL FEEL ESSENTIAL CARE OF THE STATE" [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian, who is in Moscow on an official visit, met yesterday in "Ritz Carlton" hotel with the representatives of the local Armenian community. The meeting was unprecedented as it gathered the whole elite of the Russian Armenian community, eminent intellectuals, scientists, economic and political figures. USSR People's artist Armen Jigarkhanian, co-chairman of the Armenian-Russian inter-parliamentary commission Nikolay Rizhkov and others delivered speeches at the meeting. The rector of the Moscow State University Victor Sadovnich handed to the Armenian president Big Medal of the university.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian also delivered a speech at the meeting. In his speech the president greeted the participants of the meeting and said that through them he wanted to convey warm greetings from Armenia to all the Armenians living in Russia.

"You know that the Armenian community in Russia is peculiar in many aspects. The majority of the Armenians living outside their homeland are based here. Of course the whole Diaspora is tied with the homeland but you are the one the ties of which are stronger and multilayer both in political and cultural as well as in economic respect and this has its impact on the relations of Russian Armenians and Armenia," the president said.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

After speaking about the number of issues of the Armenian Diaspora, the president referred to the situation in Armenia, and to the issues it is facing. He particularly said, "Today Armenia has entered a new round of reforms. I have stated many times that the solution of the issues Armenia is facing and the success of the implementation of our programs are possible only by uniting efforts of all the Armenians. The realization of exclusive mission of the Diaspora hinted us to create a separate Diaspora Issues Ministry which is in the process of formation."

The president said that Armenia is seeking to become a health, banking, tourism regional center. "Let me bring a bright example: with the amount of the investments made in Armenia the Russian capital is on the first place, the Russian investors feel good in Armenia. You have great economic and intellectual potential. The part of this potential you must use in Armenia. Be sure that what you do is demanded, that your investment is important for the homeland."

Each son of our people in any part of the world wishes to see prosperous, flourishing and stable Armenia. In any country each our compatriot think about having role in the development of Armenia and they want to hear good news from their homeland.

I am sure that the Russian Armenians will gradually increase their organization level, will increase the number of cultural and educational schools in Russia and number of initiatives directed towards preservation of Armenian culture," the president said, adding that hence Armenian Diaspora in any country will feel the essential care of the state and Armenia will provide greater support for cultural and educational initiatives.

"Until now big was the role of Diaspora in the consolidation of our state and economy: the time has come when Armenia's increasing opportunities allow to say that not only Diaspora has role in the development of Armenia, but Armenia also has role in solution of issues of Diaspora. And I assure you that hence this will be the principle of Armenia-Diaspora partnership," Serzh Sargsian said.

In his speech the president also referred to three important issues. First, he said is the inner political situation in Armenia. "I would like you to understand and assess it in a right way – a political force which months before the elections clearly stated that it would not accept any result of the elections besides its victory tries by blackmailing destabilize the situation in the country. I have many times stated that stemming from the Armenia's interests I am ready to negotiate and work with any political force. Serious steps have been undertaken to smooth the post-electoral tension – the opposition is being invited by TV channels, all the people who did not have direct participation in March 1 unrest have been set free. The rights of the parliamentary opposition have been extended, a parliamentary ad hoc commission has been set up to study the events. These steps and efforts will continue but for their successful conclusion they must be two-sided. And no one has a right to destabilize the state with calls for collapse of the power and threats."

The second issue the president spoke about was connected with the Armenian-Turkish relations. "In this issue our position is clear: there must not be closed borders between the neighboring states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The regional cooperation can be the best way of establishing stability. The Turkish side suggests that a commission be set up which will study the historic facts. We are not against the creation of such commission but only when the border between our states opens. In near future I am planning to undertake new steps directed towards the promotion of the Armenian-Turkish relations. More probably I will invite Abdullah Gul to Yerevan to watch the game of the Armenian Turkish football teams".

The third issue the president said is Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation. "You know that recently I have conducted negotiations with the Azerbaijani president. We agreed to continue the negotiations over the main principles registered in the current document. Nagorno Karabakh has never been part of Azerbaijan. It was passed to Soviet Azerbaijan by the illegal decision of the party. The decision was grounded that it would help to spread the ideas of October Revolution to Muslim East. People of Nagorno Karabakh, within the circles of law, and afterwards in the demanded war, gained their right to independent statehood and the conflict may not have any solution lowering this status."

After finishing his speech the Armenian president suggested to raise glasses to the consolidation of Armenian and Russian friendship, welfare of the Russian Armenian community and our people and to the better future.

## 15. ARMENIAN-RUSSIAN EXTENDED NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

The face-to-face meeting of the Armenian and Russian presidents in Moscow today was followed by the extended Armenian-Russian negotiations. Opening the meeting Russian president said that the first part of the bilateral negotiations has already ended, they discussed developing relations between Armenia and Russia, political issues, including issue on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict regulation.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

“Now we offer to focus on the trade-economic relations. In this respect the progress is quite good and the increase of the trade turnover between the two countries is essential. The volume of mutual investments is also increasing. Particularly, the Russian investments exceeded 1.2 billion USD which is a great achievement in our relations and a very good basis for the further development of our relations,” the Russian president said, noting that cultural cooperation also exists between the two countries and particularly referred to the conduction of the cultural years which he said were very good events directed to the future.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian once again expressed gratitude for the invitation and warm reception expressing assurance that the relations between the two countries will develop drastically. He agreed that Russian investments in Armenia are quite large and bilateral trade turnover between the two countries increases, “but our aim is that in 1 or 1.5 years these indexes be measured not by million but by billion.”

