

# Armenia celebrates 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence



PRESS OFFICE OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA  
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Armenia declared its independence on September 21, 1991, the day on which a referendum on freedom from the USSR took place across the country. The Republic of Armenia was accepted as a full member

of the international community as a sovereign state after that, joining the United Nations in 1992. It was a dream come true for Armenians across the world to once again have Armenia on the map.



## New Armenia must be a victorious Armenia – President



President Armen Sarkissian has issued a congratulatory message on Armenia's Independence Day:

Dear Citizens of the Republic of Armenia,

Dear Compatriots,

On this day in 1991, we publicly stated our right to speak out. Today, as an independent nation, we confidently speak through the voice of the Right.

We proved that dreams may come true. Today, we have new aspirations which come forth every day, in each and every one of us. We should be willing and ready

to make them come true in the New Armenia. The first thing that come to mind in today's Armenia should be the understanding that this is a new environment which is to be formed by us all. We are compelled to do this because we remember the people who sacrificed their lives for freedom, who brought it closer but didn't live to see it. We own them.

A lesson of our history proves that we win when we are united.

The New Armenia must be a victorious Armenia.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Taking pride in the achievements of the past and present, we should approach the future with a greater vigor and creativity.

Our ideas and ability should precede our emotions, and we should make our country move in step with the world. The time is pushing us forward and indicates that as a state, as a nation we have no right to lag behind. We should take the course of progress with the unconditional respect towards our Constitution, with the great sense of responsibility towards the state on behalf of the public, civil society institutions, and all branches of power.

On the international arena, we stand as one: Armenia-Artsakh-Diaspora.

Which means we have much greater potential and abilities than we imagine.

Let's make it all the moving force behind our future victories, let's do it all together, all citizens of Armenia, Armenians all over the world, Pan-Armenian.

Dear Citizens,

We are used to celebrate our family holidays together and united. Our national holiday is a holiday of our great family, the modern Republic of Armenia's birthday; it's a holiday for us all – young and old, soldier and worker, scientist and student.

I congratulate us all on the occasion of this Pan-national and Pan-state holiday – Armenia's Independence Day. I wish you all peace, prosperity, happiness and optimism.

## Relations between Armenia, Russia based on friendship and respect – Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a congratulatory message to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the occasion of Armenia's Independence Day.

*"Dear Nikol Vovayevich,*

*Please, accept my sincere congratulations on the occasion of Armenia's National Holiday – Independence Day. The relations between our countries are based on good traditions of friendship, mutual respect and spiritual closeness.*

*I am confident that with joint efforts we will be able to ensure the future development of allied relations and multilateral cooperation, as well as partnership in the sidelines of Eurasian integration processes. This is undoubtedly in the interests of the peoples of Russian and Armenia and is for the benefit of the strengthening of regional security and*

*stability.*

*Dear Nikol Vovayevich, I wish you good*

*health and every success, as well as welfare and prosperity – to all your compatriots."*



## CSTO Head Concerned over truce violations on Armenian-Azeri border

Yuri Khachaturov, the secretary general of the Russian-led Collective Security Organization (CSTO), on Friday effectively blamed Azerbaijan for the latest upsurge in ceasefire violations along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

Over the past week the Armenian government and military accused Azerbaijani forces of opening fire at several villages in Armenia's northern Tavush province close to the border. An Armenian soldier serving there was shot dead earlier this week.

Khachaturov expressed "serious concern" over the escalation, calling for an immediate end to fighting in the "zone of the CSTO's responsibility." In a written statement, he warned against any "increase in threats to the security of the Republic of Armenia, a CSTO member state."

In a clear reference to Baku, Khachaturov also denounced "bellicose rhetoric" which he said is undermining international efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijani government did not immediately react to the statement.

Khachaturov, 65 is a retired general who was the chief of the Armenian army's General Staff from 2008-2016. Russia, Armenia and four other ex-Soviet states making up the CSTO appointed him as secretary general of the Russian-led defense pact in April 2017.

The new Armenian government moved to replace Khachaturov as



CSTO secretary general after he was charged and nearly arrested in late July in connection with the 2008 post-election unrest in Yerevan.

Russia strongly criticized the Armenian authorities' decision to prosecute him. A Kremlin official called it a "colossal blow to the image" of the CSTO.

Following the criticism Khachaturov was allowed to return to Moscow and continue to perform his CSTO duties for the time being. It remains unclear whether Russia, Belarus or Kazakhstan will agree to the appointment of another Armenian secretary general.

## "My step" bloc collects 81, 06% of votes in Yerevan elections

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's bloc was on course to score a landslide victory in municipal elections held in Yerevan on September 23.

The Central Election Commission (CEC) said early on September 24 that with three quarters of the ballots cast counted, the My Step bloc garnered over 80 percent of the vote, more than enough to install its top candidate, Hayk Marutyan, as mayor of the Armenian capital.

