



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, July 11, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

AGBU NEWS

1. 18TH WORLD GAMES OF AGBU STARTED IN MONTEVIDEO [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/11/08]

18th world games of Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) started on July 7 in the capital of Uruguay, Montevideo. Besides the Uruguayan sportsmen, 350 Armenian youngsters from Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Sao Paulo, Pasadena, Los Angeles, Toronto and Antwerp have arrived in Montevideo to compete in six different sports.

As the Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department reported the 18th world games of AGBU, which will last until July 13 and which will also include cultural program, are sponsored by the Armenian Embassy in Argentine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Sports and Tourism of Uruguay.

POLITICS

2. "IF I WERE COUNTRY'S FACTUAL HEAD, LEVON TER-PETROSIAN WOULD BE ALREADY IMPRISONED FOR HIS CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND TURKISH PRESIDENT WOULD NOT BE INVITED TO YEREVAN TO WATCH FOOTBALL," ROBERT KOCHARIAN SAYS [Azg, 07/10/08]

"The complex of a defeated person speaks in him. As he has been defeated twice and has never had dignity to be defeated manfully. Besides, it is always convenient to make a resigned President a target for extremism. I did not act like that back in 1998 considering such a conduct inappropriate. It is a conduct of a small person, who has become wicked. Sometimes I feel pity for him." Previous RA President Robert Kocharian gave such a commentary to the accusations addressed to him by first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian during the People's Movement rallies.

Speaking about the presidential elections held in February, R. Kocharian said in his interview to Mediamax: "He thinks he was defeated by me, though it is not so. Being a President at that time, I only carried out my duty by protecting the Constitution and restoring law and order in the country. L. Ter-Petrosian just fails to come out of the extreme opposition field. His masters and those paying money to him will not permit him to do that... Maybe he also thinks that these actions can please the authorities and on his way he will gain pardon for the crime committed on March 1 at the same time also receiving a possibility to mount the high horse during the rallies without obstacles. It is a possible tactical calculation. In the strategic respect I do not exclude that in the person of me he continues seeing his main political rival in the future political fights. I think he will be once more mistaken both in tactics and in strategy."

R. Kocharian said that a book on the years of his tenure will be published soon, where there are answers to all questions regarding efficiency of his work. "Any country and any President can be proud of such development rates. It would be amusing to publish a similar book based on the factual material of L. Ter-Petrosian's years of tenure. Let people compare them. As he and ANM have left nothing bright in people's memory, have built nothing to show. They are numbered among the types who remain in history as efficient destroyers. Sometimes L. Ter-Petrosian loses sense of measure so much that I start doubting his complicity. It is possible that he mentally just does not stand tension."

Touching upon the version in press that he is still the factual head of the country, R. Kocharian said: "It is an absolute absurd. If it were so, L. Ter-Petrosian would be already imprisoned for his criminal activities. By the way, by doing so I would have corrected my mistake of 1998. And certainly, the President of Turkey would not be invited to Yerevan to watch a football match. The goal of such publications is to cause additional problems in Armenia. Persons authorized by the Constitution should rule the country and bear responsibility. Power and responsibility are inseparable and cannot be shadowed," the former President said.



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3. NORAYR MURADKHANIAN APPOINTED HEAD OF VISA AND PASSPORT DEPARTMENT [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/09/08]

By the order of Police Major-General Alik Sargsian, the Head of the RA Police, Norayr Muradkhanian has been appointed Head of the Visa and Passport Department. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by the RA Police Public Relations and Information Department. It should be mentioned that Alvina Zakarian taking that post formerly has been lately dismissed by the order of the Police Head, on the basis of point 2, part 1, Article 45, RA law On Service in the Police: a person is dismissed from service in the Police on his own initiative, on the basis of a written report, including in connection with retiring on a long-term service pension.

4. OLIGARCHS TRY TO DISTRACT MEDIA'S ATTENTION FROM VERSION OF THEIR "SKINHEADS" COMPLICITY IN MARCH 1 MURDERS, HMAK HOVHANNISIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/09/08]

Lately Armenian oligarchs have gathered and "fell to thinking" how to distract attention of media from the rumors, according to which, the murders committed during the March 1 events have been done by their skinheads. Stating this at the July 9 discussion, Hmayak Hovhannisian, the Chairman of the Union of Political Scientists of Armenia, said that the version that those committing the murders are the bodyguards of oligarchs standing close to the authorities is one of the six versions in circulation after March 1. According to him, first President Levon Ter-Petrosian had also touched upon that version in his speech at the June 28 rally in Gyumri.

Vardan Grigorian, the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Path party, said that during the March 1 events, before the eyes of hundreds of people, policemen armed with guns some "thick-headed skinheads," who laid the arms on their shoulders and put a jacket above it. All that, according to V. Grigorian, is also clearly seen in the video recording of the March 1 events. According to him, that fact is disregarded by both journalists and law enforcement bodies, while during the state of emergency, as well as now television "washes people's brain" with false information. "Besides, during the February rallies we constantly sowed respect for law enforcers among the people, therefore it is impossible that demonstrators use violence to policemen or soldiers," the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Path party, said.

5. COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PERSECUTED PEOPLE CREATED [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/09/08]

According to human rights activist Vardan Haroutiunian, the Armenian authorities have fulfilled only one of the provisions of PACE Resolution N 1609, at that, only formally. That provision, as V. Haroutiunian said at the July 9 discussion, is the National Assembly ad hoc commission created for the purpose of investigation of the March 1 events. The members of that commission, according to the human rights activist, depend on the authorities and therefore, cannot carry out fair and unbiased investigation. "So far, none of the commission members has demanded releasing even if one of the political prisoners with a signature at the preliminary examination stage," he said.

V. Haroutiunian said that a signature on not leaving the place of their residence has been chosen as restraint to 25 people on the March 1 case, 3 people have been acquitted, and today 82 people are in custody. According to the human rights activist, when the Press Service of the Prosecutor General's Office reports that there are 17 prisoners in prisons on the above mentioned case, it means that the Prosecutor's Office means only those whose sentence has not been pronounced yet. While, according to the human rights activist, the others, convicts, remain political prisoners.

Karapet Rubinian, a representative of the National Movement (NM), said that a Committee for Protection of Political Prisoners and Persecuted People has been created lately. One of its primary goals is to provide financial assistance to families of imprisoned people.

6. APPLICATION ON PRE-TERM RELEASE OF ARMAN BABAJANIAN SUBMITTED TO INDEPENDENT COMMISSION [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/09/08]

The administration of the penitentiary institution has submitted an application on the issue of Zhamanak Yerevan newspaper's editor-in-chief Arman Babajanian to the interdepartmental independent commission on issue of pre-term release or replacing the non-served part of punishment by a milder one. NT correspondent was informed about it on July 9 by Arsen Babayan, the Spokesperson of the Penitentiary Department Head of the RA Ministry of Justice. He also said that the commission



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representatives have already met with Arman Babajanian, listened to him, they will present the respective report on it for the examination of the commission sitting.

It should be mentioned that Yerevan Kentron and Nork-Marash communities' general jurisdiction court, on the basis of A. Babajanian's complaint, had abolished the April 3 decision of the administration of the Convicts' Hospital penitentiary institution (according to which, Babajanian needed social-psychological work). A. Babajanian has been sentenced to 3.5 years' imprisonment with the accusation of evading the compulsory military service.

7. SERZH SARGSYAN: WE ARE READY TO SPEAK WITH TURKEY [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/09/08]

The Wall Street Journal, on July 9, published an article by RA President Serzh Sargsyan, which we present in translation and completely:

"The efforts of newly independent countries to create new, democratic way of life did not finished by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Republic of Armenia, a small country, which is situated between Turkey, Russia, Iran and the Caspian region rich in energy supplies, is an example of it. After independence the peaceful development potential of Armenia has not been realized completely.

During the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Turkey closed the border with Armenia as a manifestation of solidarity with Azerbaijan having Turkish roots. The regrettable result of it was that it is the 15th year the border between Armenia and Turkey important from geopolitical point of view remains an obstacle for diplomatic and economic cooperation. It is closed not only for Armenians and Turks, who may have a willingness to visit the neighboring country, but also for trade, transport, and flow of energy supplies from the East to the West. Such strategic infrastructures as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars projected railway bypassed Armenia in spite of the circumstance that there is a railway between Turkey and Armenia, which is kept closed. It is not only the people of Armenia that suffers from these limitations and bypassings. All regional countries and European states' wide community pay a high price for this unnatural obstacle to trade, progress, and international cooperation. It is time of new efforts to come out of this deadlock: a deadlock, which is beneficial for nobody and from which many suffer. As the President of the Republic of Armenia, taking the chance, I propose a new start, a new stage of a dialogue with the Turkish government and people, for the purpose of improving our relations and opening our common border.

I propose forming normal political and economic relations between our countries. After I was elected Armenian President in February my Turkish counterpart was one of the first ones among heads of foreign states to congratulate me. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that in this new period our doors are open for a new dialogue. There is no real alternative to establishment of normal relations between our countries. I hope that for creating such relations our governments are able to cross this barrier of new open door.

Creation of normal political relations will give us a possibility to form a commission, to discuss all complicated issues regarding Armenia and Turkey. We will not be able to record perceptible results without such relations. Only by that means we can create an efficient dialogue touching upon even the most delicate historic issues. At a more individual level many Armenians and Turks have already found ways to go round the closed border. They use regular charter flights from Yerevan to Istanbul and Antalya. There are many bus and taxi routes through the territory of Georgia and lorries go round the border, pass a large territory for carrying out some trade between the two countries. Like the peoples of China and United states shared enthusiasm over table tennis before normalization of relations between their governments, just this way the peoples of Armenia and Turkey are united by love for football. And it induces me to make the following invitation.

The World Championship selection match of Armenian and Turkish football national teams will take place on September 6. I invite my Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul to visit Armenia and to watch the game together at the sports ground. With it we will announce the new symbolic start of our relations. No matter what differences we have, even under a closed border, there are certain cultural, humanitarian, and sports contacts between our peoples.

Therefore I believe that citizens of Armenia and Turkey will welcome this step just like they will welcome opening of the border. It is clear that there can be political obstacles on both sides during this period, but now we need to have courage and vision to act.

