



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, November 21, 2008

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

AGBU NEWS

1. IN THE HEART OF EACH OF THEM THERE IS A WISH – TO HAVE A FAMILY [Yerkir, 11/21/08] By Gayaneh Arakelian

The Nansen Orphanage of Gyumri was established in 2000 at the initiative of Gyumri community and for two years the community took care of the orphanage. In 2002, it was passed on to the RA Ministry of Social Welfare, which is currently carrying out a program of caretaking for the children of the orphanage, who are deprived of parental care.

There are about 70 children in the orphanage today. Each of them has its dream and plans for the future. There is cold sorrow and sadness in their eyes. The sad sign of being deprived of parental care is sealed on their faces. Although the children are satisfied with the attitude of the employees of the orphanage and everything is done by the staff to fill the emptiness in their lives, but in the heart of each of the children there is a dream – to live in an ordinary family.

"It's hard to call them "parents"", said Director of the orphanage Ruben Markossian talking about the parents and families of these children, "they come and visit them very rarely, when they receive their subsidy, or when they return to Armenia from abroad. They have no wish and when you have no wish you do not even try".

Children attend art studios, different sports, dance and singing groups, learn foreign languages.

Recently, the children of the orphanage were pleasantly surprised by the initiative of the Young Professionals Yerevan team of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU YP Yerevan).

On November 2, AGBU YP Yerevan organized the trip of all the 69 children of the orphanage to Yerevan. They walked in the capital, interacted with their peers in the capital, visited parks, the National Gallery of Armenia and watched a beautiful performance in the circus.

Upon their return to Gyumri the children draw and painted their impressions. On the evening of November 16 the Yerevan Puppet Theater was full of people, including many celebrities of Armenian show-business. AGBU YP Yerevan had organized the exhibition and sale of these works of the orphanage children. The funds raised during the exhibition-sale will be used for the establishment of a computer center at the orphanage and also for inviting English language teachers for the children.

POLITICS

2. WE ARE AGAINST TURKEY'S JOINING EUROPEAN UNION, PRESIDENT OF VENDEE GENERAL COUNCIL STATES [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

During the meeting of the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and the delegation headed by the President of the General Council of the Vendee region (France), Member of the European Parliament Philippe de Villiers, S. Sargsyan asked the French side as a friend of Armenia to use its leverage at European level in order to defend Armenia's position on the Karabakh problem, P. de Villiers declared at the November 17 press conference to finalize the results of the delegation's two-day visit to Yerevan. He considered Armenia's position on the problem as reasonable and expressed a willingness to support it.

According to P. de Villiers, he presented the position of his friends and himself concerning Turkey to the Armenian president. "We are against Turkey's joining the EU," P. de Villiers underlined, adding that he expects that the National Assembly of France will pass the bill envisaging criminal punishment (the bill has already been passed by the French Senate) for denial of the Armenian Genocide. The press conference was attended by Jack Uden, the former chairman of France-Armenia friendship deputy group, the Deputy President of Vendee General Council, during whose tenure the above mentioned bill was passed by the Senate, Dominique Suchet, the Deputy President of Vendee General Council who will coordinate the indicated work, as well as by Serge Smessov, the French Ambassador to Armenia.

P. de Villiers said that the first reason for their being against Turkey's becoming a EU member is that this country is not in Europe from the geographical and cultural points of view. "And this reason makes us refrain from seeking other reasons," he said, adding: "Turkey's entrance into Europe would be a sudden shock, whereas Armenia would remain isolated". In his words, the majority of European nations share his opinion, which is evident from the results of a survey conducted by an influential European



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monthly: 80% of those surveyed did not want Turkey to join the EU. He noted that the relations between these sides should develop within the framework of the agreements on cooperation which have already been signed.

The French official pointed out that the more he becomes acquainted with Armenia, the more his position strengthens because the Armenian people practices a system of values which "are quite close to our values and correspond to our civilization, whereas Turkey is in a different civilization". P. de Villiers also declared that "even if tomorrow Turkey recognizes the Armenian Genocide, anyway, it is not a reason for that country's joining the EU", adding that "after spending two days in Armenia, we are really shocked by Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide". He expressed a hope that Turkey will change its position on this issue and the Turkish president's visit to Yerevan in order to watch an Armenia-Turkey football match will be followed in the future by a visit to the Memorial Complex of the Armenian Genocide Victims. "To admit the wounds of a nation is a symbol of greatness," P. de Villiers said.

The delegation headed by him has visited the Memorial Complex of the Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and planted a tree in the Memorial Alley near the museum.

3. MEMBER OF "RPA" FACTION CONSIDERS STREET REQUITALS AS INADMISSIBLE, EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT THOSE ENGAGED IN SUCH REQUITALS TO BE PUNISHED [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

All lawbreakers in Armenia must be punished, Edward Sharmazanov, a deputy of the RA National Assembly, spokesman for the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), expressed such a conviction at the November 18 press conference, when responding to questions related to the attack made yesterday on the chairman of Investigative Journalists NGO, editor-in-chief of Hetq On-Line weekly Edik Baghdasarian. He said that it is inadmissible to settle accounts with a person due to his/her professional activity or for any other reason, noting that the Armenian president had said the same in his speech at the National Assembly.

In response to the suggestion to name at least two persons punished for beating a reporter, E. Sharmazanov replied that it is outside of his competence to punish people. He also declined to comment on the rumors, according to which the organizer of the above mentioned attack is member of the "RPA" faction Vardan Aivazian.

To recap, on the evening of November 17 some unknown persons attacked Edik Baghdasarian, as a result of which he suffered a serious injury to the head and was taken to hospital.

4. CHAIRMAN OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS NGO EDIK BAGHDASARIAN SUBJECTED TO CRUEL BEATING [Aravot, 11/19/08]

At 7:50 pm on November 17, two unknown persons attacked the chairman of Investigative Journalists NGO, editor-in-chief of Hetq On-Line weekly Edik Baghdasarian at 1/3 Byuzand Street in Yerevan. According to Hetq On-Line, while they were pulling the journalist about, a third man threw a stone at his head from a distance, causing a serious injury. The assaulters tore E. Baghdasarian's clothes, which were not found in that place after the incident, as well as took away his photo camera.

Following a call of the witnesses, ambulance doctors and several employees of the Kentron police station arrived at the scene of the incident. After receiving medical aid on the spot, Edik Baghdasarian was taken to hospital. He finds it difficult to tell the possible reasons for the incident, even though he does not rule out that it may have a connection to his professional activity.

An ambulance car took E. Baghdasarian to the resuscitation unit of Nor Nork Hospital, and the journalist is currently under medical observation. The RA prosecutor general was informed about the incident. According to spokeswoman for the RA prosecutor general Sona Truzian, he instructed to conduct immediately an investigation into the case.

