



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. SERZH SARGSYAN HAS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH GEORGIAN PRESIDENT [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/18/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan late August 15 had a telephone conversation with Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. NT was informed by the RA president's press service that S. Sargsyan expressed condolence on many deaths as a result of the recent events in Georgia. He reasserted Armenia's willingness to provide the necessary humanitarian aid to the victims.

#### 2. CEC REGISTERS ALL CANDIDATES FOR PREFECT AND ELDERS COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN YEREVAN DISTRICTS [Aravot, 08/19/08]

Tatevik Ohanian, a press secretary for the Central Election Commission (CEC), said to Armenpress that the CEC registered all candidates for prefect and elders council elections in several Yerevan districts scheduled for September 7.

She said one of the candidates, Nelsik Grigorian, a non-partisan, who intended to contest the post of prefect of Kanaker-Zeytoon district, walked out of the race. Other districts are Achapnyak, Arabkir, Erebuni, Malatia-Sebastia and Nubarashen.

The highest competition will be in Arabkir district where the prefect's post will be contested by several candidates representing the governing Republican Party, the opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party, a non-partisan candidate and one from the recently established Armenian National Congress.

It will be tough also in Kanaker Zeytoon district, where the post will be contested by candidates from the ruling party, opposition and a non-partisan.

#### 3. BY PRELIMINARY RESULTS, MEMBER OF "PROSPEROUS ARMENIA" PARTY HAKOB BALASIAN WINS ELECTIONS OF BYUREGHAVAN MAYOR [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/19/08]

By preliminary results of the August 17 early elections of the head of the Byureghavan city community (Kotayk marz), Hakob Balasian - chief of the staff of Kotayk regional administration, member of "Prosperous Armenia" party, has won the elections: 2,078 electors voted for him. NT correspondent was informed by spokesperson for the RA Central Electoral Commission Tatev Ohanian that H. Balasian's rivals: non-party man, head of a unit of World Vision International organization Nver Stepanian and non-party man, unemployed Valery Grigorian received 659 and 632 votes respectively.

3,462 out of the 7,406 voters in Byureghavan participated in the voting. 96 voting papers were recognized as invalid. The number of inaccuracies made 7.

#### 4. FOREIGN MINISTERS OF ARMENIA AND RUSSIA DISCUSS WIDE RANGE OF REGIONAL ISSUES [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08]

During his working visit to Moscow, the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian met with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on August 17.

According to the RA MFA Press and Information Department, the meeting lasted about two and a half hours, during which the foreign ministers of the two countries discussed in detail a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues.

#### 5. THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS, NKR PRESIDENT SAYS [Aravot, 08/19/08]

A sitting of the Security Council presided over by President of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakian took place on August 19. Speaking about the recent developments in the region, B. Sahakian said that there is no alternative to peaceful resolution of conflicts.

According to the Main Information Department of the NKP President's Staff, a number of internal republican problems, including issues related to energy security were discussed at the sitting. The NKR president gave instructions to the heads of the respective bodies.



## 6. CURRENT HEAD OF EREBUNI DISTRICT GIVES UP FURTHER ELECTORAL STRUGGLE [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08]

The current head of Yerevan's Erebuni district, member of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) Mher Sedrakian on August 19 officially withdrew his candidacy, thus refusing to run in the elections of the district head to be held on September 7, NT correspondent was informed by spokesperson for the RA Central Electoral Commission Tatev Ohanian. Thus, the current deputy head of Erebuni district, RPA member Armen Harutyunian remains the only candidate for the post of the district head.

Three candidates: the current head of the district, RPA member Arayik Kotanjian, the son of the founding chairman of "Democratic Way" party Manuk Gasparian, member of the same party Manuel Gasparian and non-party man Varuzhan Mkrtychian have been registered to run in the elections of the head of Yerevan's Kanaker-Zeytun community on the same day.

Two candidates: the current head of the district, member of "Prosperous Armenia" party Mher Hovhannisian and RPA member Ggaik Hovsepian have been registered to run in the elections of the head of the city's Nubarashen district.

