



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

AGBU NEWS

1. THE FIRST AGBU SCOUT CAMP IN ARMENIA [Azg, 07/25/08]

The first scout camp under the auspices of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Armenian Youth Association (AYA) opened yesterday in Lermontovo village of Armenia's Lori region. Armenian youth from the Middle East countries, Lebanon, Tehran and Syria – a total of 165 scouts – will spend 14 days in the beautiful nature of Lori region and strengthen ties with their compatriots. The second group of scouts will arrive in the first half of August.

The opening ceremony of the camp was attended by Lori governor Aram Kocharian, AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian, Primate of the Gugark Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Bishop Sepuh Chuldjian, Grand Sexton of the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin Bishop Ararat Galtakchian and others.

"This is a historical moment for all of us. Each of us must have its share of contribution in the development of our motherland, Diaspora and Artsakh. Local and regional administration will always be next to the scouts to help them overcome the difficulties", said Lori governor Aram Kocharian.

As Ashot Ghazarian, Director of the AGBU Armenian Representation, said it was less than a year ago when after lasting discussions the Lori governor gave his approval to organize the scout camp in Lori.

"Two months ago together with the President of the Social Investment Fund Ashot Kirakossian we breathed life into this previously desert area and welcomed our scouts perfectly ready on July 22. This program will have its continuation in Armenia. Our scouts must pass on their moods to their other Armenian friends", said Ashot Ghazarian in his speech.

Grant Sexton of the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin Bishop Ararat Galtakchian had brought the All-Armenian Catholicos Karekin II's blessing to the Armenian scouts.

Armenian scouts, 50 from Tehran, 95 from Syria, and 20 from Armenia, introduced an important and memorable day in the Armenian history of the third millennium maintaining the strong ties between the youth of Diaspora and Armenia.

POLITICS

2. ACCORDING TO HMAYAK HOVHANNISIAN, CAUSE OF FAILURE OF AUTHORITIES- OPPOSITION DIALOGUE IS ROBERT KOCHARIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/25/08]

The main obstacle of dialogue between the authorities and the opposition is the disservice done by former President Robert Kocharian to the current Armenian President. Stating this at the July 24 press conference, Hmayak Hovhannisian, the Chairman of the Union of Political Scientists of Armenia, said that Robert Kocharian did disservice to current President Serzh Sargsyan by opening a fire at peaceful demonstrators on March 1 and with his further actions, by emphasizing his patronage over the latter with these actions. While, according to H. Hovhannisian, as a President, whose tenure was expiring, R. Kocharian should have assumed the role of a judge between political forces and followed elections' being held freely and fairly, by ensuring home political stability with that.

According to H. Hovhannisian, for the disservice done to S. Sargsyan R. Kocharian thrust his cadre package and a number of other commitments upon him. In general, the political scientist affirmed that the second Armenian President is not at all going to take a "time-out" even if for a few years. Leaving big policy for some time, according to H. Hovhannisian, is peculiar of great politicians, such as, for instance, Karen Demirchian or first President Levon Ter-Petrosian. "And R. Kocharian after leaving President's post through telephone talks sends messages to S. Sargsyan that "inviting Gul to Armenia is wrong, L. Ter-Petrosian should be arrested and opposition should be suppressed with an iron hand."

According to the Chairman of the Union of Political Scientists, there can be several reasons for R. Kocharian's not being able to leave the political sphere. According to H. Hovhannisian, either the former President feels himself guilty for the March 1 slaughter or is afraid of the sad perspective of standing before Hague Court, or maybe he very much wishes to become a Prime Minister.



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3. RESTRAINT TO MATENADARAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR ARSHAK BANUCHIAN CHANGED [Azg, 07/25/08]

Stepan Voskanian, the lawyer of Arshak Banuchian, the Deputy Director of Matenadaran, a defendant on a criminal case being examined by the RA Special Investigation Service has introduced a petition to the preliminary investigation body on changing the restraint, arrest chosen to Banuchian by the restraint of signature on not leaving the country. According to the report of the Press Service of the Special Investigation Service, the head of the investigation group made a decision to sustain lawyer's petition meaning that the necessity of keeping A. Banuchian under arrest no longer exists.

4. PROGRAM OF REFORMS IN ARMENIAN ARMY CONTINUES [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/25/08]

The program of army reforms is in the focus of attention of the RA Defence Ministry. Proper legislative amendments are prepared according to that program. RA Defence Minister Seyran Ohanian said on July 23, on the occasion of 100 days of his taking his post. According to him, 100 days are not enough to solve big problems, but it is not his first 100 days, and he continues fulfilling the tasks set before Armenia's Armed Forces in 2008. The program of army reforms is envisaged to be finished in 2015. As for the law On Defence, that bill has been already approved by the government and has been sent to the National Assembly, where it will be discussed during the autumn session.

S. Ohanian said that two big command-headquarters exercises were held in the above mentioned period, the Rubezh-2008 joint exercises in one of Armenian army's contingents and within the framework of CSTO. A special attention was paid to perfection of contract sergeant service, provision of army with ammunition and military equipment and their modernization. Work has been done to strengthen fighting positions, to ensure security at the contact-line.

According to the Minister, along with success, there have also been some omissions during the 100 days, and society is aware of part of them. S. Ohanian informed those present that an official investigation is carried out in the Ministry on serviceman Gor Manasarian's murder. The Minister said that the latter of his own free will had left the positions during military duty, and information about his death was received from the website of Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry. As regards the four citizens entering the territory of Azerbaijan, the Minister had no new information about their fate.

5. VERY FIRST WAY OF LIQUIDATING CORRUPTION IN ARMENIA IS EDUCATION AND CHANGE OF WAY OF THINKING, RA PRIME MINISTER ASSERTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/25/08]

According to RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian's evaluation, today 85% students graduating from Armenian universities has no sufficient abilities, and the country has a lack of specialists. T. Sargsian recorded during his July 23 meeting with RA comprehensive school pupils having one-week rest in Tsakhkadzor that today the prevailing part of 100 Armenian higher educational institutions does not correspond to European educational standards, and these institutions' graduates do not qualify in contests announced for jobs.

The meeting with the Prime Minister of more than 100 pupils from different regions, who learnt Economics subject at schools and passed the final exam in that subject was held within the framework of the Armenian Junior Achievements organization's educational programs: the goal of organizers of this summer camp functioning for already the 8th year is strengthening and deepening pupils' knowledge through various games and events especially in Economics subject.

During the meeting with the RA Prime Minister, the pupils had a possibility to get acquainted with government's activity, as well as to ask different questions to the Prime Minister.

T. Sargsian gave assurance that economy based on knowledge should be created. "Only in that circumstance we will be able to overcome the serious challenges of economy," he said.

Answering questions on corruption, the Prime Minister stated that in Armenia it starts from a maternity hospital and finishes at other stages of life, kindergarten, school, university, place of work. "I consider that perhaps the very first way to liquidate corruption is education and change of way of thinking: sound way of thinking will force out that vicious phenomenon," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister mentioned the necessity to get rid of anti-Turkish complex and to have pro-Armenian way of thinking as another important problem. According to him, "politics is built on serious calculations, and from that point of view we should make calculations and proceeding from national interests create relations with Turkey," T. Sargsian emphasized.

The Prime Minister also tried to listen to the answers of the very pupils to the questions raised.



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6. SDHP MAKES DECISION TO JOIN ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS [Haykakan Zhamanak, 07/25/08]

The Social Democratic Hnchakian Party's Board made a decision to join the Armenian National Congress. This was mentioned in the party Board's July 24 statement. SDHP also calls for all political forces concerned with Nation's and Homeland's fate announcing their readiness to join the Armenian National Congress to draw people's victory closer.

"Before the August 1 mighty and decisive rally we have a dictate to make the Movement more organized and consolidated. It is for the very purpose that the Armenian National Congress is created with Levon Ter-Petrosian's appeal and proposal," Social Democratic Hnchakian Party Board's statement read.

7. ACCORDING TO LUIS MARIA DE PUIG, IN CASE PACE RESOLUTIONS ARE NOT FULFILLED, SANCTIONS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY USED TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

YEREVAN, JULY 25, NOYAN TAPAN. Unless Armenia fulfils the requirements of PACE Resolutions N 1609 and 1620, a scandalous situation will be created: "sanctions will be immediately used" to Armenia as a result of discussions to take place during the PACE autumn session. PACE Chairman Luis Maria de Puig stated in his interview to Radio Liberty. He said that he has spoken about it during his meetings with the Armenian authorities.

Answering the question of whether it means that the issue can be raised already at the PACE October session, he said that "it will depend on Monitoring Commission's decision." And L. M. de Puig opposed to the observation that little time remains until September 11, the day of PACE Monitoring Commission sitting, by saying that Armenia had time still from March and the decision to give additional time to Armenia made at the June session was "just an exception."