5. MIATSUM INITIATIVE NOT PERMITTED TO HOLD EVENTS ON NAGORNO KARABAKH PROBLEM [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

On November 14 and 18, the town authorities of Echmiadzin and Armavir prohibited the members of the Miatsum (Joining) national initiative to hold open seminars on the subject of Nagorno Karabakh conflict at town's houses of culture. Initiative members, NA deputy Zaruhi Postanjian, former freedom-fighter Zhirayr Sefilian, and Alex Kananian reported at the November 19 press conference. According to Z. Postanjian, after Echmiadzin Mayor's Office violating the agreement reached in advance refused to provide a hall to them she applied to NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamian.



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Z. Postanjan said that H. Abrahamian talked to RA President Serzh Sargsyan, after which rang up to the deputy and said that Miatsum should not organize such events, as they are "part of the political project" of first President Levon Ter-Petrosian. When Z. Postanjan objected mentioning that their events are not political, but national, the NA Speaker said: "You are not aware yourself that you implement a project."

According to the deputy, they came across obstacles in Armavir as well: town's Police surrounded the house of culture and prohibited the town residents to enter the house. "As a result we organized a march in town streets voicing "Artsakh!," "Miatsum!," "Those Ceding Land are Traitors!." 400 people were to take part in our event in the hall, while the number of the march participants reached 4 thousand," Z. Postanjan said.

6. ARTSAKH AND ARMENIAN PEOPLE REALIZE THAT ARTSAKH DEFENSIVE SYSTEM WILL BE DESTROYED BY CEDING EVEN IF SMALLEST TERRITORY, MIATSUM REPRESENTATIVE CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

"The Armenian authorities wish to solve the Nagorno Karabakh problem by acting as they think best, as it proceeds from their personal interests," Alex Kananian, a member of the Miatsum (Joining) national initiative, stated at the November 19 press conference. He affirmed that for the sake of prosperity of their own business the RA authorities strive for achieving opening of the Armenian-Turkish border by all means, and the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in that context is very dangerous for Armenia and Artsakh.

According to A. Kananian, RA President Serzh Sargsyan's last visit to Artsakh was presented by media as a check up, but indeed S. Sargsyan had a secret meeting with the leadership of Artsakh and representatives of power structures. According to A. Kananian, during that meeting the RA President said "by a tone not admitting objection" that he has decided to settle the problem on the basis of the Madrid principles, according to which the Armenian troops will be withdrawn from 5 liberated territories, after which the Kelbajar region will be ceded to Azerbaijan.

As A. Kananian added, S. Sargsyan's security was strengthened in an unprecedented way during his visit to Artsakh: "the whole Stepanakert was paralyzed, snipers were placed on roofs of houses." The speaker said that in spite of all that the peoples of both Artsakh and Armenia realize that the defensive system of Artsakh will be destroyed by ceding even if the smallest territory.

7. FORMATION OF CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH CAUCASIAN COUNTRIES WILL STILL REQUIRE MUCH TIME, PETER SEMNEBY CONSIDERS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

It was found out as a result of joint discussions of EU and Armenian leadership that the Armenian side wonders how decisions are made in EU. Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, said in his interview to Radio Liberty commenting upon EU's initiative to send advisers to Armenia. "This group of parliamentarians will be a resource for those making a decision. They will be standing near the leaders to provide information and to tell them how this or that decision would be made in EU member-countries," P. Semneby said.

P. Semneby commented upon the statements of some Armenian, Azeri, and Georgian experts that EU prefers stability in the three South Caucasian countries to democracy and closes its eyes to elections held with violations and riggings. "The opposite of stability is instability, which no one wishes. We consider and are convinced that to achieve stability in the respect of long-term prospect democratic institutions, human rights, supremacy of law, and democratic culture should be developed," P. Semneby said. And according to the EU representative, it will take much time to achieve that. He reminded that the South Caucasian independent countries have "a history of only 17 years."

Touching upon the investigation of the March 1 events, P. Semneby said that the creation of a fact-finding group of experts is "evidence of progress." He welcomed opposition's decision to take part in fact-finding group's work.

8. DISCUSSIONS OF THE PRESENT ROUND OF KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION KICK OFF IN YEREVAN [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 11/20/08]

On the initiative of the staff of the Armenian president discussions on the present round of Karabakh conflict regulation kicked off today in the conference hall of K. Demirchian sport-concert complex with the participation of Armenian President Serzh Sargsian and the heads of political parties.



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At the beginning of the meeting the president promised that such gatherings will have a regular character. Serzh Sargsian reminded his address to the people in the NA in which he had noted that he will initiate regular thematic consultations on strategic issues which are of vital importance for the country.

According to him, such mechanism of discussions will not only contribute to the increase of the role of parties in the process of decision making, but will also become an impetus for the further development of the political field.

“Each of our meetings in this format will be dedicated to one concrete issue. I don’t exclude that in future we will also have outgoing consultations, which will be organized in the place which concerns the discussed issue, outside of the capital. I think that the importance of such consultations is first of all in hearing each other, understanding the variety of opinions and approaches, thinking over the vital issues together and in case of opportunity forming a joint position on separate issues,” Serzh Sargsian said.

The Armenian president also noted that during the discussion which will be held behind the closed doors, the participants are free to express their approaches.

Heads of dozens of political parties take part in the meeting.

S. Sargsian also congratulated everyone on brilliant performance of Armenian chess players in the World Chess Olympiad.

9. REPRESENTATIVES OF “TOGETHER” MOVEMENT PRESENT THEIR PROGRAM OF ANTI-CORRUPTION FIGHT TO T. SARGSIAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian met today in the government with more than five dozens of young people from “Together” movement.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that according to the arrangement reached during the previous meeting the young people presented today their program of anti-corruption in the education system to Armenian prime minister as a support to the government in the implementation of the program of fighting against corruption.

The Armenian prime minister greeted the aim of the movement and stressed the importance of formation of atmosphere of intolerance in the society towards vicious phenomenon including the corruption, to set up a consistent fight against such phenomenon and with it to support the major reforms implemented in the country.

Tigran Sargsian assured that the government will support the “Together” movement in such initiatives expecting close and efficient cooperation for ensuring positive changes in our state and public life.

During the meeting the Armenian prime minister also answered to numerous questions the youth young people were concerned with connected with fighting against corruption.

An agreement has been reached to meet again after starting anti-corruption program in the higher educational establishments and to sum up the first results and the existing issues.

10. NA URGENT SESSION TO BE CALLED NOVEMBER 26 [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

At the today’s session of the Armenian government a decision has been made on calling an urgent session of the parliament November 26 at 12:00. During the session it is expected to discuss more than ten legislative bills among which the ones included in the package of 2009 state budget as well as the draft budget.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan noted that the time of the session has been agreed with the NA speaker. The prime minister also assigned members of the government to conduct relevant discussions and single out those legislative initiatives which need to be urgently approved and must function from January 2009, so that in case of necessity decisions on calling other urgent parliamentary sessions be adopted.

11. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT APPROVES CHANGES IN 2009 STATE BUDGET DRAFT [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

The government of Armenia approved today at its session the changes suggested in the 2009 state budget draft.

Armenian Finance Minister Tigran Davtian said that after the budget draft was discussed in a first round in the permanent commissions of the NA and after it was discussed in plenary session, around 500 suggestions from members of parliament and factions have been received. The suggestions acceptable by the government have been included in the change draft.



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The minister informed members of the Armenian government that as a result of discussions the registered most important success is that the main macroeconomic indexes have not been changed and all the economic indexes remained the same.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan registered that it is necessary to make editorial changes and make the definitions correspond to the logic of budget process. According to him, there are such suggestions which contradict the demands of budget legislation. The works were assigned to Finance Ministry.

12. THOSE IMPRISONED IN CASES RELATED TO MARCH 1-2 EVENTS TO GO ON ONE-DAY HUNGER STRIKE ON NOVEMBER 20 IN PROTEST AGAINST INCONSISTENCY OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/20/08]

The persons imprisoned in the cases related to the March 1-2 events in Yerevan will go on a one-day hunger strike on November 20 "in protest against the doublefacedness and inconsistency of the Council of Europe".

Members of the Committee for Protection of Political Prisoners and Persecuted Persons in Armenia Vardan Harutyunian, Gayane Martirosian, Tigran Khzmalian, Mesrop Mesropian, Zhirayr Sefilian, Karapet Rubinian, Norayr Norikian and Arshavir Bozinian stated: "As a sign of solidarity with our friends who even in prison have not stopped for a second their heroic struggle in the name of a free and democratic Armenia, we also go on 24-hour hunger strike starting from 00:00 am of November 20".

13. "HERITAGE" PROPOSES HOLDING PARLIAMENTARY HEARINGS ON ARTSAKH PROBLEM [Aravot, 11/20/08]

The secretary of the National Assembly "Heritage" faction, member of the NA Standing Committee of Foreign Relations Stepan Safarian on behalf of their faction applied to the chairman of the Standing Committee of Foreign Relations Armen Rustamian with the proposal to hold parliamentary hearings on the Artsakh problem, NT was informed by the press service of "Heritage" party.

In his letter the NA deputy reminds that as long ago as November 3, 2007 he made a proposal, on behalf of "Heritage" faction, to organize parliamentary hearings on the Nagorno Karabakh problem and the process of its settlement. Instead, hearings were held on the subject of Armenian-Turkish relations, which, as S. Safarian underlined, were also quite important. However, according to him, the developments around the Karabakh problem and the current regional developments show again that organizing hearings on the Karabakh problem is of extreme importance to Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. In the opinion of S. Safarian, these hearings "may become a kind of stimulus for confronting efficiently the growing regional challenges".

14. SURRENDER OF ANY SECTION OF LIBERATED TERRITORIES OF ARMENIA IS A STATE CRIME, IS SAID IN "UNIFICATION" NATIONAL INITIATIVE'S STATEMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/20/08]

"Miatsum" ("Unification") national initiative issued a statement on November 19, in which it calls on the current authorities of Armenia to give up their state-ruining, unrealizable and absurd infringements to surrender some part of the native lands and henceforth to build the foreign diplomacy of Armenia based on their constitutionally assumed duties to ensure unconditionally the military and territorial security of Armenian statehood and the population of Armenia.

"Unification" warns the Armenian authorities, all the pro-government and opposition political forces and figures that full or partial surrender of Armenia's liberated territories will immediately result in the complete and irreversible collapse of Armenia's current security system, which is the only guarantee of stability and peace, and in destruction of the defensive capacity of the country.

"Therefore, the supposed surrender of any section of Armenia's liberated territory, while citing the vain international "guarantees", is a grave state crime aimed at ruining the bases of Armenian statehood and an intolerable encroachment upon lives of Armenian citizens," the statement reads.



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15. SMBAT AYVAZIAN SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/20/08]

The general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities, presided over by judge Gagik Avetisian, by the November 19 judgement sentenced Smbat Ayvazian, a Political Board member of the Hanrapetutiun (Republic) party, to two years' imprisonment and fine of 300 thousand drams. Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed about it by the Press Service of the RA Cassation Court.

It should be mentioned that S. Ayvazian was accused by part 1, Article 316, RA Criminal Code, using violence to a power representative not dangerous for his life and health, and part 4, Article 235, illegal carrying of gas, cold or throwing arms.

16. DELEGATION HEADED BY ARTHUR BAGHDASARIAN TO LEAVE FOR IRAN ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

Delegation headed by the Secretary General of the Armenian National Security Council Arthur Baghdasarian will pay an official visit to Islamic Republic of Iran November 23-24.

Press service of the Armenian president told Armenpress that the delegation consists of the deputy foreign minister Gegham Gharibjanian, MPs Hovhannes Margarian, Sukias Avetisian and other officials.

During the visit the delegation is expected to meet with Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, Speaker of the parliament Ali Larijani, Secretary of the National Security Highest Council Said Jalili and with other high-ranked officials.

17. NA AND FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN ARMENIA TO START CLOSER COOPERATION IN HUMANITARIAN SPHERE [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

National Assembly's science, education, culture, youth and sport affairs permanent commission organized a meeting with the representatives of foreign embassies in Armenia for establishing closer cooperation.

Armenian National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian greeted the initiative of the commission considering it as a first systematized step. "With this initiative the National Assembly stretches hand of cooperation and joint work to those who implement cultural, educational and scientific programs and to diplomatic representatives interested in that sphere," the NA speaker said.

The head of the commission Armen Ashotian noted that an issue has been put to increase the involvement of NA in many programs which are being carried out by embassies. According to him, Armenian citizens underscore partnership in political, military, economic as well as in humanitarian sphere.

"The humanitarian cooperation sphere is the platform which lets our societies get acquainted with each other, exchange the experience we need, and make the relations between our countries closer. We make a cooperation proposal, it is frank, and cooperation in this sphere may be in different directions," Ashotian said, adding that the Armenian legislative body may be useful in the implementation of the programs and expressed assurance that acquainting meeting may be a good start for further bilateral relations and consolidation of partnership.

Assistant of Georgian embassy Nino Aptsiauri said she is glad of the meeting and noted that the "intervention" of Georgian culture already kicks off in Armenia: performances of Georgian state philharmonic singing-dancing ensemble are expected in near future which will give start to the season of Georgian culture in Armenia. The days of culture will be held in March 2009.

18. ALI BABAJAN SAYS THE OPPORTUNITY OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ARMENIA MUST BE USED [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

"We should seize the created opportunity and normalize relations with Armenia immediately", Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babajan, the Turkish "Cihan" news agency cited him as saying today.

According to him, currently a favorable situation has been created to normalize Turkish and Azerbaijan's relations with Armenia.