D. Medvedev said it is a good intention. Serzh Sargsian noted that the development of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is also very important. “We must pass to the future generations the best we have.”

## 16. PRIME MINISTER TIGRAN SARKISIAN CHAIRS MEETING OF BUSINESSMEN AND HIGHER COUNCIL FOR INTRODUCTION OF NEW CULTURE OF REVENUES [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian chaired today the meeting of a group of leading businessmen, who are members of the board of the Armenian Union of Businessmen and Industrialists and members of a recently established Higher Council for Introduction of New Culture of Revenues Administration.

The participants of the meeting discussed issues related to enforcement of tax reforms and administration improvement. It also discussed some of businessmen’s concerns and their proposals.

The government press office quoted Tigran Sarkisian as saying that transparency of tax and customs reforms and administration improvement is very important.

He said the official websites of both agencies have already information which is of interest to both business people and the public at large, including information on customs clearing dues, which rule out willful actions on part of customs officers. He said this is to increase the level of trust in the government’s policy.

According to Arsen Ghazarian, chairman of the Union of Businessmen and Industrialists, many businessmen in Armenia are not yet psychologically ready to believe that these sweeping reforms are going to be lasting and persistent and that all businessmen, regardless of their businesses amount, will be treated equally.

At the same time he said the normal economic process may be jeopardized because the sweeping reforms enforced in the last one month in some cases do not offer alternatives to the style that was practiced for years.

In this sense he emphasized the role of the public council affiliated with state taxation inspectorate which is ready for open discussions with businessmen to address shortcomings, administrative errors and other similar mistakes.

“You should be confident that along with goods you import there will be no illegal imports and every such attempt will be stopped at the border and the entire process will be open and transparent,” the prime minister said at the end of the meeting.

## 17. MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND RUSSIAN PRESIDENTS TAKES PLACE IN KREMLIN [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

“We are expecting that during today’s negotiations our discussions will be effective and will correspond to the partnership level which exists between Armenia and Russia,” Russian President Dmitri Medvedev said today receiving Armenian President Serzh Sargsian in Kremlin, his residence.

He greeted the official visit of his Armenian counterpart to Moscow and said that during the negotiations they will discuss issues on political partnership, economic and social issues, cultural initiatives between Armenia and Russia.

Expressing gratitude for the invitation and warm reception, the Armenian president pointed out the importance of the meeting in respect of further development of the relations between the two countries. He expressed assurance that in future as well the ties between the two countries will develop in the atmosphere of mutual understanding, friendship.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

He expressed assurance that today's meeting will take bilateral relations on a new level. Serzh Sargsian also invited Russian president to visit Armenia at any convenient time for him.

The face-to-face meeting of the presidents will be followed by the extended meeting after which the two presidents will sign a joint statement.

## 18. ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES U.S. ASSISTANT STATE SECRETARY [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian received today U.S. Assistant State Secretary on Democratic, Human Rights and Labor Affairs David Cramer. At the meeting with the head of the government he said that he arrived in Armenia to reconfirm that USA is Armenia's partner and supporter.

According to him, Armenian-American relations may be notably consolidated if Armenia undertakes steps not to divert from the path of democracy and accept the suggestions presented to the country's government.

The suggestions referred to ensuring freedom of conduction of meetings, unbiased inquiry of March 1 events, release of people arrested for their political views. During the conversation David Cramer said that the implementation of anti-Semitic propaganda by some newspapers and TV channels is a concern and pointed out that until know there were no such phenomena in Armenian-Jewish relations.

Armenian governmental press service told Armenpress that the prime minister condemned the anti-Jewish expression which found place in media and agreeing with the viewpoint of the guest said that there is no anti-Jewish atmosphere in Armenia. He said the government has certain initiatives for the development of Armenian-Israeli relations and is going to support the initiative on establishing Armenian-Israeli tree-alley on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israel with the aim of which 60 trees will be brought to Armenia.

In connection with the people arrested after post-electoral events the prime minister said no person is convicted for political views. More than 20 sentences have been made and the courts found the accusations grounded. Tigran Sargsian said that democratic principles exclude the interference in the work of the court thus until the judicial processes end it is early to make statements about the arrests for political views.

The prime minister said that for the consolidation of democracy it is necessary to create equal economic conditions, fight against corruption, improve tax and customs administration which will promote the consolidation of democratic society. The efforts of the government are aimed at doing that.

During the meeting the interlocutors also referred to the events which took place in Yerevan March 1-2 and the activity of the parliamentary ad hoc commission. David Cramer noted that there are different opinions about the membership of the commission but according to him it is important to have trust of the people towards the commission.

## 19. INVESTIGATION INTO 56 CASES RELATED TO MARCH 1-2 EVENTS COMPLETED [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

As of June 20, 100 criminal cases related to mass disorder on March 1-2 were registered in courts, including 10 criminal cases in the Criminal Appeal Court. Spokeswoman for the RA Cassation Court Alina Yengoyan told NT correspondent that out of these cases, investigation into 56 criminal cases on 63 persons was completed. 55 persons were sentenced to imprisonment, including 25 suspended sentences. 4+1 court decisions of "not guilty" were passed, punishment not related to imprisonment was applied with respect to 4 persons, appeals were filed on 10 criminal cases.