Four candidates: the current district head, RPA member Hovhannes Shahinian, owner of Yeritsian & Sons company, non-party man Albert Yeritsian, member of "Heritage" party, former member of the RA Central Electoral Commission Zoya Tedevosian and representative of the Progressive Party of Armenia Ashot Mnatsakanian have been registered to run in elections of the head of Yerevan's Arabkir community.

## 7. PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN MERGES TWO AGENCIES INTO ONE STATE REVENUES COMMITTEE [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 08/20/08]

President Serzh Sargsyan signed today a decree to merge the State Taxation Service (STS) and the State Customs Committee (SCC) into a single government affiliated State Revenues Committee (SRC).

The president also instructed the government to adopt legal standards stemming from the decree before January 1, 2009.

By another decree Serzh Sargsyan dismissed Vahram Barseghian from the office of head of the State Taxation Service. The president signed another decree to dismiss Gagik Khachatryan as head of the State Customs Committee and appoint him as head of the State Revenues Committee.

## 8. EDWARD NALBANDIAN RECEIVES SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian received today secretary general of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Nikolay Bordyuzha.

The press division of the foreign ministry told Armenpress that Edward Nalbandian and Nikolay Bordyuzha discussed Armenia's upcoming rotating chairmanship of the CSTO and the plan of actions to be implemented during that time, as well as some issues relating to the CSTO foreign ministers meeting in Kislovodsk and other issues related to CSTO.

They also exchanged ideas on the organization's agenda issues and ways to solve them.

## 9. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WELCOMES ERDOGAN STATEMENT [Azg, 08/20/08]

'Armenia has always been for dialogue and negotiations, especially on issues that relate to the regional cooperation and security,' Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian said today to Turkish Zaman which asked him to comment on Turkey's prime minister Recep Erdogan's statement on intention to start negotiations with Armenia.

Edward Nalbandian welcomed Erdogan's statement on Turkey's intention.



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## BUSINESS

### 10. TAX REVENUES OF STATE BUDGET GROW BY 34.9% IN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2008 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/18/08]

Tax revenues of the RA state budget made more than 275 billion drams (about 894.1 mln USD) in the first six months of 2008, which ensured 105.1% fulfillment of the six months' program and 47.3% fulfillment of the annual program. Tax revenues grew by 34.9% or 71.9 billion drams as compared with the same period of 2007. High growth rates were recorded with respect to almost all types of taxes (except for simplified tax).

According to data of the press service of the RA ministry of finance, value added tax (VAT) revenues made over 141.6 bln drams in January-June 2008, which made up 51.5% of all tax revenues. Out of the indicated sum, 88.4 bln drams was received from taxation on the borders of Armenia, and 53.2 bln drams - from taxation of the domestic turnover of goods and services. VAT revenues of the state budget increased by 46.3% or nearly 44.8 bln drams on the same period of last year. Sums from taxation of both imports and domestic turnover increased.

Excise tax revenues amounted to 20.9 bln drams in the first half of 2008, which accounted for 7.6% of the total amount of tax revenues. In particular, about 14.2 bln drams was received from taxation of excise tax liable goods imported into Armenia, including 6.3 bln drams from taxation of gasoline and diesel fuel and 5.8 bln drams from taxation of cigarettes.

State budgetary revenues from taxation of excise tax liable goods made in Armenia amounted to 6.7 bln drams, including about 3 bln drams from taxation of domestically made cigarettes.

Excise tax revenues grew by 16.9% or over 3 bln drams as compared with the same period of 2007, which was mainly due to the increase in revenues from the import of gasoline and cigarettes and sale of domestically made cigarettes. A growth in excise tax revenues was also recorded with respect to imported and domestically made alcoholic drinks.

### 11. PROFIT TAX REVENUES OF ARMENIA'S STATE BUDGET GROW BY 24.5%, INCOME TAX REVENUES BY 23.9% IN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2008 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/18/08]

Profit tax revenues amounted to over 46.5 bln drams (about 151.2 mln USD) and made up 16.9% of the total tax revenues of the state budget of the Republic of Armenia in the first half of 2008. Profit tax revenues increased by 24.5% or about 9.2 bln drams as compared with the same period of 2007, which was mainly conditioned by a growth in profit tax paid by the financial and credit organizations, and by the growth in payments made by non-state organizations based on the paying the minimum profit tax by 1% rate.