"The sides have a wonderful opportunity to regulate mutual relations and it must be used, otherwise we will miss a brilliant opportunity", A. Babajan said.



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19. PROSECUTOR GENERAL RECEIVES COUNCIL OF EUROPE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

Armenian Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepian received today delegation headed by the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg.

Press secretary of the prosecutor general told Armenpress that during the meeting they discussed the results of the examination of criminal cases opened in connection with March 1-2 events, cooperation of prosecutor's office and NA ad hoc commission, and newly formed fact finding group.

The prosecutor general informed that currently 7 people are under initial arrest. The examination of their cases is over and time has been established for getting acquainted with the results.

With the request of the commissioner A. Hovsepian presented the results of the examination and referred to the works directed towards finding out the legacy of actions of the police.

Speaking about the activity of the fact finding group the prosecutor general said that the prosecutor's office is ready to provide necessary information to the newly created group at the same time expressed hope that the latter will succeed in acquiring facts which will be useful for the examination and will clarify a number of issues.

BUSINESS

20. WORLD BANK MAY PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CREDIT RESOURCES OF 250 MILLION DOLLARS FOR SME SECTOR OF ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

The Armenian government's program on measures to confront the global financial crisis was recently presented at the National Assembly. The program underlines the necessity of taking rapid and complex actions in the current situation, the Armenian prime minister Tigran Sargsyan said when receiving the representatives of the World Bank Yerevan Office and the office head Aristomene Varudakis on November 18. According to him, Armenia succeeded in confronting the first wave of the financial crisis, whereas now the countries are concerned about the second - economic crisis, and Armenia must also prepare steps to reduce its impact.

T. Sargsyan proposed that the WB representatives discuss with the bank management the agreement on provision of additional credits of 250 million USD for Armenian small and medium entrepreneurship sector (he had reached this agreement during his visit to Washington) and implement it as soon as possible. The proposal was made, taking into account the fact that by WB procedures, the allocation work will finish in the spring of 2009. The prime minister pointed out that at the time German KfW Bank considered the Armenian program on SME crediting as the best in the world, and now there is an intention to use the successful experience by increasing sharply the amount of crediting, taking quite great demand into consideration. In the words of T. Sargsyan, Armenian banks can and are ready to distribute large amounts. He said that based on the Washington agreements, he also sent today a letter to the WB's deputy director and regional directors, anticipating a rapid provision of credits for the SME program.

According to a press release of the RA Government Information and PR Department, the prime minister said that negotiations are being conducted with other financial organizations with the aim of attracting the necessary funds.

21. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SUBMITS TO GOVERNMENT ABOUT 70 PACKAGES OF PROPOSALS FORMED THROUGH DISCUSSION OF 2009 DRAFT STATE BUDGET [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

At the stated time the RA National Assembly Staff submitted to the government about 70 packages of written proposals of the parliamentary standing committees, factions and deputies. The proposals were formed as a result of the preliminary discussions of the 2009 draft state budget at the standing committees and the discussions held at the November 12-13 plenary sittings of the NA, NT was informed by Tatul Soghomonian, the head of the NA Department for Ensuring Legislative Activity, deputy head of the NA Staff.

It is noteworthy that as previously, this year the majority of proposals are related to changes envisaging additional financing for the budgetary expense items. The government will soon submit a final amended version of the 2009 draft state budget of Armenia to the National Assembly for discussion and approval. It will be clear from the final version how acceptable the proposals were.



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22. RA STATE COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF ECONOMIC COMPETITION PERMITS CONCENTRATION OF EBRD AND ARARATBANK [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

At the special sitting on November 18, the RA State Commission for Protection of Economic Competition discussed the issue of concentration of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Araratbank.

The EBRD had applied to the Commission, informing it that it intends to acquire the ordinary nominal shares recently issued by Araratbank, with these shares making up 25% of the bank's authorized capital plus one share. A declaration of the companies' concentration had also been submitted.

As a result of administrative proceedings initiated by the Commission based on the application, the Commission concluded that there are no grounds for banning the concentration of the companies and permitted it.

23. ADB TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS OF ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER IN COMING WEEK [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

During the November 18 meeting with the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, the President of the Asian Development bank (ADB) Haruhiko Kuroda spoke favorably of the current state of the Armenian economy, taking into consideration the high economic growth, moderate inflation and the sound macroeconomic policy. According to the president of ADB, Armenian economy needs high-quality infrastructures today, and ADB and the Armenian government are already cooperating in this direction. H. Kuroda said that this is his first visit to Armenia, and it has two major goals: to discuss the directions of further cooperation and to attend the opening ceremony of the ADB Office in Yerevan.

T. Sargsyan expressed gratitude to the bank for its assistance to reconstruction of rural roads, the projects on water supply and sewerage sector, and preparation of a strategy of developing the transport sector in Armenia. He presented the possible directions of future cooperation and the existing potential. The prime minister in particular underlined the assistance for reduction of the consequences of the global financial crisis and for introduction of electronic governance in Armenia, and the crediting of SME sector through provision of credits to Armenian banks. T. Sargsyan anticipated the ADB's participation in formation of technoparks and free economic zones in Armenia, and development of transit transport infrastructures.

According to the RA Government Information and PR Department, H. Kuroda added the IT sector to those indicated by T. Sargsyan, noting that in his opinion, Armenia has serious potential in IT sector. The president of ADB promised to discuss the presented proposals in the coming week and respond to them.

24. THERE IS NO ROAD BACK IN ISSUE OF IMPLEMENTING PROJECT ON CONSTRUCTION OF ARMENIA-IRAN RAILWAY, ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER STATES [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

The Armenian government has made a political decision that the construction of an Armenia-Iran railway is necessary for Armenia, and the work in this direction has already been launched with state budgetary resources. There is no road back in the issue of implementing this project, the RA prime minister Tigran Sargsyan stated on November 18.

In his words, the projects including three versions of the railway's construction were developed by Armenian research institutes long ago, there are preliminary calculations, and the Armenian government has conducted all the basic studies. Nevertheless, additional design work will be done jointly with experts of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with ADB's grant money, which will enable to update the indicated projects and make calculations related to the use of modern equipment.

The RA minister of transport and communication Gurgen Sargsyan said that out of the three versions of constructing an Armenia-Iran railway, the version of a 447-km railway is the preferable one. In case of two other versions, the railway will be either 373 km long or 443 km long. In case of all the three versions, the railway will be built from the border of two countries to Jermuk, and by the preferable version, it will pass through Selim mountain pass, Martuni, Gavar and reach the operating Gagarin station. By the estimates of the minister, the railway's construction will take 5 years.

According to him, the design of the indicated railway and a parallel motorway to be built will be done with a million dollar grant to be provided by ADB to Armenia. In the experts' opinion, construction of Armenia-Iran railway will cost 1.5-2 billion dollars.