Thus, as of June 20, 2008, the Yerevan Criminal Court had to examine 26 criminal cases, the court of general jurisdiction of Kentron and Nork-Marash communities - 10 criminal cases, the court of general jurisdiction of Arabkir and Kanaker-Zeytun communities - one criminal case, the Northern Criminal Court - one criminal case, and the Criminal Appeal Court - 6 criminal cases.

On June 23 the Criminal Appeal Court left unchanged the March 26 decision of the Gegharkunik court of general jurisdiction, by which Avetik Drechian was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment under Article 235 part 1 of the RA Criminal Code - illegal procurement, sale, keeping, transportation or carrying of weapons, explosives or explosive devices. In connection with another case related to the March 1-2 mass disorder, Mher Sargsian was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment under the CC Article 176 part 2 point 3 - robbery. The court of general jurisdiction of Arabkir and Zeytun communities sentenced Borik Arabachian to one-year imprisonment under the same article's part 1.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

## 20. "USA HAS NOT MANIFESTED ITS EXACT ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEW AUTHORITIES OF ARMENIA," KIRO MANOYAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

The promises of U.S. presidential candidate of Democratic Party Barack Obama with regard to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, in difference to the previous candidates' ones, are more convincing. This opinion was expressed by Kiro Manoyan, Director of the ARF Bureau's Hay Dat and Political Affairs Office, at the press conference, which was held on June 24. According to him, the latter has publicly reaffirmed the importance of the recognition of the genocide.

"Irrespective of the fact that guarantees in politics are rather difficult things, in difference to the previous candidates, Obama makes those statements not only as a presidential candidate but also as a member of the Senate," he said. In the words of Kiro Manoyan, Turks have had meetings with the advisers of Obama. "They have told the Turks that they should have a second plan as in case Obama is elected, he will recognize the genocide," Kiro Manoyan said. According to him, Obama touches upon not only the issue on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, but also the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh problem on the basis of fair principles. By the way, in the opinion of Kiro Manoyan, no new step will be recorded in the negotiations concerning the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh issue until the end of the presidential elections in the United States of America.

Kiro Manoyan also mentioned that the United States of America has not manifested its exact attitude towards the new authorities of Armenia so far. "The United States of America is obliged to show that it does not put a question on the legitimacy of the new authority of Armenia," he mentioned.

## **BUSINESS**

## 21. ENTERPRISE INCUBATOR FOUNDATION TO CONDUCT NEW STUDY ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR WITH ASSISTANCE OF USAID-FINANCED CAPS PROJECT [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The Interprise Incubator Foundation (EIF) will conduct a study on Armenian IT sector with the assistance of the USAID-financed Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) project. The results of the study will be published in October, NT correspondent was informed by Armen Abrahamian, coordinator of the CAPS IT cluster.

According to him, the last study on the sector was conducted in 2005 and its results were published in 2006. Unlike the previous research, this one will reflect the qualitative indices of the services provided by IT companies, the description of the jobs and the requirements to professional skills, and the current situation regarding educational institutions for IT specialties.

A. Abrahamian said that the teaching staff of these educational institutions is not ready to ensure the necessary level of education, and there is a need to retrain the lecturers and prepare new ones. It was mentioned that the experts engaged in IT industry either teach with reluctance or lack the required pedagogical knowledge and skills.

The CAPS, the EIF and the Union of IT Enterprises of Armenia (UITE) have launched a joint project on formation of an IT educational center in order to solve the problem of training IT sector employees and lecturers and certify their skills. School teachers of information science will also undergo training at the center. In the opinion of A. Abrahamian, all IT enterprises will benefit from the center's operation from the financial point of view as well, because many of these enterprises spend money on the education and training of their employees abroad, which is more expensive than their centralized teaching and training in Armenia. Steps are also being taken to establish IT education and training structures on the basis of IT companies or comprehensive schools in Armenian marzes.

## **DIASPORA**

## 22. NORTH AMERICAN PRIMATES AND DIOCESAN COUNCILS DISCUSS COOPERATION POSSIBILITIES BETWEEN DIOCESES [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

A joint meeting of the Eastern, Canadian and Western Dioceses was held at the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America at their headquarters in Burbank, California, on June 12 to discuss potential venues of cooperation between the three Dioceses in dealing with the common issues prevalent in all three North American Dioceses.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

## 23. DOCTORS DETERMINE THAT HEALTH CONDITION OF ARMENIAN PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM IS STABLE [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

On June 19 the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, was hospitalized at the Hadassah Mt. Scopus Hospital of Hebrew University due to complaints of weakness.

His Beatitude, as a result, underwent a complete general medical checkup and his physicians have determined that his condition is stable and not of serious concern.

## 24. ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF UAE GRANTED PIECE OF LAND TO BUILD ITS OWN SCHOOL AND CHURCH ON IT [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

Armenian Ambassador to United Arab Emirates Vahagn Melikyan, has praised UAE President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for his great efforts in conserving and developing the UAE's water and natural resources. He expressed profound gratitude and deep appreciation of the Armenian government to the UAE's leadership and people for their continuous support to Armenia. "The Armenian government and people greatly appreciate the sincere efforts and the positive stances of President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in support of peaceful co-existence, stability and security in the region," Melikyan said.

He expressed profound gratitude to Sheikh Khalifa for granting to the Armenian community in the UAE a piece of land to build their own school and church.

