



TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

POLITICS

1. IN ACNIS DIRECTOR'S OPINION, PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS OF ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS LIKE THEATRE [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The present developments of the Armenian-Turkish relations are like a theatre. Director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies Richard Giragosian expressed this opinion at the Hayatsk club on July 21. In his words, the main reason for the created situation is that Turkey has not oriented yet what it wants and what to do while Armenia is ready for regulation of relations. "Turkey is surprised: it underestimated the reaction of Azerbaijan and overestimated its personal power," the analyst said.

It was also mentioned that there is a great possibility of settlement of the Armenian-Turkish relations. In R. Giragosian's words, if the Armenian-Turkish border is even not opened the important thing is that it has already been opened in people's thoughts as Turk intellectuals paid visits to Armenia and there were active discussions on the Armenian Genocide, moreover, there were more active ones in Turkey. In the speaker's words, it is necessary "for further reconciliation but will also decide the future if our neighbor becomes a normal country, recognizing the historic issue of the genocide or loses that possibility."

2. NEWLY APPOINTED AMBASSADOR OF VENEZUELA TO RA HANDS HIS CREDENTIALS TO RA PRESIDENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Ugo Jose Garsia Ernandes, the newly appointed Ambassador of Venezuela to RA (residence Moscow) handed his credentials to RA President Serzh Sargsyan on July 21. Congratulating the Ambassador on the occasion of assuming his post, S. Sargsyan expressed the hope that during his tenure the Ambassador will make his important contribution to the development of the two countries' relations.

As Noyan Tapan was informed by the RA President's Press Office, issues regarding possibilities of cooperation between Armenia and Venezuela in different spheres, expansion of the legal-contractual sphere were discussed during the talk following the ceremony of handing the credentials. Activation of cooperation within the framework of international structures was also considered important.

S. Sargsyan greeted recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the parliament of Venezuela four years ago.

The day before Ambassador Ugo Jose Garsia Ernandes handed the copy of his credentials to RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian. Wishing success to the Ambassador in his diplomatic mission, E. Nalbandian expressed the hope that the Ambassador will make an important contribution to the development of relations between Armenia and Venezuela.

According to a report by the RA Foreign Ministry Press and Information Department, E. Nalbandian and Ambassador Ugo Jose Garsia Ernandes discussed issues regarding the two countries' cooperation in the political and economic spheres, expansion of the legal-contractual sphere. Both sides attached importance to deepening of cooperation at international organizations and development of interparliamentary contacts.

Ugo Jose Garsia Ernandes was born in 1941 in the city of Bokono, Venezuela. He got education at Venezuela Military Academy and Venezuela Army Higher School. In 2009 he was appointed Ambassador of Venezuela to Russia. He is a reserve general, has been awarded national and international orders.

3. ACCORDING TO ZHIRAYR SEFILIAN, ALL-ARMENIAN CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY ARFD IN STEPANAKERT WAS A "SHOW" [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Withdrawal of Armenian troops from Armenian territories by the document called Madrid Principles will result in loss of not only Artsakh, but also of the whole Armenian statehood. Zhirayr Sefilian, the Coordinator of the Miatsum movement, stated at the July 21 press conference. In his words, RA President Serzh Sargsyan should stop the campaign of the authorities under the motto "Let's cede a part to save the whole." Otherwise, according to Z. Sefilian, they "will try to prevent that campaign to



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some extent in non-standard ways." In response to the question of whether the non-standard ways are the constitutional ways he said: "There is no Constitution in Armenia."

Z. Sefilian named a "show" the All-Armenian Conference organized by ARFD in Stepanakert lately. According to his information, by Serzh Sargsyan's order, President's brother, RA NA deputy Sashik Sargsyan had financed the conference. "The show was organized to be used in the negotiations, however, he did not need it," Z. Sefilian said. He classed the resolution adopted at the conference as "padded out." Expressing bewilderment that the word "liberated" was never used in the document and document's authors name the native land a "security zone," Z. Sefilian stated that "these people are ready to make the native land a subject of trade." In his words, under the circumstances the only way out is to get rid of these authorities as soon as possible.

4. ACCORDING TO RICHARD GIRAGOSIAN, TODAY ARMENIA IS WEAKER THAN EVER AND IS PRESENTED TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY JUST THAT WAY [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The meetings of the Armenian and Azeri Presidents held on July 18-19 in Moscow were, of course, important and memorable, however, in spite of the renewed foreign pressure in the issue of Nagorno Karabakh settlement, it was obvious from the very start that no real change is expected. Richard Giragosian, the Director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS), expressed such an opinion on July 21 at the Hayatsk club.

In his words, not Madrid Principles' being the basis of the negotiations process is alarming, Madrid Principles also contain points beneficial for Armenia. According to R. Giragosian, it is much more alarming that today Armenia is weaker than ever and is presented to the international community just that way. He explained it by the circumstance that the Armenian authorities have a problem of legitimacy and society is polarized in consequence of the political crisis. R. Giragosian considers that Armenia should be stronger to keep away from possible pressures in the negotiations process.

It was also mentioned that real danger threatens Armenia rather from "friends' betrayal," in particular, from a change of the Russian foreign policy and not from Azerbaijan, the authorities of which have again returned to threats of war.

In R. Giragosian's affirmation, the Nagorno Karabakh problem cannot be solved without participation of one of the conflict sides, NKR, therefore in the negotiations process "Armenia should not reserve for itself the monopoly of representing the NKR authorities elected on the basis of democratic principles." In his words, the OSCE Minsk Group has failed the peace process first of all because it did not involve NKR as a side of the negotiations process enjoying full rights. The other reason of the failure is the closed, non-public nature of the negotiations process, which makes impossible involvement of the civil society and results in misinformation. The ACNIS Director also gave assurance that MG also realizes very well that any attempt to return NKR under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction will inevitably result in a war.

5. HOVIK ABRAHAMIAN HIGHLY ASSESSES CONTRIBUTION OF OSCE YEREVAN OFFICE TO FULFILLMENT OF COMMITMENTS ASSUMED BY ARMENIA TOWARDS OSCE [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

RA National Assembly Speaker Hovik Abrahamian met with OSCE Yerevan Office Head, Ambassador Sergey Kapinos on July 21. The interlocutors discussed and reached agreements over steps to be undertaken to perfect Armenia's legislative sphere and to bring it in line with the European standards.

According to a report by the RA National Assembly Public Relations Department, the interlocutors held the same opinion that the Council of Europe Venice Commission and OSCE ODIHR play a great role in that issue, and their joint conclusions over bills being discussed are useful instruments for Armenia's legislators. Issues of freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of press and expression, as well as legislative regulation in the spheres of television and radio were discussed in that context.

Attaching importance to the activity of the OSCE Yerevan Office, H. Abrahamian, in particular, highly assessed the contribution of the Office to the issue of fulfillment of the commitments assumed by Armenia towards OSCE singling out the implemented programs in the sphere of strengthening country's economic security.



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6. RA PUBLIC COUNCIL DELEGATION'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO BE PAID TO NKR [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

RA Public Council's delegation will pay its first official visit between July 23 to 25. The delegation will visit NKR, where it will meet with NKR President, high-ranking officials of NA, government, and other state structures, as well as representatives of NGOs. Visit's goal is to reach agreements over cooperation format with NKR, to get acquainted with political, economic, social, scientific-educational problems of NKR to discuss them at the Public Council and to form proposals later.

7. SAMVEL BABAYAN DOES NOT EXCLUDE THAT AZERBAIJAN WILL BREAK OUT WAR AGAINST NAGORNO KARABAKH IN NEAR FUTURE [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

"It is a fact that all Armenian authorities since 1994 have been ready to cede the seven liberated areas to Azerbaijan. It is a different thing that Azerbaijan is not satisfied with it and also demands proper Karabakh," former Nagorno Karabakh Minister of Defence, hero of liberation fight of Artsakh Samvel Babayan announced during a press conference on July 22. According to him, it is no use speaking about compromises until the Azeri side is ready for that. Instead, as S. Babayan added, the Azerbaijan's government continues to prepare for a war. Reminding that after establishment of an armistice the Azeris have not signed any document on not beginning any military operations up to the present he did not exclude that Azerbaijan will attack upon Artsakh in the near future. "However the Azeris should know that in case of the very first success of the Armenians they will have 2-3 million refugees," he said.

