



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Wednesday, November 26, 2008

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. GAGIK JHANGIRIAN TEMPORARILY SET FREE FROM PENITENTIARY INSTITUTION [Aravot, 11/24/08]

On November 22-27, former RA Deputy Prosecutor General Gagik Jhangirian was set free from the Vardashen penitentiary institution by the decision of the general jurisdiction court of Yerevan's Kentron and Nork-Marash communities for the purpose of taking part in the funeral of his mother. Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed about it by Lana Mshetsian, the Spokesperson of the RA Minister of Justice. It should be mentioned that G. Jhangirian is accused of using violence to a power representative not dangerous for his life and health, the case is at the stage of hearing.

#### 2. THOMAS HAMMARBERG: ARMENIA IS A MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF EUROPE, AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS UNFORGIVABLE [Azg, 11/24/08]

According to Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe High Commissioner for Human Rights, "the last events in Georgia, discussion over Karabakh, and acivization of relations with Turkey will have no impact on Council of Europe's position on the March 1 events, as we deal with elementary human rights in that issue. Armenia is a Council of Europe member, and violation of human rights is unforgivable. He stated at the November 22 press conference that he welcomes the creation of the fact-finding group in Yerevan. According to him, it is very important that representatives of various political forces are involved in the group, that they are really independent and are experts. In T. Hammarberg's opinion, all these three circumstances make group's work important.

At the same time, the High Commissioner stated that he is disposed critically and it not satisfied with the condition of the imprisoned people. "I am concerned that people are in imprisonment for more than 8 months without introducing exact proof that they are responsible for the March 1 events."

He pointed to the shortcomings in the judicial process. In particular, according to Hammarberg, there are cases when pressure is exerted on witnesses. According to him, all judicial judgments are made on the basis of policemen's evidence, who are themselves responsible for the violent actions.

Hammarberg specially dwelt on issues regarding the "Case of the Seven", that is, the organizers of the March 1 events. The High Commissioner doubted whether there was a willingness to overthrow the power by force. He said that he is going to study all materials of the "Case of the Seven" and to get acquainted with the court resolution before expressing a final opinion on the case. And if I reveal that there is no sufficient proof for sending the case to the court, a possibility to start discussions on existence of political prisoners will be created. So far I have never witnessed blind evidence, on the basis of which an independent court could accuse these people of overthrowing the power by force," the Council of Europe High Commissioner for Human Rights stated.

He said that he has already stated to the President and members of government that he will be inexorable if it comes to making a decision regarding Armenia by European structures. Thommas Hammarberg reminded that PACE session will take place at the end of January, and the issue of Armenia's fulfillment of demands of PACE resolutions is on the agenda. He especially singled out two points. In particular, whether an objective investigation of the March 1 events has been launched and how the imprisoned people are treated in the imprisonment places. "The institutions of the High Commissioner and PACE are two structures independent of each other, nevertheless, what I will report will have a considerable role in the formation of PACE conclusions."

According to him, the decision on using sanctions can be one of the possible variants of making a decision by PACE, in particular, depriving the Armenian delegation of the vote. At the same time he emphasized that the final term for fulfillment of resolutions' demands has not come today yet, and there is enough time for the Armenian authorities to ensure progress in fulfillment of many demands. According to his estimation, no progress has been reached in fulfillment of PACE resolutions' demands so far.



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### 3. TEKEYAN CULTURAL CENTER ALSO REFUSES TO PROVIDE HALL TO MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PERSECUTED PEOPLE [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/24/08]

The management of Tekeyan Cultural Center violating the agreement reached in advance, half an hour before the round table to be held on November 24 refused to provide a hall to the members and guests of the Committee for Defence of Political Prisoners and Persecuted People.

As Center's Coordinator, human rights activist Vardan Haroutiunian stated at a press briefing organized in the center's corridor, as early as 10 days ago they had applied to the management of Tekeyan Cultural Center in a written form with the request to rent center's big hall for two hours for organizing a round table on the subject Political Persecutions in Armenia. Center's management answered their letter agreeing to provide the hall for 40 thousand drams. However, at the last moment, according to the human rights activist, Center Administrator Levon Tadevosian said that they cannot organize an event in the building as a water tube had burst in the building.

Karapet Rubinian, a member of the Committee for Defence of Political Prisoners and Persecuted People, told journalists that he examined the tubes and made sure that they are in order. He reminded that some weeks ago the American Business Center, the Armenia Marriott and Congress hotels, and a number of other organizations refused to provide a hall to the Committee. Thus, the Committee members conclude that the only reason of refusal is political, and the authorities by all means try to hinder figures having opposition views to discuss the subject of political prisoners.