"Armenia cannot wait until January, moreover, it is possible that a decision will have been already made by January," the PACE Chairman stated. According to him, during the meetings with the Armenian authorities he has also touched upon the problem of constantly not authorizing opposition rallies. He affirmed that both the law and the practice of its use are bad. "I demanded that this practice be changed," L. M. de Puig said.

8. AFTER CREATION OF ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ZHARANGUTIUN TO DISCUSS WAYS OF COOPERATING WITH IT [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

"The People's Movement which appeared as pre-election alliance before the elections and which has a huge contribution to the formation of civil society today has dressed the authorities into a strait jacket and suppressed their striving for committing illegalities", announced Anahit Bakhshian, Chairman of the Board of Zharangutiun (Heritage) Party, during the press conference on July 25.

Noting that Zharangutiun welcomes the idea of initiating Armenian National Congress (ANC), A. Bakhshian mentioned at the same time that the party's Board would clarify the possible ways of cooperation and partnership with ANC only after the newly formed organization passes the program and regulations documents.

According to A. Bakhshian, at present ANC has set before itself five goals: to reveal the real guilty ones of the tragic events of March, to provide freedom of expression, to set free the political prisoners, dialogue with the authorities, and to hold special parliamentary and presidential elections. She noted that on all the mentioned issues Zharangutiun agrees with the initiators of the Congress and would make efforts for their fulfillment regardless of being or not included in ANC.

Member of Zharangutiun party Stepan Safarian stated that at the Board sitting it was decided to ask for clarifications on the principle of consensus in the activity of the NA Ad Hoc Commission on Study of the March 1-2 events from the Commission. In S. Safarian's words, after receiving an answer Zharangutiun will decide whether to take part in the work of the Commission or not.



9. RA PRESIDENT AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS TO TAKE PART IN CEREMONY DEDICATED TO 650th ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN SURB KHACH MONASTERY COMPLEX IN CRIMEA [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 07/28/08]

RA President Serzh Sargsyan and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, on July 28, will leave for the Crimea to take part in the ceremony dedicated to the 650th anniversary of foundation of the Surb Khach Armenian Monastery Complex. The RA Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Culture, the Chairman of the Committee on Contacts with the Diaspora of the Foreign Ministry, other high-ranking officials are members of the Armenian delegation.

The Armenian President will be present at the consecration ceremony of Surb Khach Church, which will be done by the Catholicos of All Armenians.

Surb Khach is one of the prominent monuments of Armenian architecture and the spiritual center of the Crimean Armenian colony, which for many ages had been the residence of bishops.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA President's Press Office, during the visit to the Crimea the Armenian President will have a conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Jushchenko. An agreement on cooperation until 2010 will be signed between the two countries' Ministries of Culture.

10. EDUARD SHARMAZANOV: IF ONE OF FORMER ARMENIAN PRESIDENTS CAN BE BROUGHT BEFORE HAGUE COURT, FOR SURE, IT IS NOT ROBERT KOCHARIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

According to Eduard Sharmazanov, the Spokesperson of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), only after the judicial enquiries on the March 1 case it will become clear whether there are political prisoners in Armenia. As he stated at the July 28 press conference, RPA considers that there should not be people prosecuted for their political convictions in Armenia.

Touching upon radical opposition's rally envisaged on August 1, E. Sharmazanov said that by the rally the oppositionists wish to ensure their place and role in Armenia's political life, which is normal. "I do not think that the demand of Serzh Sargsyan's resignation to be voiced at the August 1 rally will be able to change anything," the RPA Spokesperson said. He affirmed that today it is time to work and to implement programs, and in that context the opposition, instead of holding rallies, should be involved in a constructive activity.

According to E. Sharmazanov, the collection of signatures the opposition started to bring Robert Kocharian before Hague court is an absurd process. "If any of the former Armenian Presidents can be brought before Hague court, for sure it is not R. Kocharian," he stated. According to E. Sharmazanov, time will show what this or that figure has done for the country. Under R. Kocharian, according to him, "a normal economic growth was recorded," and 1998-2008 were years of achievements.

11. IN ARMEN ASHOTIAN'S WORDS, RAFFI HOVANNISIAN LAYS CLAIM TO LEADING OPPOSITION IN 2012-2013 STATE ELECTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

In Armenia the post-election energetics has not extinguished and cannot extinguish. This was announced by Armen Ashotian, a member of the Armenian Republican Party faction of the RA National Assembly. He added that today the authorities are trying to use new tools of solving the problems in the formed situation.

A. Ashotian noted that the authorities should manifest "good will" so that the cases of the arrested by the fact of the events of March 1-2 should appear in court as quickly as possible, and if there is evidence the guilty ones should be punished and in case of absence of evidence they should be set free.

Answering the question of how he treats the idea of creating Armenian National Congress (ANC), A. Ashotian expressed his doubt whether it should become fully established. According to him, ideological disagreements of the opposition parties and the personal claims of their leaders are the basis for doubts.

According to him, now inside the opposition a struggle is going on for becoming Levon Ter-Petrosian's heir. And Zharangutiun party, A. Ashotian's words, will not join ANC as the party leader Raffi Hovannisian has not received guarantees of becoming Levon Ter-Petrosian's heir in the opposition field. At the same time he noted that Raffi Hovannisian lays claim to leading the opposition in 2012-2013 state elections.



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12. CATHOLICOS KAREKIN II DRAWS PACE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION TO BELLICOSE STATEMENTS MADE BY AZERBAIJAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

Receiving PACE President Luis Maria de Puig on July 24, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II noted that the elimination of the public tension in Armenia is everyone's expectation. His Holiness underlined that the representatives and supporters of both the authorities and the opposition are the sons of the Church of Armenia, and Armenian Church is concerned about the fate of every Armenian.

According to a report provided to Noyan Tapan by the Information Services of the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin, during the meeting the interlocutors touched upon the efforts directed to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh problem. His Holiness expressed his concern about the bellicose statements made by Azerbaijan which have recently become frequent on the behalf of the spiritual leader of Azerbaijan. His Holiness also touched upon the barbaric policy carried on towards the Armenian spiritual and cultural monuments in Azerbaijan, particularly pointing the complete destruction of the cross-stones of Old Jougha.

13. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RECEIVES PACE PRESIDENT [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Armenian Human Rights Defender Armen Harutyunian received PACE President Luis Maria de Puig. Press office of the ombudsman told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed a number of issues on the people arrested as a result of March 1-2 events, issues on the activity of the parliamentary ad hoc commission as well as pace of implementation of 1620 and 1609 resolution.

Luis Maria de Puig said that prosecutions towards a person for his/her political views is unacceptable in any of the Council of Europe member country and noted that even if the accusations towards a person are ungrounded and may be connected with his political activity it must be excluded in Council of Europe states.

PACE chairman underscored the suggestion of the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg on the creation of a fact finding mission. Luis Maria de Puig pointed out that by the PACE resolution time has been establishment for Armenia and if until his September 4 report and September 11 report of the Council of Europe High Commissioner no positive change is registered, the consequences for Armenian may be 'disastrous'.

A. Harutyunian presented his views towards the issues and pointed out that the activity of the parliamentary ad hoc commission and the suggested fact finding mission may be effective if they have been formed on the principle of parity.

During the meeting the ombudsman also presented the details of his meetings with the arrested members of parliament.

14. HERITAGE PARTY HAS NOT DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN WORKS OF TO-BE CREATED ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OR NOT [Aravot, 07/28/07]

The Heritage party decided at its yesterday's session to discuss all the possible ways of cooperation and partnership with the Armenian National Congress only after its program and working documents are approved.

The newly-elected head of the administrative body of the party Anahit Bakhshian said that it is not clear for them how the congress will work, what strategic and long-term programs it will carry out, only after knowing it they will decide to participate in its works or not.

"After the creation of "All-People's Movement" we were one of its active participants and proved it many times by the work we carried out. If the congress functions aimed at the implementation of the demands of the "Pan-People's Movement" we will not find it purposeful to join it as it is possible that the authorities tomorrow or in a few months implement those demands," A. Bakhshian pointed out.

"If the congress is a body like a party, and the mechanisms of approving decisions be in a way that we always remain in the minority and our voice will not be a resolute one we will not be included in it, besides it is not yet clear who will head it. Only after having answers to these questions we will decide to join congress or not," member of Heritage party's faction Stepan Safarian said.

He noted that in yesterday's session they also discussed the issue on nominating new representatives in the parliamentary ad hoc commission set up for the inquiry into March 1-2 events. "In response to the June 19 application of the head of the commission Samvel Nikoyan, in which he expected that we will nominate new representatives, we sent a letter with few questions. Only after getting answers to them we will discuss the issue on the nomination of new representatives in the commission," S. Safarian said.