Answering the question "Which is, in your opinion, the most favorable way of the settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict?" S. Babayan noted that the first step should be returning Nagorno Karabakh to the negotiations table. "The conflict is not between Azerbaijan and Armenia but between Azerbaijan and Karabakh," he stressed. S. Babayan classed inadmissible the approach that the representative of Nagorno Karabakh should be present only at the signing of the final document.

8. CONGRESSMEN SEND LETTER TO OBAMA NOTING THAT ARMENIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS AND GENOCIDE RECOGNITION SHOULD BE SEPARATED [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Four pro-Armenian American congressmen wrote a new letter to USA President Barak Obama. According to the Marmara daily, in the letter of the congressmen it was noted that the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations and Armenian Genocide recognition should be separated as different problems.

It was also stressed in the letter that Armenia is true to the road-map agreement signed between the two states while Turkey has broken it.

It is possible that other congressmen will also sign under the letter.

9. EXPERT RUBEN MELKUMIAN: A GREAT PART OF TURKS HAVE EXTREMELY ANTI-ARMENIAN VIEWS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

One of the most important events occurred in Turkey's home political sphere lately is the disclosure of the Ergenekon terrorist organization. Reporting this at the July 22 press conference Noravank fund's expert Ruben Melkumian emphasized that mainly servicemen are members of the Ergenekon. "Ergenekon's main goal was to create a chaos in Turkey by terrorist actions and to take the power," R. Melkumian said.

In his words, there are many people having extreme anti-Armenian views among the arrested members of the above mentioned terrorist organization. In R. Melkumian's words, Ergenekon members Veri Kuchuk, Kemal Kerimsiz, and Sinan Aygun were actively involved in the process of Hrant Dink's persecution. According to R. Melkumian, those killing H. Dink respect the above mentioned three persons and accept them as leaders.

Former head of the Turkish Operative Department Ibrahim Shahin is also among the arrested members of Turkey. In his time he took part in making up of a list named "internal cleansing." According to the expert, Turkish nationalists included in that list the names of the Armenians, who according to them, pose a danger for the Turkish state. "It is our omission that we do not pay proper attention to Turkey's extreme anti-Armenian manifestations, while a great part of Turks have just such views," R. Melkumian said.



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10. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT APPOINTS R. KARAPETIAN AMBASSADOR OF ARMENIA TO ITALY, A. MELKONIAN – TO EGYPT [Azg, 07/23/09]

On July 22 Armenian President Serzh Sargsian signed a decree on dismissing Rouben Karapetian from the office of Ambassador of Armenia to Egypt and appointing him Ambassador of Armenian to Italy (residence in Rome).

Presidential Press Office told Armenpress that on another decree of Armenian President Serzh Sargsian Armen Melkonian has been appointed Ambassador of Armenia to Egypt (residence in Cairo).

11. COMMANDER OF KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD VISITS THE MEMORIAL OF GENOCIDE VICTIMS [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

In the frames of his visit to Armenia the delegation headed by the commander of the US Kansas National Guard, Major-General Tod Bunting today visited Tsitsernakaberd Memorial, showing respect towards the millions of innocent Genocide victims, reported the Spokesman to the Defense Minister Seyran Shahsuvarian.

12. E. NALBANDIAN RECEIVES THE UN COORDINATOR TO ARMENIA C. VIDAL [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received today the UN Permanent Coordinator to Armenia Consuelo Vidal.

Media Relations Department of the Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that during the meeting issues related to the activity of the UN House to Armenia have been discussed.

Edward Nalbandian expressed gratification on the projects implemented in Armenia by UNO and its institutions, stressed the importance of the designing and adoption of the joint plan 2010-2015 and assured that the Foreign Affairs Ministry will support the fulfillment of goals intended with the plan.

C. Vidal expressed gratitude to the Minister for the support provided to the UN Office by the RA state institutions which is properly assessed in the UN Home Office.

The interlocutors referred to the aspects of "UN Development Support Project 2010-2015" document. C. Vidal stressed the importance of the coordinating role of the MFA in drafting of the document, participation of all the concerned departments and NGOs in it and underscored that the UN Yerevan House while launching its activity will be guided by the joint plan in favor of the settlement of Millennium development goals and issue of primary importance for Armenia.

13. THE ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA STATEMENT SAYS ANY RESOLUTION ON THE KARABAKH ISSUE MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO PEOPLE OF BOTH ARMENIA AND NAGORNO KARABAKH [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Any resolution on the Karabakh issue must be acceptable to the people of both Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, says the statement of the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) issued in regard to the Nagorno Karabakh peace process.

Referring to the joint declaration by the presidents of the United States, France and Russia on July 10, at the recent Group of Eight conference in Italy the Assembly noted that the issues are complex and will require time to reach a solution that is acceptable to all parties, and most specifically to the citizens of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic.

According to the Assembly statement the Armenian Government has stated that no agreement can be reached without the concurrence of the government and citizens of Nagorno Karabakh.

"We fully endorse that policy and urge the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to ensure that the government of Nagorno Karabakh joins the negotiation process as soon as possible. We note that the OSCE Co-Chairs have repeatedly called for the inclusion of Nagorno Karabakh," the statement says.

We urge the United States, in particular, to ensure the fulfillment of President Barack Obama's campaign pledge "to work for a lasting and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict that is agreeable to all parties, and based upon America's founding commitment to the principles of democracy and self determination."

The Assembly also recalls the leadership of the United States Senate and the passage of S.J. Res. 178 in 1989, which expressed U.S. support for "the fundamental rights and the aspirations of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh."



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Moreover, the Assembly strongly supports the fundamental rights of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, and its independence from foreign rule and oppression. To that end, we support the efforts of the governments of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia.

For more than two decades the Assembly has committed its resources to the pursuit of the just cause of the Armenian people of Nagorno Karabakh.

“We have played an instrumental role in Congress, from the Senate adoption of S.J. Res. 178, to the enactment of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, which prohibits U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan until its dual blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh are lifted. We will continue to strongly support maximum assistance and aid to Nagorno Karabakh to further promote its democratic development and overcome the consequences of Azerbaijan’s aggression. Therefore, we call upon the presidents of the United States, France and Russia, whose nations collectively serve as the OSCE’s Minsk Group co-chairs, to denounce Azerbaijan’s ongoing war rhetoric and its threats for a resumption of military action. A new war will not only undermine the peace process, but will also lead to the destabilization of the South Caucasus,” the statement says.

The Assembly stands united with all Armenians to protect the freedom and security of the Nagorno Karabakh people in the face of these most serious external threats.

“The suffering endured and the sacrifices made by Armenians since the Armenian Genocide deserves nothing less,” the statement issued by the Armenian Assembly of America says.

14. M. HAKOBIAN SAYS IF AZERBAIJAN’S ARMED FORCES HAD ONCE BEEN CONVICTED OF THEIR ABILITY TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE BY FORCE, THEY WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY STARTED MILITARY ACTIONS [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

“The situation in the region requires that we have a powerful and efficient army ensuring our people’s security”, stated the NKR Minister of Defense, General-Lieutenant Movses Hakobian, today in Stepanakert.

“Since its creation, the NKR Defense Army has fulfilled a mission on ensuring the NKR people’s security. Improving from year to year, it always tries to keep the situation on the front line under its control, not allowing the enemy to commit any encroachment on the NKR people. Unlike other states with similar conflicts, no peacemaking forces are available on the Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces’ contact-line. The security and peace are maintained thanks to the NKR Defense Army”, noted the NKR Minister of Defense.

Speaking of Azerbaijan’s statements on its intention to resolve the Karabakh issue by force, the Minister underscored that if Azerbaijan’s armed forces had once been convinced of their ability to resolve the issue by force, they would have immediately started military activities.

Generally, Movses Hakobian called the situation on the contact-line complicated. According to him, no considerable changes have recently taken place. Corresponding measures on improving the NKR Defense Army’s positions on the forefront are taken.

15. NKR PRESIDENT BAKO SAHAKIAN AWARDS A GROUP OF FIGURES [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Today the NKR President Bako Sahakyan awarded a group of individuals who have made substantial contribution to the development of the spheres of economy, health care, education, culture and sports.

