



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, October 27, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. ZHARANGUTIUN CONCERNED ABOUT SOME PROVISIONS OF ORDER TO CREATE FACT-FINDING GROUP ON MARCH 1 EVENTS [Haykakan Zhamanak, 10/24/08]

RA National Assembly factions on the whole welcome RA President Serzh Sargsyan's instruction to create a fact-finding group on the March 1-2 events in Yerevan. Representatives of the RPA, ARFD, Orinats Yerkir, and Bargavach Hayastan factions representing the coalition, at the October 24 press briefings, did not consider it important which parties exactly will nominate the two experts to be involved in the group at the suggestion of coalition member parties. They consider that the proposed format, two persons from the coalition and two from the opposition, as well as one representative appointed by the RA Ombudsman, will ensure the principle of balance. It was also considered important that lawyers not being political or party figures, not employed in the state system will be involved in the group.

Orinats Yerkir faction head Heghine Bisharian did not exclude that the consideration of the March 1 case at the PACE January session can be postponed, as the work of the fact-finding group requires some time.

According to the evaluation of the parliamentary opposition, Zharangutiun faction, RA President's instruction is a delayed, yet necessary and praiseworthy step. Faction head Armen Martirosian expressed concern with some provisions of the instruction: the limitation done by subpoint 2, point 5 of the document does not permit to find out from courts with what motivations the courts permitted overhearings. There is also a limitation in subpoint 3 of the same point: the fact-finding group can receive documents and explanations from physical persons in case the latter agree to, it especially regards first and second RA Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosian and Robert Kocharian, who are not officials at present. Point 6 of the instruction, according to which the group can be provided facts by a physical person or by organization on condition that they are not publicized, according to Armen Martirosian, "to some extent will give a possibility for concealment. True, a leakage is possible, but it cannot be a basis for calling to criminal liability." According to him, instruction's point 15, fact-finding group's members are unchangeable, is also unintelligible and problematic, and according to the head of the opposition faction, it is impossible to prove whether any of its members adheres to a political force or not.

#### 2. ILHAM ALIYEV: "NAGORNO KARABAKH WILL NEVER GET A STATUS OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE" [Azg, 10/25/08]

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stated that Nagorno Karabakh will never get a status of an independent state.

"Neither today, nor tomorrow, neither in ten nor 50 years, Nagorno Karabakh will ever be given independence," Azerbaijani president stated at his inauguration ceremony.

Aliyev noted that "Karabakh conflict regulation is the primary direction of Azerbaijani foreign policy". "Regrettably, we have had no result in that direction by now, but at the same time I can point out that Azerbaijani position and the main principles forwarded by our country found great support," president of Azerbaijan pointed out.

He also said that "today the negotiations are held based on maintaining Azerbaijani territorial integrity".

"No one doubts this and cannot have any doubt in future. I think that the steps undertaken by us brought to consolidation of our position in the negotiation process, activation of the sides which take part in the process and today the international community obviously accepts that for the development of our region the frozen conflicts must find their solution," Aliyev stated pointing out that the solution can be found "only within the frameworks of norms and principals of international right".

"Azerbaijani territorial integrity must be restored. Azerbaijani territorial integrity is not, never was and will be a subject for negotiations," Aliyev said. "We are still interested in continuation of negotiations, our hopes have not expired yet. We continue to consider that negotiations can bring to fair solution of the issue," Azerbaijani president stated.

"Azerbaijani nation, Azerbaijani state will never agree with separation of Nagorno Karabakh which is historical part of Azerbaijan," he added.



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## 3. ARMENIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO LEAVE FOR GREAT BRITAIN [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 10/25/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian is leaving for Great Britain October 26 on a two-day visit.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that in London the foreign minister will meet with his counterpart and state cooperation secretary David Miliband, state minister and minister on European affairs Caroline Flint.

The minister will also be hosted in the parliament of Great Britain, where he will meet with the members of Armenian-British inter-parliamentary cooperation group.

Nalbandian is also expected to deliver a speech in International Relations Royal Institute which is considered one of the biggest scientific and expertise centers of Europe.

Within the framework of the visit Edward Nalbandian will also meet with the representatives of British Armenian community.

## 4. ARMENIAN EXPERTS CONCERNED ABOUT HASTY ACTIONS OF RUSSIA IN ISSUE OF SETTLEMENT OF KARABAKH CONFLICT [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

The OSCE Minsk Group is under threat of collapse which depends on global processes, in particular, the increased confrontation between the U.S. and Russia in recent period, Stepan Grigorian, the head of the Analytical Center of Globalization and Regional Development, said at a round table organized by the Caucasus Media Institute on October 23.