### 4. ARTSAKH IS ONE OF MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS OF ARMENIANS' CONSOLIDATION [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 11/24/08]

NKR President Bako Sahakian met with RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian on November 23 in Los Angeles within the framework of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's annual telethon. Issues regarding deepening of the Homeland-Diaspora relations were discussed, Artsakh's pivotal importance for further strengthening of these relations was emphasized during the meeting.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the General Information Department of NKR President's Administration, the same day B. Sahakian met with members of Western America's Administrative Board of Hnchakian Social-Democratic Party led by Chairman Hambik Safarian. Issues regarding Artsakh-Diaspora interrelations, Nagorno Karabakh problem, and NKR's socio-economic development were discussed during the meeting. The NKR President emphasized the necessity to further strengthen the contacts between the Diaspora and Artsakh, to form an atmosphere of constructive cooperation between various political forces. Both sides mentioned that Artsakh and its future is one of the most important consolidation ideas.

On November 23, B. Sahakian had a tete-a-tete talk with American Armenian benefactor Vahe Karapetian. Issues regarding implementation of various programs in Artsakh were discussed.

### 5. ARMENIAN PM HIGHLIGHTS COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian received today British ambassador to Armenia Charles Lonsdale and head of the British International Development Ministry's European and Central Asian department Pauline Hays.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the prime minister highly assessed cooperation with the government of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and considered the programs carried out until now by the British International Development Ministry very important for Armenia. They were aimed at improving the institutional and management systems, particularly reforms in the public sphere, expansion of budget programming, development of provinces etc.

Taking into consideration that in 2006 Armenia has been classified in the row of countries having medium income and the Great Britain's International Development Ministry's support is particularly directed to the implementation of programs in countries with low income, the government of Great Britain decided to end bilateral support program in Armenia by the end of 2008.

Ambassador Charles Lonsdale and the head of the International Development Ministry's European and Central Asian department Pauline Hays noted in this respect that with that the cooperation with Armenia is not ending. "We will continue following with attention the further pace of Armenia. Besides our assistance within the frameworks of international organizations, embassy of Great Britain will continue



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supporting the reforms carried out by the Armenian government as well as will support the peaceful settlement of conflicts existing in the region," they noted.

During the meeting they also referred to the global financial and economic crisis.

## 6. ARMENIAN AND TURKISH FMs AGREE TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TOWARDS REGULATION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, as foreign minister of BSEC chairing country, paid a one-day working visit to Istanbul November 24.

Armenian Foreign Ministry press service told Armenpress that the minister visited BSEC Secretariat where he met with the Secretary General of the organization Leonidas Khrizantopoulos. During the meeting they referred to the issues on improvement of the activity of BSEC and promotion of cooperation among the member countries.

Referring to the priorities of Armenia's chairmanship, Edward Nalbandian noted that the 60 events planned for the coming six months are aimed at increasing the authority of the organization, and deepening partnership among the member countries.

Afterwards, the session of the BSEC International Secretariat, representatives of BSEC member and observing countries and affiliated bodies took place during which Armenian foreign minister delivered a speech.

Speaking of priorities of Armenia's chairmanship, Edward Nalbandian pointed out the necessity of development of transport infrastructures in the region. One of the priorities of BSEC during Armenia's chairmanship will be cooperation in energy, nature protection, agricultural spheres.

Foreign minister said that Armenia also underscores deepening of BSEC-UN and BSEC-EU partnership.

The session was followed by a press conference of Edward Nalbandian. Speaking about normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, Armenian foreign minister noted that the full regulation of the relations stems from the interests of the two peoples and the dialogue between Armenia and Turkey is directed towards that aim – establishing diplomatic relations and opening of the border and it must not be viewed as a gift by Turkey to Armenia as Turkey is not less interested in it.

Afterwards Edward Nalbandian left for Istanbul S. Virgin Mary Mother Church and Armenian Patriarchate where he met with Archbishop Mesrop Moutafian. The minister also conducted meeting with the representatives of the Armenian community.

On the same day the meeting of Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers took place. Ali Babacan gave a dinner in the honor of E. Nalbandian. The meeting lasted for about 2.5 hours during which they discussed a number of issues on bilateral relations, exchanged thoughts over the Caucasian Security and Cooperation Platform.

In a briefing followed after the meeting the ministers assessed their meeting as useful and constructive. They agreed to continue efforts directed towards regulation of bilateral relations.

On the same day E. Nalbandian returned back Yerevan.

## 7. A. BAKHSHIAN POSITIVELY ASSESSES THE MEETING OF ARMENIAN PRESIDENT AND HEADS OF PARTIES [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Documents which are of vital importance for a country must be subject to open discussion, the head of the administration of "Heritage" party Anahit Bakhshian told today journalists referring to the November 20 meeting of Armenian President Serzh Sargsian with heads of political parties.