According to data of the press service of the RA ministry of finance, income tax revenues of the state budget made over 23.8 bln drams in the first six months of 2008, accounting for 8.7% of the total tax revenues and exceeding by 23.9% or 4.6 bln drams the index of the same period of last year. The main sources of this growth were revenues from execution of labor and civil contracts, which exceeded by 4.3 bln drams the respective index of last year.

A considerable growth in customs duties was also registered in January-June of 2008 on the same months of 2007: this growth made over 15.4 bln drams, exceeding by 59.5% or over 5.7 bln drams the index of the first half of 2007. 5.6% fulfillment of tax revenues of the state budget was ensured.

The collection of fixed payments for various types of activities amounted to about 9 bln drams, exceeding by 6.9% or 577.9 mln drams the index of the first half of 2007. This growth was mainly due to an increase in revenues from organization of gas filling stations and trade points, as well as from organization of activities in trade and public catering. At the same time, there was a decline in payments collected from organizations engaged in transportation activity and organization of lotteries.

Simplified taxes of a total of 3.3 bln drams were transferred to the RA state budget in the first half of 2008. Simplified tax revenues declined by 27.8% or 1.3 bln drams as compared with the same period of 2007 as a result of the amendments made in the RA Law on Simplified Tax. By these amendments, the types of activities liable to simplified tax were reduced on January 1, 2008, as well as some restrictions were introduced for organizations and private businessmen engaged in trade.



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## 12. INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION DECLINES BY 0.2% IN ARMENIA IN FIRST HALF OF 2008 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08]

Industrial production of 356 bln 959.2 mln drams or over 1 bln 160.5 mln USD was made in Armenia in January-June 2008. Sales amounted to 352 bln 395.9 mln drams, including sales of 34 bln 695.6 mln drams in CIS countries and sales of production of 82 bln 889.8 mln drams in other countries.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, the industrial production index made 99.8% in the indicated period as compared with January-June 2007. The same index without the production and distribution of electricity, gas and water made 98.9%.

## 13. TRADE GROWS BY 5.9%, SERVICES BY 16.2% IN ARMENIA IN FIRST HALF OF 2008 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2007 [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08]

Trade amounted to 659 bln 614.1 mln drams or over 2 bln 144.5 mln USD in current prices in Armenia in January-June 2008, growing by 5.9% in comparable prices as compared with the index of the same period of 2007.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, retail trade made 412 bln 893.4 mln drams in current prices in January-June 2008, growing by 5% in comparable prices on the same period of last year.

Services amounted to 324 bln 49.7 mln drams in current prices in January-June 2008, increasing by 16.2% in comparable prices as compared with the respective index of 2007.

## 14. PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES PACKAGE OF BILLS DESIGNED TO INCREASE TAX COLLECTION RATES AND RAISE BUSINESS TRANSPARENCY [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Deputy chief of the State Taxation Service (STS) Aharon Chilingarian presented yesterday to parliament a package of bills, designed to increase tax collection rates and raise business running transparency.

He said many business transactions are carried out without proper documents which entails to tax breaches and diminishes the efficacy of tax administration.

One of the proposed bills sets responsibility for this breach, while corporate businesses that will report on their partners who avoid providing required documents, will be exempted from responsibility.

Another bill proposes that all business entities with less than 70 million drams turnover annually be exempted from VAT. According to Chilingarian, all calculations show that law-abiding business people will not suffer losses.

Another bill raises the volume of penalties for business entities, including traders at retail markets and kiosks that will fail to install cash registers or use them with breaches. These changes are to come into effect starting from January 1, 2009.

The parliament is expected to debate and adopt the bills in the second and final third reading during this extraordinary session.

## DIASPORA

### 15. "DZAYN HAMSHENAKAN" AVAILABLE IN INTERNET [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/18/08]

"Dzayn Hamshenakan" ("Voice of Hamshen") newspaper, which has been published in Armenia since August 2004, is now available to readers around the world. According to "Yerkramas" paper of Russia's Armenians, it became possible thanks to posting all issues of the newspaper (from the very first one) on its website: <http://www.dzyanhamshenakan.org>). "Dzayn Hamshenakan" is released by Armenia-based "Hamshen" Benevolent Union of Compatriots. Its editor is writer, journalist, historian-ethnographer, deputy chairman of "Hamshen" organization Sergei Vardanian.