In his words, during the current process of force distribution in the South Caucasus, Russia is trying to strengthen its role in the region, and one manifestation is the initiative to arrange a meeting of the presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow. The political scientist expressed an opinion that in the name of its geopolitical interests, Russia is prepared to speed up artificially the resolution of the Karabakh conflict - to the detriment of the interests of the Armenian side. "If Russia wants to improve its relations with Azerbaijan, it may allocate one of its border territories with Azerbaijan, say, an area of 5 thousand square meters, to that country. It would be more correct instead of trying to solve its problems with Azerbaijan at the expense of Nagorno Karabakh," S. Grigorian said. In his opinion, any attempt to accelerate artificially the solution of the problem is fraught with negative consequences. For example, according to him, Georgia was in a great hurry to resolve the conflicts in its territory, which led to consequences negative for Georgia. S. Grigorian considered the role of the U.S. in the region to be in general constructive.

The deputy director of the Caucasus Media Institute Sergei Minasian also expressed concern about the excessive activation and haste in the issue of the Karabakh conflict settlement. In his opinion, Russia's initiative to organize a meeting of the three presidents in Moscow came as a surprise to the two other countries - co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, the U.S. and France, which are certainly displeased with this step of Russia.

## 5. OSCE YEREVAN OFFICE IMPLEMENTS A NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN MILITARY-POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, DEMOCRATIC, AND OTHER SPHERES [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

Settlement of the conflicts and improvement of the situation in the region first of all depends on the extent of confidence. Some countries in the region speak for settlement of conflicts and only then speak about establishment of cooperation, that is, "put the cart before the horse," while normal regional cooperation should be established at first. Ambassador Sergei Kapinos, the Head of OSCE Yerevan Office, stated on October 24, commenting upon the situation formed in the process of settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

At the same time the diplomat emphasized that the issue of Nagorno Karabakh settlement is not within the activity mandate of OSCE Yerevan Office, it is task of Minsk Group. S. Kapinos said that military-political, economic, ecological directions, as well as the situation in the sphere of human rights and democratic processes on the whole are the main directions of the activity of the office.

Among projects in the military-political sphere being implemented in the region, S. Kapinos singled out a pilot project on creation of Police named communal or territorial. "We try to change the activity methods of the Police, to make it more democratic and professional." In his words, OSCE has already provided much means within the framework of the project, including computers and educational supplies. Assistance to the RA National Assembly in exercising democratic control over the armed forces is another important project in the military-political sphere carried out by OSCE Yerevan Office.



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S. Kapinos stated that in the sphere of democracy and human rights OSCE Yerevan Office carries out projects aimed at ensuring freedom of expression, holds a monitoring of legal proceedings, much importance is also attached to problems of migration.

As regards efficiency of OSCE's activity in the issue of assistance to development of democracy under the lack of political will of the Armenian authorities, S. Kapinos said that much depends on maturity, self-organization of society and on presence of organizations that are engaged in protection of human rights and rights of individual groups or classes of society.

## 6. S. SARGSYAN SAYS KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION POSSIBLE IN CASE AZERBAIJAN RECOGNIZES RIGHT OF KARABAKH PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

"Regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict is possible if Azerbaijan recognizes the right of Karabakh people to self-determination, if Nagorno Karabakh has a land border with Armenia, and if world leading countries guarantee the security of Nagorno Karabakh people," President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan said in an interview to Armenian Public Television, referring to the developments over Nagorno Karabakh conflict, noting that from the passive round the process enters into an active one. According to him, the well-known developments in the region once again convinced all that there is no military way of regulation of the conflict.

As to public discussions, Armenian president considered them useful, "I think that public discussions are useful, and I am deeply convinced that we are going to enter a more active round of discussions. The discussions are always useful, but they must be based only on one thing – interest of Armenian people. We have donated a lot for the regulation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict for closing eyes or not paying attention to the speculations. We are solving a devoted issue, we are solving an important historic issue and during the solution of this historic issue if someone is trying to seek for benefit it is not moral," Armenian president said.

Responding to the question that in the recent period activation of other countries is notable in Karabakh conflict regulation issue, and particularly the initiative of the president of Russian Federation to conduct meeting of three presidents and statement of Turkish President Abdullah Gul as if Armenian president asked him to support in the regulation of the issue, Serzh Sargsyan said that Karabakh conflict regulation process is going on within the frameworks of the OSCE Minsk Group on the basis of "Madrid principles".

"It has been told for many times, and we repeat once more that there are no other mediators: the only mediators are OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs and the mess which is tried to be created does not help us in anything. I repeat the only mediators are the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, Armenia has never applied to any country with request of mediation. The invitation of President Medvedev and his activation in this issue as a president of one of the Minsk Group countries is very natural, as to commenting on the statement of President Gul, I am not commenting on the statements of other figures, especially in case when in our press the parts of statements are published out of context. I once again repeat, the only mediators are co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group but we do not reject any support. Yes, I am sure that Turkey can support in the Karabakh conflict regulation process and now I think that it does so: the visit of the Turkish president to Yerevan, continuation of Armenian-Turkish negotiations are very good example of solution of difficult issues. I am sure that if Turkey opens its border and establishes diplomatic relations with Armenia, it will greatly support the regulation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict," Armenian president said.