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25. FRANCE TELECOM RECEIVES FINAL LICENCE OF THIRD OPERATOR OF MOBILE COMMUNICATION IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/20/08]

The RA Public Services Regulatory Commission has granted the final licence of the third operator of mobile communication to France Telecom company which is registered in Armenia as FTA-Telecom. The licence was granted for a 15-year period with the right to extend it for another 15 years. On November 19 FTA-Telecom receives permission to use radiofrequencies for 10 years. The company will provide phone numbers by +374(0)55 and +374(0)95 codes.

According to the licence terms, the company is obliged to ensure a GSM coverage in Yerevan and 42 cities within two years after receiving its licence.

The company is also obliged to ensure a cell phone coverage in at least 200 villages of Armenia and for 85% of transport nodes connecting Armenia with Georgia and Iran within three years after receiving its licence.

FTA-Telecom shall transfer an amount of 51.5 million euros during a banking day for receiving the licence of the third operator of mobile communication in Armenia. The company will operate under the brand "Orange" in Armenian market.

26. ECONOMIC INFORMATION PORTAL "BUSINESS TODAY" OF "NOYAN TAPAN" INFORMATION AND ANALYTICAL CENTER OFFICIALLY PRESENTED [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/20/08]

"Business Today" economic information portal of "Noyan Tapan" Information and Analytical Center has been launched. It will provide exact economic information about companies operating in Armenia, the Diaspora and Artsakh, manufactured goods and provided services, their prices and changes in prices. Along with providing correct information about developments taking place in the market, the portal also offers an opportunity to compare prices and make operational marketing decisions, the Manager of the portal Satenik Gharakeshishian stated at the November 19 presentation of "Business Today" (<http://www.econews.nt.am> or <http://www.market.nt.am>).

According to S. Gharakeshishian, the idea of creating such a portal was proposed at Noyan Tapan as early as 5 years ago, but for certain reasons it has become possible to finish part of the envisaged huge work only today.

The chief programmer of "Business Today", Founder of "Hangyuts" Club Mher Abrahamian said that the portal is the only one in Armenia in the sense that users may quickly receive, via the Internet, data for contacting companies and choose the necessary goods and services from the exhaustive database accessible in the real-time regime. In the future, the companies - participants in "Business Today" will have the opportunity to complete information about their goods and services on their own.

The Director of Grant Thornton Amyot consulting and audit company Arman Pinarbasi stated that he anticipates accurate, fresh, profound and independent information from "Business Today". According to him, their company will be in the role of both a provider and user of the portal's information as information is an indispensable tool in work of any consulting company.

The Assistant of the Chairman of the RA National Statistical Service (NSS) Hayk Grigorian read the message of the NSS Chairman Stepan Mnatsakanian on the occasion of launching "Business Today" portal, which in particular says that the portal "will contribute to the creation and development of an economic information system" and "the formation of an information society in Armenia".

27. ARMENIA IN 6th PLACE IN WORLD BY GDP GROWTH INDEX [Azg, 11/20/08]

The Armenian government attaches importance to the outside world's opinions about economic developments in the country. The annual reports "Economic Developments in Armenia" published by the Armenian European Policy and Legal Advice Center (AEPLAC) present a "European view" on economic development processes in Armenia. The 2007 report also shows that the Armenian economy is developing in a correct way, the RA minister of finance Tigran Davtian said at the November 19 presentation of the annual report "Economic Developments in Armenia 2007".

According to him, the Armenian government receives technical assistance from AEPLAC in the implementation of economic reforms, and the government is satisfied with level of that cooperation. The report was given by the head of AEPLAC's economic team Gagik Gabrielian. In the report, 60 countries were selected for comparison with Armenia and monitoring. It was mentioned that by data of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2007 Armenia was in 6th place among 181 countries by the index of GDP growth (13.8%). By data of the World Bank, in 2007 Armenia was in 82nd place in the world and in 6th place among CIS countries by the index of per capita purchasing capacity (5,711 dollars).



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The head of the European Commission Delegation in Armenia Raul de Lutzenberger said that an agreement has been reached with the Armenian government, under which the AEPLAC will continue its work in 2009-2010.

28. ALL-ARMENIAN BANK TO FUNCTION IN THE REPUBLIC FROM 2009 [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

Armenian government approved yesterday bill "On All-Armenian Bank", with which the all-Armenian bank is intended to be established in the republic from the beginning of 2009. Because of its importance the project has been decided to be considered urgent and send to the Armenian parliament.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian noted that the establishment of the All-Armenian bank is one of the biggest all-Armenian programs. Armenia takes part in the foundation of a bank for the first time.

T. Sargsian noted that Armenian President Serzh Sargsian also stressed the importance of the establishment of the bank.

DIASPORA

29. NKR PRESIDENT MEETS REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN-ARMENIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN BOSTON [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

President of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan who is in USA on a working visit to take part in the annual fund raising organized by the "Hayastan" All-Armenian fund met November 19 at the central headquarter of the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) with representatives of the ARS, Eastern USA Central Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, Youth Union of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, Homemen and "Hamazgayin" Cultural Union.

Central information department of the Karabakh president told Armenpress that during the meetings issues related to different projects being carried out in the NKR, social-economic development of the republic and Artsakh-Diaspora relations were discussed.

Bako Sahakyan pointed out that new format of relations with different Diaspora organizations, in particular with the ARS, has already brought positive results. According to him, the new format based on close cooperation between different Diaspora organizations and the government of the NKR is a solid guarantee of effective cooperation.

The need for deepening the Artsakh-Diaspora ties and giving them new impetus was mutually noted. Within this context President Sahakyan paid special attention to the issue of further strengthening ties between Diaspora youth and Artsakh, to the importance of frequent visits to Artsakh making them implicated with the development of the Motherland.

On November 19 Bako Sahakyan met with the president of the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) Carolyn Mugar, vice-chairman Anthony Barsamyan, executive director of the organization Bryan Ardouny and member of the board of trustees of the AAA Van Krikoryan.

Issues related to the current level of cooperation between the AAA and Artsakh and prospects of deepening and enlarging it were discussed during the meeting.

Bako Sahakyan highly underscored the role of the Assembly in the development of Artsakh and support shown to it and noted that today it is necessary to pay special attention to the development of science intensive technologies and education, as well as to preparation and training of different specialists.

After the meeting the Karabakh president participated in the New England Annual regional meeting of the Armenian Assembly of America. The leadership of the Assembly headed by the chairman of the AAA's board of trustees Hirair Hovnanyan, representatives of Armenian community of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts were present at the meeting.

Bako Sahakyan introduced to the participants current social-economic situation in the republic, recent developments in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process and answered questions raised during the meeting.

On November 19 President Sahakyan met with a group of Armenian entrepreneurs from Massachusetts. During the meeting a wide range of issues related to investments and realization of different projects in Artsakh were discussed.