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A. Bakhshian also informed that they also decided to nominate member of the party Zoya Tadevosian as a candidate of the head of Arabkir district, the elections of which will take place in September. She said that hence they will always participate in the elections of self-governmental bodies in Yerevan and provinces.

15. ARMEN ASHOTIAN SAYS FIRST 100 DAYS OF PRESIDENCY OF SERZH SARGSIAN SHOWED THAT THERE ARE NEW APPROACHES TOWARDS SOLUTION OF COUNTRY'S ISSUES [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

The 100 days of presidency of Serzh Sargsian showed that we have new logic and approaches in the solution of issues the country and the society are facing, Armen Ashotian, member of the Republican party's faction said today at a press conference.

"The new authorities, on behalf of the president and prime minister, are trying to use new partners for giving best solutions to the situation created in the country," he said. According to him, all these approaches have been included in the pre-electoral programs of the president and naturally must have been carried out after the elections.

Referring to the activity of the opposition, A. Ashotian noted that their activation has melted and the latest statements are for propaganda purposes. Speaking about the creation of the Armenian National Congress, Ashotian said that he positively assessed the plan of the opposition to create a joint political force but in this case it stems from ideological controversies and personal ambitions.

A. Ashotian said that according to him "Heritage" party will not join the Armenian National Congress as far as Raffi Hovhanesian has not got the guarantee of being the heir of Levon Ter-Petrosian in the opposition field. He said he is sure that the forces behind the party and its active figures have their own political plans and will not agree to merge into the movement of Ter-Petrosian until R. Hovhanesian gets the guarantee of being the heir.

Ashotian said that the Heritage is seeking to become the main political opposition force in 2012, 2013.

16. LORD RUSSELL JOHNSTON PASSES AWAY [Azg, 07/29/07]

Former chairman of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, chairman of the PACE ad hoc on Nagorno Karabakh affairs 75-years old Lord Russell Johnston passed away. According to Scottish Daily Record, during the recent period R. Johnston was suffering from cancer.

Council of Europe press service told Armenpress that president of PACE Luis Maria de Puig and Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis sent messages of condolences on the death of R. Johnston.

"We lost a great parliamentary figure who believed in great Europe where everybody would yield fruits of democracy, human rights and rule of law," T. Davis noted.

17. RESTRAINT TO DEPUTIES ARRESTED ON MARCH 1 CASE AND TO MANY OTHER PERSONS CAN BE CHANGED VERY EASILY, ARFD DEPUTY CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

The prevailing part of the questions asked on July 28 at the Hayatsk club to National Assembly ARFD faction member Artsvik Minasian, who is also a member of the NA Ad Hoc Commission on Study of the March 1-2 Events in Yerevan and their Reasons regarded commission's activity. He, in particular, said that on July 25 a working group composed of commission members (A. Minasian was also among them: NT) visited the Vardashen penitentiary institution, and the meetings and talks with Mushegh Saghatelian, Shant Haroutiunian, Suren Sirunian kept there, were "very warm," against some opposition newspapers' publications. The meeting with Gagik Jhangirian, the former RA Deputy Prosecutor General, did not take place, as the latter was at the court on that day.

A. Minasian also said that that morning he received alarming information that Myasnik Malkhasian's health condition has worsened, and he will try to attend to that issue immediately after the press conference ensuring "deputy's being under medical control and being moved to the respective institution if there is a need of hospital treatment."

He stated that after the answers of Vahagn Haroutiunian, a senior investigator on especially important cases of the RA Special Investigation Service, the head of the investigation group on the March 1-2 criminal case, invited to the commission lately personally he does not see a necessity to keep arrest chosen as a restraint to three NA deputies and "many other persons besides them" arrested on the case.



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"I consider that the restraint can be changed very easily and the same penitentiary actions can be done by leaving people in freedom," A. Minasian said.

At journalists' request touching upon the statement made by RPA faction member Armen Ashotian lately that it would be more correct of ARFD running for the presidential elections with its own candidate became opposition after the elections, A. Minasian said: "I treat not seriously the advice of my coalition colleague for several reasons, first, he should not consistently try to get a status of political Nostradamus, especially as an answer to it was voiced both in the preelectoral and postelectoral periods of the presidential elections." He said that Dashnaksutiun has sufficient will to make decisions on its own.

18. EXAMINATION OF LAWSUIT OF GAGIK JHANGIRIAN AGAINST ROBERT KOCHARIAN TO START ON JULY 31 [Haykakan Zhamanak, 07/29/08]

The examination of the lawsuit of Gagik Jhangirian against Robert Kocharian will start on July 31 at the RA Administrative Court, presided over by judge Artsrun Mirzoyan. The claimant appeals against the legality of the former RA President's February 23 decrees on relieving him of the post of RA Deputy Prosecutor General and of his ranks. A decision to fix the day of starting the judicial enquiry was made during the July 25 preliminary hearing. The representative of the respondent party, head of RA President's Administration Hovik Abrahamian, did not come to the court sitting, asking to examine the case without him.

G. Jhangirian considers that he has never been engaged in politics, he has never joined any party and has not carried out agitation, and he spoke at the rally about violations at the preelectoral and electoral stages, abuses, crimes, as well as on illegal quash of the part separated from the case of the 1999 October 27 terrorist act. "Expressing an opinion is a constitutional norm, natural human right, and it is not political activity," the claimant said.

19. ARA SAHAKIAN AFFIRMS THAT "THIRD POLITICAL POLE" IS CREATED ESPECIALLY FOR STRUGGLING AGAINST LEVON TER-PETROSIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

The Constitutional Law Union, the Liberal-Progressive Party of Armenia, the Christian-Democratic Union of Armenia, the National Self-Determination Union, and the United Communist Party of Armenia are holding consultations to create a pole of opposition forces in the near future. CLU Chairman Hayk Babukhanian said at the July 29 dispute. According to him, the above mentioned parties have been in the opposition sphere for nearly 20 years and today they enjoy confidence among 60% people. According to H. Babukhanian, power shift is not the first and foremost task for the pole to be created: the most important goal is to resist domestic and foreign challenges of the country.

According to him, today some traitorous forces uniting around first President Levon Ter-Petrosian have split the nation. These forces, according to H. Babukhanian, consider that it is only them who are the real opposition, and it is a "manifestation of Fascism." He also expressed discontent that some young people - participants of People's Movement have compiled "black lists" of undesirable figures in Internet, in which his name was also mentioned.

According to Ara Sahakian, the former RA National Assembly Vice-Speaker, it is no secret for anyone that the third pole is created especially for struggling against L. Ter-Petrosian. "And it is clear that if someone names himself a patriot, he should consider the other one a "traitor," he said. According to A. Sahakian, it is a pity that Khosrov Haroutiunian, the Chairman of the Christian-Democratic Union of Armenia, who "was only the director of textile goods factory," today has got a reputation of a patriot, while "great scientist, doctor of philology, first President L. Ter-Petrosian is considered a traitor."

20. PROBLEMS OF ARMENIA'S SECURITY AND LIFTING ITS BLOCKADE WILL BE SOLVED AFTER MAKING CLEAR ARMENIAN BORDERS, ARA PAPIAN CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

A discussion on the subject "The problem of RA borders according to the international law" was organized on July 29 by the Armenian Center for National and International Studies.

According to Ara Papiian, the head of the Modus Vivendi center for sociological studies, Armenia's borders need to be made clear, as a result of which the problems of security and lifting of blockade faced by Armenia will be solved, as well as new possibilities for Nagorno Karabakh problem settlement will be created.

A. Papiian said that he mainly means clarification of Armenian-Turkish, Armenian-Azeri, and Armenian-Georgian borders. According to him, the Armenian-Turkish border was clarified during the Paris Assembly in February 1920. However, indeed it was not fulfilled due to Armenia's not being a subject of



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international law. A. Papian said that today's de facto border has been created as a result of the cease-fire agreement signed between Kemalists and Bolsheviks. While the border, which has been stipulated internationally, is the one drawn by 28th U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, which passes through the states of former Ottoman Empire, Van, Bitlis, Erzurum, Trapison.

According to Ara Papian, though the borders of Armenia with Azerbaijan and Georgia have not been clarified with a special report during the Assembly, the principle was stipulated, according to which the demarcation was to be done. In particular, all territories populated by Armenians were to pass to Armenia, those populated with Georgians to Georgia, those populated with Tatars to Azerbaijan. Therefore, it becomes obvious that not only NKR is de jure an Armenian territory, but also a considerable part of field Karabakh. Subsequently, according to A. Papian, Azeris cannot certify Armenians' not having settled in that territory. He also added that any interstate problem should be solved on the basis of the international law.