## 7. TRIBUTE PAID TO THE VICTIMS OF OCTOBER 27 [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Today members of parliament paid tribute to the memory of victims of October 27, 1999 terrorist attack. Speaker of Armenian parliament, vice speakers, MPs and representatives of parliamentary staff put flowers on the memory stone in the yard of the parliament.

"Each year on October 27 paying tribute to the memory of October 27, 1999 victims, once more we say our resolute "NO" to terrorism, intolerance and hostility," speaker of the Armenian parliament Hovik Abrahamian said.

According to him, though 9 years have passed since the crime but "each of us during the whole life will bear the pain and sorrow suffered with all nation on that October day of 1999".

He noted that 9 years after the crime we can state that such assassinations do not have time and everything should be done so that such crimes never repeat.



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“Therefore each time we gather by this memorial stone, we must once more assure that our force is in our unity, only together we can create a more dignified and welfare Armenia which surely was the dream of state and political officials who died October 27. As the NA Speaker I assure that I will do my best so that harmony, tolerance and mutual respect finally win in our country as it is the only way to create fair and dignified country. And the most valuable tribute to our killed counterparts will be the implementation of programs and ideas they had and I have no doubt that all of us, together will build Armenia they dreamed of,” the NA speaker noted.

## 8. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSIAN PAYS A WORKING VISIT TO NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC [Hayastani Hanrapetutian, 10/27/08]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian was in Nagorno Karabakh Republic October 24-25 on a working visit.

Press service of Armenian president told Armenpress that on October 25 President Sargsian took part in the ceremony of exploitation of a new building which has been built for the staff of Defense Army of Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

Afterwards Armenian and Artsakh presidents were present at the military exercises of the Defense Army.

After the trainings Armenian president and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces Serzh Sargsian visited defense positions. There the Armenian president answered the questions of Public TV.

## 9. ELECTIONS OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENTAL BODIES FINISH IN 53 COMMUNITIES OF GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCE [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Elections of local self governmental bodies were held October 26 in 5 town and 48 rural communities of Gegharkunik province.

Officials from N22, 23 and 24 electoral constituencies told Armenpress that according to initial results in three town communities the acting mayors – Bagrat Harutyunian from Armenian Republican Party in Martuni, Gurgen Martirosian from United Labor Party in Gavar and Gevorg Malkhasian from Armenian Republican Party in Sevan have been re-elected.

In Vardenis the acting mayor Vardan Barseghian was defeated by former mayor, member of Armenian Republican Party Volodya Khloian and the results of elections in Chambarak have been recognized invalid by N23 Electoral constituency.

Results of elections have been recognized invalid in rural communities Geghamavan and Vardadzor.

Heads of Gandzak, Noradus, Sarukhan, Tsakhkunk, Vahan, Kutakan, Sotk, Lichk, Madina, Astghadzor, Lusakunk, Chkalovka, Vardadzor and Artsvanist communities also changed.

30 of 50 newly elected heads of communities represent Armenian Republican Party, 2 heads of communities – Prosperous Armenia Party and Armenian Revolutionary Federation, 1 head of community represents United Labor and Armenian Communist Parties.

In those communities the elections of which have been recognized invalid new elections will be held after 21 days.

## 10. OPPORTUNITIES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ARMENIA AND NIGERIA DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Armenian deputy foreign minister Gegham Gharibjanian received today newly appointed Nigerian ambassador to Armenia (residence Tehran) Mohhamadu M. Abubakar Chikaya who handed to the deputy foreign minister the copies of his credentials.

Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that during the meeting Gegham Gharibjanian underscored the appointment of Nigerian ambassador to Armenia, describing it as a first step in making the relations between the countries closer.

The interlocutors discussed the possible directions of establishing economic cooperation between Armenia and Nigerian. In this pre-context the Nigerian ambassador presented the economic potential of his country and the investment field, noting that bilateral economic partnership may be based on fuel-energy sphere.

During the meeting the sides also referred to the cooperation between the two countries within the frameworks of international organizations and particularly UN.



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## 11. ARTHUR BAGHDASARIAN SAYS ARMENIA TO CARRY OUT REFORMS INTENDED BY EU NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM ON TIME [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Secretary General of the Armenian Security Council Arthur Baghdasarian met today with the EU special representative in the South Caucasus Peter Semneby, head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Armenia Raul de Lutzenberger and French ambassador to Armenia Serzh Smessow.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed issues on Armenia-EU relations, European New Neighborhood program as well as a wide range of issues on regional developments.

The sides also underscored the necessity of further development of the cooperation with European establishments. Arthur Baghdasarian pointed out that Armenia will carry out all the reforms and events intended by the European Neighborhood program on time.