Press Office of the NKR President told Armenpress that Bako Sahakian rated high their activity noting also their role in training the young specialists.

Upon the request of the attendees the Head of the State touched upon some issues related to the domestic and foreign policy issues.

NKR minister of health Armen Khachatryan, minister of culture and youth affairs Narine Aghabalyan and head of the state committee of sports under the NKR Cabinet of Ministers Razmik Hovsepyan partook at the ceremony.

16. ARMENIAN AMBASSADOR TO INDIA PRESENTS THE INDIRA GANDHI MEMORIAL-MUSEUM WITH PHOTOS OF HER VISIT TO ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Ambassador of Armenia to India Ashot Kocharian visited July 22 the memorial-museum of Indira Gandhi.



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Media Relations Department of Armenian Foreign Ministry told Armenpress that the visit aimed at handing the Indian side originals of a number of photos of historical importance which illustrate the visit of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Armenia in 1976.

The Ambassador met the head of the museum D. Shrivastava and presented the history of the photos. Shrivastava with gratification received the photos noting that they will find their place in the range of the museum exhibits.

The meeting was preceded by the walk in the museum accompanied by Shrivastava, who presented the history of renowned family of Gandhis.

17. NKR PRESIDENT BAKO SAHAKYAN MEETS THE DELEGATION OF THE PUBLIC COUNCIL OF ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

On 23 July President of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan met a delegation of the Public Council of Armenia led by the head of the structure Vazgen Manoukyan, which arrived to Artsakh on the same day.

Press Office of the NKR President told Armenpress that a wide range of issues related to domestic and foreign policy issues was discussed at the meeting. Special attention was paid to processes taking place in the two Armenian republics, to the importance of studying public opinion and trends as well as to enlarging cooperation in these fields.

The Head of the State underlined the role of the Public Council for the state and the society, noting promising expectations about cooperation prospects with this structure.

18. HEAD OF THE ARMENIAN REPRESENTATION IN EU, AMBASSADOR A. ADONTS HANDS HIS CREDENTIALS TO EURO COMMISSION PRESIDENT J. MANUEL BAROSSO [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

The head of the Armenian representation in the European Union (EU), Ambassador Avet Adonts handed his credentials to the President of European Commission (EC) Jose Manuel Barosso July 23.

Public relations department of the Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry told Armenpress that during the talk followed to the ceremony they referred to Armenia-European Union relations and the prospects of their development.

Congratulating A. Adonts for taking the office EC President re-conformed EU readiness to continue the deepened cooperation with Armenia, for which the Eastern Partnership gives fine opportunities. He welcomed Armenian President's efforts exerted towards the peaceful resolution of Karabakh conflict and regulation of Armenian-Turkish relations.

J. Manuel Barosso stressed EC readiness to undertake measures complementing the works of OSCE Minsk group.

Ambassador A. Adonts presented the latest developments in negotiations running around Karabakh conflict and the present state of Armenian-Turkish relations.

Issues on the establishment of Armenia-EU new contractual relations, signing of an agreement on free trade, simplification of the entrance visa regime, as well as positive developments registered in the inner-political life of Armenia have been discussed.

19. R. TOVMASYAN SAYS KARABAKH CONFLICT IS TO BE SOLVED ON THE BASIS OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

Karabakh conflict should be solved first of all on the basis of the principle of self-determination of nations, said the First Secretary of the Armenian Communist party Ruben Tovmasyan at the meeting with journalists adding that the self-determination should be put on the highest point, and the rest issues are to arise from that.

In his opinion, "Lachin" word is to be distinctly mentioned in "Madrid Document". According to R. Tovmasyan, the issue of refugees is of importance in the Karabakh conflict negotiation process.

He said that Karabakh conflict should be solved only in peaceful way, "peace is the most valuable thing today". "Karabakh is to have its part in the negotiation process of the conflict. If it isn't admitted as a negotiations party, Armenia should refuse to participate in it, though it will be filled with dangers", - R. Tovmasyan said.



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BUSINESS

20. ARMENIAN GDP DROPS BY 16.3% IN JANUARY-JUNE 2009 ON SAME PERIOD OF 2008 [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Armenia's GDP dropped by 16.3% in January-June 2009 on the same period of 2008 and amounted to 1 trillion 119 billion 368 million drams (about 3bn 66m 766 thousand USD). The GDP index-deflator made 102.1%.

According to the RA National Statistical Service, industrial production fell by 11.5% to 281bn 487.8m drams in January-June 2009 on the same months of last year.

The gross agricultural output fell by 2.5% to 123bn 493.4m drams, construction fell by 53.5% to 124bn 593.7m drams, the retail trade remained at the same level and made 413bn 523.8m drams, while services grew by 0.9% to 339bn 787.4m drams.

Armenia's foreign trade declined by 31.5% in January-June 2009 on the same period of 2008 and amounted to 1bn 659.9m USD, with exports falling by 45.9% to 281.3m USD and imports declining by 27.5% to 1bn 378.6m USD.

Consumer prices rose by 2.7%, industrial production prices fell by 3.1% in Armenia in January-June 2009 as compared to the same period of 2008.

The number of officially registered unemployed grew by 6.5% in late April of 2009 as compared to the same month of last year and made 81.2 thousand.

The average monthly nominal salary amounted to 93,138 drams in January-June 2009 (12.7% growth on the same period of 2008), including the average salary of 81,282 drams (17.4% growth) in the state sector and the average salary of 122,579 drams (6.9% growth) in the non-state sector.

The average exchange rate of a US dollar made 348.04 drams in January-April 2009.

21. ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATES THIS YEAR A NUMBER OF MEASURES ON PROMOTION OF INBOUND TOURISM [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan on July 21 visited Aspar Wild Tour organization. According to him, the activities of this tourism organization are in keeping with the government programs and help develop tourism in the country. The prime minister said that this year the government has initiated a number of measures to promote inbound tourism and assist tour operators with the enhancement of their capacities so that they will be able to provide tourist services both to foreigners and Armenian citizens who intend to visit various places in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.

During his visit, T. Sargsyan conducted a consultation with representatives of several Armenian tourist companies. After the consultation held a few days ago, the tourist companies' representatives went to Nagorno Karabakh to familiarize themselves with the prospects of tourism development on the spot.

The tour operators presented a new favorable tourism package: a 6-day trip from Armenia to Nagorno Karabakh for 90 thousand drams. They also envisage submitting soon an affordable short-term package.

T. Sargsyan underlined that the tourism organizations should examine statistical data to know what countries their potential customers are from, which will help them determine the directions for developing their activity. According to him, studies show that the global tourism has suffered a decline, whereas in Armenia the number of tourists grew by 2.7% in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period of 2008. The number of tourists to Armenia is expected to exceed 600 thousand in 2009 - against about 500 thousand last year.

The prime minister said that the prices of tourist packages in Armenia are 3-4 times as much as the expenses on organizing holidays on one's own, whereas the situation is opposite in European countries. He added that according to studies, the Japanese tourists spend the most money in Armenia - nearly 1,400 dollars a day, while Georgians and Iranians spend the least amount of 30-40 dollars daily.

Only 20% of tourists visit Armenia for the first time. Nevertheless, about 90% of Armenians living abroad have never been to Armenia. "If you master the tourism organization skills and be able to offer affordable tourist packages, you will succeed in increasing the number of those purchasing these packages," T. Sargsyan pointed out.

The tour operators informed the prime minister about the current problems of the tourism sector. In particular, public lavatories and refuse bins are absent on republican roads, and the areas around many churches of historical significance are in poor condition. T. Sargsyan said the government will do its best to help with solution of the indicated problems.



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22. RESULTS OF GOVERNMENT'S ANTICRISIS MEASURES ALREADY NOTICEABLE IN ARMENIAN ECONOMY [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The results of the anticrisis measures taken by the government are already noticeable in the Armenian economy, RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan stated during the July 21 visit to Aspar Wild Tour company. In his words, these results are first of all evident thanks to the programs implemented in construction sector: construction volumes grew by 230% in a month, due to which there has been an improvement in the economic indices.

The commodity turnover has increased to some extent. The decline in the agricultural sector is still continuing, which is also conditioned by the season. T. Sargsyan expressed a hope that there will be higher growth rates in agriculture in August. According to him, the extent of the decline was smaller than expected.