On the same day Bako Sahakyan met with journalists from Boston Globe daily, Armenian Mirror Spectator and Hayrenik weekly newspapers.

The president gave answers to a wide range of issues related to the settlement of Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict, recent developments in the South Caucasian region, bilateral ties between the United



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States of America and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, social-economic situation in the republic and Artsakh-Diaspora relations.

Head of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Pargev, NKR finance minister Spartak Tevosyan and other officials were also present at the NKR president's meetings in Boston.

30. EDWARD NALBANDIAN WILL LEAVE FOR ISTANBUL ON NOVEMBER 24

The RA Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian on November 24 will leave for Turkey connected with the works of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). According to the "Marmara" daily, Edward Nalbandian, as a Foreign Minister of the presiding country of BSEC, will be in Istanbul on a one-day visit to present the program of the six-month activity of the organization as well as the priorities of Armenia's presidency.

31. OBAMA'S ELECTION FORCES TURKEY TO RETHINK ITS DEMANDS FROM ARMENIA

By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier

Turkey has blockaded Armenia for the last 15 years with the vain hope that this would force Armenian leaders to make concessions to Ankara on several fronts: Abandon the pursuit of genocide recognition, acknowledge Turkey's territorial integrity, and accept Azerbaijan's jurisdiction over Artsakh (Karabagh). In return, Turkey offered to lift the blockade and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia. Armenia steadfastly rejected these unacceptable Turkish demands, despite the economic hardships its people endured as a result of the joint blockades imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Frustrated with the growing number of countries acknowledging the Armenian Genocide in recent years, the Turkish government embarked on a new scheme to try and split Armenia from the Diaspora, hoping to undermine their joint efforts for the international acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide.

In recent months, because of the convergence of several factors - internal turmoil in Armenia following the presidential elections and increasing pressure on Yerevan by Western countries and Russia to reconcile with Turkey - Armenia's newly elected President offered to accept the Turkish proposal to establish a joint historical commission on the Genocide, but only after Turkey would lift its blockade and establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan.

Shortly after Pres. Serzh Sargsyan's declaration, the Russian-Georgian war briefly disrupted the transport of goods between Black Sea ports and Armenia, making the Armenian government more eager to seek opening of the Turkish border, which would serve as an alternate supply route. Moreover, Armenia expressed an interest in joining the 'Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform,' which was proposed by Pres. Abdullah Gul ostensibly to create a closer relationship between Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey. Pres. Gul's initiative would indirectly help Armenia to counter Azerbaijan's attempts to isolate and exclude Yerevan from all regional projects.

Turkey enthusiastically welcomed Armenia's cooperative gestures. As a result, Pres. Gul accepted Pres. Sargsyan's invitation to come to Yerevan - the first such visit by a Turkish leader - to watch a soccer match between the national teams of the two countries. The visit brought worldwide accolades to the Turkish president and raised Turkey's international stature at a time when the country was desperately seeking the votes of U.N. members to win a coveted Security Council seat.

Soon however, the Turkish scheme hit a series of snags. Armenia and Turkey could not agree on the details - subject matter, composition, and timing - of the proposed joint historical commission. Turkey, on the other hand, was in a rush to set up the commission before the start of Barack Obama's presidency on January 20, 2009, in order to discourage the incoming U.S. administration from considering the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide.

Meanwhile, Armenian officials were reluctant to take action on the proposed commission, until Turkey opened the border first and established diplomatic relations with Armenia. The Turkish government apparently underestimated the resolve of Armenia's leaders to stick by these two preconditions and misjudged their determination to withstand Western pressures on this issue.

After these misjudgments, the Turks made matters worse by insisting that Armenia agree to return to Azerbaijan a portion of the territories bordering Artsakh, before Ankara would agree to lift the blockade. This unacceptable condition threw out of the window any possibility of rapprochement between the two countries in the immediate future.

Complicating matters further, two new incidents last week proved that Turkish attempts to drive a wedge between Armenia and the Diaspora on the genocide issue had failed. Pres. Sargsyan, in an interview with the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, agreed with Diaspora leaders that



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the joint historical commission was 'absolutely unnecessary.' He stated: "We do not think that anything can be achieved by it. We want to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries, open the borders without any preconditions, and afterwards, through an intergovernmental process, we can discuss all issues pertaining to the neighboring countries. We do not consider the recognition of the Genocide by Turkey as a precondition to establishing relations. We desire the latter, but not at any cost. In the past, European countries too did not establish historical commissions in order to develop normal relations. Such an initiative could also mean an attempt to mislead the international public, especially when it is a multi-year process."

In another setback, the Turkish newspaper Zaman alleged that Armenia's Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian had questioned the value of more countries recognizing the Armenian Genocide, prompting him to issue a statement refuting the Turkish report. "The recent news by the Turkish press ascribed to Armenian officials about the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide is distorted and presented upside down. I have stated many times and I want to repeat again that Armenian officials have never expressed and will never express an idea in favor of suspension of the process of international recognition of the Armenian genocide. Moreover, Armenia cannot tolerate any expression of Armenian Genocide denial," Mr. Nalbandian stated.

Significantly, these setbacks occurred at a time when Turkey's leaders are expressing great anxiety over promises made by President-elect Obama to recognize the Armenian Genocide. In fact, during his last week's trip to the United States, Prime Minister Recep Erdogan repeatedly expressed his serious concern about Mr. Obama's announced intentions on the genocide. In fact, Turkish and American officials have advised Mr. Erdogan that Pres. Obama would most probably acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and the Congress could pass a resolution on this issue, unless Turkey immediately takes the bold step of lifting the blockade and establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia.

Currently, the Turkish Prime Minister is in the process of gauging the intentions of President-elect Obama on the Armenian Genocide by communicating with his circle of close advisors. Should he determine that Mr. Obama is intent on carrying out his campaign promises on this issue, Mr. Erdogan could then quickly open the border and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, in order to preempt any official action by the U.S. President and/or the Congress. However, should Mr. Erdogan discover that Pres. Obama is hesitant on keeping his campaign promises, the Turkish side would then continue making stiff demands from Armenia.

Under these circumstances, Armenia's leaders are in no particular rush. They can patiently wait until they see what position the next U.S. President would be taking on the Armenian Genocide. In any case, the Armenian side has nothing to lose by waiting. On the contrary, by biding its time, the Armenian government could well avoid making concessions on Artsakh and refuse to establish the "unnecessary" historical commission, while getting Turkey to lift the blockade.

ARTS

32. PRESENTATION OF SINGER GURGEN DABAGHIAN'S DVD "RETURN" TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN ON NOVEMBER 30 [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/19/08]

The presentation of DVD "Return" of Gurgen Dabaghian, a performer of folk and bardic songs, will take place in Yerevan on November 30. As the singer said at the November 17 press conference, the disc contains a recording of his solo concert given in Yerevan after a 5-year interruption. Songs of Sayat-Nova, Sheram, Jivani and Hasani were performed live at the solo concert.