## 12. ACCORDING TO PRIMARY RESULTS V. GHUKASIAN RE-ELECTED AS MAYOR OF GYUMRI [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Elections of head of community and council of elders were held October 26 in 78 polling stations of Gyumri. According to primary results, the majority of voters 31,444 or 60,58% voted for the acting mayor, member of Armenian Republican Party Vardan Ghukasian.

The other candidate, MP, non-party Martun Grigorian got 19,810 or 38,16% of votes, and member of National Determination Union Daniel Darbinian got 655 or 1,26% of votes.

Head of N34 Electoral constituency Sayat Minasian told Armenpress that the number of candidates to council of elders was 52 which is incomparably more as compared with the number of candidates registered during the previous 2004 elections.

As of 11:00 o'clock October 26 nearly 8,6% of voters participated in the elections from overall number of 120, 849, and as of 20:00 o'clock after the polling stations were closed 44, 87% or 54,230 voters took part in the elections.

Although the Electoral constituency got urgent calls from some polling stations during the day, but according to the head of the Electoral constituency they were not serious election violations.

"No such incident took place that can put the fact of legacy of the elections under doubt," S. Minasian noted.

Compared with previous 2004 elections great activeness of voters has been registered.

Members of Gyumri Police as well as law enforcement bodies from Yerevan followed the whole process of elections.

On October 26, elections of head of community and council of elders took place also in Artik, the second town of Shirak province, where 4 candidates fought for the head of community and 36 – for council of elders. Elections were also held in Akhurian and Azatan and elections of only council of elders – in the third town of the province, Maralik.

According to N33 Electoral constituency, elections of heads of communities took place in 46 communities and elections of council of elders – in 49 communities of the province. Overall in 109 communities of the province elections were held on October 26.

## **BUSINESS**

### 13. ARMENTEL OPENS CALL CENTER OF ARMECONOMBANK [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

An agreement on opening a call center was signed between Armeconombank and ArmenTel company of VimpelCom group of telecommunication companies on October 23. The Call Center is a commercial center of providing phone services to the bank's customers. It is the first one in Armenia and other CIS countries serviced by VimpelCom. The agreement was signed by the chairman of Armeconombank OJSC Board David Sukiasian and the director general of ArmenTel CJSC Neycho Velichkov.

During a press conference after the agreement's signing, D. Sukiasian said that it is for the first time in Armenia that a bank entrusts some functions of its information system to another commercial structure specialized in the ICT sector. According to him, the Call Center of 24-hour and free services will provide an opportunity to establish closer relations between the bank and its customers. By dialling 6868 Armeconombank's customers can receive information about the interest rates of the bank's credits and deposits, and the tariffs of other banking services. It is also envisaged providing information on accounts and delivering money transfer and foreign currency exchange services starting from the first quarter of



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2009. D. Sukiasian said that the center was established based on studies of the Russian market of call centers that has a 15-year history. This allows the bank to classify the surveys by subjects and than to guide its strategy based on it.

N. Velichkov in his turn announced that ArmenTel plans to open call centers of international companies starting from 2009. In his words, previously they used to open such centers in India and Eastern Europe, whereas now the market of these services is being moved from Europe to the East. In the opinion of ArmenTel's director, Armenia is an excellent place for "call center" services because of Armenian young people's knowledge of foreign languages and the favorable geographical location of Armenia.

## 14. FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICES OF ARMECONOMBANK GROW [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

There was a decline in financial and economic indices of Armeconombank from the beginning of 2008 to April 1st, after which a growth was recorded in almost all the indices. The amount of deposits attracted from natural persons increased by 45%, the assets grew by almost 30%. Besides, the liquidity of the bank's assets currently makes 100% as compared with the norm of 80% established by the Central Bank of Armenia and the average index of 82% in the country's banking system, the chairman of Armeconombank OJSC David Sukiasian stated at the October 23 press conference.

He explained the observation of the bank's financial and economic indices in the indicated periods by the fact that "there was one situation before April 1st and quite another after it - in connection with the internal political events following the presidential election."

D. Sukiasian said that the international financial crisis did not have a great impact on Armenia's banking system: "the banks just have difficulty attracting resources from foreign banks, due to which the interest rates of credits and financial resource attraction will rise."

It is noteworthy that Armeconombank has 1,420 shareholders. Among the biggest ones is the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) with its stake of 25% of authorized capital + 1 share. The overall assets of Armeconombank currently make more than 52 bln drams (over 168.9 mln USD), its overall capital makes over 8.5 bln drams. The bank has about 60 thousand customers and 46 branches, including 20 in Yerevan and 26 ones in almost all the marzes of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. It was the first Armenian bank to receive a rating of Moody's Investor Service. It was assigned D- rating of financial stability and Ba3 rating of long-term deposits in Armenian drams and foreign currency.

