



# AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Friday, June 19, 2009

## TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

### POLITICS

#### 1. AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY ANDREA JOANA-MARIA WIKTORIN COMPLETES HER DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN ARMENIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

On June 16, RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian receiving Ambassador of Germany Andrea Joana-Maria Wiktorin completing her diplomatic mission in Armenia thanked the Ambassador for her activity aimed at promotion of development of Armenian-German friendly relations during her mission and wished her success in her further activity.

Speaking about bilateral relations with Germany, E. Nalbandian attached importance to further deepening and strengthening of cooperation with Germany in various spheres. He emphasized that Germany is one of the biggest investors in Armenia, and Armenia highly assesses the technical and financial programs aimed at Armenia's development implemented by the German government.

#### 2. TWO MEMBERS OF ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF POLLING STATION N 8/5 SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Yerevan Malatia-Sebastia communities' general jurisdiction court examining the case by the speeded-up order pronounced a judgment, by which Norik Yeghiazarian and Armen Ohanian were found guilty of committing a crime envisaged by Article 150, RA Criminal Code and were sentenced to imprisonment of 3 years for each. Noyan Tapan was informed about it by RA Cassation Court Spokesperson Alina Yengoyan.

According to the bill of indictment, N. Yeghiazarian and A. Ohanian were accused that being members of electoral commission of polling station N 5 of electoral district N 8, on May 31, taking the opportunity that the voters did not personally throw ballot papers into ballot boxes, they voted for RPA through copying the ballot papers.

#### 3. ACCORDING TO EXPERTS, STRIVING FOR NORMALIZING ITS RELATIONS WITH TURKEY ARMENIA HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN VERY DANGEROUS GAMES [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Under lack of national ideology and ignorance of Turkish ethnopsychology Armenia-Turkey rapprochement is beneficial for Turkey and dangerous for Armenia. Psychologist Albert Nalchajian said at the June 17 press conference. In his words, being influenced by the West, the Armenian political upper links are not guided by the state interest in this issue.

A. Nalchajian also said that supporters of making relations with Turkey more active call for forgetting the enmity, while the Turks do not forget the past and treat the Armenians with disdain. Political scientist Levon Shirinian attached importance to existence of a strong state, which will make possible creation of a national ideology.

According to the political scientist, striving for normalization of relations with Turkey, Armenia has been involved in very dangerous games. In L. Shirinian's conviction, the opening of the Armenian-Turkish border is rather economically beneficial for Turkey, which strives for developing its eastern regions. Besides, opening the border will contribute to implementation of pro-European policy, as well as forcing Russia out of the South Caucasus. According to political scientist's prediction, as a result of border's opening the Russian military base and frontier troops will be withdrawn from Armenia, after which the country will be subjected to unprecedented pressure by Turkey. Armenia will have to concentrate its military potential on the Armenian-Turkish border and can leave Artsakh unprotected.

According to L. Shirinian, history confirms that the Armenian Cause cannot have international security guarantees, as the Western countries pursue their own interests in this issue. The only variant of resisting possible Turkish aggression, according to him, is having a strong state and mighty army.

#### 4. PERSONS CONVICTED ON 2008 MARCH 1 CASES TO IMPRISONMENT OF UP TO 5 YEARS TO BE SUBJECT TO AMNESTY [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 06/17/09]

The ideology of decisions on amnesty made earlier is the basis of RA President's proposal on granting an amnesty to be discussed at the RA National Assembly June 19 special session. It is a new



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thing that persons committing a crime during the 2008 March 1-2 events in Yerevan are classed as an individual category. However, as Chairman of RA NA Committee on State and Legal Issues, RPA member David Haroutiunian told journalists after Committee's June 17 closed sitting, persons convicted to imprisonment of up to 5 years will be subject to amnesty.

As to the issue of whether the amnesty will extend to the NA deputies accused by the March 1 cases, it was mentioned that until the judicial acts are pronounced no one can unequivocally say whether the amnesty will extend to them or not. Meanwhile D. Haroutiunian stated that as regards one of the deputies, Sasun Mikayelian, no amnesty can be granted to him, as he is also accused by part 2, Article 235, RA Criminal Code, purchasing, selling, keeping, transporting or carrying illegal arms, ammunition, explosives by a group of people by a preliminary agreement.

D. Haroutiunian also said that amnesty's proposal mentions a number of articles, some conditions, under which amnesty is not used. In particular, no amnesty is granted if several crimes have been committed, one of which excludes granting amnesty. It was mentioned that acts subject to amnesty are determined not only by punishment terms envisaged for them, but also by society's estimation to act's gravity. In particular, such acts as mass disorders, for which a comparatively strict punishment is envisaged, according to D. Haroutiunian, will be subject to amnesty, while hindering journalists' professional activity envisaging minimum punishments will not be subject to amnesty.

As to granting an amnesty to people being in search, in particular, in connection with amnesty's possible extension to deputy Khachatur Sukiasian, D. Haroutiunian said that the condition of decisions on amnesty made earlier has been kept in this case, as well: people being in search should present themselves to law enforcement structures in certain period and if the case is examined at the court, they should present themselves to the court, after which, depending on the charge, the amnesty act will either extend to them or not. The amnesty unequivocally will not extend to those not presenting themselves in the set term.

## 5. SYRIAN PRESIDENT BASHAR AL-ASSAD ARRIVES IN YEREVAN ON JUNE 17 [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

The President of the Arab Republic of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad, and his spouse Mrs. Asma Al-Assad arrived in Yerevan on June 17 on a two-day official visit at the invitation of the President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan. The same day following the welcome ceremony at the President's residence, Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Bashar Al-Assad have had a private talk. President Sargsyan particularly said: "Armenian highly estimates its relationships with Syria, we estimate as friendly the Armenian -Syrian relations and think they have a great potential for development". The meeting continued in an extended format, President's press office reported. President Sargsyan mentioned, that Armenia is interested in developing economic cooperation with Syria at a completely new level. Syrian president stressed the necessity of creating favorable conditions to Syrian investors in Armenia. According to him, the Armenian community in Syria is the great power which will help to accomplish many tasks. An intergovernmental agreement of mutual encouragement and protection of investments was signed between two governments, as well as the document on nature protection. Presidents of Armenia and Syria gave a joint press conference in Yerevan.

In the evening of June 17 President Serzh Sargsyan and Mrs. Rita Sargsyan gave a dinner in honor of the Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad, and Mrs. Asma Al-Assad.

Within the framework of the visit Bashar Al-Assad had meetings with the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hovik Abrahamyan. The speaker stressed, that the Armenian people will never forget the support, the Syrian nation rendered to Armenian forcible displaced people. In that connection Mr. Abrahamyan informed, that a statue commemorating that help is constructed in Yerevan with support of the Armenian community of Syria. Officials also discussed Armenian-Turkish and Syrian-Turkish relations, as well as a number of issues related to stability and security in South Caucasus and Near East regions.

## 6. RA OMBUDSMAN MEETS WITH PACE MONITORING COMMITTEE CO-RAPPORTEURS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

RA Ombudsman Armen Haroutiunian met with PACE Monitoring Committee Co-rapporteurs John Prescott and George Colombier on June 16. The Ombudsman presented his position on amnesty mentioning that it should extend to a wide circle of people, including all citizens imprisoned on the cases of the 2008 March 1 events. Otherwise, according to him, the amnesty will not contribute to formation of public solidarity.



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As Noyan Tapan was informed by the Information and Public Relations Department of RA Ombudsman's Staff, when discussing issues regarding witnesses A. Haroutiunian said that as far back as 7-8 months ago he stated that Ombudsman's Office receives oral complaints on using illegal methods to witnesses, but the Special Investigation Service and Prosecutor General's Office did not pay proper attention to those reports. As a result witnesses renounce their evidence at the court.

Head of Ombudsman's Office Staff Vahe Stepanian presented his position on fact-finding committee's activity to the Co-rapporteurs.

## 7. THE VICE PRIME MINISTER VISITS THE ARAGATS REGION [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Armenian vice Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan spent the first half of the June 17 in the Aragats region of Aragatsotn province. He was accompanied by the Governor S. Sahakian. Prior to this the vice Prime Minister had already conducted such visits to the Ashtarak, Aparan and Talin regions.

