



AGBU ARMENIA NEWS BULLETIN

Monday, November 30, 2009

TRANSLATIONS FROM YEREVAN NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER NEWS AGENCIES

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AGBU NEWS

1. Marie Noubar Ophthalmology Clinic Reopened in the Center of Yerevan [AGBU Armenian Representation, 11/30/09]

On November 27, 2009 the Marie Noubar Ophthalmology Clinic of the Yerevan State Medical University reopened after complete renovation. The clinic was built with the donation made by the founder and president of Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Boghos Noubar Pasha in memory of his wife, Marie Noubar. This is the first eye clinic in Armenia considered to be the cradle of Armenian oculists.

Built in 1929, this clinical facility had never undergone any renovation. The clinic was thoroughly renewed and equipped with advanced medical devices and modern technologies in 2009 by the initiative and efforts of the Yerevan State Medical University after M. Heratsi.

The clinic will secure high quality medical service by leading medical specialists and ophthalmologists of the republic both for children and adult population suffering from eye diseases. Patients can receive specialized surgical and therapeutic treatment annually. There are wards for inpatients with operating room block as well as rooms for functional diagnostics. There also exist computerized treatment and consultation rooms for outpatient reception.

At the opening ceremony present were Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Armen Gevorgian, RA Health Minister Artyom Kushkian, RA Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan, Rector of the Yerevan State Medical University Gohar Kyalyan, AGBU Armenian Representation Director Ashot Ghazarian, other officials and guests.

POLITICS

2. Giro Manoyan: No breakthrough will be recorded in negotiations on Nagorno Karabakh settlement in coming months [Noyan Tapan, 11/28/09]

Head of ARFD Hay Dat (Armenian Cause) Yerevan Office Giro Manoyan is convinced that no breakthrough will be recorded in the negotiations on Nagorno Karabakh settlement in the coming months. At a meeting with journalists, reminding OSCE Co-chairs' statement that they "have a serious work to do in the coming several months" G. Manoyan said that those several months should be multiplied for several times and it will come that not several months but at least a year is meant.

G. Manoyan touching upon the Nagorno Karabakh problem on the background of the Armenia-Turkey relations said that the negotiations with Turkey have become a lever of pressure upon Armenia in the issue of Nagorno Karabakh. In his words, Armenia should have stopped the negotiations with Turkey declaring that "Turkey has changed the rules of the game in the half of the game by presenting the Nagorno Karabakh issue as a precondition and thus has already failed the negotiations."



3. Sasun Mikayelian to continue his treatment at Hospital of Convicts penitentiary institution [Noyan Tapan, 11/28/09]

The RA Ministry of Justice has not received yet RA Ombudsman Armen Haroutiunian's official note on worsening of health condition of a convict on the March 1 case, former NA deputy Sasun Mikayelian. Noyan Tapan correspondent was informed about it by Minister's Spokesperson Lana Mshetsian. Nevertheless, the issue was discussed by the order of Minister Gevorg Danielian. In consideration of doctors' conclusion that S. Mikayelian's health is out of danger and there is no basis to move him to a civil hospital it was decided to continue his treatment at the Hospital of Convicts penitentiary institution.

4. Hayk Youth and Student Union calls on National Assembly of Armenia to immediately recognize Nagorno Karabakh Republic [Noyan Tapan, 11/28/09]

On November 27, Hayk Youth and Student Union of Heritage Party issued a statement, which in particular reads:

"The Azerbaijani leadership's belligerent rhetoric and threats to resume the war have become more frequent recently. On the eve of the November 22 Munich meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents, Ilham Aliyev stated that in case the meeting fails again to produce progress in the Karabakh settlement this time, Azerbaijan will resort to settling the conflict by military means. On November 25, Azerbaijani Defense Minister Safar Abiyev said that Azerbaijan sees no other way of settling the conflict than by military means.

Under these circumstances, we consider it very dangerous that the serious challenges that the republics of Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia are facing are ignored, and that those statements are deemed as propaganda only.

We, the young members of the Heritage party, considering peace as precious value, and realizing that a war would lead to significant destruction and loss of lives to the both sides, reject any military settlement of the conflict, and condemn the Azerbaijani leadership's attempts to provoke a war by engaging its own people in a war hysteria. Nevertheless, we think that the best way to prevent a war is to be prepared for one. To be ready for a possible resumption of the war on the Artsakh front, the two Armenian states and societies should initiate adequate extraordinary actions.