## 15. STATE DEBT OF ARMENIA TO MAKE 2.2 BILLION DOLLARS IN 2009 [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

In 2009, the state debt of Armenia is forecast to amount to 2.2 billion USD which will make up 16.1% of GDP - against 17.6% in 2008. The foreign debt will make up 81.5% of the RA state debt (13.1% of GDP against 14.6% in 2008). The Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian announced this when presenting the 2009 draft state budget at the October 24 sitting of the standing committees of the RA National Assembly.

He said that the qualitative indices of the foreign state debt will be mostly within the level of the countries with a low and middle debt burden. "This will allow to maintain Armenia's high solvency rating, which naturally also raises the reliability of the country," the prime minister noted.

## 16. RAILWAY BETWEEN TBILISI AND YEREVAN WILL BE STUDIED IN THE FRAME OF EU "TRACECA" PROGRAMME [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

The European Union is launching an important project aimed at performing a feasibility study of the operating railway between Tbilisi and Yerevan in the frame of TRACECA Programme (Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia).

The main Tbilisi-Yerevan railway link, which has been inaugurated in 1899 and electrified in 1967 suffers from a severe backlog of maintenance and modernisation, and thereby cannot cover actual and future transport needs in an effective and competitive way.

In the scope of the programme the alternative Yerevan- Tbilisi railway link via Azerbaijan will also be studied. It has been inaugurated and electrified in 1984, nevertheless, only the section Yerevan - Dilijan is in operation since several years.

During the coming year the consultants will assess the current state and will develop a detailed proposal for the rehabilitation of the railway.



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The realization of this project will be implemented by an Italian-Ukrainian consortium, composed by: Lattanzio e Associati S.p.A. (Italy), Khardiprotrans OJSC (Ukraine), International Consulting & Service Group s.r.l. (Italy), International Railway Technology & Service s.r.l. (Italy).

EU Tacis - TRACECA is aimed at supporting the political and economic development in Black Sea Region, Caucasus and Central Asia by means of improvement of the international transport infrastructures. Today the TRACECA program encompasses thirteen countries: five countries in Europe, three Caucasian states and five countries in Central Asia.

## 17. ABEL AGHANBEGIAN: GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CONSTRUCTING ARMENIA-IRAN RAILWAY SHOULD BE ASSESSED AS WELL [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

The main goal of constructing an Armenia-Iran railway is to ensure transportation of goods, Abel Aghanbegian, economist, Academician of the RF Academy of Sciences said at the round table "The Economies of Armenia and Russia Today and Tomorrow" organized by A. Aghanbegian Higher School of Corporate Management under the patronage of the RA National Academy of Sciences.

According to him, the volume of goods transportation by vehicles in this direction is small, so instead of building a railway, the Armenia-Iran motorway should be improved by constructing several tunnels and reducing the motorway's length, as well as updating vehicles. A. Aghanbekian noted that quite a large amount (1-2 billion dollars) is needed to build an Iran-Armenia railway as its construction is related to considerable difficulties.

However, in his opinion, it is not ruled out that for example, Russia will make investments in this project if it considers the Armenia-Iran railway to be important from the strategic point of view. A. Aghanbegian mentioned that there were many cases in Russia when transport routes were constructed for strategic reasons and their operation finally covered their expenses - sometimes several decades later.

He said that Iran is a huge country with great potential. It has twice as much oil reserves as Russia, while by its gas reserves Iran is in second place in the world after Russia. So A. Aghanbegian pointed out the necessity to assess also the geopolitical perspectives of constructing a railway, saying that it is possible that a railway should be built from this point of view.

## 18. ARMENIA CAN BECOME REGIONAL LEADER IN POWER INDUSTRY [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

Cooperation in the energy sector is important from the economic point of view both for Russia and Armenia. Abel Aghanbegian, economist, Academician of the RF Academy of Sciences expressed this opinion at the round table "The Economies of Armenia and Russia Today and Tomorrow".

He said that having much surplus of electricity, Armenia can become a regional leader in the power industry. Georgia, Turkey, Iran and Iraq are short of electricity so Armenia can sell power in large amounts and at profitable prices to these countries, including also power from the operation of the new nuclear power plant and the new efficient steam-and-gas units at Yerevan Thermal Power Plant, as well as the use of gas supply in two directions. Besides, Armenia has so far untapped great opportunities of its water resources and small hydropower plants.

A. Aghanbegian noted that for construction of the new nuclear power unit, Armenia may use installations of Russian production which are one of the best in the world. For that reason China intends to start mass construction of nuclear power plants with Russian installations with a capacity of 800 megawatts, and the respective agreement has been signed with Russia. In the words of A. Aghanbegian, a cost-beneficial nuclear power unit should have a capacity of at least 800 megawatts.

## DIASPORA

### 19. BARACK OBAMA THANKS ARMENIANS [Azg, 10/24/08]

U.S. presidential hopeful, democrat senator Barack Obama today personally thanked Armenians for Obama for its far-reaching grassroots efforts and encouraged the Armenian American movement in support of the Obama-Biden ticket to escalate its voter outreach in the final days before the November 4th election.