T. Sargsyan said that the economic slump trends are expected to end in late 2009. Some deceleration in the slump can be expected from this month. "Our anticrisis program is quite simple, and we should be consistent in its implementation," the prime minister stated.

23. DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THIS YEAR ARMENIAN TOURISM INDEXES INCREASE FOR 0, 1 % OVER THE SAME PERIOD 2008 [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

By the initial results 0, 1 % increase has been registered in the sphere of Armenian tourism in the first semester 2009 compared with the same period of the last year.

The head of the Tourism Department of Armenian Economy Ministry Mekhak Apresyan told Armenpress that during the first semester of the running year, 207 721 tourists arrived in Armenia from different countries of the world while that number in the same period of 2008 was 207 479.

According to M. Apresyan, despite the economic crisis the state does its best to increase the growth tempos in 2009. He added that the state will continue to take all the measures towards developing tourism in Armenia. There are prerequisites for that, tourists from Thailand, Scandinavian countries, Turkey have already begun to arrive in Armenia.

According to the data of the Economy Ministry, the outgoing tourists mainly prefer Georgia and Turkey. M. Apresyan noted that in the latest period the number of people leaving for Ajaria has decreased, as the quality of services is low there. Armenians preferring sea mainly, leave for Antalia.

Speaking about the development of inner tourism, M. Apresyan noted that the information, according to which the prices are very high in Armenia, isn't right.

There are high prices in Armenia, but M. Apresyan advised to take into consideration the quality of services, which is for several times higher than the ones provided in the other countries of the region.

As for the control over the prices in tourism sphere in Armenia, he noted that there isn't an establishment having a dominant position, that's why the state can't impose this or that price.

He said that in spite of the achievements, there are still problems; it is necessary to develop infrastructures even more, and solve the problem of high quality cadres.

The data on Armenian tourism of the first semester of the running year aren't finally summed up yet.

24. ARMENIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HAS REPRESENTATIVES IN 17 COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Armenia has representatives in 17 countries of the world. Executive Director of the Chamber Araik Vardanyan told Armenpress that the representatives should be citizens of the given state, of Armenian nationality, businessmen and mustn't have any problem with local authorities. They are being registered in the Trade-Industrial Chamber of the given country as a full representative of the Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A. Vardanyan noted that the latter carry out a significant work in strengthening trade relations between Armenia and the given country. Numerous meetings, as well as exhibitions and business forums are organized with their support with the participation of businessmen from Armenia and other countries.

At present the Chamber has its representatives in USA, Canada, European, Arabic and CIS states. According to A. Vardanyan, the circle of those countries is intended to be extended.

Compared with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia doesn't have representatives in other countries, but is in close cooperation with a similar institution functioning in many countries of the world (CIS, European, Arabic countries).



According to the Consultant of the Union President Edward Kirakosyan, notable collaborative works are carried out, mutual visits, forums are organized promoting to the strengthening of trade-economic relations. Armenian trade houses are intended to open in other countries.

Armenian Development Agency informed that an agreement has been reached to open trade houses in Yekaterinburg and Kaliningrad; the problem of place is solved, there is an initial agreement with the Governors to provide territories.

Armenian Development Agency has representatives in 7 countries – France, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Iran and USA.

The Republic of Armenia has economic representatives in Moscow and Brussels.

25. PRIME MINISTER SAYS THE INCREASE OF THE REVENUE TAX IN THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF TAX INFLOWS TESTIFIES OF THE REDUCTION OF THE SHADOW IN THE ECONOMY [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Instead of 11.9% of the same period 2008 during the first semester of this year the revenue tax reached 16% in the overall structure of tax inflows, during today's session of the Government Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian noted.

According to him in the conditions of the economic fall, when the level of the profitability decreases, in reality it should not have occurred.

Whereas according to him the situation changed and the increase of the inflows for the revenue tax speaks about the reduction of volumes of the shadow in the economy.

T. Sargsian said that the studies show that the shadow mainly exists in the inner economy and the opportunities of increase of the revenues in the customs sphere are small. The fact that the State Income Committee was able to increase the volumes of the revenue tax testifies that the shadow economy is reduced in the state. The increase of the commodity circulation volumes registered during the latest period also testifies of it.

T. Sargsian expressed hope that the tendencies will be continuative, especially in the cases when the shadow in the economy is not drastically eliminated.

The Prime Minister also informed that during the first semester of this year the taxes-GDP ratio was succeeded to be increased for 0.5% instead of the intended 0.4%.

The intended achievement was to take place in the conditions of the economic growth of nearly 8% but it was possible to reach in case of the 16% of economic fall. The Prime Minister considers it a heavy task which was possible to be implemented and which must be assessed.

26. RA GOVERNMENT STARTS TO IMPLEMENT A NEW METHOD OF INVOLVEMENT OF INVESTMENTS [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

RA Government starts to implement a new method of involvement of investments. During today's session of the Government the Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian noted that with this the state will itself design business plans, make land selection and allocations. If these plans are approved by the specialists they are proposed for tender.

The representatives of the private sector, assessing the attraction of the project present an application about their concern and the sum of money they are ready are ready to invest in bringing this or that plan into life.

First such plan refers to the establishment of an agro-tourism hotel complex on the territory neighboring to Garni-Geghard highway for which according to the preliminary calculations \$5-6 million will be needed. The greatest flow of tourists transports through the mentioned highway. If the undertaking is of success and private investments are involved, the Government will make other such initiatives for instance in the Syunik province.

According to T. Sargsian the initiative is especially attractive in the respect that the state itself reveals the projects based on the strategy of the Government which increases the opportunities of their profitability.

The state also settles the issues of infrastructural development and creates more favorable conditions for the investors.

The first project is being implemented in the tourism sphere; there may be other interesting projects in the agriculture and infrastructure spheres as well.

This mechanism of involvement of investments is rather efficiently implemented in Chili.



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27. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN RECEIVES THE ADB VICE-PRESIDENT XIAOYU ZHAO AND THE DELEGATION ACCOMPANYING HIM [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan received today Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Xiaoyu Zhao and the delegation accompanying him.

Presidential press office told Armenpress that the President of the Republic with gratification underscored the quickly developing cooperation with ADP. The head of the country welcomed the quick response of the bank and interest in such extended transportation projects, like North-South highway and North-South railway, Yerevan urban transport development.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan expressed gratitude for the support of 80 million USD provided to the Armenian government by the bank for smoothing the consequences of the global financial crisis and implementation of the intended projects.

Vice-President Zhao said that ADB is interested in developing long-lasting partner relations with Armenia. Highly assessing the established cooperation between the bank and the Armenian government he said that he has observed the joint projects being implemented in the spheres of the restoration of rural roads, water supply and sewerage and is impressed by their process.

The Vice-President also assured that ADB is ready to support Armenia hereafter to overcome the difficulties arisen in the result of the crisis.

Attaching importance to the implementation of large scaled infrastructural projects the sides shared the same viewpoint that they are a serious impetus for the development of the country. They also regarded the implementation of joint projects in the private sector as prospective.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan attached vital importance to the country's cooperation with international financial institutions not only from the viewpoint of involving financial sources, but also – of the experience, working culture that they import to Armenia.

28. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDER THE ARMENIAN ANTI-CRISIS POLICY JUSTIFIED [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

International financial organizations consider the Armenian anti-crisis policy justified, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan noted at today's session of the Government.

According to him, the tax-budget and loan policy of the government in the last 5 years has been restrained, which in normal conditions is considered a literate policy. At present, in crisis conditions, the government has passed to expansion policy, in conditions of which the state increases its expenses and if needed involves additional means from internal and external markets.

The Central Bank conducts extensive policy as well, which is of anti-crisis nature, too. According to the Prime Minister, in the result of legislative changes the threshold of budget deficit has increased to 7, 5 %, which enables to extend the external debt.

He detailed that in 2009 and 2010 the government intends to involve 150 million USD from the International Monetary Fund, 60 million USD – from the World Bank, 80 million USD – from the Asian Development Bank. The involvement of financial means will be continued also during the next year by "getting use of the exclusive possibility of low prize growth".

T. Sargsyan noted that the work of tax and custom bodies is the hardest in these conditions, and all the state bodies in their turn should assist them.