During the meeting with the heads of communities special issues of the high mountainous villages were raised. Particularly issues connected with the gasification, reconstruction of trans-community roads, restoration of irrigation and drinking water pipelines as well as realization of the rural products have been pointed out to.

Public relations department of the Governor's office told Armenpress that agreements have been reached on the reconstruction of Hnaberd water reservoir and construction of new water reservoirs in Geghadzor and neighboring villages.

The vice Prime Minister paid a special attention to the construction of the sector of Alagyaz-Artik road of republican importance which passes through this region.

## 8. H. ABRAHAMIAN SAYS THE MUTUAL SINCERE SYMPATHY BETWEEN THE ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN PEOPLES CONSOLIDATES THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS OF THE TWO STATES [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan met today with the President of Syria Bashar al-Assad who is in Armenia on an official visit.

Public relations department of Armenian Parliament told Armenpress that greeting the guest the NA Speaker highly assessed the role of honorary President Hafez al-Assad in the history of Middle East policy. He stressed that the Armenian people will never forget the support which was provided by the Syrian people to the expatriated Armenians. The head of the Armenian Parliament informed his top-guest that on this occasion on the initiative of the Syrian Armenians a memorial of gratitude to the Arab people is being constructed in Yerevan.

The interlocutors agreed that there is a mutual sincere sympathy between the Armenian and Syrian people which consolidates the friendly relations between the two states. President al-Assad highly assessed the role of the Syrian Armenian community in the life of their state as well as in the development of relations with Armenia. The sides also agreed that the parliamentarians of the two states can have a specific contribution to the full implementation of the potential of the Armenian-Syrian relations.

During the intercourse the NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan and President Bashar al-Assad also discussed the Armenian-Turkish and Syrian-Turkish relations as well as a number of other issues connected with the stability and security of South Caucasian and Middle East regions.

## 9. ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTER RECEIVES INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan received today Indian Ambassador to Armenia Mrs. Rina Pandey on the occasion of ending her diplomatic mission in Armenia.

Spokesman of Defense Ministry, Colonel S. Shahuvaryan told Armenpress that Armenian Defense Minister expressed his gratitude to Rina Pandey for the efficient cooperation, as well as for her personal contribution to the development of friendly relations between the two countries and wished good luck in her further missions.

S. Ohanyan noted that Armenian-Indian friendly relations are of great value also because they represent the eagerness of the two peoples to continue historical traditions.

At the end of the meeting the sides expressed hope that Armenian-Indian relations and friendly ties will be even more strengthened involving new spheres of cooperation, including military ones.



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## 10. PRESIDENT OF ARAB REPUBLIC OF SYRIA VISITS MATENADARAN [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The president of Arab Republic of Syria Bashar al Assad, who is in Armenia on an official visit, today, accompanied by Armenian Foreign Affairs Minister Edward Nalbandyan, visited Matenadaran – Ancient Manuscripts' Institute after M. Mashtots. The guest was presented the manuscripts of the exhibition-halls; the first hall includes the main exhibition, where manuscripts from 5<sup>th</sup> to 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries are kept, the second one includes the temporary exhibition, Persian and Arabic medieval manuscripts.

Afterwards, B. al Assad wrote down his impressions in the memory-book of Matenadaran expressing admiration that the Institute preserves the world ancient and richest manuscripts which manifest the glorious past of Armenian people. B. al Assad noted that the exhibits of Persian and Arabic manuscripts show the deep ties between Armenian and Arab cultures.

Matenadaran donated the duplicate of Armenian ancient manuscript to the president. About 18 000 manuscripts and documents are kept in Matenadaran, 15 000 of which - in different languages (Arab, Greek, Latin, Assyrian, Persian, Ethiopian, Chinese, etc.), as well as 300 000 unit archive funds. The main subject for study in Matenadaran is the Armenian manuscripts.

## 11. ARMENIAN PM AND SYRIAN PRESIDENT DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan met today with the President of the Arab Republic of Syria Bashar al-Assad.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that during the meeting the sides discussed a number of issues between Yerevan and Damascus and prospects of their development.

The head of the government said that Armenian-Syrian inter-governmental commission has serious work to do for boosting Armenian-Syrian trade-economic cooperation and for implementation of joint economic programs. The prime minister said that Armenian-Syrian business forum will give new impetus for the activation of business contacts.

## 12. SYRIAN PRESIDENT WRAPS UP HIS VISIT TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Farewell ceremony of Syrian President Bashar al Assad and his spouse Asma al Assad took place today in the residence of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Presidential press service told Armenpress that before the farewell the presidents of the two countries summed up the results of the visit.

## 13. ARMENIAN HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS MUST PARTLY GET THEIR VACATION THIS SUMMER AND HAVE IT IN ARMENIA [Azg, 06/18/09]

This summer will be a hard working season for the members of the government, therefore the Ministers, deputy ministers, heads of departments and divisions cannot have a rest for an entire months. During today's session of the Government the Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan noted that in case of going to vacation the mentioned people must rest in the Republic of Armenia getting their vacation partly.

According to T. Sargsyan many high ranking officials present applications for getting vacations.

"I'm surprised that everyone presents applications for getting vacations in the same month. As if no extraordinary thing happened, as if we have overcome the financial-economic crisis and as if no tensed work is expected in the Government.

Such an approach is unacceptable. Even if the top-officials go on vacation it will be short-term and in Armenia. No applications must be presented for a month. Our economic indexes are not favorable this year and 2009 is the heaviest year for us. We must be watchful. Of course the recession of our economic indexes is especially notable against the background of high economic growth rates of the previous years, but we must not be guided by the explanation that there is an issue of technical recession.

Under the impact of the crisis our economic indexes continue to fall and conceiving this we must take the heavy burden on our shoulders. The summer will be a heavy working season for our Government," T. Sargsyan said.

According to him the first 9 months of this year will be the heaviest ones for the economy; positive tendencies will be noted at the end of this year.

"If we work hard this summer we will already see positive results at the end of the year. I ask you to collaboratively assess the summer season as a tensed working season. We have no right to intend that



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a summer season starts for the Government, a period for rest, no for us this is the heaviest working season," he said.

## 14. PETER SEMNEBY SAYS "IN RECENT TIMES A REAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN REGISTERED IN KARABAKH CONFLICT REGULATION" [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

In recent times a real progress has been registered in Karabakh conflict regulation, special representative of European Union in South Caucasus Peter Semneby said.

"It is evident that the negotiation process has activated. We had two meetings within a month, and soon the next meeting of Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents will take place",-he said.

Answering to the question about the risk of the conflict Semneby noted that "it would be senseless to ignore that", but, according to him, "both sides realize the risk of military activity". "In any case what happened in Georgia last year showed the risk of military activity quite obviously", he added.

## 15. ARMENIA GRADUALLY BRINGS THE COMMITMENTS ASSUMED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORKS OF "GRECO" TO LIFE [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Armenia gradually brings the commitments assumed within the frameworks of Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) to life.

During the speech delivered June 17 in the fourth portfolio consultation on "Peculiarities of Prevention, Discovery and Investigation of Corruption Crimes" the assistant to the Head of the State Income Committee Arthur Osikian presented the process of implementation of commitments assumed by Armenia within the frameworks of "GRECO".

According to him, within the frameworks of the institution 24 proposals have been made to Armenia 12 of which were considered implemented during session of the institution in June last year. Compared with other states Armenia has ensured quite serious results in the implementation of legislative amendments.

Nevertheless there are proposals which have not yet been implemented. Particularly according to A. Osikian a model of regularly corruption elimination training for policemen, judges and prosecutors has been suggested to be adopted, simplify the procedure of depriving of the inviolability, to tighten the circle of inviolable people and make amendments in the law on "Prosecutor's office", "Court formation" and "Special Investigation bodies".

The criminal past of people who are registered as individual entrepreneur and legal person was also suggested to be checked.

Armenia is a member of Greco since 2004.

## 16. USA TO GIVE ARMENIA \$48 MILLION AND NKR \$10 MILLION [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

US Congress House of Representatives announced the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010. The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) reported that Armenia will be given \$48 million, \$3 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and \$450 000 in International Military Education Training (IMET). \$10 million will be also given to the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

The Administration suggested the Congress giving only \$30 million to Armenia in FY 2010, and there was no aid for NKR.

The Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny noted that USA assistance to Armenia will help to offset the damages of Turkey's blockade of Armenia.

## 17. AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

Parliamentarian Mr. Victor Dominello from the Australian city of Ryde (LIB) has recently spoken about the Armenian Genocide at State Parliament, stating the importance of universal condemnation of Genocide. According to him, the failure to condemn and punish the perpetrators of Genocide will simply contribute to the crime's continuation. V.Dominello called on the Federal government to follow the government of NSW in recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Victor Dominello calling to the Australian Armenian community of Ryde assured that he will assist them to achieve recognition of Armenian Genocide.



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ANC Australia President, Mr. Varant Meguerditchian thanked parliamentarian V. Dominello for his support and noted that they believe his words will ring loud in Canberra and other legislative structures throughout the world.

## 18. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT VISITS THE UK EMBASSY TO ARMENIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM – BIRTHDAY OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visited today the Embassy of the United Kingdom to Armenia on the occasion of the National Holiday of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Presidential Press office told Armenpress that President Sargsyan congratulated the staff of the Embassy. During the conversation the sides have discussed the prospects of development of Armenia-Britain relations and stressed the necessity of promotion of the cooperation in the economic sphere. Refer has also been made to the regional issues.

## 19. DELEGATION HEADED BY ARMENIAN PM TO LEAVE FOR KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan is leaving June 20-21 on a working visit for Nagorno Karabakh to participate in the “Bridge Artsakh” economic conference in Stepanakert.

Within the framework of the visit the delegation of the Armenian prime minister will meet with the members of the government of Karabakh.

Governmental press service told Armenpress that the delegation headed by the prime minister consists of head of government’s staff David Sargsyan, Finance Minister Tigran Davtyan, Economy Minister Nerses Yeritsyan, Agriculture Minister Gerasim Alaverdyan, Urban Minister Vardan Vardanyan, Transport and Communication Minister Gurgen Sargsyan and other officials.

## 20. FOREIGN MINISTER OF UAE TO ARRIVE IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Delegation headed by the Foreign Minister of United Arab Emirates Abdallah bin Zayed al Nahayan will pay a two-day official visit to Armenia June 20.

Media relations department of Foreign Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that during the visit the delegation will meet with the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, NA Speaker Hovik Abrahamyan and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan.

During the meetings issues on Armenia-UAE trade-economic cooperation will be discussed and two documents will be signed - on donating each other territories for establishing diplomatic representations in two countries and on eliminating visa regime for people having diplomatic passports.

## 21. ARMENIAN PM SAYS CREATION OF ALL-ARMENIAN NETWORK PRIOR PROGRAM OF THE GOVERNMENT [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Creation of all-Armenian network is one of the prior programs of the Armenian government, Armenian Prime Minister said today at a briefing, pointing out that the executive body must try to assist the speed-up creation of different kinds of networks as the contemporary science gives an opportunity to create various links and provide various services.

“Our Diaspora Ministry has interesting programs and in this respect few products relating to IT sphere have been created,” T. Sargsyan said, at the same time noting that the representatives of the sphere are too enthusiastic with quite interesting and prospective programs which are being implemented in collaboration with the government.

## **BUSINESS**

## 22. ARMENIA CAN OVERCOME ECONOMIC CRISIS ON ITS OWN, TATUL MANASERIAN BELIEVES [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

The Armenian economy can and must develop by its own patterns and overcome the financial and economic crisis on its own, the advisor to the RA National Assembly speaker, economist Tatul Manaserian stated at the June 16 press conference. By his forecast, the worst period of the crisis will be



in mid or late 2010, for which Armenia must be prepared. T. Manaserian gave an affirmative answer to the question about whether Armenia's economic system is able to develop without the help of the outside world - he said that everything depends on those who work out and implement the economic programs.

In his words, in Armenia it is necessary to form a team of experts who will conceive the economic processes in our country and the world and will realize what burden they will have to shoulder. "At the present time the government is very far from the one I imagine," he said.

T. Manasarian also spoke about the tax package discussed at the National Assembly a few days ago. According to him, those engaged in big business currently do not submit the necessary documents to the respective state bodies, which contributes to the growth of shadow economy so a fight should be waged against it. "Any bill should have some substantiation. The substantiation presented by the government regarding the tax package is of abstract nature," T. Manaserian said.

## 23. WORLD BANK'S REPORT ON OBSERVANCE OF STANDARDS AND CODES, ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT PRESENTED IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

The presentation of the World Bank's Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes, Accounting and Audit took place in Yerevan on June 17. The report contains information on the requirements and practice of accounting and audit in the sphere of entrepreneurial and financial activities. Head of the WB Yerevan Office Aristomene Varudakis expressed a hope that the report will enable to improve corporate accounting and audit in Armenia as they represent an essential precondition for developing the country's economy. In his words, corporate financial transparency is also of importance to the private sector because it provides investors with an opportunity to properly assess the corporate prospects of companies, raise investors' trust in private companies and to increase accessibility of credits to small and medium enterprises.

RA Minister of Finance Tigran Davtian underlined that accounting and audit are one of the most important sectors of the financial and economic system. He said that thanks to cooperation with the World Bank and other international organizations, reforms aimed at bringing the sector into line with international standards are being carried out in Armenia.

## 24. "DIGITEC BUSINESS 2009" FORUM TO KICK OFF JUNE 19 [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

"DigiTec Business 2009" forum will kick off June 19 in Yerevan. The forum will be conducted under the patronage of the Armenian prime minister under the motto "Business and Technologies Dialogue".

The public relations department of the Union of Information Technology companies told Armenpress that the goal of the forum is to promote the encouragement of applying informational and telecommunication technologies in state system and different spheres of economy, as well as development of business environment. The forum will be opened ceremonially by Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan.

Within the framework of the "DigiTec Business 2009" forum "Microsoft" innovation forum, "DigiTec Business" exhibition, "E-Fin" conference, seminars offering technological solutions for business, as well as other events will be conducted.

Businessmen, heads of companies, IT responsible authorities, state department representatives are invited to take part in the event.

Thirty countries as well as "Microsoft RA", "Smart Systems", "Nork" informative-analytical center, "Ay Systems", "BestBuy", "Sorsio", etc will take part in the event. 1500 visitors are expected to visit the forum.

## 25. ARMENIAN-SYRIAN BUSINESS FORUM STARTS IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

In conditions of the current political and economic realities, Armenia and Syria build warm and dynamically developing relations of a new quality, and the levels of their political and economic cooperation should strive for an equality. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan stated this at the June 18 opening ceremony of the Armenian-Syrian business forum, in which Syrian President Bashar al-Assad also participated.

"This purpose is not only a good will, but also an achievable target, especially as entrepreneurs of Armenian descent are seriously represented in the business circles of Syria," S. Sargsyan said, adding that during the meetings between him and Bashar al-Assad, special attention was given to the problems of developing the trade and economic relations between the two countries. In his words, thanks to efforts



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of the governments of Armenia and Syria, quite a favorable legal and contractual field has been formed for promotion of the trade and economic cooperation.

S. Sargsyan said that the forum is a good occasion for becoming acquainted with each other's achievements in the trade and economic sphere and establishing business links. "I am convinced that there is great potential in scientific-technical, agricultural, energy, urban development, tourism, trade and financial banking sectors, and our task today is to consolidate the realistic objectives aimed at realizing that potential," S. Sargsyan stated.

Underlining the special role of Armenians living in Syria, he said: "I should ask you to contribute - by using your opportunities and business connections - to the identification of the current trade and economic potential between our countries and to the presentation of each other's products in the two countries". S. Sargsyan assured those present that each new initiative, each project on the promotion of economic relations will receive support.

## 26. ACCORDING TO BASHAR AL-ASSAD, NORMALIZATION OF ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ARMENIA, SYRIA AND TURKEY [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

"The visit to Armenia has a great significance for us, as we know Armenian culture but we are not well informed about its current situation." President of Syria Bashar al-Assad said this during the Armenian-Syrian business forum and added that it is a very good opportunity to get acquainted with the economic and political situation of the country. He noted that for expanding the cooperation between the two countries short-term and long-term programs need to be implemented through investments and business meetings need to be organized. According to him, for this it is important to create a convenient legal sphere for two countries, for the businessmen to be able to make investments.