### 16. HOW MANY TIMES LOS ANGELES TIMES? [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08] By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier

Even though I am getting tired of requesting the same correction from the Los Angeles Times every few months, the newspaper's reporters do not seem to get tired of making the same mistake! Readers can probably guess by now that I am talking about another improper reference to the Armenian Genocide in the Times. This time, reporter Agustin Gurza is the culprit.



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In the newspaper's Calendar Section of August 9, Mr. Gurza wrote a lengthy front-page feature article about the U.S. debut of the Armenian Navy Band -- a 12-piece folk-fusion ensemble from Armenia -- at the prestigious Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

I was surprised and annoyed to read in that article, the following mischaracterization of the Armenian Genocide: "Armenians carry in their collective DNA the memory of what they consider a genocide by the Turks in the early 20th century." Mr. Gurza should have known that the Armenian Genocide is universally acknowledged, except for Turkish denialists and their paid cohorts. The reporter's faulty statement also violates the Times' editorial policy on the Armenian Genocide.

Unfortunately, this is not the first such mistake by a Times' reporter; nor it would be the last. In recent years, this newspaper has published countless corrections on this issue. Over a year ago, there was a major confrontation between the Armenian community and Times' editors, when Managing Editor Douglas Frantz blocked the publication of an article on the Armenian Genocide written by reporter Mark Arax. The controversy was settled when Times' Publisher David Hiller reassured the community that no further deviation from the newspaper's established policy on the Armenian Genocide would be tolerated. Mr. Frantz is no longer employed at the Times.

Six months later, reporter Richard Simon, in his October 3, 2007 article, once again mischaracterized the Armenian Genocide. Two days after I complained to Mr. Hiller, the Times printed the following correction: "Armenian genocide: An article in Wednesday's Section A about a bill to recognize the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks as genocide said, 'Armenians say that 1.5 million of their people perished as part of a campaign to drive them out of eastern Turkey.' The statement should not have been attributed solely to Armenians; historical evidence and research support the accuracy of the term genocide."

Less than a year after that correction, reporter Gurza repeated the same mistake in his August 9, 2008 article. Assuming that as an entertainment reporter he may not be aware of his newspaper's policy on the Armenian Genocide, I called him on August 11 to let him know about his possibly inadvertent error. As he was not at his desk, I left a message on his voice mail.

When I did not hear from Mr. Gurza, I contacted directly the editors of the Times. I received a prompt call the next day, saying that the editors had reviewed my complaint, found it justified, and promised to publish an appropriate correction shortly. Indeed, in the August 14 issue of the newspaper, the following correction appeared:

"Armenian band: An article in Saturday's Calendar section about the Armenian Navy Band, making its U.S. debut Friday at Walt Disney Concert Hall, said 'Armenians carry in their collective DNA the memory of what they consider a genocide by the Turks in the early 20th century.' The statement should not have qualified the term 'genocide'; historical evidence and research support the accuracy of the term."

This correction is almost identical to the one published almost a year ago. Although some of our readers see a conspiracy behind the newspaper's repeated improper references to the Armenian Genocide, I disagree. I believe that these errors are simply caused by uninformed or negligent reporters. Since hundreds of journalists work at the Times, and there is a high turnover, it is understandable that new staff members may not be aware of the newspaper's policy on the Armenian Genocide.

Even though I am getting tired of contacting the Times, asking for yet another correction, let's look at the bright side. The editors of the Times have always graciously accepted my complaint and promptly published the requested correction.

Furthermore, each time that the Times makes such a mistake, it creates yet another opportunity for the newspaper to reconfirm the facts of the Armenian Genocide and remind both current and newly hired staff of its time-honored policy on this issue.

## 17. GEORGIA USES OLYMPIC GAMES AS COVER TO ATTACK SOUTH OSSETIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08] By Appo Jabarian Executive Publisher/Managing Editor USA ARMENIAN LIFE Magazine

During numerous previous decades, at a time when Olympic Games were in progress, many warring nations voluntarily abstained from any military activity. No country staged a military aggression against another country.

Recently the former Soviet Republic of Georgia broke that tradition. Using the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a distracting cover, Georgia initiated a military aggression against the tiny breakaway state of South Ossetia.