21. ARREST, RESTRAINT CHOSEN TO ARARAT ZURABIAN REPLACED BY SIGNATURE ON NOT LEAVING COUNTRY [Haykakan Zhamanak, 07/29/08]

An accusation has been brought to 139 people within the framework of the criminal case filed on the events that happened on March 1-2 in Yerevan. As of July 28, 15 out of them were in custody, signature on not leaving the country was chosen on 8 of them, and 4 are in a search. It was mentioned in the notification sent to the National Assembly Ad Hoc Commission by the RA Prosecutor General. Commission Chairman, NA RPA faction Secretary Samvel Nikoyan publicized it at the July 29 commission sitting.

According to the notification, the part separated from the criminal case to 21 people has been quashed and the criminal prosecution stopped. The judicial enquiry on 73 persons on 64 criminal cases out of 82 criminal cases on 95 persons sent to the court has finished. Under 64 judgements 5 people have been acquitted, 31 sentenced to imprisonment from 6 months to 6 years, a fine has been fixed to 4, the punishment has not been used suspendedly to 33 persons with use of Article 70, RA Criminal Code, a probation period has been fixed. A punishment milder than established by the law has been fixed with use of Article 64, RA Criminal Code to 1 out of 31 persons sentenced to imprisonment.

As Vahagn Haroutiunian, the senior investigator on especially important cases of the RA Special Investigation Service, the head of the investigation group on the March 1-2 criminal case, said at the commission sitting, by the instruction of RA Prosecutor General, the preliminary examination body, on July 29, also changed the restraint chosen to ANM Board Chairman Ararat Zurabian due to worsening of his health condition, arrest was replaced by a signature on not leaving the country. According to him, members of the NA Ad Hoc Commission made such a petition the day before and defendant's lawyer had made it earlier.

22. LEVON TER-PETROSIAN VISITS PARTICIPANTS OF SIT-DOWN STRIKE [Haykakan Zhamanak, 07/29/08]

In the evening of July 28 first RA President Levon Ter-Petrosian, accompanied by the leader of People's Party of Armenia Stepan Demirchian visited the participants of the sit-down strike of radical opposition in Northern Avenue, which has been going on for 24 days already. The participants of the action and of the "political" promenade welcomed the first President shouting "Levon", "Struggle, struggle till the end", "We will win". During the talk with the participants of the sit-down strike L. Ter-Petrosian addressed them words of encouragement, assuring that their struggle will soon succeed.

We should remind that the sit-down strike will last till August 1, the day of the next rally of the People's Movement.

23. MEETING OF ARMENIAN AND UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTS TAKES PLACE [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian, within the frameworks of his visit to Crimea, Ukraine, met with his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko.

The face-to-face meeting of the presidents passed in a warm atmosphere. The Ukrainian president reconfirmed his invitation addressed to Serzh Sargsian to pay an official visit to Ukraine in the last quarter of 2008. During the conversation the sides underscored the necessity of conduction of the session of the Armenian-Ukrainian inter-governmental commission before the visit and reached



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agreement over signing a number of documents which will promote the further cooperation between the two countries.

Serzh Sargsian and Viktor Yushchenko underscored the further expansion of Armenian-Ukrainian economic ties which may be promoted by the conduction of Armenian-Ukrainian business conference. The sides underscored the increase of trade turnover between the two countries and promotion of inter-provincial partnership.

V. Yushchenko suggested that within the framework of S. Sargsian's official visit the latter visit one of the Ukrainian provinces.

During the meeting the two presidents also discussed issues on using the full potential in cooperation in humanitarian, cultural, scientific and educational spheres. President of Ukraine underscored the special contribution of the Ukrainian-Armenian community in the development of Armenian-Ukrainian friendship and expressed readiness to jointly discuss all the issues of the Ukraine's Armenian community.

The two presidents also discussed a number of regional and international issues. The Armenian president also expressed gratitude to his Ukrainian counterpart for the state support in reconstruction of St. Cross Church.

24. EDWARD NALBANDIAN EXPRESSES HOPE THAT CANDIDACY OF NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BE APPROVED [Hayastani Hanrapetutiu, 07/30/08]

"I hope that as a result of discussion the U.S. Senate will approve the candidacy of the new ambassador to Armenia and she will soon arrive in Yerevan and contribute to the further development of Armenian-U.S. relations," Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said referring to the discussions which will take place today in Washington.

The minister reminded that the Armenian president also expressed his approach towards it.

BUSINESS

25. IT IS NOT EXCLUDED THAT HRANT BAGRATIAN WILL APPLY TO EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

Lawyer Artur Grigorian representing the interests of former RA Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian is going to appeal against the July 10 judgement of Yerevan Civil Court at the RA Civil Appeal Court. He said this at the July 24 meeting with journalists classing the case examined against the former RA Prime Minister by the lawsuit of the current Prime Minister as to some extent political persecution.

Current RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian when being the CBA Chairman applied to the court with a lawsuit against former Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian demanding refuting information discrediting his honor, dignity, and business authority. The court had partially sustained the lawsuit. According to the court, the expression "Tigran Sargsian had been chasing Ardshinbank long ago," is not subject to refutation, as it is an opinion, and on the rest the court judgement obliges to publish a refutation in the Aravot newspaper in a 10-day term by apologizing to Tigran Sargsian and to readers. By the way, apologizing is not envisaged by the Code of Civil Procedure, the court obviously surpassed its powers. A. Grigorian considers that the court has deprived them of the possibility to introduce proof by not sustaining their petition demanding a number of documents containing bank secret: in particular, these are all CBA Board decisions on the process of Ardshinbank bankruptcy, on all quarter accounts of Agrobank (when bank's owner was Hakob Hakobian), on the decisions of Agrobank Board of Directors in the same period, on the case of ArmSavingsBank privatization."

Hrant Bagratian in his article under the title Decisions Should Be Reconsidered, Former Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian Is Sure in the February 2 issue of the Aravot newspaper expressed his position on processes of stopping the activity of a number of banks formerly functioning in RA. He said that Ardshinbank, in essence, was a normally acting bank, and if there had not been the artificial criminal prosecutions, it is not excluded that the bank would be financially rehabilitated and would work normally. On the part of Agrobank Bagratian mentioned that bank's shares were deliberately given to a person not connected with bank's activity, which contributed to the process of bank's artificial bankruptcy. ArmSavingsBank's privatization also, according to the former Prime Minister, pursued concrete purposes, finally the assets of all these banks were given to Ardshininvesbank. H. Bagratian concluded that all that was done deliberately and the Central Bank of Armenia and its Chairman Tigran Sargsian were responsible for all that, as the law On Banking Activity gives CBA a possibility to bankrupt any bank.



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A. Grigorian said that if the Appeal Court's judgement does not satisfy them, the side, after the RA Cassation Court's decision, first of all in a 6-month term will introduce a preliminary letter and then a complete package of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights. "I welcome current Prime Minister's policy on fighting corruption, but the continuation of this case, in all appearances, will result in T. Sargsian's directly or indirectly delivering a blow to the RA rating when the European Court demands explanations from the RA government concerning the complaint," the lawyer said.

26. ARMENIAN ELECTRICAL NETWORKS TO INVEST \$70 MILLION TO UPGRADE THE SYSTEM [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

Yevgeny Gladunchik, Armenian Electrical Networks (AEN) CEO, told a news conference on July 28 that the AEN has already invested \$20 million this year into the systems' upgrading.

He said the company plans to invest overall \$70 million this year to modernize the system. He said by now the company should have already invested half of the projected investment, but that was impeded by some problems.

He said the AEN was purchasing new materials and equipment which it needs to modernize the power distributing system.

According to Gladunchik, the bulk of the work will be done in September and October.

27. STATE TAXATION SERVICE CLOSES 9 BIG SHOPS IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

The State Taxation Service (STS) has ordered 9 big shops in Yerevan to close down from 5 to 10 days after finding that they did not give customers cash register bills.

The press division of the STS told Armenpress that its officers conducted check-ups in 23 big shops in Yerevan registering similar breaches virtually in all of them. It said owners of nine shops did not protest the sanction. They were allowed to take out easily spoiled products, then the shops were sealed.

The press division said the practice of avoiding to register purchases by cash registers is so spread that it went on in some shops even at a time when they were being examined by STS officers.

The STS called on all trading outlets to respect law warning that otherwise they will be subjected to punishment.

28. LIST OF LARGEST TAX PAYERS OF THE FIRST HALF OF 2008 IS TOPPED BY "KH-TELECOM" COMPANY ("VIVACELL") [Azg, 07/28/07]

Armenian government-affiliated State Tax Service published the list of the largest 300 tax payers of the republic.

In the first half of the running year the list of largest tax payers is topped by "KH-Telecom" ("VivaCell") company which has paid 15 billion 002 million 186.2 thousand drams, followed by "Armrusgazard" company and "Armenia Telephone Company" which paid 9 billion 413 million 734.2 thousand and 8 billion 168 million 485.8 thousand drams respectively.