## 25. WE SHOULD ACHIEVE CONDEMNATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE THROUGH JUDGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COURT, FAAE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

Armenians have rather many forces and contacts at international instances, which will be enough to prepare the solution of the issue of condemnation of the Armenian Genocide in a political aspect in a short term at the International Court. Ashot Grigorian, the Chairman of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE), the Head of the Armenian community of Slovakia, expressed such an opinion in his interview to Noyan Tapan correspondent.

He reminded to NT correspondent that the issue of applying to the International Court with the lawsuit of giving a legal estimation to the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey was once more raised during the FAAE forum held on May 29-30 in Bratislava.

According to A. Grigorian, such a proposal was first voiced by Arshaluys Chgnavorian, Adviser to UN Secretary General, at the 3th Armenia-Diaspora Mass Media Conference held on September 15-17, 2006 in Tsakhkadzor. "At present we are happy to record that the solution of that urgent problem for the first time raised at the conference of mass media has started to develop in different Armenian communities, and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) has lately presented its plan of solving the problem of applying to the International Court with the lawsuit of giving a legal estimation to the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey," FAAE Chairman said. In all probability, the above mentioned lawsuit will be introduced to the UN International Court (Hague). On the other hand, according to him, "if the initiator, AAA decides to apply to another court as a result of discussions with FAAE, we all will be obliged to obey to that judgment creating a precedent of all Armenian consensus."

According to A. Grigorian, A. Chgnavorian mentioned with satisfaction that the advance of his proposal presented at the above mentioned Tsakhkadzor conference has given good results: the Armenian communities have come to realize that it is already senseless to continue achieving recognition of the Armenian Genocide at foreign parliaments, as the parliaments do not resist the recognition any longer, but they resist politicization of the fact of that crime, which is the result of the work of Turkish lobbyists. "To break the skeleton of that work in halves we should change our strategy by putting Turkey on trial and achieving a legal estimation corresponding to international legal norms to the Genocide committed by that country. We should achieve not record of the fact of Genocide once more, as there is no need to record it once more, but we should achieve condemnation of the Genocide by the judgement of the International Court," FAAE Chairman said.

"One can count years until we will be able to formulate Genocide condemnation on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the events of Genocide climax, as after the 100th anniversary the phenomenon of that first mass genocide in mankind's history will be forgotten," he added.

It was mentioned that according to A. Chgnavorian, the precedent of Armenian Genocide committed by Turkey was taken as a basis for making the Genocide Resolution adopted in 1946 by UN, and the condemnation of the very Genocide should be a precedent for condemning that crime at any



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

country's International Court and recognizing Turkey a criminal." At that, according to A. Grigorian, one of the first countries that signed under that resolution adopted by UN is the very Turkey.

"We apply to all Armenian organizations at the AAA highest level calling them for supporting solution of the problem of condemnation of the Armenian Genocide at the International Court," FAAE Chairman said.

Touching upon the work done so far in the above mentioned direction, A. Grigorian explained that a process has started when any country considers that denial of the Armenian Genocide is subject for criminal prosecution. France was the first country of the kind, and at present the government of Slovakia has initiated such a process. According to A. Grigorian, in all probability, by the end of 2008 the National Council of Slovakia will endorse the resolution authored by the country's Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Minister Stefan Harabin. "These are precedents of giving a legal endorsement to the Armenian Genocide," he said adding that a great number of works concerning the legal bases of condemnation of the Armenian Genocide have been written, monographs of great lawyer-scientists have been published especially by students who studied in foreign universities. "In fact, the phenomenon of the Armenian Genocide has been studied so much that our lawyers will have no difficulty in formulating the lawsuit of condemnation of the Genocide and according it, demanding fulfillment of articles formulated by international legal norms by the judgment of the International Court," FAAE Chairman said.

"The case is not ready in another respect, are we strong enough to win the trial without a moment's respite after applying to the Hague Court? We should enter the court only in case we are completely ready to support the case in the political respect, as well, as to apply to the International Court also means to have sponsorship at international instances, to form such a lobbying for Turks never to have chances of misrepresenting the facts, falsifying, deceiving, misleading the international community with their statements," A. Grigorian emphasized.

## 26. MARIE JOVANOVICH SAYS SHE MOURNS OVER MILLION AND HALF ARMENIANS PERISHED IN OTTOMAN EMPIRE INSTEAD OF UTTERING WORD "GENOCIDE" [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

Senator Bob Menendez castigated the Bush Administration's policy of Armenian Genocide denial on June 19, dramatically pressing U.S. Ambassadorial nominee to Armenia Marie Jovanovich regarding the Administration's refusal to properly characterize Ottoman Turkey's systematic destruction of its Armenian population as a genocide, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

The Associated Press, in its article published on June 19 entitled "Nominee Refuses to Call Killings Genocide," noted Senator Menendez's "intense questioning" and the "prosecutorial style" of his inquiries during the Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearing.

Senator Menendez meticulously questioned Jovanovich by presenting historical State Department documents from the time of the Genocide and comparing those statements with her opening remarks.

"The US government - and certainly I - acknowledges and mourns the mass killings, ethnic cleansing and forced deportations that devastated over one and a half million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire," said Jovanovich in her opening testimony.