Armenia and Turkey should not and cannot be constant enemies. More prosperous, mutually beneficial future for Armenia and Turkey, Europe, Caspian region and the whole world, opening of the historic East-West corridor is a goal we are able and should achieve. It is time to overcome artificial barriers separating us and to work for a better future."



8. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN CONFERS HONORARY TITLES ON JUDGES [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/10/08]

On July 8 President Serzh Sargsyan signed a decree to confer the title of honorable lawyer on Varuzhan Abelian, judge of civil and administrative chamber of the Court of Cassation, Hovhanes Ghukasian, judge of criminal chamber of the Court of Cassation and Arman Mkrtumian, chairman of the civil and administrative chamber of the Court of Cassation.

The presidential press service said they were conferred the titles in recognition of their input to strengthening of law and judicial system of the country.

By another decree President Sargsyan awarded Mkhitar Gosh medal to Samvel Ohanian, judge of the criminal chamber of the Court of Cassation for his services to the judicial system.

9. ARTHUR BAGHDASARIAN RECEIVES DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF IRAN ALIREZA SHEIKHATTAR [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Secretary of the National Security Council Arthur Baghdasarian received today deputy foreign minister of Iran Alireza Sheikhattar and members of his entourage. Iranian ambassador to Armenia, Seyed Ali Saghayan, was also in attendance.

The presidential press service told Armenpress that the Iranian official conveyed to Baghdasarian the invitation of Said Jalili, secretary of Iran's Supreme Security Council, to pay a visit to Iran and also the Supreme Council's proposal on holding bilateral political consultations with the Armenian National Security Council.

Thanking for the invitation Arthur Baghdasarian said the proposal is positive.

During the meeting the sides discussed also a broad scale of cooperation and regional security-related issues. The Iranian deputy minister emphasized Armenia's role and weight in the region, saying Iran views Armenia as a very important partner and is ready to boost cooperation with it.

The press office said the two sides discussed then security, transport and energy cooperation related questions. It said for his part Arthur Baghdasarian emphasized Iran's role, especially in dire times for Armenia in early 90-s, expressing hope that bilateral interaction will continue to develop.

10. TIGRAN BALAYAN: "DIPLOMATIC TACTLESNESS OF SPOKESMAN OF AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENT SURPRISES" [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

"The diplomatic tactlessness of the spokesman of the Azerbaijani foreign minister surprises. Though it is not surprising as it is not done for the first time and it is not the first time when he shows his diplomatic ignorance both about the international right and essence of the negotiation process," spokesman for the Armenian foreign minister Tigran Balayan said, commenting on the regular responses of the spokesman of the Azerbaijani foreign minister.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that T. Balayan noted that "together with all that the Azerbaijani spokesman also assumes himself a right to comment not only statements of the ministers but also presidents of countries."

11. SERZH SARGSIAN: "COURTS AND PARTICULARLY COURT OF CASSATION HAVE RESOLUTE ROLE IN CREATING ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY" [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Armenian Court of Cassation a ceremony was organized today with the participation of President Serzh Sargsyan, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, Chairman of the Court of Cassation Gagik Harutyunian, Chief Prosecutor Aghvan Hovsepien, Chief of the Police Alik Sargsyan, Justice Minister Gevorg Danielian, representatives of legislative, judicial, court system, diplomats.

President Serzh Sargsyan, summing up the ten-year long activity noted that in short period of time an assessable work has been carried out in the direction of formation of the court and organization of its activity. He said the Armenian Court of Cassation bears the important mission of formation of new judicial tradition.

The president noted that the increase of the trust of the public is directly connected with the achievement of real independence of courts which depends not only on judges but on the public as well. "I will do everything possible so that our courts and judges acquire real independence. Independence financially, independence from influential people, independence from officials, but at the same time I will



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strictly follow so that independence is not applied in a bad way and courts and judges do not think that they are independent from laws as well."

The chairman of the Court of Cassation Hovhannes Manukian said that ten years is a quite long time for registering achievements and seriously think about the future actions.

He said the first legal-judicial changes started from 1998 and in 2005 as a result of constitutional referendum the Court of Cassation assumed the mission of ensuring the equal applying of the laws in the country which H. Manukian said clarified the role of the Court of Cassation in the system of power bodies.

He also thanked former officials of the system, Second President Robert Kocharian, former justice minister David Harutyunian who greatly contributed to the implementation of reforms.

The guests, particularly chairmen of supreme courts of other countries, congratulated the court on its 10th anniversary and delivered speeches.

12. NEWLY APPOINTED ARGENTINEAN AMBASSADOR HANDS OVER HIS CREDENTIALS [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Newly appointed Argentinean ambassador to Armenian Leopoldo Alfredo Bravo (seated in Moscow) handed over his credentials to the Armenian President Serzh Sargsian.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that the president congratulated the ambassador on assuming his diplomatic mission and on the National Holiday of Argentina – Independence Day marked on July 9.

Serzh Sargsian expressed hope that during the tenure of the new ambassador the relations between the two countries will activate and expand. The Armenian president said that from geographic respect Armenia and Argentina are quite far but have warm attitude towards each other.