The top ten tax payers of the list include also Zangezur copper-molybdenum factory, "Kagh Petrol Service," "Alex Grieg", "Armenia's Electricity Networks", "Armenian Railway" and "Peres Armenian".

The State Tax Service also published the list of 300 companies who paid the greater amount of social insurance payments. The list is topped by "Armenia's Electricity Networks", followed by "Armrusgazard" and "KH-Telecom" company.

DIASPORA

29. ARA ABRAHAMIAN READY TO MAKE INVESTMENTS OF NEARLY ANOTHER 150M USD IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/25/08]

Ara Abrahamian, the Chairman of the Union of Armenians in Russia, at the Union Board sitting held in Moscow, highly estimated the speech of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan at the Baze All Armenian youth gathering as an important step on the way of consolidating Armenians spread all over the world. The statement of the Board of the Union of Armenians in Russia read that the Armenian President in his speech especially touched upon such important state issues as involvement of all Armenians' efforts in solution of problems regarding country's prosperity and guaranteeing its security. The head of Armenian state addressed all Armenians concerned with homeland's fate calling them for providing a real, concrete assistance to Armenia with their active participation.



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The statement read that "The Union of Armenians in Russia from the day of its creation has been providing material and moral assistance to Armenia. That line is reflected in elaboration and implementation of a number of socio-economic programs. Much efforts have been exerted to provide assistance to country's economic progress and to attract investment resources for development of individual economic branches. A number of Russian-Armenian economic forums, meetings with the participation of government members and Armenia's leading entrepreneurs have been held especially for that purpose. A charity program of providing refugees from Azerbaijan with apartments has been implemented. Blocks of flats have been purchased for them and given them as property. A public canteen has been functioning for many years in Yerevan, which every days provides food to nearly 300 lone pensioners. Large-scale assistance has been provided to country's scientific institutions, creative unions, multipronged publishing activity has been carried out for several years. Computerization program is implemented in Armenian and Artsakh schools and higher educational institutions. Nearly 7000 computers have been already donated to them."

Responding to the speech of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and to his initiative, A. Abrahamian proposed calling Armenians, businessmen and entrepreneurs, residing in Russia on behalf of the Board of the Union of Armenians in Russia for more actively making investments in Armenia's economy. The Board made a decision to send a circular letter to regional branches of the Union of Armenians in Russia by proposing them establishing direct contacts with Armenian regions to carry out concrete programs. The Chairman of the Union of Armenians in Russia stated that personally he will continue implementing investment programs in Armenia, and nearly another 150m USD will be invested. The Board of the Union of Armenians in Russia, on the whole, approving Armenian President S. Sargsyan's new policy, expressed confidence that every Armenian in Russia will be filled with sense of responsibility for homeland's fate and will make his contribution to its further development as far as possible.

30. DIASPORA DOES NOT UNANIMOUSLY TREAT INVITATION TO TURKISH PRESIDENT TO ARRIVE IN YEREVAN TO WATCH ARMENIA-TURKEY FOOTBALL MATCH [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/25/08]

The invitation of Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan to Turkish President Abdullah Gul to watch together the Armenia-Turkey football match to be held on September 6 in Yerevan was not perceived unanimously in the Diaspora. Ashot Grigorian, the Chairman of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE), the head of the Armenian community of Slovakia, said in his interview to Noyan Tapan correspondent that there is a whole aggravated army of opponents to that proposal in different Diasporan communities. According to their evaluation, such an issue having a very serious hint of recognition of the Armenian Genocide should not have been raised without discussing it with the Diaspora, as one should not forget that the two third of the Armenian people is in the Diaspora, which is too sensitive to the issue of recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

"Yes, we understand that to get the issue of Armenian-Turkish relations moving the RA President can invite Turkish President Gul to Armenia and at the same time announce that the issue of Genocide is inviolable, is beyond any discussions and make Turks understand that at least for Armenians, there is nothing to clear up. There is also nothing to clear up for the countries that have recognized the fact of Armenian Genocide by adopting resolutions by their parliaments. There is also nothing to discuss with all other countries, which consider that the Genocide is a fact beyond discussions, but do not wish to touch upon that issue not to sadden Turkey or to make it angry," the FAAE Chairman said adding that "the only need to discuss the issue exists in Turkey."

According to A. Grigorian, the RA President can say to President Gul that we are ready to help Turks for them also to agree to the world's opinion. He can say so when shaking hands with President Gul after the football match and during an intimate talk. However, let us not forget that Gul also masters diplomacy and will try to give a counter-blow to that with steps prepared in advance. And the Diaspora is much concerned with the outcome of that fight. The Diaspora is afraid that suddenly, God forbid, an unexpected shift may take place in the solution of our basic issue, that of recognition of the Armenian Genocide. As the idea of discussion in itself is already a terribly big regress for an issue adopted by many parliaments and brought to the axiomatic state. "The idea of discussion in itself is already a defeat for Armenian diplomacy, not to mention the real prospect of receiving a result fraught with dangers," the Chairman of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe stated. As he evaluated, moving the issue to the political plane gives a great possibility for Turkey that found the way of denial.



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According to A. Grigorian, his many contacts with representatives of the Diaspora permit him to state that the Diaspora is upset that their opinion has not been taken into consideration for dozens of years and it goes on up to the present.

In A. Grigorian's words, as it had been repeatedly stated at the FAAE conference held in late May, today the Diaspora supports the Armenian statehood, gives all its forces and abilities to support the newly elected President's policy and development of democracy in Armenia, but expects the current RA President to show an abrupt, revolutionary approach to the Diaspora and Diaspora's problems.

"We support all his steps leading to strengthening of the RA statehood, we believe that the Armenian figures of the Diaspora, who have already proved their authority to the world with Diaspora's serious, active, numerous results, will be involved in the process of strengthening Armenia's statehood, and first of all, will be involved in the Public Council, which, in our opinion, will have a great future if figures well acquainted with Armenia's domestic and foreign policy are represented there in a balanced way," A. Grigorian stated. He added that he has discussed this statement with the chairmen of the Hask Hamaynk Armenian NGO of U.S., Council of Armenian Intellectuals of America, and other organizations.

31. THIS YEAR ANCA EASTERN REGION WILL PRESENT THE FREEDOM AWARD TO SAMANTHA POWER [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/28/08]

The Armenian National Committee of America, Eastern Region (ANCA-ER), announced the honorees for its Second Annual Banquet and Awards Program, to take place on September 13, 2008 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City. As announced previously, the ANCA-ER will present the ANCA Freedom Award to Harvard University professor and human rights activist Dr. Samantha Power. A leading voice on genocide awareness, Power won the Pulitzer Prize for her book *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. She teaches at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and was a senior adviser to U.S. Democratic Party presidential candidate Barack Obama.

32. HRANUSH HAKOBIAN DISCUSSES ISSUES ON THE ACTIVITY OF DIASPORA MINISTRY DURING HER FIRST WORKING VISIT TO MOSCOW [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 07/28/07]

The head of the Armenian Foreign Ministry's Diaspora Ties State Committee Hranush Hakobian paid her first working visit to Moscow July 21-23 where she met with the representatives of the Union of Russian Armenians and other community institutions.

Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides exchanged thoughts over the Diaspora Ministry and main directions of its activity.

The participants of the meeting greeted the creation of the Diaspora Ministry and considered it as a natural step taking into consideration the vast Armenian Diaspora.

In that pre-context Hranush Hakobian noted that Armenia's president highly underscores the uniting of the potential of all Armenians and according to his proposed program the state will carry out serious policy to support the issues on preserving Armenian identity in Diaspora and in using the whole potential of Diaspora for making Armenia stronger.

H. Hakobian said that the preservation of Armenian identity is one of the most important issues of Diaspora and underscored the important role of the state support in it. At the same time she underscored the active participation of Diaspora in the implementation of economic development programs in Armenia.

33. FORUM OF ARMENIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF EUROPE RESPONDS TO CALL OF RA PRESIDENT SENDING 50+50M USD TO ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

Ashot Grigorian, the Chairman of the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe (FAAE), announced that he joins the united efforts of all Armenians directed to the development and strengthening of the state of Armenia and responds to the recently made call of the RA President Serzh Sargsyan, expressing his willingness to provide concrete aid to Armenia.

"It's time that the Armenians of the entire world could feel the power of their unity and put it in service of the uprise of motherland Armenia", the statement adopted by FAAE presidium read.

FAAE Chairman Ashot Grigorian has made a decision to make an investment of \$50m in the next two years by implementing Slovakia's export credit program. Another \$50m will be sent to Armenia from the means of member organizations to FAAE and individuals.



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"Our power is in our unity" - this formula is the pledge of the real strengthening of our motherland, and the RA President's initiative of uniting the potential of all Armenians is the first step towards the Armenia of our dreams.