In a letter sent to Armenians for Obama, Senator Obama personally expressed his thanks to the voter outreach organization, noting that, from the beginning Armenians for Obama has "been one of those grassroots groups whether its canvassing in Nevada and Virginia or calling from home in California and



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New York. I know your hard work has made a difference in the past two years, and I know it's going to make the difference in these last few days."

## 20. ARMENIA'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDUARD NALBANDIAN MEETS WITH DELEGATION OF CANADIAN ARMENIANS IN QUEBEC [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

On October 16 a Canadian Armenian delegation headed by Bishop Bagrat Galstanian, Primate of the Armenian Church of Canada, met with Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Nalbandian in Quebec City. Minister Nalbandian was attending the Francophonie Conference representing the Republic of Armenia, as a candidate for membership in the association.

The delegation included Pierre Akkelian, Vice-Chairman of the Congress of Canadian Armenians, Rev. Fr. Vazken Boyadjian, Pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral, and Levon Afeyan, Parish Council Chairman of St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral and Vice-Chairman & Treasurer of the Congress of Canadian Armenians. Also present was Arman Akopian, Chargé d'Affaires of the Armenian Embassy in Ottawa.

The discussions were cordial and productive, and covered a range of subjects from Armenia-Diaspora relations to agreed upon actions for the promotion of Armenian interests.

Minister Nalbandian stressed the importance of developing increased diplomatic, trade and cultural relations between Canada and Armenia. The Armenian Embassy in Ottawa and the Congress of Canadian Armenians both stated that they will give priority attention to persuading the Canadian Government to establish an embassy in Yerevan.

A couple of months ago, at the invitation of Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakopyan, the Congress of Canadian Armenians submitted a paper to her outlining several recommendations.

On the subject of the Rural Poverty Eradication Project for the reconstruction of Armenia's border villages, Minister Nalbandian said that this was currently under review and that he expected it would be revised to establish a more practical and efficient approach for the implementation of this vital project.

## 21. HRAYR BAZE: MY GOAL IS TO FAMILIARIZE WORLD WITH ARMENIA THROUGH PHOTOS [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

The Armenian Canadian photographer Hrayr Baze Khacherian presented his photo exhibition "Armenia Through the Eyes of Baze" to residents of Yerevan on October 21. The photographer captures inimitably and spreads Armenian cultural values such as monasteries, church complexes, monuments and in general Armenian nature. More than 60 photos taken during three helicopter flights feature valuable monuments of Armenian culture, various monasteries, churches, Lake Sevan, Mount Aragats, nice-looking sites of the country's nature, as well as historic monuments in Iran and Turkey whose photos were taken from border zones.

According to the author, he has taken these photos over the past two years. Prior to that he photographed numerous monuments and churches in Western Armenia. He has released six photo albums.

"The primary goal of my photos is to familiarize the world with Armenia through photos, to make our culture recognizable and disseminate it throughout the world," he pointed out. In his words, taking photos from a helicopter is a difficult task not only in terms of photographing but also obtaining a helicopter and getting permission to take photos from it. The heads of the RA Ministry of Defence have assisted Hrayr Baze in this issue both in the past and now.

## 22. DIASPORAN ARMENIAN BOYS AND GIRLS TO LIVE IN FAMILIES OF ARMENIA UNDER "ARI TUN" PROGRAM OF MINISTRY OF DIASPORA [NOYAN TAPAN, 10/24/08]

Boys and girls aged 15-25 who were born and brought up in the Diaspora will be invited to Armenia under "Ari Tun" ("Come Home") program of the RA Ministry of Diaspora. They will live in local Armenian families for 3-4 weeks, the RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian told reporters on October 22.

Ms. Hakobian expressed conviction that after visiting Armenia for the first time, any Armenian from the Diaspora becomes very attached to homeland. "We should help Diasporan Armenian children grow up as Armenians because any young person who set foot on Armenian land, looked at Masis from Khor Virap, washed hands in Lake Sevan and bent down at the Memorial Complex of the Armenian Genocide Victims will grow up as an Armenian," she underlined.



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The program's success, according to her, depends very much on the good will of Armenians from both the Diaspora and Armenia. "Armenians living in the Diaspora should express a willingness to send their children here, while those in homeland should meet them with pleasure," the minister said.

In the minister's words, before launching the program, they must become acquainted with the living conditions of the families to receive the children, after which they will decide the further steps. She said that the host families will take care of children, while the ministry will organize trips and meetings for them under the program.

She noted that at the start of the program, families from Yerevan and nearby marzes (Kotayk, Aragatsotn, Ararat and Armavir) will receive Diasporan children but later other marzes (provinces) will be also involved in the program. The ministry envisages inviting 1,000 children to Armenia at the first stage.