Apparently Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili hoped that the international community would be preoccupied by the Olympics, and his troops would stage a Nazi-style blitzkrieg attack against the Ossetians.



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But the Saakashvili plan backfired. Russia rushed to the rescue of the Ossetians. Russia, determined not to squander away any opportunity to punish Georgia for its NATO ambitions, counter-attacked with its military might and literally subjected Saakashvili's country to a 5-day military siege.

On Tuesday August 12, just before USA Armenian Life Magazine went to press, the world media reported that Georgia unconditionally pulled its occupation armies out of South Ossetia's regional capital Tskhinvali and signed a peace accord negotiated by President Nicholas Sarkozy of France.

South Ossetia and Abkhazia have run their own affairs without international recognition since fighting to split from Georgia in the early 1990s. Both separatist provinces are backed by Russia.

On August 12, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin told CNN that "We do not want to believe that the United States has given a green light to this adventurous act, But our American colleagues are telling us that they're investigating now what may have happened in the channels of communication for Mr. Saakashvili to have behaved in such a reckless manner."

Harut Sassounian, the Publisher of The California Courier, wrote in his column: "In my judgment, Pres. Saakashvili, expecting political, if not military, support from the West, miscalculated badly Russia's devastating reaction when he initiated last week's surprise attack on South Ossetia. This breakaway region not only borders Russia, but its inhabitants are citizens of Russia, giving the Kremlin ample reason to intervene and carry out Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's declared intent 'to punish' Georgia's President."

One hopes that Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, Armenia's and Nagorno Karabagh Republic/Artsakh's neighbor to the East learns from his Georgian colleague Saakashvili's dire experience of political and military miscalculations. Back in March, Azerbaijan had organized a military incursion against Armenia and paid dearly for its testing of the Armenians' determination to fight back.

As for the Armenians of Javakhk, the Armenian region in Georgia, Saakashvili's oppressive regime has been systematically impoverishing them so that either they leave or assimilate. Below is an urgent appeal for help released on July 24 by Javakhk Armenians:

"JAVAKHK NEEDS HELP OF THE WHOLE WORLD. Dear compatriots, the democratic alliance 'United Javakhk,' a grassroots NGO, striving to defend the human rights of Javakhk's Armenians, was attacked and crushed without any solid legal ground by Georgian Special Operations Unit in the city of Akhalkalak."

The appeal continued: "At the current moment: 1) Over 500 Georgian special police officers are stationed in Javakhk region of Georgia (this is in addition to the regular police force); 2) Over 20 members of 'United Javakhk' were thrown in jail without due course/legal procedures; 3) The Georgian operatives too control over local internet provider and independent radio station. A number of other local media outlets are shut down, which effectively limits freedom of the media and access of the general public to information for the local population; 4) The office of "United Javakhk" had been illegally searched and weapons were 'found' (allegedly all planted by the Georgian police units); 5) The population of Akhalkalak and the entire region is under the constant threat of illegal arrests, beatings and other mass violations of human rights; and 6) Armenian and Georgian media and state authorities do not comment on the situation."

Not long ago, Kosovo, another breakaway region-turned an internationally recognized sovereign state, gained its independence from the Republic of Serbia. Rightfully, the international community rushed to recognize its independence.

But the international community's duty should not have stopped there. Setting the double standard aside, the world community should have recognized South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence from Georgia, and that of Nagorno Karabagh/Artsakh from Azerbaijan.

Having failed to complete its obligations, the international community now shoulders the responsibility of the loss of thousands of innocent lives in the Russia-Georgia-Ossetia war.

Future deadly aggression by the oppressive regimes of Azerbaijan and Georgia will further saddle the community with more responsibility for further human losses.

## SOCIAL

18. ACBA-CREDIT AGRICOLE BANK ASSUMES SPONSHORSHIP OF "HAYASTAN" FUND'S TELEMARATHON 2008 [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 08/18/08]

ACBA-Credit Agricole Bank has assumed sponsorship of "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund's Telemarathon 2008. In an official letter to the Fund's acting executive director Ara Vardanian, the director general of the bank Stepan Gishian stated that ACBA-Credit Agricole Bank is ready to sponsor Telemarathon 2008 and pay 15 million drams (about 50 thousand dollars).