He said that legislatively privileges have been given to small and medium-sized enterprises in the result of reforms conducted in tax and custom spheres. At present there are about 32 000 entrepreneurs in the Republic, extending activity, which doesn't surpass the threshold of 58 million AMD turnover, the number of the ones giving fixed pay is about 20 000. Actually, so many people get use of the privileges.

T. Sargsyan also underscored that tendencies for tax indexes improvement are already quite obvious.

29. T. SARGSYAN SAYS THERE IS ALREADY CERTAIN POSITIVE STIMULUS IN RA ECONOMY [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/23/09]

There is already certain positive stimulus in RA economy, said Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan at the today's session of the government pointing out to the statistical data on the first semester of the running year issued by the Armenian Statistical Service.

According to him, there are notable positive tendencies especially in construction sphere; as of June, an unprecedented growth by about 230 % has been registered here. According to him, it is



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conditioned by the periodicity of that sphere on one hand, and by the formation of positive expectations on the other, as well as by the support projects implemented by the government.

The Prime Minister said that the industrial fall was about 12 % in the first semester of 2009, in agriculture – 2, 5 %. The season phenomena had their impact on the latter as well. In August the situation in the sphere may be improved.

The index of wholesale trade, which Tigran Sargsyan considers an important factor, has increased despite the reduction of private transfers and economic fall of nearly 16 %. He conditions it by increase of salaries by 13 %, the pensions – by 14 %, in the result of which the paying capacity of thousands of people has increased.

The extension of volumes of cash register appliance has in its turn promoted to uncovering the retailed trade out of the shadow economy, and to ensure greater volumes are registered.

“The shadow in the Armenian economy is still quite high, but the appliance of cash registers allows to register positive results, which influences on macro-economic indexes”, - T. Sargsyan said.

A certain growth has also been registered in the sphere of services as of the semester. There are certain improvements also in external trade turnover: the registered volumes made only the 54 % of the last year's indexes, the import volumes – 72 %. But there is a positive shift in June compared with May.

30. “DINO GOLD MINING COMPANY” CJSC INTENDING TO INCREASE THE OUTPUT VOLUMES BY THE END OF THE YEAR [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

The “Dino gold mining company” CJSC at present works at the same volumes as before the compulsory vacation in November last year.

Upon its short-term project the Company intends from the next year to increase its output volumes by 600 000 tons. At present it is 400 000 tons.

Chief Director of the enterprise Robert Faletta told Armenpress that if the present output volumes are preserved, the company cannot survive in the conditions of such low prices for metals in the world market.

As a long-term project for the enterprise R. Faletta mentions the enactment of Shahumian open mine, which intends new job places.

Certain works have already been conducted for the exploitation of the mine, but there is still much to do during the upcoming year.

31. GERMAN “FICHTNER” COMPANY INTERESTED IN CONSTRUCTING GARBAGE PROCESSION FACTORY IN YEREVAN [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

German “Fichtner” Company carries detailed studies in constructing a garbage procession factory in Yerevan and improving garbage disposal process.

Head of the Communal Economy Department of Yerevan Municipality Gagik Khachatryan told Armenpress that after that the company will present a proposal on garbage disposal and procession to the Yerevan Municipality and it will be determined by what means the works will be carried out.

According to G. Khachatryan, today the garbage disposal in Yerevan is realized by means of 12 specialized organizations and 360 car-mechanisms.

According to the project on sanitary cleaning, in summer garbage disposal is conducted in the capital every day, in some places – twice a day. 1400 workers are employed in sanitary-cleaning works, whose salary reaches 80-180 000 Drams.

According to the head of the department, today there is a lack of manpower in the sphere of sanitary cleaning in Yerevan.

DIASPORA

32. “HEAVEN WAY” BOOK REPUBLISHED AT ANELIAS PRINTING-HOUSE [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/23/09]

“The Heaven Way” book was published at an Antelias printing-house the last, fourth republication of which took place in 1907. Kurin teacher Manuk Kakosian used his proofreading knowledge and skills having the aim of acquainting the youth with the history of Christianity.

According to the Patriarchate of Antelias, with the efforts of newly-converted monk of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia Varand Kortmosian in order to make readable the contents of



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the book in Ashkharhabar (New Armenian language) the volume was presented to the youth as a valid guidebook.

33. CHAPEL TO BE BUILT FOR ARMENIAN JEWELERS IN GUYUMCUKENT COMPLEX OF ISTANBUL [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/23/09]

Two chapels have been decided to be built for Armenian and Assyrian jewelers in Guyumcukent complex, where jewelers of the former Closed Market work and which was built near Istanbul Eni Bosna district. They make the 30 percent of the whole population, the Assyrians are the first in the field of gold, and Armenians in the field of jewelry, the Marmara daily reported. These two chapels are also envisaged for the Christians visiting the Guyumcukent.

There is a Moslem praying room on the each floor of this complex.

Complex Board Chairman Said Erdal Metiner noted that Armenians and Assyrians have worked at their small workshops for a long time and have a great number of buyers, today many of them have moved to the complex. He also noted that the inner repairs of the chapels has been entrusted to the participant of Van's Akhtamar church renovation, Armenian architect Zakaria Mildanoglu. The expenses of building the chapels should be covered by Assyrian, Armenian and Greek sellers.

34. TURKISH MEDIA TOUCH UPON ARMENIAN CHURCH IN MALATIA [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/23/09]

Malatia Haber Turkish website wrote about the derelict Armenian church in Malatia central region's Chamurlu village, the grave near which has now become a holy place and its walls are covered with the notes of wishes of pilgrims. According to the Marmara daily, it is not known whose grave that is, it is only known that the church was built in the 13th century and belongs to prophet Jerjis who, according to the newspaper, must be Saint Sargis.

In his turn a correspondent of the Birgun newspaper wrote that the church of the village is called Vank and at first it belonged to Assyrians and then to Armenians. Only the church has remained from the large monastery built on the little hill. The story goes that the church was dedicated to Saint Sargis who was killed by the Romans for adopting Christianity. At this church the pilgrims ask the God for a child and in case of having a child they promise to call him Jerjis.

35. AIM OF HAMAZGAYIN'S BELGIAN DEPARTMENT IS EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN ARMENIAN SPIRIT [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/23/09]

The Hamazgayin Educational and Cultural Union's Belgian department will aim to consolidate country's Armenian community and in the name of preservation of Armenian identity to consolidate the cultural potential. Member of the mentioned department, executive of the educational department Samvel Sargsian told Hayern Aysor that the department working since 2009 February took the care of Belgian Antwerpen city's Nikol Aghbalian and Mekhelen's Levon Shant Armenian one-day schools, which before that worked under the protection of ARFD Belgian office. Armenian Language, Armenian Literature and Armenian History are taught at those schools which have about 70 pupils.

The member of Hamazgayin's Belgian department asserted that the institution will put the main accent of its activity on the youth's education in the Armenian spirit. For this purpose they will try to found groups in various directions of culture also at the above mentioned schools, in addition to already working dance ensemble. He added that after putting the education of Belgium's Armenian youth in Armenian spirit on strong bases it will be possible to undertake steps towards the legal registration of the Armenian community of that country.

According to S. Sargsian, 10-15 thousand Armenians live in Belgium.

36. SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL VALUES OF ARMENIAN-BASED AND DIASPORAN ARMENIAN YOUTH ARE SAME, DIASPORAN ARMENIAN PARTICIPANTS OF SUMMER SCHOOL THINK [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

On July 20, the Armenian Young Women's Association received the Diasporan Armenian young participants of the Summer School program organized by the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA). They discussed with the guests and reporters the similarities and differences between the Armenian youth living in Armenia and in Diaspora.

Opinions were expressed that the only difference between Armenians and Diasporan Armenians is the distance and the spiritual and cultural values are the same.



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"The Diasporan Armenians are more modest, devoted, patriotic, while Armenian girls only think of having many clothes and sparkling decorations," a participant of the discussion, Nvard said.

One of the guests expressed an opinion that Armenians living abroad bear the influence of the culture and way of thinking of the country where they live: "As people in their environment more listen and speak English they will hardly completely feel the significance of being an Armenian, it is the Armenian language that keeps awake the realization of being an Armenian in each Armenian."