Businessman Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) came in a distant second with 7 percent, followed by the Luys alliance, which got 5 percent. Both groups have ministerial posts in Pashinyan's cabinet.

The nine other election contenders fared much worse, according to the initial election results.

Under Armenian law, alliances need to win at least 8 percent of the vote in order to be represented in the city council empowered to elect the mayor. But the law also stipulates that at least three political groups must be represented in the council, meaning that Luys will also hold seats there. Luys's mayoral candidate, Artak Zeynalyan, was quick to visit the My Step headquarters in Yerevan and congratulate Pashinyan's bloc on its convincing victory.

Pashinyan actively participated in the local election campaign, portraying the vote as a referendum on his political future. He said that needs a "strong mandate" to push for the holding of snap parliamentary elections in Armenia in the coming months.

Citing the election outcome, a close Pashinyan associate, First Deputy Prime Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, said that the premier has received such a mandate. Mirzoyan declined to speculate about possible election dates.

The CEC put voter turnout at about 43.7 percent, up from almost 41 percent that was recorded by it in the previous municipal elections that were held in May 2017 and controversially won by the then ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). The HHK, which lost power in May 2018 after weeks of mass protests, chose not to join the latest mayoral race in the Armenian capital.

Pashinyan twice called for a high turnout during Sunday's voting. "I hope that my fellow citizens today will very actively participate in the vote and won't stay at home because there is no doubt that you are the ones who will decide [the election outcome,]" he said in a live video address aired through Facebook in the morning.

Pashinyan made the same appeal late in the afternoon amid signs that Yerevan voters are not turning out in large numbers. He suggested that the turnout is relatively low because voters are no longer bribed and bused to polling stations by any party.

Pashinyan also sounded satisfied with the authorities' conduct of the elections, saying he hopes they will be "exemplary."

The vote was also marked by an unusually small number of irregularities or violent incidents reported by election contenders, local monitors and media. The HHK was accused of vote rigging and buying through-out its leader Serzh Sargsyan's decade-long rule.

Armenia's Investigative Committee said law-enforcement authorities received 25 complaints about alleged violations such as attempts at multiple voting. It pledged to investigate all of them.

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## Trump congratulates Armenia on Independence Day

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has received a congratulatory message from US President Donald Trump on Armenia's Independence Day.

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

On behalf of the American people congratulations to you and the people of Armenia on the 27th anniversary of your national independence.

Armenia has much to celebrate this year. A peaceful, popular movement ushered in a new era in Armenia, and we look forward to working with you to help you execute the will of your people to combat corruption and to establish representative, accountable governance, rule of law buttressed by an independent judiciary, and political and economic competition.

We thank you for your steadfast partnership on many fronts, including contributing to NATO operations and showing great generosity in welcoming Syrian refugees.

The coming months bring opportunities to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which would create even more possibilities for US-Armenian cooperation. As a member of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States looks forward to working with you to find a lasting and peaceful resolution of this conflict.

This year also marks the centennial of the



First Armenian Republic and the 100th anniversary of US-Armenia friendship. I look forward to further strengthening the partnership that began between our countries one hundred years ago. On this special centennial anniversary, I wish the very best to you and to the people of Armenia," the U.S. President's congratulatory message says.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo similarly saluted "remarkable changes" in Armenia. "The peaceful popular movement that transformed the government has ushered in an

exciting new chapter of Armenian history," he said in a written statement on the country's Independence Day.

Both Trump and Pompeo also stressed the importance of a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. For his part, Pompeo urged the conflicting parties to "resume intensive negotiations as soon as possible."

The U.S. as well as Russia and France have long been spearheading international efforts to broker a compromise solution to the Karabakh dispute.

## Former Yerevan Mayor questioned in corruption probe

Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) has questioned former Yerevan Mayor Taron Markaryan as part of a criminal investigation into a municipal fund that was overseen by him.

NSS officers searched the offices of the Yerevan Fund and arrested its executive director and another municipal official in mid-June. The two men were accused of extorting hefty payments to the charity from individuals seeking construction permits from the mayor's office.

The NSS claimed that a part of the "large amounts" of cash paid by at least two such entrepreneurs was pocketed by them. Later in June the arrested officials were released from custody pending investigation.

Markaryan, in office since 2011, announced his decision to resign as mayor on July 9. He gave no reasons for the move.

The NSS director, Artur Vanetsyan, told reporters on September 20 that Markaryan was recently questioned as a "witness" by investigators and admitted "certain violations" in the Yerevan Fund's activities. He did not specify whether the former mayor could also face criminal charges.

Vanetsyan also said that the municipal fund's



former executive director, Ashot Ghazaryan, has agreed to return 1.8 billion drams (\$3.7 million) in allegedly embezzled funds to the state.

Markaryan, 40, is a senior member of former

President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). His late father Andranik served as Armenia's prime minister from 2000-2007. The latter headed the HHK until his sudden death in 2007.