ARTS

34. GOLDEN APRICOT - 2008 INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WINNERS [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/28/08]

The finish of the Golden Apricot (Voske Tsiran) 5th International film festival was announced on July 19 at the Moscow cinema of Yerevan with the showing of renowned director Atom Egoyan's film Adoration. RA President Serzh Sargsyan, Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosian, other high-ranking officials, renowned cinematographic figures were present at film's Yerevan premiere.

According to Canadian Armenian director Atom Egoyan, Golden Apricot is of much importance for the Armenian nation. "It shows not only the cinematographic art of the strong nation, but also brings cinematographic art of other nations to Armenia." After the end of the film the names of Golden Apricot's this year's winners were announced at the Latar hotel complex.

The Golden Apricot for the Best Feature Film was given to Moscow-based Armenian director Anna Melikian for her film The Mermaid. Silver prize in the Feature Films Competition was given to two directors simultaneously: Aditya Assarat, Thailand, for the film Wonderful Town and Eran Riklis, Israel, for his film Lemon Tree. The Jury Special Diploma in the same nomination was given to Iranian director Abolfazl Saffari for his film End of the Earth.

In the Documentary Film Competition the Golden Apricot was given to Meira Asher, Israel, for the film Women See Lot of Things. And the Silver Prize was given to Indian Nishta Jain for the film Lakshmi and Me.

In the Armenian Panorama Competition the Golden Apricot was given to American Armenian young director Eric Nazarian for his film The Blue Hour. And the Silver Prize was given to director Diana Mkrtchian, Russia, for her film Gata. The Jury Diploma was given to Mariam Ohanian, Yerevan, for her film Jrrarat. Miniatures.

FIPRESCI Award was given to director Huseyin Karabey, Turkey, for his film My Marlon and Brando. The director was also awarded Ecumenical Jury Diploma. And Ecumenical Jury Award was given to Eric Nazarian for his film The Blue Hour.

35. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT DECREES TO GRANT "BAREKAMUTYUN" STATE DANCING ENSEMBLE TITLE OF HONORABLE COLLECTIVE [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/28/07]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian decreed July 24 to grant "Barekamutyun" ("Friendship") state dancing ensemble a title of honorable collective for its contribution to the development of culture as well as high level of performance, presidential press service told Armenpress.

36. "ARNO BABAJANIAN" INTERNATIONAL SONG FESTIVAL TO BE ESTABLISHED [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

"Arno Babajanian" international song festival will be established in Armenia. The founding concert will take place on August 9 in the central square of Tsakhkadzor on the initiative of Armenian Culture Ministry, "Arno Babajanian Memory International Foundation" Armenian branch, Tsakhkadzor municipality and "Ovatsia" ("Ovation") producer center.

Jacques Hakobian, the director of the Armenian branch of the "Arno Babajanian Memory International Foundation", told Armenpress that in the first one mainly Armenian artists will participate – distinguished musicians Ruben Matevosian, Rayisa Mkrtchian, Leyla Saribekian, Alla Levonian and others as well as young performers.

"We hope that the festival will become a traditional one just like in Yurmala - either once in a year, or with more interval, I think that in the round of formation the Armenian government and those who love works of Arno Babajanian will help us," he said.

Friend of Arno Babajanian, composer, USSR people's artist Edward Mirzoyan described the future festival as a "great happiness, witness of immortality of the composer."

"I am happy that near the songs of Arno the ones of his contemporaries Konstantin Orbelian, Alexander Achemian and Khachatur Avetisian, which were highly assessed by Arno and which have had a great contribution to the development of estrade songs, will be performed," he said.



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Minister of Culture Hasmik Poghosian, composer, USSR people's artist Alexander Harutyunian and many others greeted the conduction of the festival.

37. MHER MESROPIAN OF ARMENIA COMES 5TH AT YURMALA SONG FESTIVAL [Aravot, 07/28/07]

The 26 year-old Mher Mesropian, who represented Armenia at New Wave pop music festival in Yurmala, Latvia, came in 5-th. He scored a total of 341 points.

The first prize was won by a pop singer from Georgia, the second from Russia and the third by a singer from Italy. Overall 17 singers representing 14 countries took part in the festival.

The prize fund, \$100,000, will be distributed to three winners. The first winner will get \$50,000, the other two \$30,000 and \$20,000 respectively.

38. 100th ANNIVERSARY OF ADANA MASSACRE TO BE MARKED IN 2009 [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

Next year the 100th anniversary of Adana massacre will be marked. Composer Ara Gevorgian's work Adana which is devoted to the memory of the victims of Armenian Genocide has been recorded in 17 languages, including Turkish. The name of the Turkish performer is kept secret. This was announced by the famed composer during the press conference held at Armenia's National Library on July 28.

In the words of Hayk Demoyan, the director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, what can be conveyed by song cannot be done by diplomacy. The singers Inka (Finland), Luise Werner (Sweden), Kai Auhagen (Germany), and Daniel Decker (USA) share the same opinion. "The whole mankind should be aware of what happened so that new tragedies would be excluded. And the song has gained great popularity in our countries", they underlined.

Felix Bakhchinian, the director of the Fridtjof Nansen Fund, gave commemorative medals to A. Gevorgian, D. Decker, Inka, L. Werner, and K. Auhagen.

39. INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PANTOMIME THEATRES TO BE HELD AUGUST 10-15 [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

International festival of pantomime theatres will be held in Tsakhkadzor August 10-15. An official from the Armenian Culture Ministry told Armenpress that theatres from Spain, Italy, Greece, Russia and other countries applied for participation in the festival.

The event is being organized in joint collaboration of Yerevan Pantomime State Theatre, Culture Ministry, Union of Armenian Theatrical Figures and National Theatrical Creative Union.

The festival is planned to be conducted once in two years.

RELIGION

40. REPRESENTATIVE OF HOLY SEE OF ST. ETCHMIADZIN PARTICIPATES IN LAMBETH CONFERENCE [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

The 14th Lambeth Conference kicked off July 19 in the campus of the University of Kent situated on a hill to the south of Canterbury and will last until August 3.

Press service of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin told Armenpress that Karekin II sent his blessing to the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and all the participants of the conference.

With the blessing of Catholicos Karekin II the primate of the USA Western Diocese of the Armenian Church Archbishop Hovnan Terterian is participating in the conference representing the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin.

The Lambeth Conference is Anglican Communion's bishops gathering which is being held once in 10 years. It discusses a number of issues the Anglican Communion's churches are facing as well as contemporary challenges of the world.



SOCIAL

41. ARMENIAN CITIZEN OF NETHERLANDS ARRESTED FOR TRYING TO SMUGGLE PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS [ARMENPRESS, 07/25/07]

Officers of the special squad of the state customs committee arrested July 22 an ethnic Armenian citizen of the Netherlands for trying to smuggle into Armenia an 'unprecedented' big batch of psychoactive drugs.

The man, Armen Hovhanesian, was arrested at Zvartnots airport together with undeclared 'methadone hydro chloride' drugs. He arrived by Amsterdam-Yerevan flight.

According to the press division of the state customs committee, Armen Hovhanesian avoided going through customs by choosing the green path trying to smuggle in 600 tablets of the psychoactive drug.

The press division of the customs committee said also the same day that customs officers confiscated 100 tins of caviar (11 kg) from a Georgian citizen who was trying to smuggle them into Armenia at Bavra customs house.

42. TSAHKKADZOR TO HOST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/07]

Turkey, Nigeria, Greece, Poland, Georgia, Iran, Belarus, China, Syria and Ukraine have confirmed that they will send their young people to Armenia for a week-long gathering to be organized by Armenian Sport and Youth Issues Ministry in cooperation with the Center for Youth Events, Pan-Armenian International Youth Center Foundation and the International Center for Inter-cultural Studies, Education and Dialogue.

The gathering will be held in the resort town of Tsakhkadzor on August 20-28. Arsen Soghomonian, head of youth policy department of the Sports and Youth Issue Ministry, told Armenpress that young people from about 100 countries are expected in Armenia.

He said the festival's goal organized under the motto of Cultural Dialogue is to enhance dialogue among young people of different cultures.

Each country will send 3-5 people who will represent their countries' cultures and traditions.

43. TWENTY-EIGHT PEOPLE APPLIED FOR TEMPORARY REFUGE IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Twenty-eight foreigners applied to Armenian authorities in the first half of this year seeking temporary refuge.

Ruzana Petrosian, head of a division of the migration and refugees department of the Territorial Ministry told Armenpress that 24 of them were Iraqis and the other 4 from Iran and Lebanon.

All applicants are granted a three-month temporary residence and when this expires they can seek temporary refugee status.

44. GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCE EARNED 2.4 BILLION DRAMS FROM TOURISM INDUSTRY IN FIRST HALF [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Hakob Badalian, head of the provincial statistical agency in Gegharkunik, told Armenpress that the region earned a total of 2.4 billion Drams from tourism industry in the first half of the year.

According to him, good weather is to account for it too as the bulk of earnings came from holiday-makers who spent their weekends near Lake Sevan.

Many Armenians prefer to spend their weekends at rural communities located on the lake's shore. They are Shorzha, Areguni, Artanish, Norashen and some others.

Apart from hotels and resort homes there are 6,000 cottages which can accommodate 20,000 people. According to local authorities some 180,000 people visited the area.

The anticipated earnings from tourism by the end of the year are about 2-15 billion drams.



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45. "MONUMENT RESTORATION CENTER" COMPANY TO BE ESTABLISHED [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

The government of Armenia decided at its today's session to approve the suggestion presented by the Armenian Ministry of Culture on creating "Monument Restoration Center" Closed Joint Stock Company.

Culture Minister Hasmik Poghosian said that the new company must be created as a result of merging of monument restoration "Shirak", "Gugark", "Tavush", "Vaik", "Aragatsotn", "Gegharkunik", "Zangezur" companies. The merging of the mentioned companies, according to the minister, is agreed with their bad financial condition.

The newly created "Monument Restoration Center" will be a specialized company which will also deal with the training and qualification of relevant staff. The state stocks of the company will be given to the Ministry of Culture.

In near future it is necessary to present to the government's approval the statute of the company.

46. BEELINE UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHED IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

The staff training department of ArmenTel company has got a status of "Beeline" university. The head of "Vimpelcom" company's department dealing with the work with the staff and organizational development Galina Voronetskaya said today at a press conference that it is the first corporative university in Armenia which is also first one established by "Vimpelcom" outside of Russia.

"The education system of the university fully corresponds to the world standards of corporative education," Voronetskaya said, adding that in the market the fight goes in two directions – for the customer and for the highly-qualified specialist. According to her, in that respect the issue of the training of the staff has a strategic importance for the company.

The general director of "ArmenTel" company Neicho Velichkov noted that the company is carrying out a great number of reforms: it is implementing a number of investment projects and has ambitious programs for the future. As far as the customer is very demanding this circumstance brings new opportunities for continuative development of the company and developing new programs.

The university opened as a result of 1.5 years' activity and will support the strategic development of the company. The specialists who will give classes there have been selected by the company, their number is currently 17 and they are teaching the top-managers, managers and technical staff of the company.

47. ARMENIAN LECTURERS TO TRAIN IN USA IN SIDELINES OF YOUNG LECTURERS TRAINING PROGRAM [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

"American Councils of International Education" organization is carrying out training program for young lecturers of Armenia, CIS, Eastern European countries with the sponsorship of U.S State Secretariat's Education and Culture Affairs Department.

Press service of the Armenian Education and Science Ministry told Armenpress that the program gives an opportunity to the professors of the universities to train in several specializations architecture, art, business management, economy, education, nature protection, history, international relations, journalism, law, linguistics, literature, conflict regulation etc.

The participants of the program will be selected on the basis of an announced competition and will attend classes from January 2009 until the end of May in the United States, will participate in conferences and will be invited to give lectures in universities.

After program ends they will have an opportunity to establish close cooperation with their U.S. colleagues, develop new educational programs, study new teaching methods.

The deadline for submitting the applications for participation in the competition is August 29, 2008.



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48. SERZH SARGSIAN ADDRESSES PARTICIPANTS OF THIRD ALL-ARMENIAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan sent a message to the participants of the third All-Armenian educational conference. Presidential press service told Armenpress that in his message the president particularly said,

“I warmly greet the participants and guests of the second All-Armenian Educational conference. I am glad that the conference gathered in Armenia the devotees of preservation of Armenian education and upbringing abroad, the preservers of Armenia’s identity in Diaspora – Armenian teachers.

Today I direct my word of gratitude to each of you. You are carrying out the greatest mission of preserving Armenian – an Armenian, upbringing Armenians in foreign shores in Armenian traditions and teaching Armenian language. In this issue the Republic of Armenia also has serious work to do.

I am sure that by often visits to homeland, such like conferences and discussions you will take new knowledge, new spirit to pass to your pupils, who must continue the eternal pace of the Armenian people.

I wish the conference fruitful work and wish participants personal and professional success.”

49. PAN-ARMENIAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CENTER TO BUILD 100 HOUSES FOR KARABAKH WAR FIGHTERS [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

The Pan-Armenian International Youth Center has also responded to President Serzh Sargsyan’s call, which he made during a meeting with participants of Baze youth jamboree in Jermuk earlier this month.

The center said it will come out with an initiative to build 100 houses for families of young fighters killed in the Nagorno-Karabakh war, and those who were wounded in it. The center said it will handle the entire process – from designing of mansions to their construction.

The center said the first house will be built in the village of Jrashen, Ararat province. The ceremony will be held on July 30 in attendance of Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian, representatives of the Armenian Church and Pan-Armenian International Youth center.

50. 36 PERCENT OF ARMENIAN MIGRANTS CHOOSE RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

A survey conducted by the Armenian National Statistical Service among 2,500 Armenian households who were wishing to move to other countries for permanent residence between 2002-2007, found that the majority- 36.5 %- would choose to settle down in Russia, 21 percent would choose USA, 11.5 percent Ukraine, 6 percent Georgia and 14 percent other countries.

The findings of this survey were unveiled today by Karine Kuyumjian, head of demography and census department of the Statistical Service, who said that 92 percent of Armenians who moved to other countries in that time span were aged 15-59, while the median age was 35 years and the majority had secondary education.

The survey also found that 68 percent of all migrants were married, 67 percent were hired workers, 9 percent were self-employed and 3 percent were unemployed. The majority of Armenian migrants were engaged in construction sector, 18 percent in trade and services.

Piir Ziben, UN Population Fund South Caucasus Regional Director, said the survey has brought to surface a string of interesting results that may be used by the government to develop a more specific migration policy.

Piir Ziben drew attention on the fact that Armenia has actually joined nations with aging population. He said the survey may be used also in planning the number of schools and other institutions, as well as teachers and so on.

According to survey, almost 88 percent of Armenian migrants described their stay in foreign countries as ‘successful.’ Nine percent of returned migrants said they came back because of failing to find a job.

The survey was conducted in cooperation with Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry and the UN Population Fund. It was started in 2001 in the aftermath of the latest Armenian population census.



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51. SIX ARMENIAN CITIES AND TOWNS HAVE SISTER-TOWN AGREEMENTS WITH 36 CITIES AND TOWNS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Six Armenian cities and towns have signed sister-town agreements with 36 cities and towns in different countries.

The press division of the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that Yerevan has signed sister-city agreements with 26 cities. The first was signed in 1965 with Italian Karrara and the last was signed with Los Angeles, USA, in 2007.

The second largest Armenian city of Gyumri has signed sister-town agreements with Alexandria (USA), Osasko (Brazil) and Plovdiv (Bulgaria).

The third largest town of Vanadzor signed the first such agreement with French Bagno in 1968, and also with Pasadena in the USA and Batumi in Georgia.

Ijevan's sister town is French Valence, Jermuk has signed agreements with Sain Rafael, Kapanin and Glendale in the USA.

Nagorno-Karabkh's capital Stepanakert has signed a sister-town agreement with Montebello in California, USA.

52. SCHOOLS IN SHIRAK PROVINCE UNDER MAJOR REPAIR [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Secondary schools in five communities of the northwestern Shirak will have been repaired this year on 320 million Drams released by the government. These communities are Musaelian, Torosgyugh, Amasia, Pemzashen and Meghrashen.

Some 80 million Drams of this money will be spent on the repair of the school in Musaelian and 47 million on the school in Torosgyugh.

Albert Margarian, head of the urban department at the provincial governor's office, told Armenpress that the majority of 163 secondary schools of the province need gyms and modern heating systems and 80 other schools need to be reconstructed.

53. ISSUES ON RESTORATION OF TAVUSH AND VAYOTS DZOR WATER SUPPLY AND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

Deputy head of the State Water Economy Committee of the Armenian Territorial Governance Ministry Ruben Abrahamian left on July 27 to Tavush and Vayots Dzor provinces on a working visit.

Press service of the committee told Armenpress that R. Abrahamian met with the director of "Debed-Aghstev-Jrar" company and directors of "Khndzorut," "Ijevan, Noyemberian," "Berd" water companies.

In Vayots Dzor he conducted meetings with the "Vaik" and "Yeghegnadzor" water companies and discussed the process of charging irrigation water fees as well as the pace of the reconstruction of irrigation systems on the funds provided from the state budget. The people responsible for the work assured that the reconstruction works are going on and will be finished by the end of the year.