According to A. Bakhshian, the presence of many parties in the discussion did not provide the desired pluralism: she said it would be more efficient if the discussion of the issue had a format of debate and heads of fewer parties be invited, such as those who have a role in the political life of the country. Nevertheless she positively assessed the organization of the discussion in such a format by the Armenian president.

In A. Bakhshian's opinion, as a state, Nagorno Karabakh is an established fact and it is not a subject to discussions.

Referring to the visit of the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg to Armenia, A. Bakhshian expressed hope that he will make his objective decision. She found difficulty in answering what kind of decision will be made during the January session of CoE Parliamentary Assembly, because of not same applying of democratic values by the institution.



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A. Bakhshian noted that "Heritage" party expressed its anxiety to T. Hammarberg connected with the organization of the works of the fact finding group in the NA building as, according to them, it will not ensure the secrecy of evidences.

## **BUSINESS**

### **8. 15th ANNIVERSARY OF PUTTING ARMENIAN DRAM INTO CIRCULATION CELEBRATED [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/24/08]**

In November 1993 when the decision on putting the national currency - the Armenian dram into circulation was published, Armenia was facing numerous economic and social problems and overcoming the cold winter of 1993. At the same time, there was an awareness that it was a really historic day as putting the national dram into circulation meant restoring an independent statehood, the Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan stated at the festive ceremony to celebrate the 15th anniversary of issuing the Armenian dram and the 115th anniversary of foundation of the Armenian banking system. The event was attended by the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, the Chairman of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) Arthur Javadian, government members, the Chair and Deputy Managing Director of the IMF Murilo Portugal, and representatives of international organizations.

According to the prime minister, "we are proud to have a stable and reliable national currency and banking system which will allow us to withstand modern global economic crises".

In the words of A. Javadian, in the years of independence, the Armenian banking system underwent many ordeals and is ready today to withstand any challenges. The achievements reached by the sector year by year, in particular, the constantly improved field, the introduction of modern information technologies, and the responses in line with international trends have formed a well-founded trust in the work and actions of CBA. A. Javadian said that today Armenia has a national currency regulated by definite steps, a successful banking system considered as a leading one in the region, while the country's population is being more and more involved in the sector of financial services.

In the opinion of M. Portugal, the fact that the dram is strong and stable bears evidence of the efforts of the Armenian government and the capabilities and skills of the Armenian people. It also bears evidence of the sound financial policy being conducted in the country and of high capitalization and liquidity of its financial system.

Levon Barkhudarian who was the RA minister of finance in 1993 told reporters that in that period the situation was quite hard in Armenia, and the state did not have capital reserves. Nevertheless, the decision to put the national currency into circulation was a correct and necessary step, and it was important both in terms of establishing Armenian statehood and conducting an independent monetary policy.

The participants had the opportunity to see the commemorative coins of Armenia (all the gold and silver coins issued from 1994 until now) displayed at the fresco exhibition room of the National Picture Gallery in connection with the anniversary. More than 100 commemorative coins, including 30 gold ones, have been issued in the indicated period. The first coin was issued in May 1994 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Sardarapat battle.

A Monument to the Armenian dram was opened at the CBA building on November 22. Tigran Sargsyan described the monument symbolizing the dram as a serious work of art. In his opinion, when looking at this monument, every person discovers something for himself/herself as people have quite a different attitude to money.

### **9. GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS WILL HAVE LIMITED EFFECT ON ARMENIA, CHAIR AND DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IMF SAYS [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/24/08]**

Although Armenia is in worse conditions as compared with its neighbors, in recent years the country has achieved high indices of economic programs' implementation, a high economic growth and low inflation, and has considerably reduced the level of poverty, the Chair and Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Murilo Portugal stated at the November 22 press conference to finalize the results of his visit to Yerevan.

According to him, the fact that unlike other countries, Armenia has maintained the rate of its economic growth this year shows that the global financial crisis has a limited effect on Armenian economy, while its financial stability has no vulnerable aspects. Besides, the Armenian banks continue to make profits, the level of their capitalization and liquidity remains high, and the inflow of capital investments and remittances is continuing.



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In the opinion of M. Portugal, by approving the program of a 14 million dollar support on November 17, the IMF asserted its trust in Armenia, and if there is a need to allocate additional sums, it will be done. The purpose of the above mentioned allocation is to help Armenia with its integration into global economy. The IMF will also continue providing advisory help to the Armenian authorities.