## Trump nominates Lynne M. Tracy as Ambassador to Armenia

U.S. President Donald J. Trump has announced his intent to nominate Lynne M. Tracy of Ohio to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia, the White House reports.

Ms. Tracy is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, currently serving as Senior Advisor for Russia Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

Previously, she served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Asia in the



Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the Department of State, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, and Principal Officer at the U.S. Embassy Branch Office in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Additionally, Ms. Tracy served as the Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, where she was awarded the Secretary's Award for Heroism. She is the recipient of the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award. Ms. Tracy earned her B.A. from the University of Georgia and J.D. from the University of Akron. She speaks Russian.

## Karabakh must not be a part of Azerbaijan, Armenia's PM tells UN General Assembly



Karabakh must not be a part of Azerbaijan, unless one wants to trigger a new genocide of Armenian people, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan says.

Addressing the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in New York, PM Pashinyan said "the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict continues to prevail on our foreign policy agenda."

"The status and security of the Republic of Artsakh is an absolute priority of the Republic of Armenia in the negotiation

process," he added.

According to the Prime Minister, "any attempt to resolve the conflict through military means represents a direct threat to the regional security, democracy and human rights."

"Armenia will continue its constructive engagement in the peaceful resolution of the conflict within the format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, which has the only internationally recognized mandate to deal with the conflict," Pashinyan stated.

Azerbaijan should change its behavior of disrespect towards the negotiations and abandon "the idea of any military solution and implement all the previous agreements. Furthermore, if Azerbaijan is truly committed to the peace process it should start talking to the main subject of this conflict – Nagorno-Karabakh," he added.

"Azerbaijan declares on every occasion that Karabakh should be a part of its territory. At the same time it announces that it will not negotiate with Nagorno Karabakh. The question is how Azerbaijan can make a claim over Nagorno-Karabakh without even speaking to NK? Is that possible? This is possible only if Azerbaijani government wants the territory and not the people," PM Pashinyan said.

"Thus, it becomes obvious that the intention of Azerbaijani leadership is to cleanse Armenians from Karabakh, like they did in Nakhijevan. This entitles Nagorno-Karabakh to make the argument, that to be a part of Azerbaijan for Karabakh means to be totally exterminated. Hence Karabakh must not be a part of Azerbaijan, unless one wants to trigger a new genocide of Armenian people," Nikol Pashinyan stressed.

He reiterated that "the conflict can and should be settled only through mutual compromises by all sides, in an atmosphere conducive to peace and not war."



## Armenian Central Bank Chief reelected Chairman of CIS Interstate Bank Board



The 57th session of the CIS Interstate Bank's Council was convened September 17th in the Central Bank HQ in Yerevan, Armenia, chaired by Chairman of the Council Arthur Javadyan.

Arthur Javadyan is also the incumbent president of the Armenian central bank.

The session discussed the financial report of the bank, the 2019-2020 strategy and other issues.

During the sitting Javadyan was re-elected

as Chairman of the Council of the CIS Interstate Bank for a 1-year term.

The Interstate Bank is an international banking settlement and credit institution with 100% participation of state capitals of member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Interstate Bank was founded in 1993 by ten CIS countries. The Interstate Bank has its representative offices in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus and the Kyrgyz Republic.

guz Republic.

The Interstate Bank has concluded agreements with the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan on the terms of presence and on the procedure for and the rules of performing banking operations. The highest management body of the Interstate Bank is the Council of the Bank, consisting of the heads of the central (national) banks and the representatives of the ministries of finance and other governmental authorities of the founder States.

The goal of the Interstate Bank's activity consists in facilitation to economic integration and development of the national economies of CIS countries by means of creation of the mechanism of settlements for effecting trans-border payments in national currencies, crediting foreign trade operations of CIS countries in national currencies, and participation in implementation of projects of inter-state significance.

The Interstate Bank has direct access to the national payment systems of six countries, namely, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Tajikistan. The Interstate Bank implements all the arrangements for combating legalization (laundering) of proceeds from crime. – General Information from official Interstate Bank website.

## California-based firms to invest in Armenia's IT sector

The Los Angeles-based Alena Solutions software company is planning opening offices in IT Centers of the Armenian cities Vanadzor and Gyumri. A relevant agreement was signed between executive director of Gyumri Information Technologies Center Amalya Yeghoyan and Executive Director of Alena Solutions Asbed Kassis.

Under another agreement signed with Hireclout co-founder Avetis Antaplyan, the firm engaged in technology recruitment and consulting will be opening office in Gyumri.

Amalya Yeghoyan's is paying a working visit to the US



with support from Business Armenia.

"Business Armenia is ready to utilize its large network of representatives to support the foreign investments in Armenia. We are happy that these investments are to be directed to Armenia's provinces," stated the CEO of Business Armenia, Mr. Armen Avak Avakian.