According to B. al-Assad, the only impediment for the development of the relations between Armenia and Syria is the lack of land communication. "We spoke to the Armenian President about the problem of how to improve Armenian-Turkish relations, as the solution of this problem will contribute not only to the development of Armenian and Turkish economies but also the economy of Syria," B. al-Assad said.

The President of Syria noted that the conflicts, be them in the Caucasus or in the Middle East, should be solved peacefully. According to him, it will give an opportunity to the businessmen to make investments trustfully. "Yesterday I saw the Armenian tourism map and learnt how many beautiful places there are in Armenia. And if the visits are accompanied with Aleppo dishes it will be wonderful and they will be very good tourist places," B. al-Assad said.

## 27. MARTIN SARGSYAN: VISIT OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT TO ARMENIA IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

An Armenian-Syrian business forum with the participation of more than 160 businessmen from both countries was held on June 18. Chairman of Armenia's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Martin Sargsyan expressed a hope that the forum will provide businessmen of the two countries with an opportunity to cooperate and set up joint ventures.

In his words, unlike the political relations, the economic relations between Armenian and Syria are not at a high level, and the Syrian president's visit to Armenia is a good opportunity to discuss the prospects of their development. He said that a lot of work has been done in recent years for the establishment of economic links, with meetings and discussions being held more frequently. An exhibition of Armenian products was organized in Aleppo in 2008. "At the exhibition, those directions, over which we can negotiate and develop our trade and economic links, were outlined. These are mainly agriculture and IT sector," M. Sargsyan said, adding that in addition to that, an agreement to open a permanent showroom for Armenian goods was reached with Aleppo Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and it will become a stimulus for export.

It was mentioned that although a notable growth in the trade turnover between Armenia and Syria was recorded in recent years, its amount is still small. The year-by-year fall in exports from Armenia to Syria is especially alarming: in 2005 exports amounted to 470 thousand USD, in 2006 - 240 thousand USD, in 2007 - 150 thousand USD, and in 2008 exports from Armenia to Syria amounted to 90 thousand USD.



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## 28. THIRD ARMENIAN TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS CONFERENCE HELD [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

The Armenian government has proclaimed tourism a priority sector of the economy, and it is taking steps to turn the country into an excellency center of this sphere. So the government attaches importance to holding Armenian Tourism Competitiveness Conferences, which open an opportunity to discuss once again the approaches to the sector's development. RA Deputy Minister of Economy Vahe Danielian stated this in his speech of welcome at the 3rd annual Armenian Tourism Competitiveness Conference on June 18. This year's conference is entitled "Towards Crisis Solutions".

The conference is hosted by the USAID-funded Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project. Its Director Hayley Alexander said that the conference subject of targeted marketing in international market is a key one. In his opinion, success was achieved in this direction, particularly in terms of cooperation with France. The CAPS director also focused on the use of information technologies in tourism and the coordinated work of the bodies responsible for the sector's development such as the RA Ministry of Economy, the Armenian Tourism Development Agency (ATDA) and the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia (NCFA) - other organizers of the event.

The USAID Armenia Office Head Ms. Jetinder Chima reminded that since 2005 an average annual growth of 20% has been recorded in Armenia' tourism. However, in her estimation, the sector can grow at a higher rate. She said that although Armenians are hospitable, foreign tourists spend little money in Armenia because "those who sell goods do not speak and smile". She expressed an opinion that Armenia's tourism can also be encouraged by the formation and sale of budgetary - cheap travel packages.

The ATDA CEO Nina Hovnanian-Alexanian expressed satisfaction with the fact that Armenia's tourism is growing, whereas all over the world tourism is suffering a decline due to the global financial and economic crisis. By official statistics, the number of tourists to Armenia rose by 2.8% in the first quarter of 2008 compared to the same period of the previous year and made 86,569.

## 29. AGARAK COPPER-MOLYBDENUM FACTORY TO RESTART ITS PRODUCTION EARLY JULY [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Agarak copper-molybdenum factory company will restart its production activity early July. Press service of the company told Armenpress that at present renovation works of worn out equipments and optimization of management system is being conducted.

The works of Agarak copper-molybdenum factory were temporarily suspended from February 2009. After the beginning of the world economic crisis in October 2008 the factory started to have losses which were compensated by the investments of the shareholder "GeoProMining" group of companies. From the start of the crisis the investments reached 15 million USD which have been spent on the compensation of the losses and social payments.

The "GeoProMining" implements all the commitments assumed for the Government and the staff; the number of workers of the factory reaches 900 000.

From the moment the factory paused its activity 500 workers of the factory get their salary in full size, 400 workers are in the obligatory vacation and are paid the 2/3 of salary. The workers are also given an opportunity to use the gathered vacations. The monthly fund of the factory salary reaches 500 000 USD greater part of which is got in the formation and production phase.

The "GeoProMining" group of companies purchased the stocks of the Agarak copper-molybdenum factory in December 2007. The company has specialized in the output and enrichment of multi-metal mines (copper, molybdenum, antimony) and precious metals (gold, silver). It has a diversified structure of production and realization market.

The mines of the company and mountain-enrichment factories are spread in Armenia, Georgia and Russia.

## 30. IT SPHERE HAS REGISTERED AN INCREASE BY 20% COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan participated today in annual informational, telecommunication and high technology "DigiTec Business" forum.

Technological solutions to banking and financial sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, trade and storing, construction and transportation, public sector, cargo transportation, medical and drug spheres are presented at the forum.



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Governmental press service told Armenpress that Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan attached great importance to the forum saying that it enables IT representative companies to show their new production and services, as well as the progress and achievements registered in a year, and customers are given the opportunity of choosing valuable products and services for their business.

Armenian prime minister expressed his satisfaction that IT sphere even in the conditions of the world crisis has registered an increase by 20% compared with the last year. "Productivity increase is one of the best ways of overcoming the crisis, and IT is one of the exclusive spheres that presents proposals on increasing productivity and competitiveness to economy branches", -said the head of Armenian government stressing that the government is too a customer in this forum and is to serve an example for businessmen with its choice.

The prime minister said that the government is inclined to apply modern IT in all the links of the state system, as it faces the problem of increasing the productivity as well. 25 companies and 1500 businessmen took part in the forum.

## DIASPORA

### 31. ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF TURKEY TO ELECT CO-PATRIARCH [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Turkish government decided to empower the Armenian community of the country to elect a Co-patriarch. According to the Marmara daily, which cites the Turkish Hurriyet daily, the decision was made taking into account the health problems of Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul Mesrob Mutafian.

The Turkish newspaper wrote that thus the Armenian Patriarchate receiving the permission to elect, is to apply to the government during the coming months for doing the election, because the Patriarch's position has vital importance for the Armenian community in Turkey. After the appeal the government is to amend the law about the election of the Patriarch which was used during the elections of 1998. After this amendment the Armenian Patriarch in Turkey should be elected as a Co-patriarch. According to the Marmara daily, he will be empowered to wear Patriarch's clothes, but Archbishop Mesrob will retain his primary position.

### 32. DIASPORA MINISTER RECEIVES STUDENTS FROM ALEPPO [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 06/18/09]

RA Diaspora minister Hranush Hakobyan receives the of 36 10-grade students from Aleppo-based "Qaren Eppe" Armenian lyceum.

As the public relation department of the Diaspora ministry reports, Ms. Hakobyan presented Diaspora ministry's functions and programs. The minister stressed, that true Armenian must be necessarily literate and good person, law-abiding citizen of the country he lives, which is of utter importance, be healthy, which means everyone should refrain from bad habits.

Ms. Hakobyan dwelled on the "Come Home" program, told about the official web site of the ministry and recently established "Armenians Today" electronic web periodical, mentioning that Armenians from around the world are invited to post their stories on these web-sites.

Students touched upon the problem of the status of Armenian diplomas abroad. The minister promised to address this issue to the RA president, since Armenians diplomas of higher education are still not recognized in many countries, which prevents Diasporan Armenians from studying in their homeland.

Currently 1200 students are enrolled in the "Qaren Eppe" Armenian lyceum established in Aleppo in 1947.