Juxtaposing the eyewitness accounts of the then United States' Ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, who served in the region at the time of the Armenian Genocide and documented the destruction of the Armenian population, with the definition of the crime as outlined by the U.N. Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide, Senator Menendez asked whether the President's annual April 24th remarks, Jovanovich's prepared statements, and her responses regarding U.S. diplomatic reporting matched the U.N. Convention, to which the U.S. is a party. Ambassador Jovanovich sidestepped this question, stating instead that it is the President and the State Department, who set the policy of defining historic events. In her testimony, she publicly confirmed that "It has been President Bush's policy, as well as that of previous presidents of both parties, not to use that term."

Senator Menendez responded, "It is a shame that career foreign service officers have to be brought before the Committee and find difficulty in acknowledging historical facts, and find difficulty in acknowledging the realities of what has been internationally recognized." He went on to state, "And it is amazing to me that we can talk about millions, a million and a half human beings, who were slaughtered, we can talk about those, who were forcibly pushed out of their country, and we can have presidential acknowledgements of that, but then we cannot call it what it is. It is an attempt to suggest that we do not want to strain our relationships with Turkey... I believe acknowledging historical facts as they are is a principal that is easily understood both at home and abroad. So while the Administration believes that this policy benefits us vis-a-vis our relationship with Turkey, I think they should also recognize that it hurts our relationship elsewhere: recognizing the evils of the past do not trap us, but they set us free."



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

The Armenian National Committee of America, in the face of ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian, expressed its gratitude to Senator Menendez for his courage and determination in holding the Bush Administration accountable for its deeply flawed policy of enabling Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide. Executive Director Aram Hamparian also stated that he is looking forward to carefully reviewing Ambassador Jovanovich's responses to the written questions that will be posed by Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in order to get a fuller understanding of her ability to effectively represent U.S. interests and American values as our Ambassador to Yerevan.

Senator Ben Cardin, who chaired the confirmation hearing, concurred with Senator Menendez, noting that "there is no question in my mind, that facts speak for themselves, and what happened was genocide... In Armenia we need an ambassador, who understands the historical facts, and has the historical facts correctly stated."

Senator Barbara Boxer as well made a speech during the hearing, noting her outrage at the firing of former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans for speaking truthfully about the Genocide. "It is bad enough that Armenians everywhere have to endure a U.S. President who refuses to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide despite earlier promises to the contrary. But Armenians were also recently forced to witness the dismissal of a career U.S. diplomat, Ambassador John Evans, who expressed his personal view that it is long past time that the United States call one of the greatest events of deliberate mass murder in the 20th century by its rightful name "genocide," she said.

## ARTS

### 27. CONCERT-ACTION DEDICATED TO 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF NELSON MANDELA TO OPEN WITH PERFORMANCE OF JIVAN GASPARIAN IN LONDON [Aravot, 06/23/08]

The concert-action dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Nelson Mandela to be held on June 27 in the London famous Hyde Park will open with the solo performance of world-famous duduk player Jivan Gasparian. The famous musician will perform Armenian national tunes during that concert, which is dedicated to the anniversary of the former President of the Republic of South Africa.

According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by the RA Ministry of Culture, many rock and pop stars of the world will take part in the concert.

According to the same source, Bill Clinton, the former President of the United States of America, Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister of England, world-famous actors Robert de Niro, as well as many others will attend the concert. 30 million inhabitants of the world will watch the charity concert-action by satellite broadcast.

### 28. YEREVAN CONSERVATORY TO HOST ARMENIAN-JAPANESE INTER-STATE NOTE SIGNING CEREMONY [Azg, 06/24/08]

The Yerevan Conservatory will host on June 26 a ceremony of signing an Armenian-Japanese Inter-State Note.

The press office of the conservatory told Armenpress that the document will be signed by representatives of Japanese and Armenian education and science ministries.

The Japanese side will present pianos to the Conservatory, which it won through a grant program.

### 29. CONFERENCE "CINEMA AS MEANS FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE" TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

The conference "Cinema as Means for Intercultural Dialogue" will be held on the days of the fifth "Golden Apricot" International Film Festival, to be held in Yerevan between July 13 and 20. The objective of this conference to be held by the assistance and on the initiative of the Council of Europe is to discuss the role of cinema and cinematography in the establishment of the dialogue.

According to the information provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Susanna Haroutiunian, the Artistic Director of the festival, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine will take part in the conference. In her words, the intercultural dialogue is a primary program for the Council of Europe as it is considered to be a source of mutual enrichment for the European states in religious and political terms.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

Susanna Haroutiunian mentioned that a number of famous European structure officials, producers, festival organizers from Armenia and abroad involved in cinema will take part in the conference.

## 30. FIRST "ARMENIAN NIGHTINGALE" NATIONAL VOCALIST CONTEST TO BE HELD [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

The Armenian Ministry of Culture in association with Armenian Musical Association, Opera and Theater Ballet and Yerevan Conservatory will hold the first national contest of vocalists dedicated to famous opera singer Gohar Gasparian.

The contest will be held on November 10 – December 14.

The press division of the Culture Ministry told Armenpress that the contest will be eligible to Armenian vocalists aged 8-32, including students of musical schools and the Conservatory.

The goal of the contest, called 'Armenian Nightingale', as Gohar Gasparian was called, is to detect gifted singers and help them boost their talent. The three-stage contest will end on December 14, Gohar Gasparian's birthday, by a gala concert.