The interlocutors also underscored the role of the Argentinean Armenian community which, according to ambassador, is fully involved in different spheres of life.

In the economic field the sides underscored the investment programs carried out in Armenia by the Argentinean Armenian businessman Eduardo Ernekian. The ambassador said that he is ready to focus his efforts towards the further expansion of Armenian-Argentinean cooperation and considered very important the opening of the Argentinean embassy in Yerevan.

The Armenian president wished success to the ambassador in all his initiatives and said that the Armenian side is ready to support him.

13. THE BLOODSHED OF MARCH 1st PUT AN END TO POLITICAL CAREER OF AUTHORITIES,- ZHIRAYR SEFILIAN SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/10/08]

"What takes place in the home political field of Armenia is hard to characterize as a political struggle: it is the people's resistance to the governing regime", announced Zhirayr Sefilian, the coordinator of the Defense of Liberated Territories initiative, at the July 10 press conference. According to him, the opposition movement gathers full speed day by day, and this makes us believe that the opposition will succeed in the near future. As to the position of the authorities, according to Z. Sefilian, it was clear to him since long ago that they wouldn't loath to shed blood to retain their posts. Noting that his prevision came true on March 1st, the former freedom-fighter announced that the bloodshed put an end to the political career of the authorities. In his belief, now the peaceful rallies of the opposition will be more productive than the ones before March 1st.

Commenting on the estimations given by the former RA President Robert Kocharian in the address of the People's Movement and the first President, Z. Sefilian said, "We shouldn't comment on the words of a mental patient, leaving this job to corresponding specialists. However, the patient today has turned into a monster, moreover, a wounded monster who will make ravages before dying."

Z. Sefilian announced that three days ago his initiative applied to the Mayor of Yerevan, asking to endow the open-air rally envisaged in the near future but was rejected. In his words, the authorities don't allow to hold rallies even in the territories next to the stadiums.

14. L. TER-PETROSIAN IS FOR ARMENIAN-TURKISH POLITICAL RELATIONS, WHILE S. SARGSYAN PUTTING ASIDE POLICY WISHES TO ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS, ZHIRAYR SEFILIAN CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/10/08]

The disagreements of first Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian and Commander of Shoushi special regiment Zhirayr Sefilian over the Nagorno Karabakh settlement do not hinder their political cooperation. Z. Sefilian stated at the July 10 press conference adding that the concern that in case the



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ruling regime is kept Armenia will go to ruin unites him with the radical opposition leader. According to Z. Sefilian, coming to power L. Ter-Petrosian will start "cleaning the Augean stables" and in three years will concede his post to another political force enjoying people's confidence.

Touching upon President Serzh Sargsyan's statement on creation of an Armenian-Turkish commission of historians, Z. Sefilian said that as far back as when S. Sargsyan was a Defence Minister he made defeatist statements: "Aghdam is not our homeland," "we should return the territories." "S. Sargsyan has always had a single goal, to seize President's post, and now tries to retain it by all means. For him, the most important is that and not the state of Armenian-Turkish relations or other political problems," Z. Sefilian stated. He said that welcomes the People's Movement's position condemning S. Sargsyan's above mentioned statement. According to the former Commander, L. Ter-Petrosian has always been for political relations in the respect of Armenian-Turkish contacts, while S. Sargsyan has put aside policy "and just tries to establish friendly relations."

15. AS OF JULY 7, 21 PEOPLE SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CRIMINAL CASE INSTITUTED ON MARCH 1 EVENTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/10/08]

As of July 7, 16 defendants are in preliminary custody, a restraint not connected with arrest has been chosen to another 9 defendants within the framework of the criminal case on March 1-2 events examined by the RA Special Investigation Service.

According to the report of the RA Prosecutor General's Office, 80 criminal cases on 91 persons have been sent to the court by the Special Investigation Service, judicial enquiry on 49 out of them, on 55 persons, has finished, judicial enquiry on other criminal cases is underway.

5 out of above mentioned 55 persons have been acquitted, 21 have been sentenced to 1-5 years' imprisonment, a fine has been determined as a punishment for 4 persons, punishment determined for 25 persons on Article 70, RA Criminal Code, has not been used suspendedly and a probation period has been determined.

16. OFFICIALS SHOULD PERSONALLY RECEIVE CITIZENS AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/10/08]

At the RA government's July 10 sitting, RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian instructed all ministers, heads of all departments, regional governors, Yerevan Mayor in a ten-day period to adopt the respective legal acts on the order of organization of citizens' reception. Besides, according to the Prime Minister, the above mentioned officials should personally receive citizens at least once a month.

Information on the reception organization order should be placed on the websites of the respective structures.

T. Sargsian said that complex events should be carried out to improve quality of services provided to citizens. According to him, the number of application-complaints addressed by citizens to the executive power is evidence that they are not always paid proper attention by state officials. Therefore, according to the Prime Minister, heads of state structures should be personally aware of problems raised by citizens, and the problems should become a subject of discussion and be solved by the order established by the law.

17. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO LEAVE FOR WASHINGTON ON WORKING VISIT [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian will leave on July 13 for Washington on a working visit.

Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that in Washington the minister will meet with the U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice.