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Thus, according to a press release of the Fund, Telemarathon 2008 already has two official sponsors in Armenia: the main sponsor is VivaCell company that has donated 304 mln drams, and the other sponsor is ACBA-Credit Agricole Bank. Active negotiations with other possible sponsors of Telemarathon are underway at the Yerevan executive unit of the Fund.

Telemarathon 2008 will be held in Los Angeles on November 27 of this year. This year's donations will be allocated to development programs of Armenian and Artsakh villages.

## 19. DENMARK TO HELP ARMENIA CREATE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS [ARMENPRESS, 08/19/08]

Armenian education and science ministry is negotiating a plan of joint cooperation with the government of Denmark in elementary and vocational education.

Artak Aghbalian, head of elementary and vocational education department of the ministry, told Armenpress that both sides are going to sign soon a memorandum of understanding. He said as part of cooperation Armenia will use Danish experience in creating new education standards. Also teachers of colleges and vocational schools will have training course.

Artak Aghbalian said the training course and creation of new standards are very important. He said Armenia has so far only 24 operating educational standards, 27 will have been developed this year and 100 more in 2009-2010.

## 20. HAYASTAN ALL-ARMENIAN FUND BEGINS PREPARATIONS FOR ANNUAL TELETHON-2008 [ARMENPRESS, 08/19/08]

'Hayastan' all-Armenian Fund said it began preparations for the annual Telethon-2008 that will be held simultaneously in the USA and Yerevan in November.

Ara Vardanian, the acting executive director of 'Hayastan' Fund, told Armenpress that the Fund has commissioned a new song for Telethon-2008 that will be ready in early October, but will be presented to public a week or two before the telethon.

Ara Vardanian said also that VivaCell phone mobile operator has pledged a 304 million Drams donation. Besides, he said, Acba Credit Agricole Bank joined several days ago the list of Telethon's sponsors. He said negotiations continue with other Armenian commercial banks to win their support for the event.

Ara Vardanian said donations this year are expected to be as generous as in the past and more of them are expected to come from Armenians in Armenia proper. He said the Fund will try to negotiate also with Russia-based Armenians to talk them into taking an active part in the event.

He said the raised proceeds will be spent on implementation of rural development programs both in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. He said the Fund and VivaCell are discussing also a new donation option via sms for donors who could donate no more than 500 drams.

He said a phonethon will be held also in France that will attract donors from other European countries. He said the Fund was considering also whether to hold a phonethon in Armenia or not. He said a radiothon was held in Lebanon 3 years ago and this year either a radiothon or a phonethon will be held there as well.

Before the telethon a big concert will be held in Nagorno-Karabakh on October 11 and October 18 in Yerevan 'to remind people about the Telethon-2008.'

## 21. ARMENIA SENDS REPAIRMEN TEAM TO GEORGIA HELP REPAIR KEY RAILWAY BRIDGE [ARMENPRESS, 08/19/08]

Armenia sent a 12-member repairmen team to Georgia to help it repair a key Georgian railway bridge exploded on August 16.

The bridge is located near the central Georgian town of Gori, 40 km west of Tbilisi. The Georgian government accused the Russians of blowing it up on Saturday, a charge strongly denied by Moscow.

Susana Tonoyan, a spokeswoman for Armenian transport and communications ministry, said repairs on the heavily damaged bridge got underway on Monday, but she declined to say when the repair will be over. Earlier Georgian authorities said it will be over in 2 days.

A total of 72 rail carriages loaded with goods bound for Armenia are currently stranded in the Georgian ports.

The railway is the main transport link between Armenia and the Georgian Black Sea ports of Batumi and Poti which process more than 90 percent of freight shipped to and from Armenia.



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## 22. CHILDREN OF ARMENIA FUND TO MARK THE 5-TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS INCEPTION IN ARMENIA [Azg, 08/19/08]

Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) will mark this month the 5-th anniversary of its inception in Armenia.

A press officer of the COAF told Armenpress that the Fund's ultimate goal is to help reduce poverty in the country through revival of Armenian rural communities and implementation of projects embracing children and young people.

On this occasion the COAF's main sponsors, donors and members of its Board will be visiting Armenia on August 22-25.