M. Portugal said that some dependence of the Armenian economy on remittances from abroad and foreign investments is dangerous as it may have negative consequences if the economic situation deteriorates in countries that represent a source of money inflow for Armenia. According to the IMF official, in the first half of 2008, 75% of remittances from abroad and 70% of direct foreign investments in Armenia were those from Russia. However, there have been no signs of a decline in foreign investments or discontinuation of investment projects in Armenia.

M. Portugal announced that by IMF forecasts, in 2009 economic growth will make 8% in Armenia, which is lower than in recent years but higher than the indices of many other countries. By IMF forecasts, the overall economic growth of developed countries will decline, which has not happened since the 1970s. M. Portugal explained that the 15-month global financial crisis reached its culmination in October of this year when a number of countries announced their measures on stabilization, but it will be possible to speak about their results in the future. He said the first signs of getting out of the crisis will appear in late 2009.

## 10. "CONVERSE BANK" AND EBRD SIGN CREDIT PROGRAM COSTING 10 MILLION USD [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

The executive director of "Converse Bank" Ararat Ghukasian and representative of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Michael Weinstein signed today a credit program costing 10 million USD. The funds provided by EBRD will be directed towards crediting small and medium-sized business.

A. Ghukasian told the reporters that the credits will be provided without geographic limitations to those dealing with trade, services, industry, agriculture. The credits will be provided with 4-year term and with market interest. The executive director of "Converse Bank" expressed hope that the first provisions will be received in January. Before that, credit specialists of the bank will have special training classes.

Chairman of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian underscored such like cooperation, at the same time saying that the realization normals of Armenian banks are quite high today.

Such credits, according to A. Javadian, simply support in confronting the further impact of global financial crisis. He said that the recently spread information as if Armenian banks do not provide credits today do not correspond to reality.

## 11. NO DECISION MADE ON MERGING OF "POSTBANK" AND "CONVERSE BANK" [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

No decision has been made over merging of "Postbank" and "Converse Bank". Executive director of "Converse Bank" Ararat Ghukasian denied the news about this and said that these two banks will possibly cooperate.

"The time will show what kind of developments will be and what kind of cooperation "Postbank" and "Converse Bank" will launch. Everything will be transparent and within the circles of the law", he assured.

According to A. Ghukasian, no talks can be about the merging of these two banks.

Head of the Central Bank simply noted that it is not excluded that Armenian banks merge. Nevertheless the "Converse Bank" already supports the "Postbank" in the issue of casting and retraining of the staff.

## 12. UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING INVESTMENTS IN ARMENIA CREATED [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Chairman of the Armenian Central Bank Arthur Javadian said that unprecedented opportunities for making investments in Armenia have been created. According to him, investments may be made in different spheres as today an economic growth is registered and the banking system of the country is in a good condition.

The chairman of the Central Bank noted that during the recent period the investments in the construction sphere decreased which is directly connected with negative tendencies of the sphere in Russia.



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“Our Russian-based compatriots are making fewer investments in the Russian construction sphere. At this moment they have an unprecedented opportunity to make investments in their Homeland,” he said.

Chairman of the CB also assured that during this year no reduction of volumes of private transfers has been registered.

A. Javadian said that with the support of the Armenian government preventive events are being carried out, particularly recently the government provided 17 billion drams credit means to Armenian-German fund for crediting small and medium-sized business.

## DIASPORA

### 13. 18,000-20,000 ARMENIANS LIVE IN GREAT BRITAIN [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

The efficiency of the activity of Armenian Diaspora Ministry is conditioned by its cooperation with Armenian communities. An engineer and cartographer Ruben Galchian told Armenpress that the Diaspora Ministry can conduct an efficient work: a long time is necessary to work out programs and to consult with Diaspora Armenian officials as they better know the issues and opportunities of their communities.

One of the missions of the Ministry must be the support to the Armenian arts figure and intellectuals so that they present the Armenian culture to the Diaspora, as well as invite the Diaspora Armenian intellectuals and art figures to their homeland presenting the values created in the Diaspora to their compatriots.

Living in Great Britain and being acquainted with the peculiarities of the local Armenian community Ruben Galchian noted that the newly established Diaspora Ministry needs time to get acquainted with the structure and issues of the community.

Today 18,000-20,000 Armenians live in Great Britain, from which 4,000-5,000 are those who left Armenia during the last years. Around 10,000 of them mainly live in London and its suburbs, others – in different towns.

According to R. Galchian, the lack of NGOs and other organizations in the community is conditioned by its smallness.

At present Sunday schools function in the community, where the Armenian pupils have an opportunity to study Armenian language, Armenian literature and history. 250-300 children visit such schools.

R. Galchian said that the issue of preservation of Armenian identity is partly solved with this. He informed that there also exist sport and cultural organizations: the Armenian institute deals with cultural booklets, organization of lectures, ceremonies, concerts through which Armenians and foreigners get acquainted with the Armenian culture. For Armenians the main place of gathering is the church.