The minister is also expected to meet with the leadership of White House, U.S. Congress, "Millennium Challenges" Corporation and heads of U.S. Armenian organizations.

Within the frameworks of the visit Nalbandian will deliver a speech on the Armenian foreign policy in the Karnegin Foundation.



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18. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN HAS WORKING MEETING WITH EMERGENCY MINISTER MHER SHAHGELDIAN [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

President Serzh Sargsyan had a working meeting today with Emergency Minister Mher Shahgeldian.

The presidential press service told Armenpress that the minister reported to the president on the ongoing and impending reforms of the sector which are designed to upgrade the entire system.

It said the president underscored consistent work in several directions. He particularly, instructed to continue modernization of anti-hail systems, formation of insurance system for emergency cases by studying and application of international experience.

19. PRIME MINISTER SARGSYAN APPOINTS EMIL BABAYAN DEPUTY JUSTICE MINISTER [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/11/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan decreed today to appoint Emil Babayan to the office of deputy justice minister.

The news was reported to Armenpress by the government department for public relations and information.

20. AMBASSADORIAL NOMINEE MARIE YOVANOVITCH ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS OF BARACK OBAMA [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

Senator Barack Obama has received written responses to the four written questions he submitted to U.S. Ambassador Designate Marie Yovanovitch as part of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's ongoing review of her nomination to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

A Committee decision on this posting is expected in mid-July.

In her response M. Yovanovitch wrote, "The U.S Government, of course, mourns the mass killings, ethnic cleansing and forced deportation that devastated over one and a half million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The United States recognizes these events as one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, the "Medz Yeghern" or Great Calamity, as many Armenians refer to it. That is why every April the President honors the victims and expresses American solidarity with the Armenian people on Remembrance Day. As the child of refugees – at a different time and place – I do feel very strongly about the great suffering experienced by the Armenian people both at that time and today as they remember this dark chapter in their history. I too mourn the loss of so many innocent lives and fully respect that the Armenian-American community and the Armenian people want their pain and loss be acknowledged."

The former Ambassador to Armenia John Evans was recalled after speaking publicly about Armenian genocide. President Bush's previous nominee as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Richard Hoagland, was subject to two legislative holds by Sen. Menendez and was ultimately withdrawn by the Administration.

BUSINESS

21. TAX OFFICERS REVEAL A SET OF UNREGISTERED COMPANIES [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

The State Taxation Service said its officers discovered a clandestine lump sugar producing workshop in Yerevan, which operated for 18 months without paying taxes. The owner was registered with the Taxation Service as an individual entrepreneur presenting every time so-called zero report, but in fact the workshop produced a total of 270 tons of sugar.

The owner operated a Russia-made equipment turning the granulated sugar into lump sugar. When tax officers arrived at the site a truck loaded with 1000 kg of lump sugar was about to set off. The workshop was closed and a criminal case was started.

Taxation officers revealed also an unregistered bakery in Yerevan, which by the way operated close to the State Taxation Service's main office.

Tax officers also revealed two unregistered shops in the village of Hakhtanak, owned by one man and also an illegal currency exchange office and a restaurant in Yerevan.



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22. CHINESE AND ARMENIAN BUSINESSMEN MEET IN YEREVAN TO DISCUSS BOOSTING COOPERATION [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

Chinese and Armenian businessmen met today in Yerevan to discuss a wide scope of issues on how to boost and expand their ties.

The meeting was organized by the Armenian Commerce and Industry Chamber. Its executive director Ara Vardanian said the two-day discussions are the follow-up of a trip to China by a group of Armenian business people two weeks ago.

He said the gathering's goal is to specify cooperation prospects and step up what there is.

Some 10 Chinese business people have arrived here from Russia after attending a Russian-Chinese meeting in Moscow, because "apart from the big Russian market we are also interested to have partners in smaller markets, particularly, in Armenia."

They said this is actually a fact-finding visit to Armenia for an in-depth look into Armenia's potential and business environment.

Chen Been, deputy director of Europe and American department of Zilin province said their preliminary assessment is that China-made cars, spare parts, meat products and light industry goods may have demand in Armenia.

He said Armenian and Chinese businessmen can also establish successful cooperation in production of building materials, timber and food.

Een Ful, head of the Moscow representation of Chinese FAW carmaker, said they could try to sell their trucks and passenger cars in Armenia.

According to Ara Vardanian, a large-scale Armenian-Chinese business forum will be held in autumn.

Andranik Alexanian, chairman of the Yerevan Commerce and Industry Chamber, said Armenia can offer to China tourism, IT services and raw materials.

ARTS

23. THE 8-TH ANNUAL 'COUNTRY OF TALKING STONES' FAIR TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 7-8 [Aravot, 07/10/08]

The 8-th annual international tourist exhibition titled The Country of Talking Stones (CTS-2008) will be held in Yerevan on November 7-8.

The organizing committee of the exhibition told Armenpress that the fair will bring together representatives of travel agencies, resort homes, restaurants, entertainment centers, carriers, hotels, insurance companies, publishers and NGOs.

The exhibition will provide its participants with an opportunity to share and exchange their experiences, establish new contacts and discuss in detail related issues.