We call on: - The National Assembly to immediately recognize the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, setting up conditions for recognizing the NKR by the Armenian government at an appropriate time, as well as for signing bilateral agreements between the Republic of Armenia and the NKR in all fields, including the defense and security fields; - The Armenian cabinet to review the 2010 state budget and, at least, reinstate defense expenditure of the 2009 budget, as well as increase significantly the overall size of loans to the NKR;

- The Republic of Armenia and NKR defense ministries: 1. Organize trainings and exercises among the entire adult population for enhancing civil defense combat skills; 2. Develop a functional plan for the government-civil society cooperation in war time and present this plan to the public;

- The Armenian Foreign Ministry to send an official note to the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, that is considered to be Armenia's ally and strategic partner in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, demanding that any military supplies and cooperation under the 2006 and 2008 agreements between Moscow and Baku be discontinued immediately".

DIASPORA

5. It is proposed amending some provisions of RA Law on Dual Citizenship [Noyan Tapan, 11/28/09]

At the November 26 sitting, the Armenian government made an addition to Decision No 821 of December 25, 1998. The addition is conditioned by the circumstance that foreign citizens who receive Armenian citizenship or special status of residence in the Republic of Armenia often have problems with transcription of their first names and family names, which later results in numerous obstacles and complaints. Under the decision, in such cases the English spelling of the first and family names of the person shall coincide with the English spelling in the passport received in the foreign state, and his (her) first and family names shall be transcribed from English to literary Armenian, while in especially complicated cases, the reference given by the State Language Inspection of the RA Ministry of Education and Science shall be assumed as a basis for transcription.



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At the briefing following the government sitting, RA Minister of Diaspora Ms. Hranush Hakobian said that over the two years when the law on dual citizenship has been in force, some problems have arisen, causing discontent of Diaspora Armenians. So the Armenian president has instructed the Ministry of Diaspora, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the RA Police to jointly discuss these problems.

"According to the procedure, a person's first and family names were directly transcribed from English to Armenian, as a result of which the individual, who was to receive an Armenian citizen's passport he dreamt of, would become a completely new person - in the Armenian version," H. Hakobian said. According to her, there have even been cases when people refused to receive a passport because of distortion of their names. The minister informed those present that the amendment envisages that transcription of first and family names from English to Armenia will be done in literary Armenian. In case of a request of a foreign citizen of Armenian descent who has received citizenship, the name will be transcribed from English to Armenian by the version he (she) prefers. If it is a complex name and does not conform with any pattern, the opinion of the State Language Inspection shall be taken into account. "However, if the first and family names in Armenian are unacceptable after joint discussion by the police, the Language Inspection and the given person, then the name will be written in the form preferred by the person," the minister said.

In her words, the number of those acquiring dual citizenship is gradually growing: 1,350 persons received dual citizenship in 2008, and 3,514 ones in the first ten months of 2009. Discussions are underway to amend some provisions of the current law in order to facilitate the process of receiving dual citizenship.

H. Hakobian said that it is mostly the heads of all-Armenian organizations and the Armenians dealing with problems of Armenian identity preservation in the Diaspora who acquire dual citizenship. She added that there have been cases when dual citizenship was granted to people who had never been to Armenia but who dreamt of having an Armenian passport.

6. All Armenian Telethon 2009 raises donations and pledges of 15 million 875 thousand dollars [Noyan Tapan, 11/28/09]

The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's 12th annual Telethon broadcast live from Los Angeles for 12 hours has finished. Summing up the results of the fundraising activities this year, the Fund announced donations and pledges of 15 million 875 thousand 043 dollars. The raised sum will be spent on reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure in Shushi: water pipes, schools, roads, apartment buildings, thus initiating the revival of Shushi. In parallel with this work, the Fund will continue rural community development projects in Armenia and Artsakh.

The Telethon was attended by guests from Armenia and Artsakh, including the Fund's Executive Director Ara Vardanian, Prime Minister of the NKR Arayik Harutyunian. Head of the Artsakh Diocese Bishop Pargev Martirosian, Spokesman for NKR President David Babayan, Representative of the NKR to the U.S. Robert Avetisian, other guests and benefactors participated in the Telethon.