R. Galchian was the Armenian honorable consul in Great Britain from 1991-2000. In November this year he was awarded with the title of honored Doctor by the chairmanship of Armenian National Academy of Science for his contribution to the development of science in Armenia.

R. Galchian had his direct participation in the establishment of “Relatives of Armenia” charity organization in 2000 which implemented nearly 200 programs in Armenia costing 1 million USD, as well as the “Aid Armenia” organization which was established after the earthquake in 1988, which made an investment of 12 million USD: particularly the Vanadzor St. Narek children's hospital was constructed.

### 14. PARTNERSHIP OF DIASPORA AND ARTSAKH IN INFORMATION FIELD DISCUSSED [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

President of Nagorno Karabakh Bako Sahakyan met November 25 in Los Angeles with entrepreneur, owner of the Armenian-Russian TV Network channel Robert Oglakchyan.

Central information department of the office of the Karabakh president told Armenpress that a wide range of issues related to cooperation between Artsakh and the Diaspora in the information field were discussed during the meeting. The president of the country underlined the importance of developing cooperation in this field characterizing information field as a strategically important sphere.

On the same day Bako Sahakyan had a meeting with American –Armenian philanthropist couple Harry and Aida Shakaryans and discussed with them issues related to the prospects of carrying out different projects in Artsakh.

November 25 President Sahakyan also visited Prelacy of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of North America and met with members of the Diocese's National council and



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representatives of local Armenian community. Bako Sahakyan introduced to the participants social-economic situation in NKR and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process. The president highly underscored the role of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church in preserving Armenian national identity in Diaspora and in strengthening ties between the Diaspora and the Motherland.

On the same day Bako Sahakyan met president of the United Armenian Fund, vice-president of the "Lincy" foundation Harout Sassounyan.

A wide range of issues related to projects being carried out in the republic and prospects for future ones were discussed during the meeting.

## ARTS

### 15. ARMENIA TAKES 8th PLACE IN JUNIOR EUROVISION 2008 SONG CONTEST [Azg, 11/24/08]

In the Junior Eurovision 2008 song contest held on November 22 in Cyprus Monika Manucharova representing Armenia with the song The Sound of My Song took the 8th place. The Bzikebi group representing Georgia won the contest. The Ukraine took the second place and Lithuania the third place.

It should be mentioned that this was Armenia's second participation in Junior Eurovision. Last year the Arevik children's ensemble of Public Television and Radio took the second place with the song Dream being inferior to Belarus by only one point.

### 16. "WOMAN" INTERNATIONAL FIFTH FILM FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

"Woman" international fifth film festival will be held in the State Puppet Theatre after H. Tumanian from November 28-December 2 during which 50 films of women directors from Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Iceland, Finland, Germany, France, Iran, USA, Great Britain, Turkey and Spain will be presented. Ten films from Armenia are presented in the festival.

An official from Armenian Culture Ministry told Armenpress that contest program as well as show of films of German director Ulrike Ottinger and French director Agnes Varda will be included in the festival.

The film festival which became already traditional aims at giving a meaning to the place and role of women in the society, highlighting women's problems through film and contributing to the creation of films by women in Armenia. It also gives an opportunity to discover new names and through the film to present the life perceived by women of different nations.

Andrey Gerasimov (a director, rector of Highest Courses of Scenarists and Directors, Russia), Beverly Shaffer (director, Canada), Ulrike Ottinger (director, Germany), Yekaterina Yeremenko (director, Russia/Germany), Salome Sagaradze (director, Georgia), Roque Tavakoli Gerdefaramarzin (director, Iran), Hatis Kanner (representative of "Filmmor" women's international festival, Turkey), Eliza Batonin (director, Spain) will be the guests of the festival.

During the film festival with the Beverly Shaffer and Andrey Gerasimov will give master classes.

At the end prizes will be awarded in "The Best Film" nomination, there will also be special prizes and certificates.

The women film festival has been organized by "Liza" fund with the support of Armenian branch of Open Society Institute, Armenian Culture Ministry, Goethe Institute and Embassy of Canada.

### 17. THREE ARMENIAN FILMS PRESENTED IN THE "NEVSKI BLAGOVEST" INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN FILM FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Films "Christian Armenia" (about the history of adoption of Christianity by Armenians), "Saint Chrism" (about the history of chrism) and "Chrism Making" (about the process of making the chrism) presented by the Armenian Apostolic Church will also take part in the "Nevski Blogovest" international Christian film festival which kicked off yesterday in St. Petersburg.

According to "Yerkramas" newspaper, during the one-week festival not only films presented by Russian Christian directions will be shown but also round-tables, conferences will be conducted, a photo exhibition on religious theme will also open.