The exhibition will be held under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Economy, The Union of American Travel Agencies Armenian representation and the Union of Armenian Travel Agencies.

RELIGION

24. THREE ARMENIAN CHURCHES IN IRAN REGISTERED IN UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S LIST [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Iran's Armenian Monastic ensembles have been designated as the country's ninth property and registered on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The three Armenian churches in northwestern Iran - the Saint Thaddeus Monastery, the Saint Stepanos Church and the Chapel of Dzordzor - were registered during the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee's meeting in Quebec, Canada.

The structures - the oldest of which, St Thaddeus, dates back to the 7th century - are examples of the universal value of Armenian architectural and decorative traditions.

The Saint Thaddeus Church is considered as one of the oldest churches in the world and dates back 1,700 years. Historians believe the church is the tomb of Thaddeus who is said to have been one of Christ's disciples and who traveled to Armenia to preach the teachings of Christ.

St. Stepanos Church was originally built in the ninth century but repeated earthquakes in region severely damaged the original structure. Located near Marand in East Azerbaijan, the church was renovated during the reign of the Safavid king Shah Abbas (1588-1629).



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Dzordzor Church is located in the village of Barone in Zangar Valley of Chaldoran region in the north of West Azerbaijan Province. It was built in 1315.

The UNESCO website described the monuments as "examples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions" adding that "They bear testimony to very important interchanges with the other regional cultures, in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox and Persian."

The Armenian Foreign Ministry in Yerevan said the inclusion of these monuments into UNESCO World Heritage List, assisted by Armenia throughout all the stages, is the testament of centuries-long friendship and mutual respect of two nations who have been living side by side for millennia.

SOCIAL

25. TSAKHKADZOR TO HOST 4-THE INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION-2008 CONGRESS [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

On July 11-14 the resort town of Tsakhkadzor in central Kotayk province will host the fourth international Construction-2008 congress that will discuss issues of comprehensive construction strategy in Armenia, as well as investments, development, building materials and technology-related issues.

MASTER international integration support center told Armenpress that the plenary session of the congress will also focus on preparation of construction workers and their training as well as their qualification, ways to resolve these issues, building materials sale and development prospects.

Representatives of 70 local as well as Turkish, Nagorno-Karabakh and Russian specialized companies are expected to take part in the congress.

The congress is being organized by MASTER center in cooperation with Armenian Urban Ministry, the Union of Armenian Industrialists and Businessmen and the Union of Builders.

26. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT TRAVELS ACROSS CENTER OF THE CAPITAL [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian traveled today through the center of the capital getting acquainted with the construction work.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that on his way the president also visited National Aesthetics Center and watched the displayed works.

27. ARMENIAN PM VISITS GYUMRI TO DISCUSS ISSUES ON ENSURING APARTMENTS TO HOMELESS FAMILIES OF THE TOWN [Azg, 07/10/08]

About 3,000 apartments will be built until 2011 for the solution of the apartment problem of the families who remained without homes after the disastrous earthquake in Gyumri in 1988.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian visited today Gyumri to discuss a number of related issues on the place. He was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Territorial Governance Minister Armen Gevorgian, Urban Minister Vardan Vardanian, Shirak Governor Lida Nanyan, Gyumri Mayor Vardan Ghukasian, representatives of urban, financial, territorial governance ministries.

Within the frameworks of the visit, the prime minister was in Gyumri's Akhurian community, "Ani" and "Mush" districts, got acquainted with the apartment building opportunities.

The prime minister told the reporters that the aim of the visit to Gyumri was to orient how the construction will be carried out. Within its framework 3,000 apartments will be built in the coming three years to solve the problem of the homeless families in the town.

The construction must start from 2009 which, T. Sargsian said, means that in 2008 all the issues connected with the territory where the apartments will be built must be solved and all the projecting and calculating works as well.

According to initial calculations, the expenditures on ensuring homeless people of Gyumri with apartments will amount to 80 billion drams which will be provided by the state.

At the end of the meeting the Armenian prime minister also conducted meeting in the Shirak governor's office with the participation of distinguished architects of the republic.

During the meeting assignments were given to urban minister, Gyumri mayor. The next meeting connected with the discussion of the program will be held in early August.



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28. SOME 540,000 HOUSEHOLDS CONNECTED TO NATURAL GAS NETWORK [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

By July 8 some 540,000 Armenian households were connected to the natural gas network, the press division of the Armenian-Russian ArmRosGazArd (ARG) company told Armenpress.

It said the number of households and subscribers connected to the network rose by 23,728 since the start of the year. It said also out of 940 towns and villages 485 are connected to the network. Forty-five are urban settlements and 440 are rural.

Twelve villages have been connected to the network since the start of the year, ARG said.

29. CHIEF OF PRESIDENTIAL STAFF VISITS SOUTHERN PROVINCE OF SYUNIK [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Chief of presidential staff Hovik Abrahamian traveled July 9 to the southern province of Syunik to discuss with the regional governor and community heads the pace of resolution of a number of issues which had been raised by President Serzh Sargsyan during his pre-election campaign.

According to Hovik Abrahamian, solutions to the bulk of these issues are in the process. During the meeting community heads spoke also about the most urgent issues of their communities.