"Gyumri, Vanadzor, Gavar are promising for investments in high-tech. Those have rich infrastructures, university branches. The first two have techno parks. This is remarkable because we are implementing a strategy of decentralizing the investments," Amalya Yeghoyan said.



## European Court obliges Armenia to pay 76,600 euros in three cases

The European Court of Human Rights has obliged Armenia to pay a total of 76,600 euros under three cases.

The case of Mushegh Saghatelyan v. Armenia concerned an opposition activist's allegation of a politically motivated crackdown on 1 March 2008 following a wide-scale protest against the presidential elections. He complained in particular that he had been ill-treated by the police, that his arrest had been unlawful and that the entire criminal case then brought against him had been fabricated.

Saghatelyan had eventually been convicted for assaulting two police officers and illegally carrying a knife.

In today's Chamber judgment the Court held that Armenia was to pay Mr. Saghatelyan 15,600 euros (EUR) in respect of non-pecuniary damage and EUR 5,000 in respect of costs and expenses.

In another case, the applicant, Vartgez Gaspari, an Armenian national who was born in 1957 and lives in Yerevan, complained about the conditions of and rea-



sons for his detention for ten months in 2008.

Following protest rallies against the 2008 presidential election, there were clashes with the police and on 1 March 2008 Mr. Gaspari was arrested on suspicion of assaulting a police officer. Shortly afterwards, he was formally charged and the courts allowed the investigator's application for his pre-trial detention.

He lodged an appeal, arguing that he had a place of residence and a minor child and was known to be of good character. Howev-

er, the Court of Appeal dismissed his appeal, concluding that he had misled the investigating authorities about his identity because his arrest record indicated his name as both Vartgez Gaspari and Vardges Gasparyan and that there were therefore grounds to believe that he might abscond or obstruct the course of justice. All his other requests to be released were dismissed.

Mr Gaspari was found guilty as charged and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in November 2008. He was released in Feb-

ruary 2009.

The Court ruled that Mr. Gaspari should be paid 4,000 euros (EUR) for non-pecuniary damage.

The third case (Gulyan v. Armenia) concerns the death of Armenian national Ashot Gulyan's 30-year-old son, Levon Gulyan, when he was being questioned by the police as a witness in a murder case. He was found dead on 12 May 2007 in the courtyard of Yerevan police headquarters after having apparently fallen from a second floor window.

Levon Gulyan had been taken to the headquarters for questioning about a man who had been shot dead three days earlier in front of the restaurant he owned.

Relying in particular on Article 2 (right to life), the applicant complained inter alia about the death of his son in police custody and the authorities' failure to carry out an effective investigation.

The Court ruled that there had been violation of the rights to life and investigation and obliged Armenia to pay 50,000 euros in non-pecuniary damage and EUR 2,000 for costs and expenses.

## Armenia, Iran leaders discuss energy cooperation, economic ties



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Iran's President Hassan Rouhani discussed a wide range of issues on bilateral agenda as they met in New York, on the sidelines of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly.

The interlocutors attached importance to the development of economic cooperation, and stressed the need to take practical steps to boost trade-economic ties to fully utilize the existing potential.

Nikol Pashinyan emphasized the special nature of Armenian-Iranian

relations and highlighted the need to ensure their continuous development on the basis of firm friendly relations.

Hassan Rouhani, in turn, praised the role of the Armenian community in Iran. He voiced confidence that the agreement on free trade zone with the Eurasian Economic Union would further deepen the Armenian-Iranian economic cooperation.

Nikol Pashinyan and Hassan Rouhani discussed a wide range of issues related to cooperation in the fields of energy, road construction and others.

Hassan Rouhani incited Nikol Pashinyan to Iran and noted that the visit would allow to hold a more comprehensive discussion on bilateral cooperation.





## EU Envoy calls for new democratic institutions In Armenia

Armenia's new leadership needs to create new institutions in order to build on recent months' democratic changes in the country, a senior European Union official said on September 20.

In an interview with RFE/RL's Armenian service, Ambassador Piotr Switalski, the head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, also urged the government to send further "positive signals" to potential foreign investors.

"There are positive intentions, great hopes and expectations," Switalski said when asked to comment on the policies of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's cabinet. "Based on the European experience, we avoid giving advice. We can only share our experience."

"The most important thing is to build institutions," he went on. "Political will is a mechanism, a lever for changes, but changes can happen only after the political will is transformed into strong institutions and good laws."

"Armenians will soon be faced with big challenges of how to transform these positive changes



and intentions into laws and a new culture of governance," added the diplomat.

Pashinyan has repeatedly pledged to democratize Armenia, strengthen the rule of law, eradicate corruption and create a level playing field for all business since he swept to power in May after weeks of protests that brought down the country's previous government.

Switalski acknowledged that Pashinyan's government has already succeeded in improving the domestic business environment. "I think that positive changes are

obvious and these positive changes relate to the fact that there are no longer business figures acting like intermediaries thanks to their special connections. I think we are getting closer to a situation where rules of the game are equal"

Citing official statistics, Switalski cautioned at the same time that foreign direct investment in the Armenian economy has fallen in the last few months. He suggested that foreign investors have "decided to wait and see what happens next."