### 33. RA MINISTRY OF DIASPORA KEEPS PROBLEMS OF DIASPORAN STUDENTS IN FOCUS OF ITS ATTENTION [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

The RA Ministry of Diaspora in its activity attaches importance to work done with the Diasporan youth studying at Armenia's educational institutions. Saying this to Hayern Aysor, Sirvard Hambarian, the Head of the Scientific-Educational Programs Subdivision of All-Armenian Programs Department, RA Ministry of Diaspora, emphasized that issues regarding students' educational, social, and legal status are always in the focus of Minister Hranush Hakobyan's attention.

According to S. Hambarian, to solve these problems, to overcome the difficulties in the way of Diasporan students integration in Armenia a number of meetings have been already organized at the



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Ministry with representatives of body of active students, individual groups, educational institutions, law enforcement and other interested structures.

Polls were held by the RA Ministry of Diaspora Scientific-Educational Programs Department jointly with the World Armenian Congress Association of Youth Organizations to study the problems of Diasporan young people studying at Armenia's universities. Problems raised by the students regarded, in particular, study, as well as study payments, their status, dual citizenship, as well as their integration in Armenia.

In particular, students had some problems connected with the status of temporary stay: the students were not informed in time that by September 15 they had to introduce their documents to extend the term of their stay, because of which part of students had to pay a fine of 50 000 drams. S. Hambarian said that the Ministry has discussed the issue with the RA Police Passport and Visa Department, as well as with universities' administrations and as a result, at the most part of universities the fined sum was returned or was transferred to the account of students' study payment for the next half-year.

The students consider that the term of temporary stay should be extended. S. Hambarian said that the Ministry has legislative initiatives to make amendments in the status of stay, to extend terms of visas.

The students are also concerned with the process of granting dual citizenship. According to them, the process should be more simplified.

Another problem raised by Diasporan students was also solved with the Ministry's mediation: by RA Health Minister's decree, henceforth Diasporan students will receive free medical aid at medical institutions of Armenia.

S. Hambarian also said that they work with universities' administrations in the direction of liquidating considerable difference between study payments of RA citizen students and Diasporan students. Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction has already responded to this initiative of the RA Ministry of Diaspora. From 2009-2010 academic year Diasporan students entering Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction paid groups studying in Armenian (study for bachelor's degree and master's degree) will pay for their studies as much as RA citizen students. The administration of the State Engineering University of Armenia has also expressed such readiness.

It was also mentioned that students studying at foreign universities apply to the RA Ministry of Diaspora expressing willingness to pass their practice in Armenia. In July the Ministry of Diaspora will receive five students of RF Nizhni Novgorod A. Lobachevski State University International Relations Department. An Argentine Armenian student from Mendoza University will also hold his professional practice at the Nairi medical center of Yerevan.

According to S. Hambarian, today the Ministry has a goal to contribute to Diasporan students' participation in development processes of Armenia-Diaspora cooperation, rise of Diasporan youth's role. "Armenian students from foreign countries studying at Armenian universities are unique ambassadors of the ethnic Homeland, Armenia and the country of their residence, at the same time a link connecting the Homeland and their communities," S. Hambarian said. In her words, the Ministry with its activity will contribute to sowing the idea of bearing responsibility for keeping the national identity in the Diasporan young generation worldwide, to formation of perception of Armenia as Homeland, formation of Armenian language thinking, their involvement in programs aimed at preservation of Armenian identity. "They are the future capable force of consolidating Diaspora's professional potential for the sake of development of cooperation between the Homeland and Diaspora, for the sake of prosperous Armenia and strong Diaspora," S. Hambarian said.

## 34. EDUCATION AND SCIENCE MINISTRY TO PROVIDE 51 000 TEACHING LITERATURE AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS TO THE ARMENIAN EDUCATIONAL CENTERS IN DIASPORA [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Armenian Education and Science Ministry will provide 51 000 teaching literature and supplementary materials to the Armenian Educational Centers in Diaspora.

Chief specialist from the Department of Relations with Diaspora of the Ministry Tamara Zalinian told Armenpress that course-books, encyclopedias, DVD discs and exercise-books will be provided. The process of procurement of the educational guidelines has already kicked off. T. Zalinian noted that education literature to be provided to the Diaspora this year will include DVD discs on Armenian wanders and traditions as well as posters about Yerevan. Guidelines for teachers will also be involved.

The literature is intended for the children who attend the Armenian educational centers of Europe, USA and CIS states who do not know or badly know Armenian language.



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The volumes of the literature to be provided to the Armenian Educational Centers in Diaspora will depend on the applications presented by them as well as surveys conducted by the Ministry: the number of pupils and necessity of educational guidelines is taken into consideration.

Usually more literature is ordered than it has been intended as during the year new Armenian educational centers in different states of the world opened, which have a need for educational guidelines and literature. Nearly 350 everyday Armenian schools function in the Diaspora and the number of Sunday schools is not clarified yet as very often new schools are opened and the old ones are closed.

## 35. RAFFI BILAL ELECTED DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF TURKEY'S SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

Istanbul-based Armenian Raffi Bilal has been elected deputy chairman for external relations of the Social-Democratic People's Party (SHP) of Turkey. According to Marmara daily, at the June 15 sitting of the party's board, Bilal was elected a member of the chairmanship, then he was elected deputy chairman of the party during a meeting of the central administrative board.

Raffi Bilal is one of the founders of the Social-Democratic People's Party. After the creation of the party, he was elected a member of its board in 2002. In 2005 he started to work as a person in charge of the EU platform, and since 2008 he has been assistant of the secretary-general of the SHP's central administrative board.

Besides Bilal, the party board had another member of Armenian descent - Talin Manuelian, Marmara reported.

## 36. ARMENIAN STUDENTS FROM ISTANBUL WIN THIRD PLACE IN MIND LAB INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIAD [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/18/09]

Students of the Armenian Merametchian college based in Istanbul won the third place in the Mind Lab International Olympiad in Venice.

Students of the Armenian Merametchian college from Ferigiugh Shant Taghlian, Allen Polad, Arman Cham, Shahin Parmaqsez, by taking part in Mind Lab's competitions became champions of Istanbul first, then of Turkey. They obtained the right to represent Turkey in the Mind Lab International Olympiad, Marmara reports. 10 national teams participated in the finale, representing Turkey, Israel (A and B), Hungary, U.S., Romania, Great Britain, Brazil, Italy and Portugal.

Olympiad was organized in six tournaments, during which Armenian children had shown remarkable play: before the last game Armenians from Istanbul were at the second place after Israeli A group, and only in the last game moved to the third place yielding to Israeli B group.

## 37. MARK GERAGOS CALLS GREEKS TO DEMAND COMPENSATION FROM NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

The Geragos&Geragos legal company in USA, which belongs to renowned Armenian lawyer Mark Geragos (Kirakosian), calls the heirs of Greek survivors of the 1915-21 massacre in Turkey to sue against the New York Life Insurance Company and demand a compensation. According to the Haykakan Zhamanak daily, Geragos noted that before 1915 thousands of Greeks subordinate to Turks had insured their life and property at the New York Life Insurance Company.

The newspaper reminds that in 2004 the Insurance Company agreed to give \$20 million compensation to the relatives of 2300 Armenians who lived in Ottoman Turkey.

## ARTS

## 38. ANDRANIK ALEXANIAN TO REPRESENT UKRAINE AT JUNIOR EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 2009 [Azg, 06/17/09]

11-year-old Andranik Alexanian of Khmel'nitsk will represent Ukraine at the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2009. According to analitika.at.ua, Andranik was recognized the winner as a result of television and SMS votes. Announcing the vote results, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko said that by tradition, the contest participants will have an opportunity to rest at the Artek camp.



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## 39. SEVRUGIANS' PHOTO AND PAINTING EXHIBITION WORKS IN GERMANY [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Classical photographer Antoine Sevrugian's and his son, painter Andre Sevrugian's (Darvish) works have been shown at the Museum of World Culture in Frankfurt for several months. The exhibition titled Sevrugian. Images of the Orient in Photography and Painting, 1880 to 1980, which was launched on December 6, 2008, will be open till July 7, 2009.

According to the Marmara daily, besides Antoine Sevrugian's photography glasses, there are also Andre Sevrugian's 90 paintings on the subject of Iran at the exhibition. The models, which are shown, belong to Antoine Sevrugian's grandson Emanuel Sevrugian.