Particularly, head of the Tsav rural community spoke about the urgent need of resettlement of some residents of the village living in temporary wooden dwellings. Head of Sisian rose the question of drinking water and repair of community roads.

Syunik governor Suren Khachatryan and the chief manager of Zangezur copper and molybdenum smelter Maxim Hakobian also took part in the meeting.

30. ARMENIA TO POST SOON ANNOUNCEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL TENDER TO CHOOSE THIRD MOBILE PHONE OPERATOR [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Transport and Communication Minister Gurgen Sargsian said Wednesday that the ministry has received funds from the government for posting an announcement on an international tender to choose the third mobile phone operator.

Speaking to journalists the minister said the announcement will be posted in several leading international financial newspapers.

He said the bids will be opened 90 days after the announcement and the winner will be announced 15 days later.

31. ARMENIAN BAR ASSOCIATION TO HOLD CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS WORK OF BUSINESS LAWYERS [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

On October 2-4 the Armenian Bar Association will hold a conference to discuss the work of business lawyers.

Ruben Sahakian, chairman of the Armenian Bar Association, told Armenpress that some 50 Armenian and French lawyers dealing with relating issues, will participate in the conference.

He said European lawyers have gained substantial experience in this area and will share it with Armenian colleagues.

He said representatives of government agencies will also attend it.

32. PRIME MINISTER INSTRUCTS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES THEY ARE TO GIVE TO POPULATION [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan instructed today all-level government officials to drastically improve the quality of services they are to give to population. He said this is President Serzh Sargsyan's clear position which was spelled clearly out in his election program.

According to the prime minister, to materialize this the government will have to enforce a complex of measures. He said the number of complaints received by public service offices shows that the latter's response is not always adequate and proper.

To resolve this issue he instructed all ministers of his government, heads of other executive agencies, governors, the Yerevan municipality to adopt within 10 days corresponding legal acts regarding reception of citizens and responding to their applications, proposals and complaints.



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They were told to organize at least one reception of citizens a month to hear their complaints. The public at large should be notified about the procedure, the prime minister said.

The prime minister expressed hope that realization of these instructions will add to improvement of contacts between the executive bodies and ordinary citizens, help improve the quality of the latter's services, and raise also the level of public trust in the government.

33. KAPAN AARHUS CENTER LOOKS FOR WHAT COULD POLLUTE VOGHJ RIVER [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

On July 9 the Kapan OSCE nature protection information center (Aarhus center) convened experts for a discussion into what could have polluted the River of Voghj that crosses the town.

On June 25- July 5 the river's waters acquired a milky color. No rains were registered those days and experts say it may have been polluted by a breakdown at the mill tailing of the biggest copper and molybdenum Zangezour plant.

However, Martin Harutyunian, head of the plant's ecological department, dismissed these allegations saying no breakdowns had occurred on the tailing.

After numerous complaints of local residents samples of water from the river were sent for examination to Syunik regional ecological laboratory.

The examination blamed the changed color of the river's water on 'change of the river's natural background.' It said concentration of several 'dependent particles' exceeded the permitted level from 10 to 12 times. It said also it does not have equipment to check the concentration of heavy metals in the river.

Experts of the plant's department say the registered changes are not as large as to pose threat to public health and ecology. Nevertheless, it is not clear yet what could have changed the color of the river's water. An investigation continues.

34. GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE 92.5 MILLION DRAMS TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF VIKTOR HAMBARDZUMIAN [Azg, 07/10/08]

The government decided today to release 92.5 million drams from its reserve funds to back up a series of events to mark the centenary of famous Armenian astronomer Viktor Hambardzumian.

Finance Minister Tigran Davtian said 85 million drams will be made available to the National Academy of Sciences on the basis of a donation contract and the rest will go to Culture Ministry.

Among these events there will be an international conference and seminars.

35. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER VISITS SOUTHERN SYUNIK [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

Armenian human rights defender Armen Harutyunian led a team of experts who paid a visit to the southern province of Syunik on July 9 to look into the state of human rights protection on the ground.

The visit was planned beforehand and was part of his regional trips.

The press service of the human rights defender's office told Armenpress that Armen Harutyunian met with regional governor Suren Khachatrian and mayors of the region's biggest towns of Goris, Kapan, Sisian, Agarak and Meghri.

He and his entourage visited also the Goris prison and met with some of the convicts. The ombudsman was shown also rooms intended for short and long meetings of the convicts with visiting family members.

Among other things he discussed also the housing problem of refugees living in a hostel in Kapan.

36. NORK CENTER INSTALLS FOUR INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN SOCIAL SECURITY MINISTRY OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

The Nork Information and Analytical Center of the Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry has installed four information systems in the Social Security Ministry of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.

One deals with registration of disabled people, the second is for registration of unemployed and employers, the third is for the state labor inspection and the last is for electronic correspondence.

The press service of the Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that Nork specialists also conducted an extensive training course for employees of Nagorno-Karabakh to teach them how to operate these systems.



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During the visit specialists of the Nork Center discussed a set of related issues with local authorities.