In response to the question of Chairman of the Armenian Young Women's Association Lilit Asatria of what the eight young participants of the Summer School program revealed coming to Armenia, a resident of the Utah state Sargis answered that in the course of time he lost interest in Armenia, even did not want to say that he was an Armenian: "However now I have changed a lot, I have realized that I would not like to be a Mexican, a German or any other nationality, it is very good that I am an Armenian." New York-based Elizabeth, coming to Armenia, began thinking whether she is an Eastern or Western Armenian, and what kind of contribution she will make in society as an Armenian.

During the discussion those present also tried to find out what should be the basis of a stable family, love, respect, faith and whether those present will marry representatives of another nationality or Armenians living in different countries of the world. It turned out that the primary thing for all of them was love.

In response to the question of why the participants consider themselves to be Armenians, Sargis answered: "My father is a man who does not like Armenians at all, and hates foreigners, that is why there has been no contact with Armenians for many years. However I have always considered myself to be an Armenian, as I have an Armenian surname, culture and way of thinking." On the whole, the participants shared the same opinion that Armenian is not the one who "crosses himself every morning and eats dolma," for being an Armenian it is not important to know Armenian and be a Christian.

Assembly Country Director for Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh Arpi Vartanian wound up the discussion confessing that sometimes she feels herself an inhabitant of Armenia, sometimes an American Armenian, but before being a Diasporan Armenian or an inhabitant of Armenia she thinks that we all are human beings.

37. ISTANBUL ARMENIAN SCHOOL-LEAVERS PASS ENTRANCE EXAMS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

This year all 45 school-leavers of Armenian Central School of Istanbul have passed the entrance exams of higher educational institutions. According to the Marmara daily, four pupils were included in the 1000 bests of Turkey, one in exact sciences and three in the sphere of language.

38. TWO YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ARMENIANS AMONG VICTIMS OF TU-154 PLANE CRASH [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Two young citizens of Australia, brother and sister Arin and Ani Apcarians were among the victims of TU-154 plane crash flying from Tehran to Yerevan.

Arin, who was the elder, was a medical student at Westmead Hospital, and Ani was studying child care and at the same time gaining volunteer experience in that field at the Hamazkaine Toumanian Saturday School.

The Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC Australia) joins the Armenian community worldwide in honoring and remembering the 168 victims of the air disaster and joining the Armenian-Australian community, which mourns especially over the loss of two young persons.

A memorial service for Arin and Ani Apcarian will be held at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection on 22 July evening.

ARTS

39. HASMIK HARUTYUNYAN GIVES LULLABY CONCERT AT "GIVING VOICE" FESTIVAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The events presented here took place at the Giving Voice folk art festival in Wroclaw, Poland, in April 2009. On April 19, the St. Anthony Cathedral of Wroclaw, an acoustically perfect structure from the late Middle Ages, was the setting for the first-ever concert of traditional Armenian lullabies. Small statues of saints looked down from above the altar and around the church as Harutyunyan sang selections from



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her award-winning "Armenian Lullabies" CD. She also sang several lullabies recently discovered in various archival materials, including songs from Moush, Musa Ler, and Nakhichevan.

Although Hasmik was singing a capella, her songs were intertwined with the echoes of Norayr Kartashyan's sring (blul), shvi, and duduk. At the concert lullabies of Old Armenia, included those recorded by Komitas ("Akna Oror") and Mihran Toumajan ("Orim, Orim" and "Oror Jojk Em Kapel") were resonated. The concert program took the listeners on a journey through the provinces of Historic Armenia, to the provinces of Taron, Vaspurakan, Kharberd, Tigranakert, Trebizond, Cilicia (Kessab and Musa Ler), and Eastern Armenia. Hasmik also sang "Nazei Oror," a lullaby about the Armenian Genocide, from the poem The Blind Ashough by Avetis Aharonian, minister and culture figure of the Armenian republic of 1918-1921.

Near the middle of the concert, as Kartashyan played "Vardani Mor Voghbu," a folk melody about national hero Vardan Mamikonian, on duduk, Hasmik quietly recited the Hayr Mer (The lord's Prayer).

During the course of the festival, Hasmik presented a series of workshops about the Armenian lullaby and traditional Armenian children's songs, including several written or arranged by Komitas. She also taught several Armenian folk dances, including the well known Gyovend, Kochari, Ververi, Tamzara, Papouri, Shoror, and Mayroke dances. Later, during gatherings and parties, the workshop participants demonstrated their new skills to festival organizers and guests.

Also representing Armenia at the festival of theater and song was Mher Navoyan, musicologist from the Komitas State Conservatory. Navoyan lectured about Armenian monodic music, as well as conducting discussions with Theater Zar members about the life and work of Komitas. Theater Zar, along with the Grotowski Institute (Poland) and the Center for Performing Research (Wales), organized the week-long festival.

Currently, Hasmik and her brother, Aleksan Harutyunyan, are recording an album of traditional Armenian wedding songs for Face Music, a record company based in Switzerland, while they continue their activities with the Shoghaken Folk Ensemble of Yerevan, Armenia.

40. CATHOLICOSATE OF GREAT HOUSE OF CILICIA CONTINUES PUBLICATION OF RELIGIOUS TEXT-BOOKS [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Publication of new text-books on religion started two years ago under the sponsorship of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia continues: a volume is published every year. According to the Patriarchate of Antelias, books published up to now are envisaged for pupils at the age of 8, 12, 14. Religious knowledge, corresponding to those age groups, the Bible, saints, holidays and traditions of the Armenian Church, prays with colourful pictures, splended printing are involved in the volumes. Each of the text-books has a teacher's guidebook. Text-books for pupils at the age of 6 and 10 with the teacher's guidebook are being at present prepared for the publication.

41. ISTANBUL ARMENIAN KARIN SUSMAK SUCCESSFULLY GRADUATES FROM CONSERVATORY OPERA MUSIC DEPARTMENT [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Member of Istanbul Sahakian choir Karin Susmak successfully graduated from Istanbul University's Conservatory Opera Music Department. As a graduation thesis she performed the main role of Gustav Albert Lortzing's one-act comic opera Opera Experience, the role of the servant Hanhen. Besides it, Karin Susmak also took part in the ceremony dedicated to the memory of Leyla Gencer and was highly evaluated by the critics and music lovers for her performance, the Marmara daily wrote.

42. CHILDREN'S OPERA CHORUS FOUNDED BY GAYANE HOVHANNISIAN SO FAR ONLY ONE IN EUROPE [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

Children's Classical Opera Chorus was founded by Gayane Hovhannisian, an opera singer and teacher of Armenian descent, in Marseilles, French province of Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur, 11 years ago. The chorus is composed of children of various nationalities.

G. Hovhannisian started her activities as a teacher in Armenia. Upon graduation from Komitas State Music Conservatory in Yerevan, she began working at the Chair of Vocal. She gained her pedagogical experience at the music school headed by David Zalian.

During an interview with Armenians Today's correspondent, G. Hovhannisian recalled that the officials in charge of culture in Marseilles and Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur treated with mistrust her idea to found an opera chorus of children. Ms. Gayane, however, managed to select 30 out of 500 children



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and form a chorus. Later on these children were joined by their younger brothers and sisters. The chorus currently has 50 singers aged 5-11 and 11-20.

In 2000 the Children's Classical Opera Chorus performed Pergolesi's Stabat Mater in several French cities, which was followed by numerous invitations from various countries. Their performances are often broadcast on French television. The chorus gave successful concerts at the Royal Palace in Belgium, Le Louvre, and many cities of France. In 2004 the chorus participated in an international contest in Rome and took 4th place among 68 countries.

The chorus has received invitations from Rio de Janeiro, London and other cities.

On seeing the great achievements of the Children's Classical Opera Chorus, the Armenian community of Nice asked Gayane Hovhannisian to found an Armenian children's chorus there. The chorus has functioned for 5 years, and its repertoire mainly consists of works of Armenian composers. In the opinion of G. Hovhannisian, the young singers of the Nice children's chorus are talented. Many of them already study at the conservatories of Nice and nearby cities. The Armenian children's chorus gives 1-3 performances a month in cities of Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur. The chorus is expected to take part in One Nation One Culture 2010 Festival in Yerevan.

43. IT IS NATIONAL CULTURE THAT HELPS ARMENIANS TO REMAIN ARMENIANS [Hayastani Hanrapetutiun, 07/23/09]

RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian received on July 21 representatives of the Youth Union of France of the city of Marseilles, members of the Araks and Sasoun company who are in Armenia these days.