"At this point it is important to send positive signals to the effect

that Armenia is interested in attracting foreign investors," said the EU envoy. "It should be ensured that new investors, especially those from the EU, feel they are welcome here."

The EU closely monitored the recent crisis in Armenia sparked by former President Serzh Sargsyan's attempt to hold on to power after serving out his second presidential term on April 9. Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, and Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission president, sent a congratulatory letter to Pashinyan two days after he was elected prime minister on May 8.

The EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, subsequently voiced "full support" for sweeping reforms promised by the Armenian government.

Pashinyan has since repeatedly criticized the EU for not increasing its financial assistance to Yerevan. Switalski countered in July that his government needs to come up with specific reform-oriented projects before demanding greater aid from the bloc.

## Armenia's President meets key business executives in France

On a working visit to France, Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian keynoted the Summit of Minds in Chamonix.

Discussions focused on the trends of development of the global economy, investment opportunities and challenges of the contemporary world, on leadership and strategic decision-making.

At the meeting with the organizers of the Summit, the President of Armenia reached an agreement to organize a similar event in Armenia.

In the framework of the Summit of Minds, President Armen Sarkissian on September 23 had a working lunch with the representatives of the European Parliament, as well as over two dozen of leading companies, funds, organizations and banks, including American Google, Nasdaq, Cargyll, McKinsey, Revolution, Swiss Nestle, Pictet and Lombard Odier, French Groupe Accor, Publicis, One Ragtime, Société Générale, Russian Alfa Bank, British Bridgepoint and Kleinwort Hambros.

The President discussed the business climate in Armenia as well as issues related to invest-



ment attraction and creation of business ties. President Sarkissian introduced the competitive advantages of the country, underlined Armenia's role as a bridge between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Area which opens new and significant opportunities. At the meeting,

an actual agreement was reached on the implementation of certain programs in Armenia.

President Sarkissian held also two meeting-interviews with the leadership of the renowned media outlets – the British The Financial Times and the French Les Echos.



## Armenian Parliament celebrates 100th anniversary of establishment

The Armenian Parliament celebrated the 100th anniversary of establishment on September 20. Attending the solemn ceremony were President Armen Sarkissian, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, President of the Artsakh Republic Bako Sahakyan, President of the National Assembly Ara Babloyan, Deputies of the Supreme Council and all convocations of the National Assembly, representatives of the executive and judicial authorities, diplomats accredited to Armenia, other officials.

“Unity, looking ahead and combining forces in any maelstrom of life have been the main lessons of the 100-year history of Armenian parliamentarian,” National Assembly Speaker Ara Babloyan said in his opening remarks.

“I am convinced that the political platform of the Parliament is the best place for discussing any



thoughts and ideas. Therefore, we must gather here, weigh everything and solve issues through consensus, as it is accepted in the civilized world,” Ara Babloyan said.

Addressing the event, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the role of parliaments in the history of the three Republic of Armenia

is hard to overestimate.

He stressed that the “people’s will is the most important source of effectiveness and legitimacy of the any parliament’s activity.” “The Parliament should reflect the sentiments, the intentions, the dreams and the choice made by the citizens of the Republic of Armenia,” the Prime Minister said.

He voiced confidence that the Armenian statesmen and people have enough skill, will and wisdom to put the country, the state, the constitution on the “irreversible track of development,” which, he said “will ensure the eternity of our people and our state.”

President Armen Sarkissian noted, in turn, that “a developed Parliament is one of the most important evidences of representative democracy. He stressed that “Parliamentarism cannot develop without the development of the civil society.”

“The latest spring events have shown how influential the public demand for change can be. Today, the content of statehood needs to be supplemented by the enthusiasm and dedication of new Armenia, firm belief in the future and strong will. Both the authorities and the civil society should assume responsibility for everything that happens in our country,” the President stated.





## VivaCell-MTS: Ralph Yirikian Shares his Huge Experience with the Youngsters

***“Success is a result of choosing proper tools of management”***

Upon the initiative of the Leadership School the model of business management adopted at VivaCell-MTS was shared with yet another group of young audiences. With various backgrounds the young people attending the meeting got an opportunity to learn about more than a decade of the Company's history, the path it

The meeting served as an important platform to develop tools of efficient management among younger generation of professionals. Learning the experience accumulated through years, the young people get an opportunity both to hear a story of success of a leading company, as well as to see the challenges and the hardships

*what he or she does. But the paths to achieving anticipated results differ. The definition of success varies, too. It may be business interest for one, ensuring revenues for another and keeping pace with the modern world for the third one. There are also those, who see success as an opportunity to create favorable conditions for others*

*both everyday work and willingness to do so. The fact that you are here and that you are eager to learn about the experience of this Company is proof that you can get the knowledge you need and can apply it in what you do. Dream and achieve!”* VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.



has passed to gain its present-day respect in the society, the efforts it continuously makes to retain the leading positions in the market, as well as the professional career of the Company's General Manager.

the company's team and its leader have overcome over time remaining committed to the strategies, the adopted model of responsible management and meeting to the needs and wants of consumers.