Antoine Sevrugian (1840-1933) was one of the leading photographers of the 20th century in Iran. 2000 photographic glasses from his works have been retained, but, unfortunately, 7000 were destroyed in the years of the Constitutional Movement of Iran. His son's, painter Andre Sevrugian's (1894-1996) works also present Armenian and Iranian themes. The considerable part of Andre's Persian miniatures are retained in India, and "Sayat Nova" series are very popular among candle paintings on Armenian themes.

## 40. THIS YEAR'S MUSIC HOLIDAY TO BE DEDICATED TO THE 140<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF KOMITAS [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The music holiday will be celebrated June 21 in the republic which will this year be dedicated to the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great composer Komitas. On the occasion of the holiday multi-genre open air music events will be organized in Armenia.

Head of the Public relations department of Armenian Culture Ministry Gayane Durgarian told Armenpress that state ensembles, other orchestras and choruses will take part in the open-air concerts which will present live performances in different squares and central streets. Well known French singer Natali Juli will also this year take part in the Yerevan music ceremonies.

Different works of the great composer will sound by the statue of Komitas. The only close concert which will be held in parallel to the open-air ones will take place in the concert hall after Arno Babajanian which will again be dedicated to the jubilee of Komitas.

The events of the music holiday in Armenia are organized by the Armenian Culture Ministry and the French Embassy to Armenia.

## 41. THE FILM "TANGLED PARALLELS" BY HOVH. GALSTYAN IS TO TAKE PART IN THE QUALIFYING FILM PROJECT "OUTLOOK" OF MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The full-length film "Tangled Parallels" by Hovhannes Galstyan will participate in the film competition project "Outlook" of the annual Moscow international film-festival.

Film's director and general producer Hovh. Galstyan told Armenpress that the film is of Armenian-Norwegian production in collaboration with the French side. They have worked on this project for 6 years and now they wait for the premier and responses. It is a story of mother and daughter during the World War II. The screening is made in Armenia in July-October of 2005, in 2006 July-in Norway. Film's budget is 600 000 Euros, 200 000 of which is provided by the Armenian side.

The retrospective showing of 7 films by director Harutyun Khachatryan ("Border", "The Return of the Poet", "The Documentation Officer", "The Kond", "The last station", "Return to Evangelic Country", "The white city") will be organized within the framework of the Moscow film-festival.

Armenian delegation will take part for the first time in the film-forum organized in the sidelines of the festival, Armenian film projects are to be presented.

## 42. "MUSIC HOLIDAY" IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

"Music Holiday" is to be held in Armenia June 21 organized by Armenian Culture Ministry and French Embassy to Armenia. That day till late evening the central streets of the capital, neighboring surroundings of the open cafes, parks and squares will be filled with modulations of multi-genre music – jazz, classical, folk, rock. The concert dedicated to 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of world famous composer Komitas's will take its unique place in the event.



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Armenian Culture Minister Hasmik Poghosyan said today that music will become “the day’s hero”. This undertaking is very important for Armenian people who have a special attitude towards music.

According to her, for the first time all the Armenian provinces with 24 towns will join the event. “That day is going to be an all-national festival; it is a gift for all of us”, the Minister noted, adding that the music festival will help to bring peace in all countries.

According to French ambassador to Armenia Serzh Smessow, this event is of great importance because everyone without any restriction will have the opportunity of listening to life music, “everyone will find something interesting for him/her. It is going to be a great festival for everybody; we have only to hope that the weather will be favorable and will allow us to enjoy the festival,” the ambassador added.

French singer Natali Zholi, who is in Armenia for the first time for participation in the festival, noted that she has heard of Armenia and Armenian people for many times and now she is glad that is going to perform for Armenian public.

The event “Music Holiday”, which gathers both professional and amateur performers of music and music-lovers, kicked off in 1982 on the initiative of French Culture Ministry. Today it is spread all over the world gathering over 110 countries and 340 cities around the idea.

In Armenia this event has been conducted since 2007.

## RELIGION

43. BASHAR AL ASAD VISITS MOTHER SEE HOLY ETCHMIADZIN [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 06/18/09]

President of Syria Bashar al Asad who pays a two-day official visit to Armenia visited today the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin accompanied by the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandyan.

They were met by the Archbishop Ararat Galtagchian and the leader of Damascus Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Ardashir Nalbandian who led him to the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

The Syrian President and Catholicos of All Armenians talked about the spiritual generalities of Armenian and Arab nations; it has been stressed that a new page of cooperation is being turned with the visit of Syrian President, it will be an impetus for the further promotion of aged spiritual-cultural cooperation. Refer has been made to the important contribution of Syrian Armenian Community to the Syrian life as well as to the cooperation of religions, existing relations with the Mother See Holy Etchmiadzin and intercourse which took place between the chief Syrian Mufti and Catholicos of All Armenians.

B. al Assad invited the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II to pay an official visit to Syria.

In virtue of assessment and gratitude for the honest attitude and care towards the Armenian nation and Armenian community as well as for the welfare of the important activity of peace and friendliness the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II rewarded the Syrian President with the highest award of the Armenian Apostolic Church – Medal of St. Krikor Lousavorich.

Together with it the decree of rewarding of the Medal in Armenian and a souvenir was also handed to him. The Catholicos presented that on the background of Ararat Mountain the Holy Etchmiadzin is figured on it.

Accompanied by the Catholicos and the Minister the Syrian President walked around in the museum, observed the most precious exhibits – the golden letters and golden cross as well as the Noravank cross-stone of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II presented the history of Armenian Church and the activity of Armenian Catholicosates to the guest.

## SOCIAL

44. COOPERATION AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH NEWLY-ELECTED FOREIGN MEMBERS OF RA NAS [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Agreements on cooperation in 21 directions have been reached with the Diasporan Armenian scientists - newly-elected members of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Armenia, NT correspondent was informed by the RA NAS President Radik Martirosian.

It should be mentioned that last year the candidates for RA NAS foreign membership were offered the following conditions: 1) they shall come to Armenia every year and take part in an annual reporting back meeting of the NAS, 2) they shall deliver scientific reports, 3) they shall become



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acquainted with scientists and scientific bodies of Armenia and discuss the opportunities for implementation of joint programs and participation in international projects, 4) they shall assist in sending a young Armenian scientist on a mission to a scientific organization in their own country.

R. Martirosian pointed out that the Diasporan Armenian scientists had readily accepted these conditions. According to him, agreements on staff training and retraining, implementation of joint research, joint preparation of post-graduate students and other issues were reached. Besides, it is envisaged opening a branch of the International Center for Relativistic Astrophysics (Italy) in the RA NAS system.

Among the agreements reached are also those on the strengthening and expansion of the source of minerals in the mining industry of Nagorno Karabakh, the discussion of issues related to the exploration prospects of possible oil and gas accumulations, the cooperation on the introduction of the technology of food preparation with solar energy, and the proposal to sign an agreement on scientific cooperation between the academies of sciences of Armenia and Tatarstan.

## 45. 90 GEORGIAN ARMENIAN TEACHERS TO PASS RETRAINING IN ARMENIA: FIRST GROUP OF TEACHERS TO ARRIVE IN YEREVAN SOON [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

A project of building a Center of Armenian Culture near Surb Echmiadzin Armenian Church in Tbilisi has been worked out. Leader of Armenian Apostolic Church Georgian Armenian Diocese Archbishop Vazgen Mirzakhian presented the project at the meeting with RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian. As Hayern Aysor was informed by the Ministry's Department on Contacts with All-Armenian International and Church Structures, the Archbishop said that such a center would be especially important in the respect of consolidating the Armenians living in Tbilisi, having a well-organized Armenian community. More than 360 thousand dollars is required for building the two-storeyed building. It was mentioned that the project needs sponsors.

Besides, on the initiative of Archbishop Vazgen Mirzakhian it is planned to teach an additional Armenological subject at Armenian schools in Georgia, History of Armenian Church. As far back as in 2008, at his meeting with Hranush Hakobian, the leader of the Georgian Armenian Diocese made such a proposal. The Ministry of Diaspora together with the Archbishop worked out a program of Georgian Armenian teachers' retraining, according to which, retrainings were to be held in Georgia, with the participation of specialists sent from Armenia. However, according to the RA Ministry of Finance, that program envisaged much funds and was not approved. It was decided to include the program of Georgian Armenian teachers' retraining in the retraining program of Diasporan teachers implemented by the RA Ministry of Education and Science since 2000, which is currently implemented jointly with the RA Ministry of Diaspora. The first group of 70 Georgian Armenian teachers will arrive in Armenia soon. In total, 90 Georgian Armenian teachers will pass retraining within the framework of the program.