In the words of G. Dabaghian, after that concert he received invitations from various countries: in September and October he gave concerts in the U.S, Russia and Ukraine. The singer informed those present that next year he plans to tour in France, Italy, Australia, the U.S. and Russia.

In response to the question about whether he intends to perform songs of any other genre, G. Dabaghian replied: "I was born and grew up in a family where one can mainly hear bardic and folk songs. My repertoire will not undergo changes and I am going to remain faithful to the genre which is loved and appreciated by people".

The singer is glad that young performers' love of folk music is growing. He considers young singers his friends rather than rivals, saying that they also try to popularize Armenian folk and bardic music.

According to G. Dabaghian, he spends his spare time swimming and mountaineering. "I have climbed to the tops of almost all mountains in Armenia, and next year I am going to climb Mount Ararat," the singer said.



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33. INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S CULTURE AND ART TO BE HELD IN CHINESE TOWN OF TYANTSZIN NEXT SUMMER [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

An international festival of children's culture and art will be held in the town of Tyantszin, China on July 25-30 next year, financed by the Chinese Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Tyantszin municipality.

Armenian Culture Ministry informed that children's groups of different nations may take part in the festival.

The program of the festival named "Peace, Friendship and Future", includes the "Meeting in Binhay" world children's holiday event and the fifth international children's painting exhibition-prize giving.

Within the frameworks of the event performances of art groups will be presented and the fourth contest of "The Great Wall of World's Children" will take place.

34. "METALFRONT- FEST 2008" ROCK-FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN ARMENIA NOVEMBER 26-27 [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

"METALFRONT- FEST 2008" rock-festival will again be held in Armenia November 26-27 with the participation of not only local but foreign rock bands.

Bands from Russia, Iran, Netherlands and Armenia will perform in Hovhannes Tumanian Puppet Theatre.

35. THIRD REPUBLICAN FESTIVAL OF YOUNG THEATRICAL PRODUCING TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [Azg, 11/20/08]

Armenian Culture Ministry and the Union of Armenian Theatrical Figures will organize the third republican festival of Young Theatrical Producing November 21-28 which aims not only to discover and present the works of young creators but also to support their further professional formation.

Head of the Union of Armenian Theatrical Figures Hakob Ghazanchian told today journalists that the festival gives an opportunity to say once more to the world that there are many talented young producers in Armenia.

This year's festival is multi-genre: there will be 12 performances of classic and modern authors from which four performances will be staged by the Vanadzor State Dramatic Theatre after Abelian and Gyumri State Dramatic Theatre after V. Atchemian.

"This theatrical wave has not only been spread on the theatres functioning in the capital but also on creative groups of provinces which is very good. The theatrical art is based on the creator with unique enthusiasm. In fact there are many creators with such enthusiasm in the provinces, and this means that the culture develops outside Yerevan as well," H. Ghazanchian noted.

The staging of the performances has been included in the frameworks of state order, a part of which will be staged on the stage of Union of Armenian Theatrical Figures.

Young theatrical critics and students of the theatrical faculty of Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinema are also involved in the works of the festival. With their participation discussions are planned during the days following the performances.

Referring to the issues of young directors, H. Ghazanchian noted that now they are lack of opportunities and conditions to stage performances and express their "crazy" ideas.

The event is a wonderful occasion to discover them, support the development of their abilities, to create and to form them as experienced producer.

"6-7 years ago there was a doubt who to leave the theatrical art, now I can surely say that there are worthy followers", H. Ghazanchian added.

At the end of the festival the union will award the participants with gifts and diplomas.

RELIGION

36. HOLY SEE OF ST. ETCHMIADZIN SENDS A LETTER TO PRIMATE OF GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin sent a letter to the primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church Ilya II connected with the encroachments against St. Virgin Mary Church in Tbilisi Norashen district.



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Director of the information system of the Holy See of St. Etchmiadzin Vahram Melikian said today at a press conference that in the letter the Holy See expresses its concern over the incident and suggests that the issues be solved as soon as possible.

"The accusations as if the Holy See is not undertaking any steps are not right. What is being done, is not voiced in high instances. The encroachments against cultural values in Georgia are not new cases they have deep roots and Armenian Church has many times responded to the issue both through letters, phone calls and visits of Armenian delegations," he said.

He reminded that a year ago the Holy See sent a delegation to Georgia where the issue was once again voiced and the Georgian side assured that the issue will be solved.

Vahram Melikian said that the issue is the legal status of churches in Georgia. Except the Georgian Orthodox Church, other churches have been suggested to be registered either as non-governmental organizations or legal persons.

"The status was not accepted by all the churches. In Georgia the Diocese of the Armenian church does not have legal registration and it happens so that it is functioning illegally," V. Melikian said.

SOCIAL

37. 50 PEOPLE TEMPORARILY LIVE IN CAPITAL'S HOUSE FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

At present 50 people temporarily live in Yerevan's house for homeless people.

A leading specialist of the issues of handicapped and old people of Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Ministry Arpine Hakobian told Armenpress that the house is intended for 50 people but in case of necessity the applicants are supported.

Additional ten places are intended to be added in the building in January 2009. According to A. Hakobian, the homeless people are guided to the house by the policemen and workers of territorial social centers.

Specialists implement necessary works with the homeless people as a result of which they return to their families, find jobs, get corresponding treatment and the old people find their place in the house-hostels.

The house intended for the homeless people functions from January, 2006. By November 10, 2008 it has served 719 homeless people.

Due to the work of the specialists of territorial social centers 13 of them returned to their families, 44 have been situated in house-hostels and 19 found a job.

38. MEETING OF IT REPRESENTATIVES TO BE HELD IN DILIJAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

This year's third meeting "without ties" of heads of organizations of IT sphere and representatives of state establishments is expected to be held in Dilijan December 5-7.

Executive director of "IT Enterprises Union" Karen Vardanian said today at the press conference that during the meeting they will discuss the works carried out in the sphere, point out the issues. The issue of Armenia's competitiveness in conditions of global financial crisis will also be discussed. K. Vardanian said that the participants of the meeting will also refer to the electronic management issue.

According to initial results 60-100 people will participate in the meeting.

39. "OPEN PROGRAMMING CONTEST 2008" FOR ARMENIAN YOUNG SPECIALISTS [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

"Open Programming Contest 2008" is being held in Armenia's IT sphere conducted by the Enterprises Incubator Foundation, Armenian Economy Ministry, "San Microsystems" corporation, the USAID and "The Union of IT Enterprises".

Head of the Enterprises Incubator Foundation Bagrat Yengibarjian told today journalists, that the aim of the contest is to discover young talented programmers.

"This is one of the contests which promotes the development of the sphere. Being implemented from 2003 it has got state's support", B. Yengibarjian said.