*“Everybody strives to succeed in*

*— whether those are employees or the society at large. The interpretations may be endless. The true success is the amalgam of all these things and is a result of the choice of management tools. That is not an easy way to succeed. It requires*

During the interactive discussions the participants got acquainted with the specifics of the telecommunications industry, as well as discovered the tools required for long-term successful management.



## U.S. aviation authority urged to facilitate launch of non-stop flights to Armenia

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has called upon the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to facilitate the launch of non-stop flights from the United States to the Republic of Armenia – easing transit for tourists, speeding up business travel and cargo movement – while deepening the bilateral ties between two friendly nations.

In a letter shared on the eve of Armenian Independence Day, ANCA Chairman Raffi Hamparian encouraged Acting FAA Administrator Dan Elwell to engage with Armenia's civil aviation authorities on concrete steps toward this powerful new connection between the American and Armenian peoples.

Travel to Armenia marked double-digit growth over the past year, with the demand for flights from the United States to Armenia continuing to grow – driving tourism as a major engine of Armenia's prosperity. Currently, travelers from the U.S. need to purchase tickets using connecting flights on foreign carriers, often with long layovers. This effort

is intended to create an effortless, convenient and speedy connection in getting from one country to the other.

"The ANCA is leading the effort to establish non-stop flights from the United States to Armenia," shared longtime ANCA leader Zanku Armenian, who has years of professional experience in aviation matters. "The time is ripe for the FAA and Civil Aviation Authorities in Armenia to create a favorable legal and regulatory environment and foster engagement with commercial stakeholders – empowering the private sector to initiate profitable non-stop flights. With a concerted effort by both governments, we are optimistic that a private air carrier will step forward to launch non-stop flights from Los Angeles or New York to Yerevan. The demand for air travel from the United States to Armenia is strong and growing. While this is an ambitious initiative by the ANCA that was started well before the recent positive changes in Armenia, the timing now is particularly favorable to establish

a new dimension to the bonds between our two countries," added Armenian. "Once government hurdles are cleared, the private carrier that steps forward to establish this new non-stop route will enjoy the long-term business benefits by being a first-mover on such an opportunity. This is why the ANCA has been initiating dialogue with various U.S. federal, state and local authorities and private sector parties to advocate for this game-changing idea."

According to the FAA, "over most of the past decade, the international market has been the growth segment for U.S. carriers when compared to the mature U.S. domestic market. This international growth is shifting the geographical center of gravity for aviation in terms of arriving and departing passengers farther east, from North America (the birthplace of aviation) toward the Asia/Pacific, and the pace of this shift is accelerating. With new longer-range aircraft capabilities and an emerging middle class, more countries are seeking direct flight access to the profitable U.S.

market, and they must meet the same safety oversight levels we follow in the United States."

The FAA collaborates with other federal agencies and departments and industry as well as bilateral and regional international partners to set safety and efficiency standards and to develop bilateral agreements. They also work closely with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the United Nations based in Montreal, Canada, which serves as a global forum for international civil aviation.

*The text of the ANCA letter to Acting FAA Administrator Elwell is provided below.*

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell:

I am writing on behalf of the Armenian National Committee of America to request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) actively engage with the Republic of Armenia's Civil Aviation authorities on the concrete steps needed to facilitate non-stop commercial flights between the United States of America and the Republic of Armenia.

With demand for air travel between the U.S. and Armenia steadily increasing – and bilateral bonds growing stronger – this is the right time for the FAA to engage on this matter – to the benefit of American airlines, tourists, business travelers and cargo companies. A non-stop connection would eliminate significant inconvenience for Americans and create new revenue streams for U.S. airlines and airports. With a concerted effort, we are confident that there would be strong and growing demand for the launch of non-stop flights as early as the 2019 or 2020 peak tourist travel seasons.

Thank you in advance for considering our request. We look forward to engaging with you and your team on this important matter.

### WHAT WILL NON-STOP U.S.-ARMENIA FLIGHTS MEAN TO YOU?



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## Bloomberg: Armenia among fastest-growing tourism destinations

Armenia is among the fastest-growing tourism destinations in Europe. With 18.65 percent year-on-year growth Armenia is ranked 10th, according to Bloomberg.

According to the source, a number of travel agencies in the US such as Abercrombie & Kent, Ker & Downey, and TCS World Travel, collectively tout historical riches such as Mt. Ararat (where Noah's Ark is said to have made landfall), the charming capital of Yerevan, and its most famous cultural descendants, the Kardashians.