On the same day other deputy head of the committee Gagik Khachatrian left for the province of Lori, got acquainted with the pace of work of restoration of water-supply and water removal systems carried out within the framework of German credit program.

Together with the people responsible for the water supply system and the head of the German "GITEC" consulting organization they discussed the future steps. The aim of the carried out program is to restore the water supply and water irrigation systems of Lori's Vanadzor town and other 16 settlements.

54. NO ARMENIAN CITIZEN INJURED IN ISTANBUL BLASTS [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

No Armenian citizens were injured as a result of blasts in Istanbul, spokesman for the Armenian Foreign Minister Tigran Balayan told Armenpress.

Late in the evening of July 27, two blasts hit the Istanbul taking lives of 17 people. Around 154 were injured, the condition of 14 of them is grave. The blasts occurred almost at the same time in crowded district of the town.

The European establishments condemned the terrorist act and expressed their condolences to the relatives of the victims.



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55. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT MEETS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN CRIMEA [ARMENPRESS, 07/29/07]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian who is in Crimea, Ukraine, accompanied with the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, visited July 28 Yalta's St. Hripsime church where the president and Catholicos met with the hundreds of representatives of the Armenian community the major part of which came to participate in the event dedicated to the 650th anniversary of the St. Cross monastery complex and consecration ceremony of St. Cross Church.

After the greeting speech of the Catholicos, President Serzh Sargsian expressed his joy over visiting St. Hripsime and meeting compatriots.

"We have come to share our joy together, we have come to say that you have homeland, we have come to say that we will help you in any issue," the president stated. "Republic of Armenia bears certain responsibility in front of the Armenian community. Armenia needs you and we want your glance be directed towards Armenia, we assure you that each of you has its place and activity in Armenia, you have your home in Armenia."

The Armenian president and Catholicos got acquainted with the church and the works carried out there and visited the tomb of well-known artist Vardges Surenyants.

56. SEVENTEEN COMPANIES EXPRESSED WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN TENDER FOR THE THIRD MOBILE TELEPHONE OPERATOR IN ARMENIA [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 07/30/08]

About seventeen companies applied for the participation in the tender for the third mobile telephone operator in Armenia. They are "France Telecom" (France), "CEO Blackrock Communications" (Ireland), "V-Tel" (Jordan), "GEO" (England), "M\$A Tele2 AB" (Sweden), "Knightsbridge International Telecommunications Holding", (Austria), "Aetos Consulting Limited", (England), "Kalba International" (Egypt), "AAA Capital GmbH" (German), "Auroratel" (Russia), "PJ Engineering" (Finland), "Eventis Telecom" (Russia), "EEC group" (Egypt), "mmC Group" (Spain), "Samsson group" (Germany).

By the way "SALEM AGENCIES AND SERVICES CO" (SAS) and "JGAG" companies also expressed wish to participate in the tender but have not mentioned what country they are representing.

Press secretary of the Armenian transport and communication minister Susanna Tonoyan told Armenpress that the tender commission will publish the names of the companies which will pass the next round of the tender in 40 days. After that in another 40-day period the companies must present applications-suggestions to the commission. The name of the third mobile operator will be known in December.

57. 20,000 PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY TOURISM COMPANIES [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

So far Armenian Economy Ministry has licensed 124 guides for the country's tourism sector. The ministry started this process in 2005.

The press division of the ministry told Armenpress that out of 70 big and small hotels only 6 have received qualification. It said this process is voluntary and each hotel undergoing it receives then a special certificate indicating the number of its 'stars.'

Tourism was declared by the government as one of its priorities. It has helped to improve substantially infrastructures which contribute to tourism boosting-highways and roads, airports were made to comply with international standards, the number of hotels has increased along with the number of cafes, restaurants and entrainment facilities. The quality of services has also risen.

As a result more and more people visit Armenia. Particularly, 83,000 tourists visited Armenia in the first quarter of this year, by 15 percent more from a year before. The overall number of tourists by the end of the year is expected to grow 20 percent.

Some 20,000 people are employed now directly by tourism-related companies, who make 1.7 percent of the overall work force.

In the 2007 index of World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Armenia was rated 74 of 124 surveyed countries.



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58. EIGHTY-TWO ARMENIANS APPLY FOR 71 PLACES IN ACADEMIES OF GREECE AND RUSSIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

Eighty-two Armenians have applied for 71 places available for Armenian cadets in 18 military academies of Greece and Russia.

To become eligible the applicants will have to pass a series of examinations, which are now underway. Armenian cadets will be majoring in prestigious Russian military academies in Moscow, Ryazan, Voronezh (Russia) and in Greece.

Murad Isakhanian, head of a Defense Ministry department in charge of military education and personnel, told Armenpress that many third-year cadets from Armenian academies and officers continue their education in Italy, Germany, China and USA.

59. STREETS IN GEGHARKUNIK COMMUNITIES ASPHALTED, NIGHT ILLUMINATION RESTORED [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

The Noratus community in Gegharkunik province has released 20 million Drams from its budget to back up the repair of the village's central street that will be covered with asphalt.

Community head Andranik Hakobian told Armenpress that the street will be entirely covered with asphalt in one month.

The local budget also released 7 million Drams for restoration and expansion of the village's night illumination system. Now three of its streets have night-time illumination.

Asphalting works are underway also in Martuni, a town in Gegharkunik. According to its mayor Bagrat Harutyunian, the mayor's office released 18 million drams to this end. The community spent also 15 million drams to restore its night illumination system.

SPORTS

60. GYUMRI-KARS FOOTBALL FRIENDLY GAME TO BE HELD IN KARS AND GYUMRI [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Before Armenia-Turkey football match Gyumri-Kars friendly game will be held August 9 in Kars. The response match will take place in Gyumri on August 14. Though the teams are not finally formed it is already clear that they will consist of representatives of the mass media, cultural sphere and non-governmental organizations of the two towns.

The initiative of conduction of the football game belongs to the president of Gyumri's "Asparez" press club Levon Barseghian. During the meeting with the reporters he said that for the organization of the game they had to visit Kars three times, meet with authorities, local mass media, and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

The organizers assure that this football meeting does not have any political color, is not a professional game and is aimed at establishing ties between the two countries.

The Armenian side will leave for Turkey to participate in the game on August 8.

61. 51 ARMENIAN DELEGATES TO LIVE IN OLYMPIC DISTRICT [ARMENPRESS, 07/28/07]

Around 51 Armenian athletes, coaches, doctors as well as the head of the Armenian delegation to Beijing Derenik Gabrielian will live in a Beijing Olympic Games District.

The presidents, prime ministers and heads of national Olympic committees will have special residences according to their official status. The ceremonial opening of the Olympic district will take place July 27.

D. Gabrielian told Armenpress that Armenia's first Olympic group will leave for Beijing on July 31.

62. HRIPSIME KHURSHUDIAN TO LEAVE FOR BEIJING INSTEAD OF MELINE DALUZIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

Meline Daluzian (Gyumri), a member of the women's weightlifting national team preparing for Beijing Olympic Games in the sports settlement of Podolsk, Moscow region, was taken to hospital due to the disease of pancreas. Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed about it on July 28 by the Press Office of the Armenian National Olympic Committee.



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It was mentioned that M. Daluzian needs a long-lasting treatment and Hripsime Khurshudian (Kasakh) has left for Podolsk instead of her to take part in the teaching and training gathering. The latter will take part in Beijing Olympic Games.

63. GAGIK GRIGORIAN RECEIVES BRONZE MEDAL IN EUROPEAN WEIGHTLIFTING YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/29/08]

European Weightlifting Youth Championship finished on July 27 in the city of Amien, France. Representative of the Armenian national team Gagik Grigorian (85 kg, Gyumri) showed 135 kg result in the clean and jerk exercise and received a bronze medal, lifted 155 kg weight and took the 4th place with 290 kg biathlon result.

64. ARTHUR ABRAHAM TO TAKE ON RAUL MARKES ON OCTOBER 4 [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

Armenia-born IBF world champion Arthur Abraham will take on Raul Markes of the USA on October 4 to retain his champion's title.

In all likelihood, the fight, according to Sport Today magazine, will take place in Germany.

Arthur Abraham's major goal is to win champion titles in all versions. To archive this he will have to fight against Oscar de la Hoya and Kelly Pavlik. The latter is WBC and WBO world champion.

65. FIRST ARMENIAN DELEGATION LEAVE FOR BEIJING [ARMENPRESS, 07/30/08]

The first Armenian delegation left for Beijing, China, on July 29. They are Derenik Gabrielian, head of the Armenian Olympic delegation, Bagrat Burnazian and Anjela Mirzoyan, two senior officials of the Sport and Youth Affairs Ministry.

In Beijing they will tackle issues connected with reception and accommodation of Armenian athletes in the Olympic Village.

Produced by AGBU Armenian Representation

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Established in 1906, AGBU (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.