## SOCIAL

## 31. RECEPTION TIME AND ORDER FOR CITIZENS BY RA MINISTER OF JUSTICE DEFINED [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

Gevorg Danielian, the RA Minister of Justice, will hold the reception of citizens every Friday between 14:00 and 15:00. This information was provided to a Noyan Tapan correspondent by Lana Mshetsian, the Spokesperson of the Minister, who stated that citizens, who want to register for reception and receive consultation, can apply on Wednesdays between 16:00 and 18:00 with the following telephone number: 380 389.

## 32. MIGRATION NEGATIVE BALANCE RECORDED IN JANUARY-MAY IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

Migration negative balance was recorded in the five months of this year in Armenia, which made 69.6 thousand people. That index exceeds the index of the same period of previous year by 2.1 thousand or by 40.6%. As Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed by Vahan Bakhshetian, the Deputy Head of Migration Programs Department of Migration Agency of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration, in May the negative balance made 9300 drams.

It was also mentioned that migration has a seasonal nature in connection with New Year holidays and leaving for abroad for working. According to it, usually a negative balance is recorded in January-May, positive in June-July, negative in August-September, and positive in October-December.

A. Bakhshetian also said that passenger flows volumes grow year by year. Last year the total volume of passenger flows made 925.2 thousand people, which exceeds the index of the same period of the previous year by 16.4%.

## 33. 900 THOUSAND - 1M RA CITIZENS EMIGRATE FROM ARMENIA SINCE 1992 [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/23/08]

The Migration Agency of the RA Ministry of Territorial Administration has created a new Internet system with the [www.sma.am/migrant](http://www.sma.am/migrant) address. Its goal is to provide information to RA citizens living abroad on issues they are concerned with. As Gagik Yeghanyan, the Head of the Agency, said at the June 20 press conference, people can apply to the system with issues of RA citizenship, loss of documents, their return, compulsory military service in RA, and other issues. Besides, according to him, system's special online regime gives a possibility to conduct an interview between a citizen and a competent employee of country's proper state body.

G. Yeghanyan said that 900 thousand - 1m RA citizens have emigrated from Armenia since 1992. Nearly 70% of them have left for CIS countries, including nearly 65% to RF.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

## 34. ON JUNE 25 YEREVAN TO HOST THIRD NATIONAL YOUTH, REALITY, PROSPECTS CONFERENCE [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

On June 25 Yerevan will host the third national "Youth: Reality and Prospects" conference. The Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry's center for organization of youth events told Armenpress that representatives of over 150 non-governmental and student organizations, youth wings of political parties, as well as young people representing Armenia's national minority groups from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh will take part.

About 90 organizations, 30 from provinces, will demonstrate their works. The three-day conference will feature discussions on youth policies, problems and ways to overcome them.

The conference will be attended by Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian, sports and youth minister and other officials.

## 35. 11 ETHNIC ARMENIANS INJURE IN GRENADE BLOW IN MOSCOW [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Repts from Moscow, Russia, say that ethnic Armenians were among people who were injured in a hand grenade explosion in a Moscow hostel.

The explosion was reported to take place on June 20 night in a Moscow suburb hostel. The number of injured people, according to Russian news agencies, varies between 14 to 17. According to Interfax, 11 are ethnic Armenians, one is Georgian, one is Azeri and one is Russian.

The police opened a criminal case on counts of attempted homicide and illegal possession of explosives.

The prosecutors do not link the blast to the ethnicity of the injured people. They said there were no conflicts between them before the blast.

## 36. YEREVAN TO HOST 36 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM PROVINCES AS PART OF "YEREVAN IN FIVE DAYS" PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Around 36 young people representing all 10 regions of Armenia will come to Yerevan from June 23 to 27 as part of the "Yerevan in Five Days" civic education program. The visit takes place within the framework of USAID-funded Youth and Community Action Program (YCAP), launched from September 2004 and being implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The main goal of the program is to increase civic activism among young men and women and enhance community involvement in addressing public issues.

An official from the Academy for Educational Development told Armenpress that the participants of the program will tour institutions and meet representatives from the RA Presidential Administration, National Assembly, Court of Cassation and First Instance, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labor and Social Issues. They will participate in interactive civil society workshops with local and international NGOs to learn more about the elections, local self-government system and anti-corruption initiatives. The participants will also have opportunities to share information and ideas from their respective communities to enhance the YCAP network of civically engaged youth throughout Armenia.

At present YCAP works with 36 Youth Action Clubs and 44 Community Action Committees in 80 communities throughout the Republic of Armenia. To date over 1500 volunteers involved in YCAP have planned and implemented over 1000 projects ranging from village clean-ups and improved municipal waste management to small infrastructure improvements and better transportation routes. They also organize seminars on various topics with guest speakers and other events such as cultural, sport, civic participation, social, agricultural, health and environmental.

## 37. EDUCATION MINISTRY'S HOT LINE RECEIVES NO COMPLAINTS DURING UNIFIED EXAMINATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Arthur Baghdasarian, head of the Education and Science Ministry's public relations and information department, told Armenpress that the ministry had received no complaints via a hot line when secondary school graduates were having the unified graduation examinations.

He said the bulk of calls were inquiries to learn when the final results of the exams will be posted. Arthur Baghdasarian said they received about 80 such telephone calls, although the ministry was swift to post all relating information on its official website.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

He said the department receives also e-mails, some of which are from foreign countries. For example, a Diaspora Armenian proposed help for a Yerevan school for children with special needs and the ministry acted as a connecting link.