## 46. REGULAR LEAVING EVENT OF SUNDAY SCHOOL HELD AT UNION OF ARMENIANS IN RUSSIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

A regular, 6th leaving event of Sunday school took place at the Union of Armenians in Russia.

According to miasin.ru, not only children of school age, but also the elder generation learns Armenian language and culture at the Sunday school. It was also mentioned that the young people love Armenian language lessons. Students, post-graduate students, who have appeared far from the Homeland as fate willed, go to the school.

According to Karine Blbulian, Russian language teacher, Adviser on Education of the Union of Armenians in Russia, they do not need the Armenian language in their practical life, but they want not only to speak, but also to write and read in their native tongue to be full-value persons.

According to K. Blbulian, there are always students of other nationalities attending Armenian language lessons, all of them take a special interest in Armenia's century-old history and Armenian culture.

## 47. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT S. SARGSYAN PUTS FLOWERS ON THE MEMORIAL TO WORLD FAMOUS CHESS PLAYER TIGRAN PETROSYAN [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

Armenian President, Chairman of the Armenian Chess Federation Serzh Sargsyan put flowers today on the memorial to the of outstanding chess player, world chess champion Tigran Petrosyan, who today would have become 80 years old.



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Presidential press office told Armenpress that Armenian president followed the tournament dedicated to the world famous chess player with the participation of Armenian chess veterans, representatives of junior chess school, as well as Olympic champions Artashes Minasyan and Tigran Petrosyan.

Afterwards a consultation was held with participation of Serzh Sargsyan and the administrative staff of the Chess Federation dedicated to the events on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tigran Petrosyan.

48. PAN-ARMENIAN YOUTH 7<sup>TH</sup> FORUM TO BE HELD IN TSAKHKADZOR [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

“Pan-Armenian Youth International Center” foundation intends in August to conduct the pan-Armenian youth 7<sup>th</sup> forum in Tsakhkadzor on the “Cooperation” theme.

Responsible for media relations of the Center Bella Hovhannissian told Armenpress that participation of nearly 100 young people from Armenia, Artsakh, Javakhq and Diaspora is expected.

During the conference the issues of the youth not only in Armenia but also in Diaspora as well as the policy of the state directed towards the youth will be presented, and an attempt will be made to find possible solutions to the presented issues. Representatives of different state institutions are usually present in the forum and the participants have an opportunity to address the questions they are interested in.

This year the Center also intends to organize the “Dialogue of Cultures” international festival in which more than 90 representatives of different nations take part each year. The event gives an opportunity to the youth of different nationality to better recognize the culture of each other. The participants present each other their culture, traditions, history, literature, dance as well as the national cuisine.

According to B. Hovhannissian this is a unique dialogue which aims at establishment of peaceful and friendly relations.

During the year the “Pan-Armenian Youth International Center” also organizes numerous teaching seminars, courses particularly on the “European Youth Policy, Projects and Institutions” and “International Youth Activity and Cooperation” themes.

49. ARMENIAN DELEGATION TO TAKE PART IN THE WORLD 10<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF ARMENIAN DOCTORS IN NEW YORK [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

World 10<sup>th</sup> conference of Armenian Doctors will be held July 1-4 in New York. It is organized by the “Armenian American Doctors’ Association”.

An official from the Armenian Health Ministry told Armenpress that the delegation of the Ministry will also take part in the conference.

Leading specialists of the health system from different states of the world will be present at the conference. The participants will have an opportunity to get acquainted with the achievements and news registered in the medicine during the latest period.

The conference will contribute to the establishment of new ties and cooperation between the participants. Not only the achievements of the health system, but also the issues and priorities will be presented.

50. AS OF JUNE 15 FROM 6,524 OFFICES OF COMMUNITY SERVANTS 5,386 ARE OCCUPIED [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

As of June 15 from the 6,524 offices of the community servants in Armenia 5,386 are occupied.

An official from the Public relations department of Armenian Territorial Administration Ministry told Armenpress that the vacant offices exist mainly in the farthest villages of the republic.

One of the main requirements for being engaged is the existence of the higher education because of which in the rural regions either very few people apply or do not apply at all.

During 2009, 1000 community servants are intended to be trained, 960 of which – in the provinces, 40 – in Yerevan. 67 of them have already been trained. During the current year the first round of training of the community servants is intended to be finished. During 2008, 2,371 community servants have been trained in the republic including 488 in Yerevan and 1,883 – in the provinces.

A register is held in the Ministry for the observations of the process of inputting of community service, getting the necessary information, summarizing and for the efficient assessment of the process, which is regularly being updated.



## 51. A NUMBER OF PROJECTS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN THE REPUBLIC TO SOLVE ISSUES OF REFUGEES [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

June 20 is the international day of refugees. Certain projects are being implemented in Armenia towards the regulation of the issues of the refugees living in the state.

Head of the Migration Agency of Territory Administration Ministry Gagik Yeganian told Armenpress that June 20 is a claim for watchfulness to all the states of the world as well as the society to undertake steps towards the prevention of the situations as a result of which people become refugees and to exert a delicate approach towards the people who start a new life.

"Losing what they had the refugees appear in an environment and face numerous issues. The society must not be indifferent but in case of necessity support them. Full integration of the refugees in the new life depends on the attitude of people," G. Yeganian said.

This is already 19 years refugees live in Armenia and the state implements projects towards reduction of their issues. One of the most important issues is the project of ensuring with flats.

G. Yeganian is optimistic towards the regulation of this issue and the optimism derives from the fact that feeling the importance of the issue Government conducts serious steps and during the latest years releases sums from the state budget.

Today there are no concrete data on the number of refugees in Armenia. The latest data were in 1992 according to which 311 000 refugees live in the republic. But according to G. Yeganian most of them have left for different states, mainly for CIS states and Russia.

The agency conducts serious steps to keep the link with the refugees who left for other states from Armenia; an internet [www.sma.am/migrant](http://www.sma.am/migrant) website functions through which the Armenians who are in abroad get an answer of any issue they are concerned with.

## 52. AT 12:34 PM 4-5 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE REGISTERED IN ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

At 12:34 o'clock a 4-5 magnitude earthquake took place in Armenia the epicenter of which is in 22km distance from the Garni village.

An official from the National Service of Seismic Defense of the Armenian Emergency Situations Ministry told Armenpress that the quakes were also felt in Gavar, Abovian and Yerevan. In different sectors of the capital the quakes were of different magnitude. The National Service of Seismic Defense also denied the news according to which new quakes are expected in the nearest future; no such forecasts exist yet.

## 53. NATIONAL SEISMIC DEFENSE SERVICE DENIES THE NEWS ABOUT EXPECTING QUAKES [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The National Seismic Defense Service of the Armenian Emergency Situations Ministry denies the news that other quakes are expected in Armenia at 15:30.

Responsible for the media affairs of the Service Hamlet Bisharian told Armenpress that they are baseless rumors and there is no reason to go into panic.

The Seismic service gets numerous phone calls from the residents who mention that they have been informed about the quakes on the TV and in numerous establishments of the capital the workers were asked to go out. H. Bisharian noted that no TV or other official institution made such a statement. The Seismic service officially states that there are no grounds for panic.

At 12:34 a 4-5 magnitude earthquake took place in Armenia the epicenter of which was 22 km far from the Garni village.

## 54. THE 15<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE WRITERS' UNION TO BE HELD JULY 4 [ARMENPRESS, 06/18/09]

The 15<sup>th</sup> assembly of the Armenian Writers' Union will be held July 4 in the big hall of the Writers' House.

Chairman of the Writers' Union Levon Ananyan told Armenpress that at the conference the works carried out by the union during the last four years will be reported, elections of the administrative staff of the union will be conducted.

Armenian Writers' Union has about 400 members together with its regional branches.



