

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Major split in opposition Heritage party**
- **Baku will open border with Armenia after “occupied” territories are returned**
- **Ankara works on "peace road" with participation of Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan**
- **Armenian Genocide monument to be erected in Moscow**
- **1,3% of economic growth planned for 2010**

Internal politics

- Opposition supporter and businessman MP Khachatur Sukiasyan was set free from the Security Service after appearing voluntarily from hiding and giving signature not to leave Armenia. Later he laid down his mandate, quoting “unprincipled position” of his fellow MPs. (opp. Hayk, September 8)
- The leader of the opposition Heritage party Raffi Hovhannisyan resigned. Newspaper says this is a consequence of a big scandal within the party, prompted by rigged elections to the party's board. (opp. Haykakan Zhamanak, September 9)
- Levon Zurabyan from opposition National Congress said that they will discuss the government's failures in foreign policy, economy and domestic policy at the rally on 18 September. The rally and subsequent march are authorised by Yerevan Mayor's office. (opp. Chorord Ishkhanutyun, September 9)
- Opposition Heritage party's board showed a vote of no confidence to its three members and expelled them. The head of the Heritage faction, Armen Martirosyan, resigned, and Heritage MP Stepan Safaryan was appointed to his office. (centrist Aravot, September 10)

Conflict Resolution

- The paper comments on the replacement of Minsk Group co-chair Matthew Bryza with Robert Bradtke – “active supporter of Kosovo's independence”. The paper says unlike Kosovo, Karabakh expects to gain self-determination while it is already independent. (opp. Zhamanak, September 9)
- Turkish singer Hadise found herself in the list of people banned from performing in Azerbaijan after she showed support to Armenian Eurovision singers, Arshakyan sisters. Baku declares “persona non grata” those who travel to Karabakh through Armenian territories. (centrist Azg, September 9)
- Azerbaijan is ready to open border with Armenia if Yerevan returns five “occupied” territories adjacent to Karabakh and clearly schedules return of Kelbajar and Lachin regions, Azerbaijan's MFA spokesman Elkhan Polukhov said. The questions of Armenia's participation in regional projects can be considered only after all territories are returned. (opp. Zhamanak, September 10)
- NKR Defense Ministry refuted information spread by the Azerbaijani media as if 5 Karabakhi soldiers died and 3 were wounded as a result of the Armenian troops attack from Aghdam region. “This is a regular misinformation of the Baku propaganda”. (opp. Zhamanak, September 11)

Regional politics

- The issue of Armenian-Turkish relations may be tackled in parliament next week. The matter was discussed at the meeting of National Assembly committee on foreign relations. Heritage and Dashnaktsutyun parties seconded the hearings. (centrist Aravot, September 5)
- Opposition Heritage party demanded a referendum before the final signing of the two Armenian- Turkish protocols, while the ruling Republican party is against the referendum idea. According to the law, such referendum is possible only if initiated by the government. (centrist Aravot, September 5)

Date
September 5-11, 2009

Press and Political Review, Armenia

- Jirayr Sefilyan, the head of "Unification" initiative, said Armenian-Turkish protocols carry great damage for Armenia. He expressed his disagreement with the statement of the opposition National Congress, saying that it may become a gap that'll split the Congress. (centrist Aravot, September 5)
- Europe and Turkey are working on a "peace road", Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu said. The road will start in Azerbaijan reaching Europe through Nagorno-Karabakh, Lachin corridor, Armenia, Nakhijevan, and Turkey. Davutoglu said it would be "the first global project with participation of Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan." (opp. Haykakan Zhamanak, September 8)
- Smbat Ayvazyan from opposition National Congress said there are discords within the Congress about the Armenian-Turkish deal, but they have a single position that only legitimate power can solve the issue. He said the protocols may draw a wedge between Armenia and Diaspora. (centrist Aravot, September 8)
- Souren Sirunyan from National Congress said the pro-nationalistic parties are wrong in assuming that the Turkish-Armenian protocols are a threat to Genocide recognition. "An open dialogue with Turkey will only encourage Turkey to recognise the Genocide. If Turkey wants to be a regional leader it will also have a more responsible stance on Karabakh issue. (centrist Aravot, September 8)
- Hrant Margarian from Dashnaktsutyun party commented on Armenian-Turkish protocols, saying: "We are actually giving up the right of further generations to fight for their rights, we are questioning the fact of the Genocide, a matter of dignity and justice for our nation". (centrist Aravot, September 9)
- Armenian economist Tatul Manasserian said that Armenia and Turkey are not establishing economic cooperation, but legalising it, since about 25% of Armenia's foreign trade falls on Turkey. He said that normalisation of relations will allow Turkey to buy Armenia-generated electricity and cover a huge shortage of power in its eastern regions. (centrist Aravot, September 9)
- Turkish FM Ahmet Davutoglu said Turkey is going to resume internal political consultations on the Armenian-Turkish rapprochement. He said that after six-week long talks finish the government would have nothing to do, as it is the Parliament to make the final decision. Davutoglu also said there is a lot of time before the border will be opened. (opp. Zhamanak, September 11)
- A monument commemorating victims of Armenian Genocide will be erected in Moscow. The monument is expected to be put up in the precinct of New-Nakhichevan and Russian Eparchy Cathedral of Armenian Apostolic Church. (centrist Azg, September 11)

UK/Embassy

- Photo-exhibition "Britain" by Vahe Gabrielyan, Armenia Ambassador to the UK is a diverse and colourful presentation of the UK. Those who never visited the UK should go and see more than 100 photos, says the newspaper. (pro-govt. Novoe Vremya, September 8, Aravot, September 9)
- EU Skills, a three-year project implemented by the British Council and funded by the FCO, was launched. "The UK supports cooperation between Armenia and the EU. The goal of the project is to create a group of government officials who are needed for effective dialogue with EU institutions", HMA Charles Lonsdale said. (govt. Respublika Armenii, September 11)

Other

- Azerbaijani judo youth team arrived in Yerevan to attend Judo Europe Championship. Azerbaijani and Armenian officials signed a document guaranteeing their security. (opp. Zhamanak, September 9)
- According to the IMF, the 2009 economic depression will make 10-15% in Armenia and the inflation will be 3%. Agriculture may experience short-term competitiveness problems if the Armenian-Turkish border opens, but eventually will boost the Armenian economy. (centrist Azg, September 10)
- Finance Minister Tigran Davtyan announced the primary version of the 2010 budget: 1,3% of economic growth, 5, 5% deficit. Davtyan said the 2010 budget is modest and stabilising. (opp. Hayk, September 9)