He said many foreign calls are to learn about conditions and terms of receiving higher education in Armenia.

He said there were however, some complaints about school administrations who forced graduates to collect money for purchase of graduation ceremony scenarios, which students stage at their schools.

## 38. ARMENIA HAS 3,071 RESTAURANTS, CAFES, CANTEENS AND OTHER FOOD CATERING ENTITIES [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

According to official figures, there are 3,071 restaurants, cafes, canteens and other food catering entities in Armenia.

The press division of the State Taxation Service told Armenpress that 2,370 are restaurants, 537 are open-air cafes, 54 are bars offering variety shows and night clubs and 110 are canteens.

In Yerevan there are 1,241 restaurants, 291 open-air cafes, 45 night clubs and 89 small canteens.

These entities are subject to so-called fixed payments taxes, based on the space of the restaurant, cafe, night club or canteen occupies and some other criteria. In 5 months of this year these entities paid 20.7 percent more in fixed payments from a year before.

## 39. NEW MOBILE FIELD HOSPITAL TO BE INAUGURATED TOMORROW [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

A special ceremony will be held on June 25 at the Armenian Defense Ministry's main hospital to inaugurate a new mobile field hospital.

Seyran Shahsuvarian, spokesman for the Defense Ministry, told Armenpress that the event is part of an exercise conducted here with the assistance of U.S. military instructors designed to teach how to operate a mobile field hospital.

The exercise started on June 9 will end on June 30. The mobile hospital was given to Armenian Defense Ministry in 2007 January within the frameworks of Foreign Military Funding (FMF) program.

Three U.S.-made trucks were brought to Armenia in June for transportation of mobile field hospital.

The mobile hospital will provide the Armenian Defense Ministry with opportunity to deliver medical services both during emergencies in Armenia and in every corner of the world.

## 40. ARMENIA BUILDS NEW EUROPEAN STYLE PRISON [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Construction of a new prison near Chobankara village in Armavir province will be over in a year or two, Justice Minister Gevork Danielian said during a meeting of experts dedicated to prison rules management.

He said the government releases 2 billion Drams every year for construction of the new prison. It will be a big facility of closed type that will house also convicts sentenced to life in prison.

The minister said the new prison is designed to accommodate 1,200 convicts and will meet all European standards.

Prisoners from two other facilities which need urgent repair will be kept in Chobankara prison. Armenia has a total of 12 prisons.

## 41. 500 MILLION DRAMS TO BE ALLOCATED ANNUALLY FROM STATE BUDGET IN 2009-2011 FOR PLANTING OF GREENERY IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

The Master Plan of Yerevan envisages increasing the green areas in the city by 100 ha in 2008, including by 60 ha in Shengavit, 30 ha in Nubarashen and by 10 ha in other communities. The head of the environmental protection department of Yerevan municipality Avet Martirosian said at the June 23 press conference that green areas of about 60 ha have already been created in the indicated communities. In the first quarter of this year, 32 thousand trees were planted in Yerevan.

According to A. Martirosian, 60 million drams (about 196.7 thousand USD) was allocated from the state budget for greenery planting this year, but under the 2009-2011 program, 500 million drams will be allocated annually.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

The department head announced that by late 2008, a new irrigation network of the total length of 8,015 meters will be built in the city's Davitashen, Shengavit, Malatia-Sebastia, Ajapniak and Kentron communities. Besides, the study of Yerevan lands' pollution with heavy metals, which started in 2007, and the sketch plan on its basis will be completed.

A. Martirosian said that 97% of the ambient air pollution is caused by exhaust gases from transport means and by construction work. He expressed a hope that starting from next year, air pollution will be reduced to the minimum - after the end of road construction work in the city, as well as thanks to the measures undertaken by the Armenian government and Yerevan municipality.

## 42. 17 CASES OF ILLEGAL TREE CUTTING REGISTERED IN YEREVAN IN 5 MONTHS OF 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

17 cases of illegal tree cutting were registered in Yerevan in the first 5 months of 2008, in connection with which reports were written out and sent to the environmental inspection of the RA ministry of environmental protection. The head of the environmental protection department of Yerevan municipality Avet Martirosian said at the June 23 press conference that 5.5 million drams (about 18.7 thousand dollars) was transferred to the state budget as compensation for tree cutting.

## 43. ARMENIA HAS POTENTIAL TO BECOME TOURISM, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AND BUSINESS SERVICES REGIONAL CENTER [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

Armenia has the potential to become a tourism, information and communications technology and business services offering regional center, however, it has to go a long way to achieve this goal.

This was a highlight of a two-day international conference on best practices of offering tourism, information, communications and business services that started in Yerevan on Tuesday (June 24).

The conference's participants from Georgia, USA, Croatia, Bulgaria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Armenia discussed these issues in terms of sustainable economic growth and improvement of services in the regional context.

It was stated that a study and application of Western experience in these areas will help Armenia to raise the level of its international competitiveness.

Deputy economy minister Vahram Ghushchian said for example that the higher accessibility to Internet will make Armenia more competitive. He said people now get rich not through possession of oil or natural gas reserves but through expanding their businesses in the Internet. As an example he cited Google.

He said an attempt will be made in the next five years to introduce E-Government program in Armenia which will allow to conduct 50 percent of all government services via on-line networks.

According to him, only 5.8 percent of Armenia's population has access to Internet, twice less than in Azerbaijan and as many as in Georgia.