It was mentioned that families that want Diasporan Armenian children to stay with them shall apply to municipalities of their cities or regions in order to be put on the list of the program. H. Hakobian has already held meetings with regional governors with the aim of discussing the details of "Ari Tun" program.

## **RELIGION**

### **23. CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS CONSECRATES NEWLY-BUILT SAINT HRIPSIME CHURCH IN BARNAUL [Azg, 10/24/08]**

At the invitation of the Primate of the Diocese of Nor Nakhijevan and Russia Bishop Yezras Nersisian and the Diocesan Council, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II on October 18 left for the city of Barnaul, the Armenian Diocese of Nor Nakhijevan and Russia, in order to consecrate the newly-built Armenian St Hripsime Church there.

Representatives of the local authorities headed by Barnaul mayor Vladimir Kalganov, the deputy governor of Altay region Boris Larin, as well as members of the Armenian community and clergymen of the Armenian diocese met His Holiness at Barnaul Airport.

Early October 19 Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II had a meeting with the governor of Altay region Alexander Karlin.

At noon of the same day, the consecration ceremony of St Hripsime Church took place. The ceremony was presided over by His Holiness Karekin II. The church's architect is Hakob Babakhanian, it was built under the patronage of the brothers Mkhitar and Yura Aroyan. The foundation stone laying ceremony of the church was held as long ago as 2001 and was presided over by the Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Russia Bishop Yezras Nersisian, while its crosses were consecrated in November 2006. About 30 thousand Armenians currently live in Barnaul and adjacent regions.

Numerous members of the Armenian community headed by the Chairman of the Diocesan Council of Nor Nakhijevan and Russia Arthur Chilingarov, as well as Barnaul mayor, officials of the regional authorities, Bishop Maxim of Barnaul and Altay of the Russian Orthodox Church, and representatives of the Union of Armenians in Russia met His Holiness outside the church. Armenians from other communities of Russia had also arrived in Barnaul to attend the consecration ceremony.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Bishop Yezras Nersisian read the Kondaks of the Supreme Patriarch of Armenia, according to which the benefactors of St Hripsime Church were awarded St Gregory the Illuminator orders.

Then His Holiness planted an evergreen fir-tree in the church yard, blessed those present and distributed small crosses brought from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to them. Local creative groups and those from Armenia gave a concert in the evening.

## **SOCIAL**

### **24. CONSTRUCTION OF ARAGATSOTN SECTOR OF ALAGYAZ-HOROM-ARTIK ROAD ALMOST FINISHED [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]**

Construction works of Aragatsotn sector of Alagyaz-Horom-Artik road which is of state importance are going to be finished soon.

Some 10-15 days more and it will be put into functioning. Program which started in previous years will be finished this year due to 617 million drams released from the state budget, with which a sector of 12 km has been renovated.

Head of the "AAB Project" company which carries out the construction, A. Badalian told Armenpress that with their present works whole Aragatsotn sector of the road of nearly 24 km, will



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already be renovated. But the so called cosmetic works will be continued next year for which 14 million drams has been released from the state budget.

The road is of great importance as it passes through the Aragats region which is the highest in the province and is the only and main road connecting the communities with provincial center, capital and neighboring provinces. But due to its geographic position it is under the threat of unfavorable weather as a result of which the issue of reconstruction and renovation permanently exists here.

As to the road building in the province, overall work of 2,523 billion drams has been conducted in 2008.

The funds were provided by the state budget. Nearly 14 roads of inter-state, state and provincial importance were involved in the program including Hartavan-Yernjatap, Tsamakasar-Zarinja, Nerkin Sasnashen-Verin Sasnashen, Mastara-Dzoraglukh-Zovasar-Garnahovit, Sasunik-Yerevan, Akunk-Yerevan-Gyumri roads, Aragatsotn sector of Yerevan-Gyumri-Georgia highway of nearly 2.8 km long. And the reconstruction of the bridge on river Kasakh was included in reconstruction works of Ashtarak-Oshakan-Dasht road.

Road building in the province is also conducted with "Millennium Challenges" program. Particularly construction works are carried out on the roads Getap-Karakert and Getap-Tllik.

Big investments are also planned next year. Nearly 2,31 billion drams will be provided from the state budget with which nine road building programs will be implemented.

Investment of 430 million drams will also be made by "Millennium Challenges" program.

## 25. ORIGINAL OF AN IMPORTANT PHOTO PROVING ARMENIAN GENOCIDE DISCOVERED [Azg, 10/25/08]

An original of a very important photo proving the Armenian genocide has been discovered. An official from the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute told Armenpress that the photo was shot in 1915 in the Caucasian front by a Russian soldier. It shows the ashes of residents of burnt Armenian villages in Mush region.

In the opposite face of the photo it is written in Russian "Armenians Burnt Alive by Turkish troops in Sheikhalan village". Moreover the photo is numerated 74, which witnesses that there exists a larger collection of photos made by Russian soldiers during the First World War.

