

**Azərbaycan Respublikasının
Amerika Birləşmiş
Ştatlarındakı Səfirliyi**



**Embassy of the Republic
of Azerbaijan
to the United States of America**

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Embassy of Azerbaijan Hosts Mugam Concert in D.C.

On October 2, a concert of Azerbaijan's young Mugam performers organized by the Embassy of Azerbaijan was held at the Carnegie Institution

Mugam is a traditional musical form characterized by a large degree of improvisation and draws upon popular stories and local melodies. The art of mugam is an important branch of verbal heritage of Azerbaijani music. The spectators were greatly impressed and enjoyed the performance by vocalists Ms. Beyimkhanim Mirzayeva, Mr. Tayyar Bayramov and soloists Mr. Elchin Hashimov and Mr. Ahmadov.

Members of Washington's Azerbaijani community, the Diplomatic Corps and U.S. governmental and non-governmental organizations attended the event.

The musicians' visit to the United States is sponsored by the International Visitor Leadership Program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The goal of this program is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Azerbaijan.

Foreign Trade on the Rise in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's foreign trade with 132 foreign countries rose 5.7% during January-August to \$7.4 billion. Of these, exports accounted for \$4 billion and imports for \$3.4 billion. Azerbaijan has a trade surplus of \$577.2 million, according to the State Statistical Committee.

Trade with the European Union represented 27.9% of Azerbaijan's foreign trade. The Commonwealth of Independent States accounted for 25.8%, while other countries accounted 46.3% of trade. In a continent-by-continent analysis, trade with Europe accounted for 46.4% of trade, Asia for 44.4%, North and South America for 8.9%, Africa for 0.2%, and Oceania for 0.1% of Azerbaijan's foreign trade.

81.6% of Azerbaijan's trade was conducted with 13 countries Turkey, Russia, Italy, Iran, Ukraine, United States, Georgia, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Kazakhstan, India, South Korea, China, Japan, Indonesia and Brasilia.
/APA/

ADB Approves \$500 Million Loan for Azerbaijan's Road Program

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will help finance a comprehensive road network program that will help manage transportation costs, increase the free flow of goods and ensure sustainable economic expansion.

The ADB loan will go toward Azerbaijan's comprehensive Road Network Development Program, which is expected to be executed over the next eight years at an estimated cost of \$3.4 billion. The plan was developed by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Transport in July 2006. The program aims to develop an adequate, efficient, safe, and sustainable road network.

The investment component of the program involves the construction, upgrade and rehabilitation of about 9,500 kilometers of 124 priority roads. The non-investment component focuses on priority reforms, including the development of regulations and operational procedures, encouraging private sector participation in construction and maintenance, and capacity building for planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

To help finance the program, ADB will provide a \$500 million loan that will be available in stages. The first loan segment, amounting to \$200 million, will fund Project 1 under the Road Network Development Program. Project 1 involves the construction of 59 kilometers of a new expressway between Masalli and Astara on the southern corridor, the rehabilitation of local roads in the project area, the installation of a vehicle weighing station along the new expressway, and project support and capacity building for road network management.

“Connectivity, both domestically and internationally, is the key to sustainable development in Azerbaijan. However, about 70% of the country's road network is in poor condition, resulting in high transport costs, long delivery periods and traffic accidents,” said Hong Wang, principal transport economist of ADB's Central and West Asia Department. “The road network needs to be developed to spur growth of trade, investment and tourism in Azerbaijan,” said Mr. Wang. (Asian Development Bank)

Azerbaijan to Double Its Peacekeepers in Afghanistan

On October 4, the Chairman of the Azerbaijani Parliament's Security and Defense Commission, First Vice Speaker Ziyafet Askerov said that the number of Azerbaijani peacekeepers in Afghanistan is planned to double.

According to Mr. Askerov, President Aliyev presented a project on this issue to the Parliament (Milli Majlis).

On November 15, 2002 the Azerbaijani Parliament gave its consent to send Azerbaijani peacekeeping troops to Afghanistan.