On trips with Abercrombie & Kent, guests also get in deep with local traditions: visiting brandy distilleries, meeting car-



pet makers, hearing spiritual chants in ancient monasteries, and learning to make lavash (a type of local flatbread) with an

Armenian family.

Travel Company Cox & Kings is slated to start tours to Armenia, pairing the country with

Georgia in the next few weeks.

"When you're talking about these fast-growing destinations in Europe, there's often a lack of name recognition, compared to more popular countries," Warren Chang, chief operating officer for bespoke travel outfitter Cox & Kings' Americas division, told Bloomberg.

"But so many of these places have robust histories and a really understated romantic feel—plus diversity of culture and beautiful nature," he added.

The other destinations where tourism is skyrocketing include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Iceland, Turkey, Israel, Georgia and San Marino.

## Christopher Okemwa

### Golgotha

Head solemnly hanging  
as in prayer  
Hands widespread  
as in an exaggerated hug  
Blood-stained  
Nail-pierced holes  
On the limbs  
Disheveled filthy hair  
Now hanging down like sisals

Let Pontius Pilate  
Bring down the trio  
Before the eagles  
come swooping down on the carcasses  
The hyenas clank their teeth  
The swam of flies  
The wafting stench

### Can it be?

Can it be, that by any chance  
We are existing?  
Or is it just a dream?  
Or an illusion?  
If life be a dream  
It could be a dream dreamt by who?  
Spirits, ghosts or angels?  
Are the sounds we hear  
Real?  
The odour and fragrance  
True?  
The objects we see  
Existing?  
Are the colours we see  
Real?  
What of the feelings

The love  
The hatred  
-Are they all real emotions?  
Or are they an imagination?

If it be an imagination  
Whose imagination?  
Imagining from where and how?  
An angel? A ghost?  
A spirit? A god?

Probably we are not living  
Most likely we might be dead  
And all that we see  
hear  
feel  
smell  
Is a figment of imagination  
Or some sort of hallucination

Oh, no—we can't be dead  
We might be alive and living  
And if that is so  
If that is true  
If everything is real  
Then God also must be  
His eye in the sea of the night  
Is real  
The fierce splash of his red tears  
In the morning  
Upon the sheet of the eastern horizon  
True  
The thunder and lightning of tears he sheds  
In the evening  
A solemn cry upon humanity  
A suffering on the cross of Calvary  
For the sins  
For the evil of mankind



## Justin Trudeau: Armenia and Canada enjoy a special relationship

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, on September 21 issued a statement on Armenia's Independence Day.

"Today, we join Armenian communities in Canada and around the world to celebrate the anniversary of Armenia's independence.

"Armenia and Canada enjoy a special relationship – one that we are committed to strengthening. More than 60,000 Canadians trace their heritage to Armenia, and their contributions help make Canada the prosperous, vibrant, and open country it is today.

"Over the last few years, Arme-



nian Canadians have come together to welcome thousands of Syrian refugees to Canada. They have gone above and beyond to make newcomers feel safe and welcome, reunite families, and give people a chance at a new life. Their generosity and compassion inspire us all.

"Armenia and Canada share similar visions of peace, justice, and democracy, and collaborate in international organizations such as La Francophonie.

"On behalf of the Government of Canada, I offer my best wishes to everyone celebrating Armenia's Independence."

## Queen Elizabeth II sends congratulations on Armenia's National Day

On the Independence Day of the Republic of Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has received a congratulatory message from Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The message reads, in part: "It gives me great pleasure to send to Your Excellency my congratulations on the celebration of your National



Day, particularly in the year in which Armenia celebrates the centenary of the establishment of the first Republic of Armenia, together with my best wishes for the good fortune and happiness of the people of Armenia in the coming year. At this time I reflect on the close historic ties between our countries, and look forward to our ongoing friendship and cooperation."

## British architects leading calls to save Armenia's Zvartnots Airport

British architects are leading international calls to save Terminal 1 of Armenia's Zvartnots airport, one of the jewels of Soviet crown, which now looks like a monolithic space-city straight out of science fiction, according to the Daily Mail.

After it was built in the 1970s, more than 2,500 passengers crowded through the country's most modern airport terminal every hour. For them, it was the height of luxury with a restaurant high up on the central control tower and views across to the Ar-

menian capital Yerevan.

Leading British architect Tim Flynn says the airport is an outstanding piece of architecture. His London-based international practice has had an office in Yerevan for 14 years.

And he hopes that the new government in Armenia which came to power after May's Velvet Revolution will decide Zvartnots is a historical building worth preserving. He warns, however, that the longer it's left to crumble away, the chances of saving it diminish.

"I realize the new prime minister has a lot on his plate, but I hope his conscience will lead to a change of plan. Whatever you think of the old Soviet Union, the buildings from this period were extraordinary and adventurous, a piece of history," the Daily Mail quotes Flynn as saying.