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## 55. 5 ARMENIAN SCHOOLS TO TAKE PART IN THE QUALIFICATION ROUND OF MICROSOFT'S "INNOVATION SCHOOLS" INTERNATIONAL CONTEST [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

5 Armenian schools will take part in the qualification round of Microsoft's "Innovation Schools" international contest. Coordinator of "Partners in education" project of Microsoft Armenian office Kristine Gyonjian told Armenpress that the Armenian round of the contest has already finished, 20 schools had presented applications 5 of which have been chosen – the Yerevan "Anania Shirakatsi" educational complex, YSU affiliated special physics-math's school after A. Shahinian, Yerevan "Mkhitar Sebastatsi" educational complex, Vanadzor #1 and Abovian #10 secondary school after V. Hambardzumyan.

Schools which will pass the international qualification round will be given an opportunity within a year's period to draft a new educational model based on the IT technologies. According to K. Gyonjian the successful models will be exemplary for different schools of the world and will be possibly implemented in a number of states including Armenia.

The school which will be selected among the 5 schools representing Armenia will be known September 15. Each year 30 schools from the whole world are chosen for the participation in the "Innovation Schools" contest, to implement their whole potential in creation of flexible and reliable educational models, and to convey these models as well as their own experience to the schools of their states as well as the whole region.

"Partners in Education-Armenia" memorandum of mutual understanding was signed 3 December 2008 between the Armenian Education and Science Ministry and "Microsoft" Company with which cooperation in three main directions is intended – "Innovation School", "Innovator teacher" and "Innovator pupil".

To organize the collaborative activities efficiently meetings and discussions are regularly organized between the sides.

## 56. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT VISITS THE EXAMINATION CENTER SITUATED IN THE YSU TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE PROCESS OF UNIFIED EXAMS [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

To get acquainted with the process of unified exams the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visited today the examination center situated in the Yerevan State University where the graduates were taking exams in Chemistry and Armenian History subjects.

Presidential Press office told Armenpress that the President walked around in the examination rooms and followed the process of exams. Before the start of the exam the head of the examination center described the graduates the procedure of the exam, afterwards at the presence of the President the test package was opened and the start of the exams announced.

## 57. IN 36 RURAL COMMUNITIES OF LORI AND SHIRAK PROVINCES AND SPITAK CONSTRUCTION WORKS ARE CONDUCTED [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

In 36 rural communities of Lori and Shirak provinces and Spitak construction works are being implemented by the "Glendale Hills" company.

Chief Director of the Company Vahe Amloyan told Armenpress that the projects have already kicked off in three communities and preparation works are conducted in another 5 villages for their implementation.

Within the frameworks of this project 536 apartments, 2047 individual houses as well as service centers are intended to be constructed. The project overall costs 42 billion drams. At the end of this year 398 houses will be exploited.

## 58. THE ISSUE OF DRINKING WATER BEING SOLVED IN SHVANIDZOR [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

A project of ensuring the Shvanidzor village with drinkable water kicked off from the beginning of this year financed by the "Hayastan" all-Armenian, "Civillitas" foundations as well as the Armenian Community in Iran.

Within its frameworks the village well is cleaned and repaired, the chlorination of the water is ensured and the water pipeline is lengthened for 350 meters, 1.8 km of which was constructed two years ago with the support of "Rec Caucasus" organization. At that time an additional water reservoir was constructed in the village.



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Head of the Shvanidzor village Hovhannes Ohanyan told Armenpress that the ongoing project also intends to construct additional pools to ensure stored water in the village. Within the frameworks of the project the Shvanidzor community was gifted with a tractor. There was a strict need for it.

## 59. QUALIFICATION COURSES FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE OF SYUNIK [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

Qualification courses for the unemployed people will kick off this month in Syunik financed by the Armenian Government. 14 unemployed people will be involved in them. The qualification courses will last 2-3 months during which the unemployed people will get educational-pensions.

Head of the Kapan province center of employment Ruben Poghosyan told Armenpress that within the frameworks of UN education project another 40 people will be re-qualified to become compatible in the labor market.

Courses will be conducted in the technical service of vehicles, cooker, gardener, tiller, welder, wall constructor and in other professions. The participants will also each month get educational pension and after the qualification be employed within a year's period.

## 60. 22 SERVICEMEN OF ARMENIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY CELEBRATED TODAY A HOUSE-WARMING CEREMONY [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

22 servicemen of Armenian Defense Ministry celebrated today a house-warming ceremony. The four-stored building which was provided to them consists of 6 one and two room flats and 10 three-room flats and is situated in the Moldovakan 39/3 address, Yerevan.

The keys of the apartments were handed to the servicemen personally by the Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan. Congratulating the servicemen on behalf of himself and the Ministry S. Ohanyan said that he shares the feeling which has each person who got an apartment.

"Congratulations to you that you have fully devoted yourself to the work and showed a punctual attitude towards it. I wish that at the end of each heavy working day you come back to your apartments, relax the stress and new children are born in your homes," the Armenian Defense Minister said.

S. Ohanyan stressed that in spite of the impact of the economic crisis the Armenian authorities headed by the President Serzh Sargsyan do their best to ensure the happiness and security of the Armenian Armed Forces.

Colonel Stepan Ghazarian who celebrated a house-warming ceremony on behalf of himself and others expressed gratitude to the Minister for the care and urged all the servicemen to devote themselves to their work "which never remains without assessment".

S. Ohanyan walked around in the apartments which are ensured with all the necessary conditions.

## 61. ATTENUATION OF SEISMIC ENERGY TAKES PLACE IN THE REPUBLIC [ARMENPRESS, 06/19/09]

After the Garni earthquake on June 18, 11 quakes of weak magnitude took place approximately at the same zone. The last quake took place today morning at 08:44. During today's press conference the assistant to the head of the Armenian National Service of Seismic Defense Hrachya Petrosyan said that they are natural seismic shakes which give reason to say that an attenuation of seismic energy takes place in the republic. According to the specialists there is no more reason for trouble.

H. Petrosyan noted that the prediction of earthquakes is an extremely complicated procedure though the scientists of the whole world conduct works towards it.

According to Nikolay Grigoryan, Assistant to the head of the Armenian Rescue Service of the Emergency Situations Ministry the whole scientific mind of the world was for long years busy with the prediction of earthquakes. But there are no significant successes yet, it is impossible to predict when and where the earthquake will take place. N. Grigoryan stresses the importance of awareness of people during the disasters.

He also stressed the importance of the readiness of authorities for the earthquakes and other disasters, noting that the disaster can each moment threaten us.

H. Petrosyan said that the Service is in permanent relations with the seismological institutions of USA and other states even of Turkey; it also has a seismic-biological laboratory where rare Brazilian expensive fishes are kept; the fishes showed no anxiety before this earthquake.



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Referring to the seismic construction H. Petrosyan noted that the new buildings which are constructed in Yerevan are rather qualitative as newest technologies are implemented during their construction, the outline passes a corresponding testing and the construction quality is controlled by the Armenian Urban Ministry. The other buildings must be ranked according to the construction period. Buildings which were constructed by 1960 have no seismicity calculations; in the projects constructed during 1970-80 these norms have been taken into consideration.

N. Grigoryan added that the Yerevan new buildings are constructed on the seismicity bags.

## SPORTS

### 62. 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9TH WORLD CHESS CHAMPION TIGRAN PETROSIAN'S BIRTH ON JUNE 17 [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

The 80th anniversary of the 9th World Chess Champion Tigran Petrosian's birth will be on June 17. He was many times champion of Armenia, Moscow and the USSR and two times world champion. Competing for the title of the world chess champion, he defeated Mikhail Botvinnik in 1963 and Boris Spassky in 1966.

As a member of the USSR chess team Tigran Petrosian became many times winner of World Chess Olympiads and many times champion of Europe.

He was an Honored Worker of Sports and Physical Culture of Armenia, a USSR Honored Master of Sport, a candidate of philosophical sciences, and the editor-in-chief of "64" weekly. He was awarded a Sign of Honor order.

Monuments to Tigran Petrosian were erected in Yerevan, a street and the Central House of Chess Players in the city were named after him.

Tigran Petrosian died on August 13, 1984, in Moscow.

### 63. ARMENIAN MEN CHESS CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP HELD IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 06/17/09]

Armenian Men Chess Club Championship was held on June 13-15 in Yerevan. Mika, Chess Academy, and Bank King took the first three places. They received the right to take part in the European Club Championship.

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