40 films are included in the program, from which 35 – documentary, 4 – short films as well as Eric Till's "Luther" film. Tapes from 11 countries have been presented. The festival aims at consolidating the cooperation between Christian directions.



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Representatives of Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Armenian Apostolic churches are included in the organizational committee.

The festival is not competitive, as competence contradicts to the ideology of unity and relationship of the organizers.

Free public watching is also organized.

18. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SIGNS A DECREE AWARDING H. KHUDAVERDIAN AND K. SHAMALIAN TITLES OF HONORABLE ARTISTS [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan signed decree on granting actress of Hrachya Ghaplarian Dramatic Theatre Haykuhi Khudaverdian and actor Karpis Shamalian titles of Honorable Artist of Republic of Armenia for contribution to the development of theatrical art, presidential press service reported.

## SOCIAL

19. MARCH TO BE ORGANIZED IN YEREVAN ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FIGHTING VIOLENCE TOWARDS WOMEN [Aravot, 11/24/08]

Events dedicated to fighting violence towards women will be organized on November 25 and 27 in Yerevan on the initiative of the Women's Resource Center NGO. A march under the motto "Violence towards women should be stopped starting families up to conflict regions" will be organized on November 25, the International Day of Fighting Violence towards Women and a discussion on the subject Sexual Violence in Armenia will be organized on November 27.

According to the report provided to Noyan Tapan by the organization's office, 1 of 3 women becomes a victim of domestic violence in Armenia, at that their 20% periodically undergo cruel violence.

20. "THE ROAD HOME" BOOK BY PRESIDENT OF CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK VARTAN GREGORIAN TRANSLATED INTO RUSSIAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 11/24/08]

The presentation of the Russian translation of the autobiographic book "The Road Home" of the President of Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian took place at the RA National Academy of Sciences (NAS) on November 21. In the words of the NAS President Radik Martirosian, the book is a story of the life of a man who created his fate on his own, and V. Gregorian's life is a striking example of the realization of an American dream. "Everyone in the U.S. can reach a great deal in case of hard work". The book is written in the form of a personal diary and presents a 60-year period in the author's life from his poor childhood in Tabriz to appointment to the post of President of Brown University.

V. Gregorian is the 12th President of Carnegie Corporation of New York (founded in 1911) and the first non-American president of it. The corporation finances numerous scientific and educational programs. In 1981-1989 he was the President of the New York Public Library. He saved the library from bankruptcy by raising more than 300 million dollars. V. Gregorian has received a number of awards for his significant contribution to science and art.

21. A. MOVSISIAN SAYS IN CASE OF NECESSITY GAS FROM IRAN MAY ALREADY BE IMPORTED TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

The second round of construction works of Iran-Armenia gas pipe line have finished and now the testing works are being held. Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian said today that in case of necessity it is already possible to import gas from the Iranian side. The minister once again reminded that the gas imported from Iran will not have tariff, instead for 1 cubic meter gas, the Armenian side must give 3kw/h electricity.

The minister noted that the issue on construction of oil-processor in Armenia is not withdrawn from the agenda. "The task groups continue working in that direction. It is necessary to forward such solutions which will make the construction of oil-processor economically effective," A. Movsisian said.

According to him, after reconstruction works the Armenian Atomic Power Plant continues working. He said the works were done with high quality and the plant started functioning 11 days earlier from the expected time.



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Referring to the construction of Hydro Power Plant, A. Movsisian noted that this year session of Armenian-Iranian inter-governmental commission is going to take place the agenda of which includes the issue. In 2009 projecting-calculating works will kick off.

## 22. ISSUES OF RECONSTRUCTION AND HEATING OF SYUNIK PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SOLVED WITH STATE BUDGET MEANS [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

The issues of reconstruction and heating of Syunik provincial library have been solved with the state budget means.

Head of the library Susanna Minasian told Armenpress that the next issue is the furnishing of the library as the Syunik provincial library got no new furniture during the last 26 years. There is a sharp need of new chairs, tables, book cases and book shelves.

The head of the library assured that the issue will be partly solved with the support of Armenian Culture Ministry in the nearest future.

Syunik provincial library is ensured with modern computer technology.

## 23. BRANCH OF CHESS ACADEMY OPENS IN APARAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

A branch of chess academy opened in the Armenian province of Aragatsotn. Hence the residents of Aparan will also have an opportunity to go to chess. Before that, the academy headed by Smbat Lputian established branches in Ashtarak and Talin. Nearly 60 teenagers visit the Ashtarak branch, and the Talin branch has 50 pupils.

The Aparan branch, though newly opened, has no lack of members. For many years a chess section functions here under the subordination of the municipality. The section has been distinguished with the success of its pupils not only in the provinces but also in the republican Olympiads.