Clem Cecil, of SAVE Europe's Heritage and director of London's Pushkin House, the Russian cultural centre, said: "The Zvartnots building is a classic of its kind – it should be saved. It was built in a period when Stalin's grip had been broken and Soviet architects were experimenting with international influences."

"Zvartnots is very cutting edge and reflects the excitement of the times. The problem is it's been under-appreciated and vulnerable. The fact there's a growing effort to save it is good news," she noted.





## Zodiac Weekly Forecast



**Aries (March 20–April 19)**

Your avatar planet is Mars, which is traveling through the territory of community connections and friendships. This week Mercury is making an easy aspect to Mars, which suggests now is a good time to discuss your relationship with those who are close to you. The give-and-take is working better than it has in the past.



**Taurus (April 20 – May 20)**

A sudden surprise may strike you early in this week. After the shock wears off, you will eventually recognize that this is the best thing that might have happened. It breaks you away from a rut that has had you jammed tightly into a box. Occasionally the Taurus Bulls unconsciously create pens of concrete around themselves that must be knocked loose to give room to grow.



**Gemini (May 20–June 20)**

Mercury, your ruling planet, moves into the sector of life related to children, recreation, personal creativity, and romance. Your attention will be focused in these areas through October. You will enjoy everything more if you can leave your Inner Critic in the closet and not let it loose while you play.



**Cancer (June 21–July 21)**

Your mind and heart are clearly in sync at this time. You are likely at peace with yourself. There is a solid and practical solution at hand and you do not have to quarrel with yourself over it. Activities involving your children and/or other creative products of your being are favored. Love life flows smoothly.



**Leo (July 22–August 21)**

The Mercury spotlight is shining on you so brightly this week that the glare may hurt your eyes. Make an effort to listen without offering opinions. Inquire of others about their attitudes. If you make flat statements you are likely incorrect or too adamant for comfort. Your lack of perspective will be much more focused next week.



**Virgo (August 22–September 22)**

Your ruling planet, Mercury, moves into the sign of Libra for the next two to three weeks. Your attention will be drawn to organizing your financial picture. Work and daily routines will flow well. If there are snags in your financial picture, they will show up for correction now.



**Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)**

Mercury enters your sign on September 21 and it races through Libra until October 9. (Please note the lead paragraph.) Don't allow anyone to press you into a decision you aren't ready to make. However, if you have been cogitating for a long time, then this might be the moment you decide to plunge forward.



**Scorpio (October 23–November 21)**

You may feel the need to touch base with those who offer you a sense of "home". It could be people from your family of origin or maybe old friends. It might also have to do with your need for spiritual sustenance. Returning to places and people who have offered you comfort and solace is a good idea now.



**Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)**

Hold tightly to your faith. You have planted seeds that are slow to develop at first but they hold promise of a growth burst by the end of this year. This is especially likely if the seeds you planted are meant to help a large number of people. If so, then Pluto is your major assistant.



**Capricorn (December 21–January 19)**

The asteroid Vesta has recently moved into your sign. It will be with you until late November. The name Vesta is borrowed from the Vestal Virgins of Rome. Female children were committed to tend the flame from age 6 to around 30. They were allowed to do little else. You may become devoted to someone or something of value during this period. It's your turn.



**Aquarius (January 20–February 17)**

You may need to concentrate to avoid critics, whether they be internal or external. Instead of accepting blame or guilt, use the energy to make improvements wherever they are needed. Follow the "go" signals in your life. Look for the doors that are open and give you freedom to roam. Leave the blocked paths for a better time.



**Pisces (February 18–March 19)**

Pay special attention to small cues and signals. The unconscious wants to get in touch through means other than one would expect. Notice unusual "messages" that others offer. Sometimes the beginnings of a new path are heralded by hints. Don't expect a brick to fall on your head, but look at meaningful experiences.



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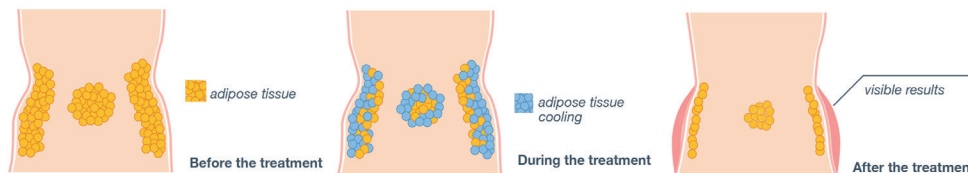
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# Noyan Tapan

The publisher: NT Holding LTD  
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝  
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500  
Circulation: 1500 print copies and  
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:  
**TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN**  
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:  
**GAYANEH ARAKELIAN**  
Director of the weekly:  
**MARINA HARUTYUNYAN**  
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**  
Proofreader: **SUSANNA MKRTCHIAN**  
Layout: **DIANA GRIGORYAN**  
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ.Հարությունյան

**ISSN 1829-0604**

Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝  
03U898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.  
Registration certificate and the date:  
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: [contact@nt.am](mailto:contact@nt.am)  
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