One of the important fundraising events held prior to the Telethon was the fundraising gala in Moscow where Russia-based Armenian businessmen gave pledges of 5.29 million dollars which were also included in the results of this year's Telethon.

Another important fundraising event was the annual pan European Phoneathon. Its results were donations and pledges of 1.8 million dollars, which exceeds by 10% last year's index of 1.5 million dollars. More than 12,400 families participated in the Pan European Phoneathon 2009.

According to the Fund, the Telethon 2009 was the most efficient out of those held so far in terms of the number of participants and considerably exceeds the indices of the previous years. The results of the national fundraising were especially impressive in Armenia: more than 20 thousand people made donations. Over 13 thousand people made donations in post offices. One innovation of this year included donations through SMS messages - thanks to VivaCell MTS, the main sponsor of the Telethon 2009. Among sponsors were also ACBA Credit Agricole Bank, America Bank, Ardshinvestbank, and ArmPost.

The fundraising activities in Armenia and Artsakh are continuing. The results of this year's fundraising will be summarized in late 2009 when the Fund will sum up the donations and announce the names of the donors.

SOCIAL

7. Parliament to elect four members of National Television and Radio Commission [Armenpress, 11/30/09]



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The competition for the vacancies of members of the National Television and Radio Commission has been conducted today in the parliament. According to changes in the law on "TV and Radio" and Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly, half of the members of the National Assembly through a competition and with six-month term will be elected by the National Assembly and the other half will be appointed by the president of the country.

NA public relations department told Armenpress that a competition commission has been established by the NA speaker consisting of six members. Eight candidates participated in the competition – Karen Vardanyan, Hayk Kotanyan, Gevorg Harutyunyan, Goharik Arshakyan, Koryun Arakelyan, Armen Mkrtychyan, Aram Melkonyan, Spartak Karabakhtsyan. As a result of the two-round competition – test and oral – the winner participants will during four days be presented to the parliamentarians and the NA will elect members of the commission.

In the test round all the participants except Spartak Karabakhtsyan, overcame the necessary 90% limit and will be presented to parliament's election. The results of the oral competition will though help the parliamentarians to orient in election process but will not have any impact on the results of the tests.

8. The 2nd Armenian Pharmaceutical Competitiveness Conference to be held in Yerevan [Armenpress, 11/30/09]

The 2nd Armenian Pharmaceutical Competitiveness Conference will be held in Yerevan December 1 organized by the USAID-funded Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Scientific Center of Drug and Medical Technology Expertise, the Union of Medicine Producers and Importers of Armenia, Armenian Development Agency, and National Competitiveness Foundation.

An official from the CAPS told Armenpress that the event aims to update industry representatives on the current status of the sector, promote collaboration among pharmaceutical sector stakeholders, and encourage discussions on major industry issues, including financial crisis impact on pharmaceutical production, adoption of Good "X" Practices (GXP) regulations and export market opportunities.

Conference participants will discuss opportunities for Armenian pharmaceutical producers in domestic and foreign markets, the need for improvements in medicine regulation, as well as the current situation of medicine production in Armenia and possible development scenarios.

The event is open to pharmaceutical producers, government and international organizations, educational institutions, NGOs, business associations, pharmaceutical professionals, the press and those interested in Armenia's pharmaceutical industry.

9. Reconstruction and re-equipment of Noyemberyan's hospital to be completed in October of 2010 [Armenpress, 11/30/09]

Noyemberyan town's central hospital is being reconstructed with the financial support of "Hayastan" all-Armenian fund. Noyemberyan Mayor Vanush Amiraghyan said that the program costing 161 million AMD will be accomplished in October of 2010.

According to the mayor, after the reconstruction the hospital will be ensured with the newest medical equipment and serve with a new quality. In the hospital a local heating will be installed, an elevator for transferring the patients will operate, and a sanitary point will exist in each ward. A similar hospital will soon be given to exploitation in the town of Ijevan, which will work according to the norms of up-to-date medicine, too.

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Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City with an annual budget of \$36 million, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 400,000 Armenians on six continents.