For example the pupils of the school won all the three places in the provincial round of the republican Olympiad of school children which took place in the spring of this year.

During these days the chess life is quite lively in the schools. It is already a month the first round of the Olympiad of the school children continues. Boys and girls who will reach best results here will take part in the regional round which will take place in December. Afterwards, in 2009 the provincial and republican tournaments of the Olympiad will take place.

Chief specialist of the education, culture and sport department of the Governor's office Ashot Sahakian told Armenpress that at the schools the chess tournaments pass in a quite lively and interesting atmosphere.

The chess federation of the republic displays interested towards it, and with its initiative all the schools of the province got chess boards.

There are sufficient opportunities to hold chess tournaments in the schools.

## 24. MURDER IN IJEVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

At 12:00 o'clock November 24 the Ijevan branch of Tavush provincial Police department got an alarm call that dead body of a resident of Ijevan Valerie Aghinian with signs of violence was found in the territory called White Water.

An official from Tavush provincial Police department told Armenpress that due to undertaken operative-investigative events on the same day at about 19:00 o'clock it has been found out that the murder was committed by a resident of Ijevan, consultant to the head of the Ijevan branch of Yerevan State University Artak Tchagharian.

The examination of the case continues.

## 25. JOB FAIR FOR DISABLED PEOPLE HELD IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

A job fair for handicapped people was organized today in Yerevan with the participation of 28 organizations. The chairman of "Unison" NGO, which organized the fair, Armen Alaverdian said that this is first such initiative in Armenia.

"The employment issue of a handicapped person is one of the prior issues today, we must show to the society that a handicapped person is able to work and take care of himself/herself too," A. Alaverdian said.



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The employers presented vacancies of computer worker, secretary, manager and others. A. Alaverdian noted that only 8 percent of disabled people are ensured with job while many of them have great working potential.

“We received a great response among the handicapped people as well. We have received many calls from them. We have also worked with them supporting with consultation, helped in writing resumes and other issues. We tried to do everything so that people with disabilities also be competitive,” A. Alaverdian added.

The fair is conducted with the assistance of Open Society Institute and financial support of the government of Netherlands. The partners of the job fair are Armenian Trade-Industrial Chamber, Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, “State Employment Service” agency.

## 26. FRENCH AND VANADZOR PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTES COOPERATE [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Representatives of pedagogical institute of the French Ex-Marseilles Academy’s university paid a three-day visit to Vanadzor. A number of events have been organized on the occasion of their arrival. The guests met with the vice Governor Zohrab Torosian and the consultant of Lori Governor Levon Aslanian who promised to support the development of cooperation between the Vanadzor and French educational establishments according to the earlier signed agreement.

The meeting with the authorities of Vanadzor institute was of familiarizing nature.

For getting acquainted with the methods and level of teaching of the French language here the guests conducted hearings of lectures also shot classes for further study and analysis of the courses.

The diploma works of the graduates of the painting department of the institute have been presented to the guests, and after the presentation the students of English and music departments organized an event dedicated to Armenian-French relationship during which the students, in Armenian and French languages, presented Armenia, Lori province, Vanadzor, their institute and the history of Armenian–French relationship to the guests.

The guests listened to the works of Armenian and French well known composers played by the students of musical department. It has been noted that a separate French department is intended to be established in the institute, a new manual of French formed and a program of training of the specialists of the province as well as professors’ and students’ exchange programs will be implemented.

At the end of the visit the guests promised to shift the attention of the corresponding representatives of French embassy in Armenia to the organization of French teaching in the Lori province during their upcoming meeting.

## 27. AGREEMENT ON TRADE-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL-CULTURAL COOPERATION SIGNED BETWEEN GEGHARKUNIK PROVINCE AND NAGORNO KARABAKH MARTUNI REGION [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Head of the administration of Nagorno Karabakh Martuni region Valeri Khachatryan and the Governor of Armenian province of Gegharkunik Nver Poghosian signed an agreement on trade-economic and educational-cultural cooperation between Gegharkunik province and Nagorno Karabakh Martuni region.

The delegation from Gegharkunik province headed by the Governor Nver Poghosian left November 25 for Nagorno Karabakh Martuni region.

The agreement has been signed with five years’ term. The sides expressed conviction that the cooperation will be efficient in all the spheres.

It’s already a year that a mail communication has been established between pupils of N1 school of the town of Martuni in Gegharkunik province and N1 school in Nagorno Karabakh Martuni region, an agreement has been reached that the 8th grade pupils of N1 school of the town of Martuni in Gegharkunik province visit Nagorno Karabakh to get acquainted with Artsakh on the place.