The company is in Armenia to receive dancing master classes within the framework of the Come Home program before coming tours in the communities of Diaspora.

According to the Press and Public Relations Department of the RA Ministry of Diaspora, the French Armenian guests presented the Minister their impressions got from Armenia, fixing those positive changes that were obvious when comparing with their previous visits paid to Armenia. The guests attached importance to improvement of necessary conditions for Diasporan Armenians' making investments for development of tourism in Armenia and in the sphere of business. Speaking about keeping the national culture, they mentioned: "It is too important that the national culture remains at its height and is an example for Diaspora for we are able to keep out national traditions, feed from the Armenian culture and give it to our youth."

RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian expressed gratitude to representatives of the Youth Union for keeping high the national culture in France, the Armenian's soul and identity as well as for organizing visit of the Araks and Sasoun company members to Armenia. "People are different, have different way of thinking, different views but we must be together and united in the issue of strengthening the Homeland, preservation of historic, cultural and spiritual values," the Minister mentioned.

Before the farewell the Minister persuaded them to constantly keep in the heart three most important precepts: return to the Fatherland, to keep the Armenian Culture and that they always remember and follow the principle that Armenia is the Homeland of all the Armenians.

RELIGION

44. DURING THE 13TH ASSEMBLY OF CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES HOVAKIM MANOUKIAN ELECTED A MEMBER OF CEC CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND SHAHE ANANIAN – A MEMBER OF THE WORKING GROUP [ARMENPRESS, 07/23/09]

On July 20 the 13th Assembly of Conference of the European Churches finished its works. The delegation of Armenian Apostolic Church also took part in the summit.

Press office of the Mother See told Armenpress that besides the address to the member churches during the CEC assembly a number of statements have also been adopted on assessment of the rights of migrants, promotion to the ethical principals in the financial and economic institutions, human rights and religious freedom, denouncement of nuclear weapon.

During the Assembly the Primate of the inter church relations department of the Mother See Holy Echmiadzin Hovakim Manoukian has been elected a member of CEC central committee and Shahe Ananian – a member of the working group which must by 2013 review the instruments of conduction of CEC mission and its charter and present the results to the approval for the subsequent CEC Assembly.



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45. SERVICE HELD IN ARMENIAN CHURCH TO BE BROADCAST ON TURKISH TELEVISION TONIGHT [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/23/09]

The service held in the Holy Trinity Church in Beyogly with the participation of the choir master Nshan Chalkchian and psalm-readers will be broadcast on Turkish state television TRT-1 channel on the night of July 22. Marmara reported that the indicated service took place the next week after Holy Easter.

SOCIAL

46. 12 THOUSAND ARMENIANS LIVING IN ADZHARIA HAVE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL PRESERVATION [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

12 thousand Armenians currently live in Adzharia, including 9 thousand Armenians in the city of Batumi. According to Marmara daily, Batumi Armenians are engaged in small and medium business, the number of handicraftsmen is also great.

Spokesman for the Union of Armenians in Adzharia Arthur Hovhannisian said that the most important problem of the community is the preservation of Armenian identity, which greatly depends on solution of educational issues. The Armenian branch of Georgian school in Batumi has 30 pupils and 10 teachers of pension age. This year the branch did not give graduates as no 1st grade was formed 10 years ago. "We need to save the school, otherwise the role the community will decline to a zero level. We have a church, a school and a consulate, but the imperative necessity is to maintain the link with homeland and to remain faithful to our Armenian roots. We need to keep our roots, language, traditions and customs," A. Hovhannisian underlined.

In his words, a House of Friendship opened in Batumi a year ago. The offices of the Armenian, Azerbaijani, Greek, Russian, Jewish, Ukrainian, German, and Yezidi communities are located in the House of Friendship. The Armenian community maintains its links with Armenia through various programs, as well as in the format of cooperation between sister cities. The relations with homeland have become especially active after the opening of the Armenian consulate. 3 students from Batumi currently study at universities of Armenia. It is envisaged that 20 Armenian young people will visit Armenia under "Ari Toun" (Come Home) Program of the RA Ministry of Diaspora.

As regards the participation of Adzharian Armenians in the internal political life of Georgia, Arthur Hovhannisian said the community tries to be neutral as their participation in political events may become a subject of speculation and be used against the Armenians. "We have adopted a position of neutrality, but at the same time we assist with solution of problems of interest to the Armenian community," he explained.

47. ARMENIAN STUDENTS FROM RUSSIA TO UNDERGO PRACTICAL TRAINING AT RA MINISTRY OF DIASPORA [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

A group of Armenian students from Russia's Saint Petersburg State University and the Faculty of International Relations of Nizhni Novgorod State University started their practical work at the RA Ministry of Diaspora on July 15.

By the timetable worked out jointly by the ministry's department of Armenian communities in CIS countries and the department of pan-Armenian programs, the trainees together with Chairman of the Armenian community in Nizhni Novgorod Tigran Shahnazarian and the group head Sona Davtian became acquainted with the structural subunits of the ministry. The heads of the departments and units presented briefly and comprehensively the functions of their subunits. The students from Nizhni Novgorod University showed interest in the activities of the newly established ministry, its current and future programs. They expressed a desire to take part in the events of Ari Toun (Come Home) Program.

According to the Press and PR Department of the RA Ministry of Diaspora, a meeting of the trainees with RA Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobian is scheduled. During two weeks the students from Russia will study the ministry's regulations and work at its regional departments, as well as familiarize themselves with the sections and goals of Armenians Today electronic newspaper.

The students will also do practical work at some other ministries and scientific and educational institutions.



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48. PROCESS OF ACQUIRING ARMENIAN CITIZENSHIP GATHERS MOMENTUM [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

2,420 persons acquired citizenship of the Republic of Armenia in the first half of 2009, which was more than in the period from 1997 to 2007, Head of the Passport and Visa Department of RA Police, Lieutenant Colonel Norayr Muradkhanian announced.

He explained that the process of granting RA citizenship began in 1997 when the by-laws ensuring the application of the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia (passed in 1995) took force. 1,735 citizens received RA citizenship in 1997-2007. It was mentioned that in the indicated period the institution of dual citizenship was not valid, and those receiving RA citizenship were obliged to give up their citizenship of the other country.

N. Muradkhanian added that dual citizenship was permitted after the amendments to the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Armenia were adopted in February 2007, while in November 2007 the Armenian government approved a decision regulating the process of acquiring RA citizenship. 1,554 persons received RA citizenship, including status of dual citizen, in 2008.

N. Muradkhanian said that citizens of 23 countries, including 177 from Russia, 34 from Uzbekistan, 21 from Turkmenistan, 38 from Iraq, 42 from Iran, 16 from the U.S, and 23 from Syria received RA citizenship in recent years.

In 2007 there were no cases when an application for receiving RA citizenship was rejected. 10 applications were rejected in 2008, 9 applications were rejected in the first half of 2009.

According to Head of the Department for Pardon, Citizenship, Awards and Titles of the RA Presidential Staff Jemma Hakobian, decisions on granting stay permits to 40-60 persons are now taken twice a week. Decisions on granting RA citizenship to up to 600 persons are taken twice a month.

49. ARMENIAN VERSION OF CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: MAKING THE CONNECTION REPORT REPRESENTED IN YEREVAN [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The USAID Mobilizing Action Against Corruption Activity (MAAC), RA Ombudsman's Office and International Council on Human Rights Policy (ICHRP) represented the Armenian version of the ICHR Corruption and Human Rights: Making the Connection report on July 22.

In RA Ombudsman Armen Harutiunian's words, corruption is today a serious problem for Armenia, and a considerable part of the complaints got by the Ombudsman's Office relates to the facts of corruption. "This is the phenomenon the struggle with which is rather difficult and which is deeply rooted in our society," A. Harutiunian said. In his words, one must not pay attention to punishments in the struggle against corruption but must be able to root out those phenomena with the help of a number of institutes and reduce them with the help of preventive mechanisms. In A. Harutiunian's words, while the corruption has such large scales in the country, it is difficult to speak about an ordinary citizen and harmonious mutual relations of state structures.