37. PRESIDENT OF ARMENIA PRIZE AWARDEE YURI BARSEGOV MAKES DONATION TO FAMILIES OF DECEASED AND VETERANS OF ARTSAKH WAR [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

The Moscow-based Armenian Professor Yuri Barsegov donated the financial reward of his President of Armenia Prize to the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's Assistance to the Children of deceased and First Degree Invalid Soldiers of Armenia and Artsakh project.

Yuri Barsegov was awarded with the President Prize in the nomination of "Persons having made a valuable contribution to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide."

The monetary reward of \$10,000 will cover the one-month benefit going to the beneficiaries in Armenia and Artsakh.

In his letter of gratitude to the President of Armenia Mr. Barsegov stresses, "My heart was filled with gratitude to be awarded with the President of Armenia Prize for my two-volume book called Armenian Genocide, Liability of Turkey and Obligations of the International Community, which was published with the support of Armenians' Union of Russia.

Your appreciation inspires confidence that with your leadership we'll manage to achieve the international recognition of the genocide and assessment of it in accordance with the international law."

In his letter he has expressed willingness to serve the Armenian people and requested to allocate his reward for the above-mentioned project.

Ara Vardanyan, the Acting Executive Director of the Hayastan Fund mentions: "Barsegov's generous deed should set an example for all of us. Apart from development projects the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund has been assisting our soldiers' families all these years and will continue to do so in the years to come."

The Armenia Fund is a non-profit organization established in 1992 with the aim of facilitating humanitarian assistance and infrastructure development in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. The Fund has 19 affiliates worldwide.

38. OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RECEIVES 1,768 COMPLAINTS IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

The office of the Armenian human rights defender received 1,768 complaints and letters in the first six months of this year. Some 575 were in writing, human rights defender Armen Harutyunian said at today's news conference.

He said the overall number of complaints and applications rose 30 percent against the same time span of last year and positive solutions were found to 48 applications this year to have restored 87 people's rights.

He said his office sent 564 letters and complaints to relevant state agencies. Some 129 applications were complaints of police work, 64 of Yerevan municipality, 47 of Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, 37 of the office of prosecutor general, 5 of the Health Ministry.

Armen Harutyunian said the most frequent breach, a total of 132 complaints, was violation of the article 42 of Armenia's Constitution which says that everyone is free to do what is not banned by law and what does not violate others' rights.

Among other most frequent breaches were violation of individuals' rights to decent living conditions, housing, freedom and immunity. The majority of complaints-390- were from Yerevan, 32 were from Kotayk, 25 from Shirak, 23 from Gegharkunik provinces. The least complaints came from Vayots Dzor-5 only.

39. ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA TO MARK 90-TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 07/11/08]

Some 100 representatives of the Armenian Evangelical Association of America will arrive in Armenia for a ceremony that will mark the 90-th anniversary of its establishment in the USA.

The anniversary is marked not only in the USA, Armenia, but also in many other countries where the Armenian Evangelical Church has its followers.

The ceremony in Yerevan is scheduled for July 17. It will be a big concert and cohorts of top Armenian officials, as well as senior clergy will attend it.



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The Armenian Evangelical Association of America was established in 1918, June 7 in Massachusetts. Its major mission is to help Armenians maintain their faith and national identity, to help the needy and support Armenian organizations.

Tigran Yumushakian, director of its general programs, said today in Yerevan that the Armenian Evangelical Association was among the first organizations to respond to the 1988 destructive earthquake in Armenia sending tons of food, clothes, medications and equipment.

Doctor Rene Levonian, head of the World Armenian Evangelical Church and representative of the Armenian Evangelical Association of America in Armenia, said their ultimate goal is to be useful to Armenia and its people through implementation of a variety of programs.

He said the annual budget of the Armenian Evangelical Association of America is \$7 million and \$3 million are earmarked for Armenia.

SPORTS

40. UNIFORMS FOR ARMENIA'S OLYMPIC TEAM TO BE READY IN ONE WEEK [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

A Russian-Italian Rosco and an Armenian Kivera Niconics companies, hired by the Armenian National Olympic Committee to tailor the full dress and sporting uniforms for Armenian national team for the Beijing Games will present the clothes in a week, the National Olympic Committee told Armenpress.

In another sport news Melik Janoyan, Armenia's sole track and field athlete, a spear thrower, will be practicing in his native town of Gyumri. Then he will move to Tsakhkadzor.

Also 6 Armenian Greco-Roman youth wrestlers will participate in Europe's youth championship in Slovakia's Kosizce. It will start on July 16.

The head coach of the team is Armen Babalarian. The athletes are Avetik Dnoyan, 50 kg, Babken Karapetian, 55 kg, Mikael Hakobian, 60 kg, Aram Julfalakian, 66 kg, Varsham Buranian, 74 kg and Andranik Khachatryan, 84 kg.

41. U.S. CHESS FEDERATION INCLUDES AMERICAN ARMENIAN TATEV ABRAHAMIAN INTO NATIONAL TEAM [ARMENPRESS, 07/10/08]

The Chess Federation of the USA has included an American Armenian grandmaster Ms. Tatev Abrahamian into the national team for participation in World Chess Olympiad.

The Olympiad will take place in Germany's Dresden in November.

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