Young specialists up to thirty years old, who consider their abilities competitive in one of the programming languages – C++ or Java, may take part in the contest. The contest will be carried out in three main rounds, nearly 60 young people will take part in the qualification round 30 of which will be selected to compete in the individual round. The winners of this round will have an opportunity to take part



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in the "Tutorial Camp" program which will be held in Tsakhkadzor. They will form 10 teams consisting of three persons to take part in the team competition.

The participants occupying the first three places will get big money awards – from 200,000 to 450,000 drams. Encouraging prizes are also intended.

Head of the Information Technology development department of Armenian Economy Ministry Zhenya Azizian noted that the contest with all its principles corresponds to the aspect of the policy of development of information technology sphere.

Under the prime minister's high auspices IT month has been announced within the frameworks of which numerous events have been carried out.

The state financing of the contest reaches five million drams. Such events are also planned to be conducted in Gyumri.

Applications for participation in the contest may be presented by December 2.

40. 4-5 ARMENIAN YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED BY GERMAN BUNDESTAG [ARMENPRESS, 11/20/08]

By the International parliamentary scholarship established by German Bundestag 4-5 young people from Armenia will participate in the studying program in Berlin.

The program is being held in joint collaboration of Berlin Free University, Berlin Humboldt and Technical universities.

Member of parliament of Federal Republic of Germany Lidia Westritsch, who is in Armenia to conduct interviews of the next year's scholarships, said today at a press conference that Armenian young people have an opportunity of the second year; the deadline of receiving applications for the new contest is January 30, 2009.

Within the frameworks of the program which is being carried out for 20 years, 120 young people from 25 countries work in German Bundestag for 5 months, get acquainted with German democracy, process of adoption of political decisions, development and adoption of laws.

The International parliamentary scholarship is intended for the young people who have higher qualification and are interested in politics.

With the efforts of German embassy competition for the participation in the next year's program has already been held and the best young people have been selected.

41. SALARIES OF JUDGES PLANNED TO BE 440,000 DRAMS FROM 2009 [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

The Armenian government approved yesterday bills on making changes in the Armenian laws "RA's legislative, executive and judicial head employers salary" and on "Prosecutor's office".

It suggests that the official salary of judges of the courts as well as the prosecutor general be established in a separate article of the annual state budget law.

Armenian Labor and Social Affairs Minister Arsen Hambartsumian informed that the salaries of Armenian judges will be increased twice from 2009 and will become 440,000 instead of 220,000.

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian noted that this is a serious political decision with which serious financial means will be directed to the judicial system.

"At the same time it means that the demands of the public from judges will also increase sharply", Armenian prime minister said.

42. 120 ARMENIAN STUDENTS STUDY IN UNIVERSITIES OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

Within the frameworks of different inter-state agreements 120 Armenian students left for other countries to get education.

Head of the International Cooperation and Diaspora relations department of Armenian Education and Science Ministry Vahe Grigorian told Armenpress that this year many places have been presented by Russia, Romania, Czech Republic and Bulgaria for studying in their higher educational establishments.

Medicine, economy, jurisprudence and international relations are demanded specializations.

During this year Armenian Education and Science Ministry signed an agreement with Syria within the frameworks of which already 28 Armenian students left for Syria for 10 months to study Arabic language.



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Within the frameworks of inter-state agreement the number of students from other countries who arrived in Armenia to study is also large.

The majority of them are from Iran (1,000 students) and India (600 students). They mainly study in Yerevan State Medical and Armenian State Architectural Universities.

At present the Armenian Education and Science Ministry negotiates with a number of countries to sign inter-state agreements with them in the future.

43. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PEDIATRICIANS KICKS OFF IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

The international conference of pediatricians kicked off today in Yerevan dedicated to the 75th anniversary of one of the founders of pediatrics in Armenia Professor V. A. Astvatsatrian. During the two-day conference pediatricians from Russia, Switzerland and Nagorno Karabakh will discuss with their Armenian counterparts issues on the development of new directions of pediatrics, prevention of children's diseases and death cases.

Assistant to Armenian Health Minister Tatul Hakobian stressed the importance of conduction of the conference expressing gratitude to the participating pediatricians.

"We've come to conclusion that we must seriously assess the work of previous ten years and the reforms implemented in the sphere of prior health care and understand which is the role of the pediatrics. We understand that we went in wrong direction in some issues and put stresses where we were to, but at the same time we shouldn't have underestimated what we call children's health and health care of children and teenagers", the deputy minister said.

Within the frameworks of the conference an exhibition has been organized by local and foreign pharmaceutical companies.

SPORTS

44. MEN'S CHESS NATIONAL TEAM OF ARMENIA WON AZERBAIJANI TEAM IN WORLD OLYMPIAD WITH SCORE OF 2,5:1,5

The games of the 6th tour were held on November 19 in the World Chess Olympiad being held in Dresden.

The men's national team of Armenia defeated the Azerbaijani team with the score of 2,5:1,5. Vladimir Hakobian, who played on the second chess-board, won the game with Shahriyar Mammadiarov, and Levon Aronian, Gabriel Sargsian and Tigran L. Petrosian drew their games. After the 6th tour the men's national team of Armenia shares the 1-2 places with the Russian team with 11 points. The Armenian team is in the lead with extra indices.

The women's national team of Armenia was defeated by the Ukrainians and shares the 13-33 places with 8 points.

On November 20 the men's national team of Armenia will compete with the Russian delegates, the women's team with the delegates of Austria.

5 tours are left till the end of the Olympiad.

45. ARMENIAN CHESS PLAYERS ARE LEADERS IN WORLD CHESS OLYMPIAD [ARMENPRESS, 11/21/08]

"It will be very hard to prevent the Armenian chess players to celebrate the second uninterrupted Olympic victory in the 38th World Chess Olympiad which is being held in the town of Dresden, Germany. The circumstance that before the tournament the Armenian men chess team had the international ninth rating was misleading and the Armenian chess players were underestimated", Russian sport media reported.

"Armenia continues to surprise the chess world. Armenian chess players did not only concede in competition with the Russian team but also were able to win them. In the only efficient match of the competition, the Armenian chess player Gabriel Sargsian simply paralyzed his rival Alexander Grishchuk and enjoyed a brilliant victory", German sport media reported.

The Armenian chess players won 2.5:1.5 the Russian team in the seventh round of the Olympiad and became the only leader of the Olympic tournament with 13 points.

German first team, Israeli and French teams share 2-4 places with 12 points.



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In the women tournament the Armenian chess players won 3:1 the Austrian team in the seventh round and yet share the 9-13 places having 10 points.

The leader among the women tournament is the Chinese team having 13 points, followed by the Ukrainian team which has 12 points and the third comes Russia with 11 points.

In the eighth round the Armenian women team will play with the Azerbaijani one.

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