ICHRP Robert Archer mentioned that the corruption in Armenia has a wide spreading in different spheres, starting from the judicial system to small structures. In his words, though a number of anti-corruption events are implemented in Armenia during the recent years, but there are numerous problems.

MAAC President Francois Vezina stated that according to surveys of the Transparency International organization, Armenia has received 2.93 points over last 6 years measured by the 10-point scale. He also mentioned that Armenia shows good indexes among the South Caucasian and Central Asian states but it has still much to do at the world level.

To recap, the 4th Anti-Corruption Conference organized by the MAAC and ICHR took place in Yerevan on the same day.

50. A FORUM OF ARMENIAN-FRENCH ASTROLOGISTS IS TO TAKE PLACE IN BYURAKAN [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

A forum of Armenian and French astrologists is to take place September 21-25 in Byurakan Observatory after Victor Hambartsumyan.

Director of the Byurakan Observatory Hayk Harutyunyan told Armenpress that at the meeting issues on development of astrology in Armenia and cooperation with French observatories will be discussed.

5 astrologists arrived from France, will present achievements in astronomy of their country, as well as the events organized in France within the frames of the "International Astrology Year" and their results.



UNESCO has declared 2009 as an International Astrology Year, which aims to make astrology available to different sections of society.

51. 103 DISABLED APPLICANTS GIVEN RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTINUE THE EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

As to July 1 recommendations have been given to 103 disabled applicants enabling them to continue the education in different educational institutions by RA Socio Medical Examination Agency (SMEA).

Head of the agency Misha Vanyan told Armenpress that 99 disabled people have applied for the entrance to higher educational institutions, 4 – semi-professional.

The core purpose of the socio medical examination is except recognizing a person as disabled, to help him/her as a full person enabling to return to society.

“Our main goal must be the bringing of a disabled back to society. If the disabled can’t work by any profession, trainings and re-qualification must be conducted, after which he/she will get a job by means of relevant state projects. It is the integration itself, as the disabled person acquires independence, solves his/her problems due to his/her work”, - M. Vanyan said.

According to him, the disabled applicants are given such kind of recommendations, which allow them to work by their profession in future. In the last years more recommendations are given for the entrance to higher educational establishments, and after the graduation the majority works by his/her profession.

52. ARMENIAN PRESIDENT GETS ACQUAINTED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW COMPLEX WHICH IS BEING CONSTRUCTED IN THE “ARMENIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS” CJSC [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian visited today the “Armenia International Airports” CJSC to get acquainted with the construction works of the new complex being constructed in the public zone.

Press Office of the RA President told Armenpress that the complex started to be constructed in 2008 and will be exploited in 2011, after which “Zvartnots” international airport will be able to serve 3 million passengers annually.

President Sargsian also walked round in the already exploited Departure and arrival halls, got acquainted with newly inputted technical systems and the organization of the process of service of the passengers.

53. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCES IN ARMENIA DRAFTED FOR THE UPCOMING 5 YEARS [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

A strategic plan for the upcoming 5 years is being drafted for the development of sciences in Armenia, in which special stress is put on the issue of reduction of “brain outflow”.

Head of the State Committee of Science of the RA Education and Science Ministry Samvel Harutyunian told Armenpress that the mentioned strategy will involve all those priorities that will give an opportunity of involvement of the youth in different scientific projects and through them to keep the youth in the state.

According to S. Harutyunian the strategy will also fix the range of financial-economic privileged conditions of the youth who deal with science ensured by the state.

Besides that there will be a priority to involve the young specialists in the grant projects which will somehow prevent the emigration of young specialists from the country.

According to the strategy additional salary will be set for the young activists.

According to the head of the committee the average age of the scientists in Armenia now reaches 60-62 and in a number of professions – 70-72.

“The real age for dealing with science and launching a serious scientific activity is considered to be 35-45, but in our country there are very few scientific workers within that age category,” he said.

The State Committee of Science has worked out a draft strategy for development of science for the upcoming 10 years and presented it to the Government. Besides that the strategy being designed for the upcoming five years will cover the concrete steps to be undertaken, the improvements of the coordinating project which will be presented to the Government only after the general discussions.



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54. TWO FOREIGN AUTHORITATIVE TV CHANNELS PURCHASE THE LICENSE FOR SHOWING "THE LAND OF NOAH" DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT ARMENIA [ARMENPRESS, 07/24/09]

Two Spanish and Scandinavian authoritative TV Channels purchased the license for showing the "Land of Noah" documentary film about Armenia.

Head of the Territorial, Economic Development and Tourism Department of Armenian Economy Ministry Mekhak Apresian told Armenpress that the Spanish TVE (Television Espanola) TV Channel which is broadcasted for 450 million auditoriums has already purchased the film and in the nearest future will start the broadcasting. In the Scandinavian states it will be broadcasted through the "Scandinavia" TV Company.

The film of 52 minute length in English presents the entire Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, as well as Ani and Mount Ararat. A historical remark is paid to the territory of historical Armenia, facts, documentary materials are presented. €225,000 and 11 million drams have been spent from the State budget for screening of the film.

M. Apresian noted that the show of the videos on the Armenian tourism places on CNN and Euronews TV channels, spread of informative materials, organization of cognitive visits for foreign journalists and tour operators continues; Armenia also takes part in different international exhibitions.

SPORTS

55. WEIGHT-LIFTERS OF ARMENIA PREPARES FOR EUROPE YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The Europe Youth Weight-Lifting Championship will be held between July 25 to August 2 in Sweden. Smbat Margarian (56 kg, Yerevan), Ruben Mamoyan (62 kg, Etchmiadzin), Hayk Hakobian (+105 kg, Gyumri), Ruben Alexanian (+105 kg, Ararat), Alla Samvelian (58 kg, Baghramian) and Astghik Galstian (63 kg, Yerevan) will represent Armenia.

The boys' team has held an educational-sporting gathering in Abovian since July 13 and the girls are trained by their trainers at their places.

56. PYUNIK DEFEATED BY ZAGREB DINAMO 0 TO 3 [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

On July 21, in the return game of Football European Champions Cup Tournament second qualification tour, Armenia's champion Pyunik was beaten by Zagreb Dinamo 0 to 3. The first match held in Yerevan ended in a draw, 0 to 0. Zagreb football players passed to the next tour by the results of two matches.

Thus Armenian Banants, Mika and Pyunik did not qualify.

Kapan Gandzasar's return game with Dutch Breda will take place on July 23 at Yerevan Republican stadium. In the first game the Kapan football players were defeated with the score of 0 to 6.

57. GOR HAROUTIUNIAN GAINS SILVER MEDAL IN EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

The European Youth Olympic Festival started on July 18 in the city of Tampere, Finland. 20 sportsmen from Armenia represent the following kinds of sports: judo, athletics, cycling, tennis, swimming, and gymnastics.

On July 21, judoist Gor Haroutiunian (50 kg, Vanadzor) gained 4 victories, was defeated in one fight, took the second place and gained a silver medal. Another judoist from Armenia, Roza Khachatryan (48 kg, Yerevan), was defeated in two fights and did not qualify.

58. ARTHUR ABRAHAM: HE WHO IS CLEVER WINS IN THE BOXING RING [NOYAN TAPAN, 07/22/09]

"It would be painful for me to be defeated by a Turk. Our grandfathers suffered so much at the Turks' hands, so my defeat would weigh me down. I was training hard to win and uphold the honor of our nation," the IBF Middleweight World Champion Arthur Abraham said at the July 22 press conference. Commenting on his recent match with the boxer of Turkish descent Mahir Oral, Arthur Abraham also noted that it was psychologically important to him. "He who is clever rather than a strong person with a good body wins in the boxing ring," he declared.



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A. Abraham said he has changed his weight class from 72.5 kg to 76.2 kg to compete in super middleweight because the world-famous boxers refused to fight against him in his previous weight class. He has taken a decision to participate in the Super Six World Boxing Classic Tournament, which will last until 2011, for the WBA and WBC super middleweight title. "No such thing took place in the history of boxing so far," A. Abraham said, adding that during two years, 4 world champions will fight with each other.

According to him, he will not be able yet to compete under the Armenian flag as he has a contract with a German company until 2011.

In response to the question about what he is going to do after he quits boxing, A. Abraham replied that he would conduct real estate and aircraft business.

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