## 44. 1,247 OFFICIALLY REGISTERED TAXI COMPANIES OFFER SERVICES TO ARMENIANS [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

Some 1,247 officially registered small and big companies offer taxi services to Armenians across the country. According to press division of the state taxation service, 297 of them operate in Yerevan, down from 339 from a year ago and 950 are registered in provinces.

The overall number of such companies fell from 1,448 companies last year, which operated 5,700 cars.

Taxi services are taxed under the Armenian Law on Fixed Payments. The monthly payment for one registered car in Yerevan is 6,800 Drams, 6,200 Drams in Gyumri and Vanadzor and 5,600 Drams in other towns.

In the first five months of this year a total of 164 million Drams were collected as fixed payments by taxi companies. The growth was 2.3 percent over the same time span of 2007.

## 45. ARMAVIR PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL TO BE RECONSTRUCTED [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

A tender will be announced soon to choose a company to handle a major reconstruction of the provincial hospital in Armavir, the center of the same name province.

Larissa Muradian, a deputy governor of the province, told Armenpress that all documents are ready and the reconstruction will start right after the winner of the tender is chosen.



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

The reconstruction will be funded by a \$2 million allocation from a World Bank credit. The hospital is expected to meet international standards. Modern equipment will be installed as well.

The deputy governor said there is a demand for urologists, cardiologists and cancer specialists.

## 46. KAPAN TO MARK IN AUTUMN THE 70-TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEING GRANTED TOWN STATUS [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

The municipality of Kapan has designed a set of events to mark in autumn the 70-th anniversary of being granted the status of town.

The highlight of events will be unveiling of a monument symbolizing the town's entrance. The event will be attended by representatives from its sister-town Glendale in California, USA, Yerevan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Vilen Badalian, head of the municipality's department in charge of urban issues, told Armenpress that the monument will be carved from a white marble rock.

It will be built not far from the town on the right side of the local airport. The project's estimated cost is 7 million Drams.

## SPORTS

## 47. MAGNUS KARLSEN AND BORIS GELFAND TO PLAY FOR ARMENIAN MIKA CHESS CLUB [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Norway's Magnus Karlsen and Israel's Boris Gelfand will play for Armenian Mika chess club at Europe's chess clubs championship, slated for October in Greece's Kalitea city.

The Armenian team will be headed by Levon Aronian.

## 48. ANDRANIK TEYMURIAN CHANGES BRITISH BOLTON WITH LONDON'S FULHAM [ARMENPRESS, 06/24/08]

Andranik Teymurian, the 24 year-old Armenian half-back of Iran's national squad, has changed British Bolton FC with London's Fulham.

According to the latter's website, the Armenian has signed a two-year contract. It says nothing about the transfer price.

Teymurian is said to be in the limelight of other British, German and Italian teams. Teymurian was recruited by Bolton in 2006 right after the end of World Cup championship.

## 49. MIKA YEREVAN WINS IN ARMENIAN CHESS CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

The Chess Club Championship of men finished in Yerevan on June 21. Mika has received the title of the winner with 10 points. FIMA and Bank King share the second and third places with 8 points each. They are followed by Hrazdan with 4 points, Yerevan 2 points and Gyumri 0 points.

Mika and FIMA earned right to take part in the European Cup Tournament to be held in the city of Kalitea of Greece between October 16 and 24.

## 50. LEVON ARONIAN TAKES 12TH PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION CLASSIFICATION LIST [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

On June 21 the International Chess Federation made public the classification table of chess players having higher than 2700 rating. Vishwanathan Anand (India, 2798 showing) is in the lead of the classification list. He is followed by Alexander Morozevich and Vladimir Kramnik (both from Russia, 2788 showing). Vasili Ivanchuk (the Ukraine) takes third place with 2781 showing, Levon Aronian (Armenia) takes 12th (2737) and Sergei Movsisian (Slovakia) 16th place with 2723 showing.

## 51. WEIGHTLIFTERS OF ARMENIA RECEIVE 10 MEDALS IN WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/24/08]

The World Weightlifting Youth Championship finished in the city of Cali of Columbia on June 22. Two more representatives of Armenia were decorated with medals. Sevak Sahakian (105 kg, Kasakh)



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

---

took third place with the 376 kg result of the biathlon (165 kg + 211 kg) and was awarded a bronze medal. Ruben Alexanian (+105 kg, Ararat) took second place with the 412 kg result of the biathlon (185 kg + 227 kg) and was decorated with a silver medal. Thus, all the four delegates of Armenia, in general, received 10 medals (7 silver and 3 bronze) in the World Youth Championship.

## 52. ARTHUR ABRAHAM ROBBED AT MIAMI AIRPORT [ARMENPRESS, 06/25/08]

The undefeated German-based Armenia-born boxer Arthur Abraham who scored a second win over Edison Miranda of Columbia with a fourth-round stoppage on June 21 to defend his IBF title in 75.3 kg category was robbed at Miami airport in Florida, USA.

He and his brother Alexander were to fly home to Germany after the battle against Miranda. News reports from Miami said that Arthur Abraham's champion belt was stolen.

The brothers told police that they had left their car at a paid parking lot of the airport. Apart from the belt the thieves took also away their video and photo cameras, mobile phones and souvenirs which they bought for their parents.

---

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

*Please be advised that the AGBU Armenia News Bulletin is for general reference only and should not be reprinted in any form without the explicit written permission of AGBU. All rights reserved.*

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