The official said that Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute will seek to discover the other photos and fill the collection which will promote the success of the work initiated by the institute on collecting photos and other documents connected with the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 26. SHOOTINGS IN KOMITAS AVENUE [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

ON October 26 at approximately 14:35 pm the police department of Arabkir received an alarm about shootings in the yard of Komitas Avenue's 48/A building.

A police official told Armenpress that it was found out that on the same day at 14:30 in the yard of the mentioned building unknown people opened fire in the direction of "VAZ-2121" car killing Hrachya Matevosian born in 1965, wounding Harutyun B. born in 1976, who was rushed to hospital.

The circumstances are being clarified, investigation continues.

## 27. PROVINCIAL CENTER OF EMPLOYMENT IN GAVAR TO FUNCTION AS A MODEL AFTER THE RECONSTRUCTION [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Provincial center of employment in Gavar, Gegharkunik province will function as a model center after the reconstruction which will be finished October 28.

Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Minister Arsen Hambartsumian, Ambassador of USA in Armenia Marie Yovanovitch will be present at the opening ceremony of the center.

An official from "State Employment Service" agency of Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that Gavar provincial center serves 11 communities of the province. About 2,625 job seekers including 1,584 women and 503 young people are registered in the center. The center cooperates with nearly 280 employers.

This as well as other employment centers functioning within "State Employment Service" agency were established in 1992.

During the latest years the specialists of the center have many times been trained within the frameworks of state and international programs, have taken part in study visits and conferences.



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New working methods and programs have been implemented due to which the level of service has significantly increased.

To provide full services to job seekers and employers with the support of USAID "Program of Consolidation of Social Security Systems" Gavar provincial employment center as well as a number of other centers have been renovated and ensured with necessary conditions to provide high quality and effective services. With the support of the program the center has also been entirely reconstructed and furnished. To conduct separate group works with different non-competitive groups in the job market and with job seekers as well as for the continuative training of the workers of the center classrooms have been furnished with necessary attributes.

10 provincial and 41 territorial centers function in the "State Employment Service" agency of Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry 12 of which have been reconstructed within the frameworks of World Bank "Program of Management of Social Security Sphere" and 5 – with the support of USAID "Bridge" program.

## 28. VANADZOR INFECTION HOSPITAL SHOWS MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO 120 PATIENTS [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

Armenian Health Minister Harutyun Kushkian paid today a working visit to the Armenian province of Lori accompanied with the head of the ministry's medical department, hygienic-anti-epidemic department and other specialists.

Press secretary of the minister Ruslanna Gevorgian told Armenpress that the aim of the visit is to personally get acquainted with the situation in the province, condition of the patients in Vanadzor hospital.

The specialists of the ministry and province are carrying out all the preventive, anti-epidemic measures. According to the initial information, the source of the infection is water.

Vanadzor infection hospital has showed medical assistance to 120 patients, 64 of which have been signed out as of today.

## 29. 84 CHILDREN BORN IN GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCE DURING THE LAST WEEK [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

84 children were born October 20-26 in the Armenian province of Gegharkunik.

An official from health department of Gegharkunik governor's office told Armenpress that 8 children were born in Sevan region, 21 – in Gavar, 9 – in Vardenis, 2 – in Chambarak and 44 children were born in Martuni region. The last continues to have a notable weight in protection and development of national gene fund. According to statistics, not less than 40 children are born in Martuni hospital each week.

## 30. 864 DECISIONS MADE THIS YEAR ON LEGALIZATION OF ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

864 decisions including 797 alienation and 67 rents have been made this year connected with legalization of illegal constructions in Yerevan.

Chief consultant of mayor of Yerevan Hrachya Muradian told today journalists that additional 160 decisions have been made on legalizing illegal constructions on private territories.

At present two processes of legalization of illegal constructions are carried out in Yerevan – payable and non-compensative. The payable legalization process mainly concerns manufacturing, social institutions and is implemented by May, 2006 decision of Armenian government. It concerns to those illegal constructions which were built by May 18, 2006.

Cases of demounting of illegal constructions reach nearly 400.

According to H. Muradian at present no new illegal constructions are built in Yerevan.

"People understand that illegal construction sooner or later will be demounted," he said.

## 31. HEAD OF WATER ECONOMY STATE COMMITTEE VISITS VANADZOR [ARMENPRESS, 10/27/08]

The head of the Water Economy State Committee of the Armenian Territorial Governance Ministry Andranik Andreasian paid today a working visit to Vanadzor to get acquainted with the situation in the town, to find the reasons of the infection. During the recent days a version was circulating as if several days ago water pipe lines have been changed and it is possible that the infection is from water.



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The director of the “Water Economy Development and Reforms Program” of the Water Economy State Committee Adibek Ghazarian rejected the version, noting that works connected with water pipe lines have not started.

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