Visit of the official delegation from Nagorno Karabakh Martuni region to Gegharkunik province is expected for the nearest future.



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## 28. MOBILE INTERNET COMPUTER CENTER TO BE TESTED IN 10 DAYS [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Already in ten days the mobile internet computer center will be put into functioning in Armenia. Head of the National Center of Education Technologies (NCET) Areg Grigorian told Armenpress that the main works have been finished and the experiment will be carried out in the Anipemza village of Shirak province.

The center is a car with a corresponding saloon intended for six pupils and a teacher. It is ensured with modern devices and internet communication. The car will visit Armenian remote schools, conduct training courses for local teachers and computer classes – for the pupils.

Earlier a tender was announced for the creation of internet computer center the winner of which was announced “Meditech” company. The NCET has organized consultations and discussions on creation of the mobile internet computer center with organizations and specialists having such working experience.

## SPORTS

## 29. TURKISH CLUB INVITES ARMENIAN RUGBY PLAYERS TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEST [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

The “Enda” sport club of Turkish Antalya town invited Armenian rugby players to take part in the international rugby tournament which will take place in Antalya: it has also been offered to conduct a training gathering there.

An official from Armenian Rugby Federation told Armenpress that it is not excluded that the Armenian athletes compete with Turkish rugby players.

Head of the Armenian Rugby Federation Yuri Beglarian will take part in the annual summit of International Rugby Federation which will take place in Paris, December 4-5.

Successful plays of Armenian rugby players in the international arena rose the authority of Armenian rugby.

## 30. ARMENIAN MEN'S CHESS TEAM AGAIN WINS THE TITLE OF OLYMPIC CHAMPION [ARMENPRESS, 11/25/08]

Armenian men's chess team again won the title of Olympic Champion in the 38<sup>th</sup> World Chess Olympiad and preserved the title won in Turin in 2006. The tournament was held in the town of Dresden, Germany.

During today's last 11<sup>th</sup> round the Armenia-China match ended with 2.5:1.5 score.

Thus, Armenia gained 19 points during the 11 rounds of the Olympiad and topped the list.

Armenian President, Head of the Armenian Chess Federation Serzh Sargsian and head of FIDE Kirsan Ilyumzhinov played the first steps of Armenian and Chinese chess teams.

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov thanked the Armenian President S. Sargsian for visiting Dresden.

The president had met and talked with Armenian chess players inspiring them and wishing successes.

## 31. K. ILYUMZHINOV: “ARMENIAN CHESS PLAYERS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE CHESS WORLD” [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Head of International Chess Federation (FIDE) Kirsan Ilyumzhinov warmly congratulated Armenian President Serzh Sargsian and the Armenian chess players on winning the title of Olympic Champion for the second time.

He noted that Armenian chess players play a significant role in the chess world and the Olympic victories in Turin and Dresden are brilliant proofs of it.

According to deputy head of Armenian Chess Federation, grand master Smbat Lputian, chess players of big countries usually reach such success. The second victory of Armenian men chess players and the sixth place of women chess players speak about the stable successes of Armenian chess.

German press described the victory of Armenian chess players as quite logical. The Armenian chess players were in the group of leaders from the beginning of the tournament and at the end they headed the list being the main favorite of the gold medal.



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The Armenian chess players gained 19 points from 22 possible and gained an “absolute” victory overcoming all the competitors.

32. G. SARGSIAN – THE BEST PLAYER OF 38<sup>th</sup> WORLD CHESS OLYMPIAD [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Armenian grand master Gabriel Sargsian gained 9 points from 12 possible and has been recognized the best player of the 38<sup>th</sup> World Chess Olympiad in Dresden.

Grand master Vladimir Hakobian with 8 points is the best on the second board and Lilit Mkrтчian is the third in the women’s tournament with 8 points.

33. A NEW TOURNAMENT OF DAVIS CUP IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

Armenian Tennis Federation claims to hold the men’s tournament of the third Euro African zone of Davis Cup in Yerevan in 2009.

An official from Armenian Tennis Federation told Armenpress that by now the International Tennis Federation highly assessed the organization of all the international tennis tournaments in Yerevan.

34. HONORING CEREMONY OF ARMENIAN CHESS TEAM TO BE HELD [ARMENPRESS, 11/26/08]

At 19:00 o'clock, November 26 the Yerevan municipality will organize an official ceremony of meeting the Armenian Olympic Chess Champion team in the “Zvartnots” airport.

An official from Yerevan municipality told Armenpress that after that the participants of the ceremony will leave for the sport-concert complex after Karen Demirchian.

In the sport-concert complex a ceremony in the honor of the Chess Olympic champions and a big concert will be organized after which at 20:00 o'clock firework will take place.

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