In Armenia they are expected to be received by the prime minister and education and science minister. The latter will award the ministry's gold medal and letters of appreciation to a group of COAF sponsors.

## 23. ARMENIA AND UNDP SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO FIGHT GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGES AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS [ARMENPRESS, 08/19/08]

Armenian nature protection minister Aram Harutyunian and UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Consuelo Vidal signed today in Yerevan a memorandum of understanding to fight global climate changes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The minister recalled that Armenia had signed the Kyoto Protocol, the main tool to fight climate changes, back in 2002. Under the treaty Armenia has no green gas emission commitment, but it enables Armenia to cooperate with other countries as part of Clean Development Mechanisms project, designed to help nations ensure sustainable economic development and solve nature protection and other problems.

According to Consuelo Vidal, one of the UNDP Armenia Office's major directions is to help Armenia overcome the consequences of global climate changes.

## 24. ARMAVIA TO MAKE ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS TO RUSSIAN MOSCOW, SAMARA AND KRASNODAR [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Armenia's national carrier Armavia said it will operate additional flights to Russian Moscow, Samara and Krasnodar this month.

Nana Avetisova, a spokeswoman for Armavia, told Armenpress that the decision was made based on the growing demand.

Armavia operates three regular weekly flights to Krasnodar, one to Samara and five to Moscow.

Nana Avetisova said Armavia had already made extra flights to Russian Moscow, Minvody and Stavropol earlier this month.

## 25. ON OCTOBER 4-5 YEREVAN WILL HOST THE SECOND ARMTECH CONGRESS-2008 [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

On October 4-5 Yerevan will host the second conference-exhibition ArmTech Congress-2008, dedicated to high technologies. It will be held under the high aegis of prime minister Tigran Sargsyan and its topic will be 'To Learn from the Past, to Reveal the Future.'

The press division of the economy ministry told Armenpress that the conference's goal is to bring together high technology specialists and enhance this sector's development in Armenia.

Speakers will present the most latest global achievements and challenges in this area, as well as Armenian government's and local IT companies' activities. The conference is expected also to provide its participants with a broad avenue to boost the existing and establish new business ties.

The first ArmTech Congress-2007 was held in 2007 July 4-7 in San Francisco, USA.

## 26. ZVARTNOTS AIRPORT OPERATED 4,844 ARRIVING AND DEPARTING FLIGHTS IN THE FIRST 7 MONTHS [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Armenia's main Zvartnots airport operated some 4,844 arriving and departing flights in the first 7 months of this year, up from 4,299 flights from a year before.

The press division of the Armenian Civil Aviation Department told Armenpress that some 360,772 people were brought to Armenia by air, up from 336,950 from a year before.



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Also some 409,833 people left Armenia by air, up from 369,254 from a year before. Some 3,376 tons of goods were brought to Armenia by air in the first 7 months of 2008, and 2,375 tons were taken out of Armenia.

The second largest airport in the northwestern province of Shirak operated 90 arriving and departing flights which brought 5,354 and took away 8,490 people.

## 27. UNHCR AND ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT POPULATION MOVEMENT TO BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

The Georgian-Russian war prompted a big flow of population movement from Georgia to Armenia. After the end of active military actions, specialists of the Armenian Migration Agency of the Territorial Ministry and UNHCR Armenia Agency visited three crossing points on the Armenian-Georgian border to study the situation on the ground.

According to UNHCR Armenia Agency, some 11,000 people crossed into Armenia through Bagratashen border check point on August 8-18. For comparison, three days before the standoff, on August 5-7 only 400 foreigners crossed into Armenia through Bagratashen.

Part of foreigners who fled to Armenia used it as a transit country to fly home. The majority of foreigners were ethnic Armenians, citizens of Georgia-women and children who sought safe refuge in Armenia at their relatives and friends.

There were also ethnic Georgians and ethnic Ossetians, as well as Russian citizens of Armenian origin, fleeing Georgia, and also foreign diplomats, members of their families and personnel of international organizations in Georgia.

The UNHCR Armenia Agency has set up a task force with other UN agencies in Armenia to examine the movement of population together with Armenian government to be prepared for emergency situations.

## 28. TURKEY TO INVITE ARMENIA TO JOIN THE CAUCASIAN UNION [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Turkey's prime minister Recep Erdogan said today the official Ankara was intending to negotiate with Armenian authorities over inviting it to join the Caucasian Union.

Erdogan unveiled the initiative to build the Caucasian Union on August 11. He said it would seek to strengthen regional stability. According to him, the Caucasian Union is open both for the region's countries and also for Russia, the USA and Turkey.

He said Turkey's foreign minister Ali Babacan will meet this week with Russian diplomats over the five-side platform and according to him, the format of dialogue with Armenia will be decided during Turkish-Russian talks.

According to Erdogan, the long-lasting peace and the atmosphere of confidence are of vital significance for Turkey.

He made the statements before flying to Baku, Azerbaijan, where he will discuss the Caucasian Union idea with Azeri officials.

Erdogan had already discussed this idea in Moscow and Tbilisi. He said it was welcomed in both capitals.

## 29. POLICE ARREST NSS OFFICER [ARMENPRESS, 08/20/08]

Armenian police said its operatives revealed during an August 19 'comparative' study at Zvartnots airport that Vahe M., 31, a senior inspector of the National Security Service (NSS) at the border troops check point at the airport, failed to report after revealing false data in a passenger's passport flying to Vienna.

The police said in return Vahe M. received 400 British pounds. The police said also an investigation was launched into this case.

## 30. POLICE LOOKING FOR THE MAN WHO ATTACKED RFE/RL ARMENIA SERVICE DIRECTOR [ARMENPRESS, 08/19/08]

The Armenian police said today that Hrach Melkumian, the acting director of the RFE/RL Armenia Service, reported on August 19 that he had been assaulted and beaten by an unknown man on August 18 evening.



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According to Hrach Melkumian, he was attacked between 9.30-10 pm in a small park in downtown Yerevan where Moskovian and Mashtots streets intercross.

He said the man called his name and then approached and hit him on the face and different parts of the body with concurrent swearing. The police said a forensic examination was ordered.

The police said they are taking every measure to track down and detain the attacker.

## SPORTS

### 31. TURKEY'S HEAD COACH SAYS SEPTEMBER 6 GAME IN YEREVAN TO BE A SERIOUS TEST [Azg, 08/19/08]

Head coach of Turkey's national squad Fatih Terim said the September 6 first 2010 World Cup qualifier against Armenia in Yerevan will be a serious test for his team.

"Armenian and Turkish teams will be having their first ever match and I am sure it is going to be a tough game. The Armenian team is strong and in the first qualifier it will have a very big motivation," he said to Turkish media.

On August 20 Turkey's team is having a friendly game against Chile, the last high-profile game before they arrive in Armenia. Armenia's Danish head coach Jan Poulsen is likely to travel to Turkey to watch that game.

### 32. FIRST GROUP OF ARMENIAN ATHLETES BACK HOME FROM BEIJING [Haykakan Zhamanak, 08/19/08]

The first group of Armenian athletes was back home today early morning from Beijing, the capital of the Olympic Games, including five athletes who won bronze medals. All were given a warm welcome at Yerevan's Zvartnots airport.

Weightlifter Gevork Davtian, who won bronze medal in 77 kg weight division, said he wanted very much to win the gold medal, but failed. "But I realize that Olympic bronze medal is also a big award" he said.

Tigran Martirosian, another weightlifter, who won bronze in 69 kg weight category, said the competition was very tough in Beijing.

Greco-Roman wrestler Roman Amoyan, 55 kg, another bronze medallist, said next time he will win gold.

With five bronze medals Armenia shares so far the 65-th place in the overall country ranking.

### 33. BOXER HRACHIK JAVAKHIAN SECURES AT LEAST BRONZE MEDAL FOR HIMSELF AT BEIJING OLYMPICS [NOYAN TAPAN, 08/19/08]

Boxer Hrachik Javakhian overcame the quarter final barrier at the Beijing Olympic Games on August 19. Doctors did not allow his Korean rival to enter the ring, as a result of which H. Javakhian reached the semifinals without a match and secured at least a bronze medal for himself.

The Armenian free-style wrestlers started their competitions in Beijing with a defeat. Martin Berberian (60 kg) was beaten by a Canadian wrestler.

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