

Nikol Pashinyan meets new Russian PM



Kazakhstan -- Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan takes a selfie with his Russian counterpart Mikhail Mishustin at the start of their meeting in Almaty, January 31, 2020.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his new Russian counterpart Mikhail Mishustin hailed rapidly growing trade between their countries and pledged to further deepen Russian-Armenian commercial ties when they met for the first time on January 31.

The two men held talks on the sidelines of a meeting in Kazakhstan’s largest city, Almaty, of the prime ministers of the five ex-Soviet states making up the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), a Russian-led trade bloc.

“Relations between our countries, governments have always been and will be good and warm,” Pashinyan said in his opening remarks at the talks. “I think that we always have a chance to elevate our relations to a new level.”

Mishustin assured him that Russia’s newly reshuffled government is “intent on continuing constructive relations and working contacts with our Armenian colleagues.” He said that Russian-Armenian trade soared by nearly 18 percent in January-November 2018, solidifying Russia’s status as Armenia’s number one trading partner.

“This is good,” he said. “We should cement this positive trend and look for new fields of cooperation.”

Pashinyan likewise noted that bilateral trade was on track to approach the \$2 billion-mark last year. He said this is one of the reasons why economic growth in Armenia accelerated to over 7 percent.

“I hope that your government will support the economic dynamic which we have in Armenia right now,” added

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Armenian PM highlights making efforts for creation of EAEU common energy and transportation markets

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan emphasized the importance of elimination of current barriers and restrictions in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in his remarks on January 31 at session of the Eurasian Inter-Governmental Council in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

“This is our first meeting this year under the Belarusian chairmanship. We support the main integration directions recorded within the Belarusian presidency. In this regard I would like to emphasize the importance of eliminating the existing barriers and restrictions that undermine the formation of a common economic space. It’s also necessary to intensify efforts aimed at creating single EAEU energy and transportation markets based on non-discriminative approaches in the fields of price increase, tariffs, availability of services.

The increase of efficiency of the EAEU



bodies and the development of transportation and logistics infrastructures is also another direction which should be under our focus”, the Armenian PM said.

He added that once again the process of work on eliminating the barriers within the operation of the domestic market was also discussed. “Today we have made decisions regarding these barriers. Nevertheless, as I have stated repeatedly, we believe that it is necessary to unite efforts to eliminate the current barriers and create conditions to rule out their repetition in the future. As for

the 2025 Eurasian Integration Development Strategy directions, I would like to note that we attach a special importance to the final approval of this document based on the cooperation forms enshrined by the EAEU treaty”, Pashinyan said.

He added that Armenia traditionally is actively participating in and supporting the process of creating and implementing the EAEU digital agenda. The Prime Minister said the creation of ecosystem for digital transportation corridors will enable to reduce the distance between the consumer of goods, services, the producer and the seller. “This will greatly reduce the time of searching for optimal options and methods to deliver and transport the goods, making the market more effective in this respect”, Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan said.

Armenia appoints customs attaché at Upper Lars border checkpoint



Aram Tananyan has been appointed Armenia’s customs attaché at Upper Lars checkpoint on Russia-Georgia border.

The respective decision was adopted today at the Armenian government’s regu-

lar session.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the customs attaché will work near the Upper Lars border checkpoint, not in Moscow.

State Revenue Committee Chairman Davit Ananyan said Aram Tananyan has been serving as adviser to the SRC Chairman since 2018, has worked in the public administration system for many years, in particular holding positions in the National Security Council, the Rescue Service and the Min-

istry of Emergency Situations.

After the Cabinet meeting Aram Tananyan told reporters that his powers are not defined yet, but added that the SRC has adopted a 5-year development strategy. “You have seen what changes have taken place in our system within the past 1.5 year. Our system aims at ensuring the whole turnover of the country. And on this background, we are currently moving to the north because one of our main transportation routes passes through Lars which connects us with the EAEU territory”, he said.



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the Armenian leader.

According to an Armenian government statement, the two premiers then discussed a “wide range of issues pertaining to Russian-Armenian economic relations.” The statement cited Mishustin as proposing that Moscow and Yerevan explore possibilities of launching “concrete projects in the information technology sector.” Pashinyan welcomed the idea, it said.

Mishustin, whom Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin appointed as prime minister on January 16, attended a global IT forum held in Yerevan in October. The 53-year-old technocrat headed Russia’s Federal Tax Service at the time.

Armenian, Azeri FM's end two-day ‘Intensive’ talks



The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan concluded on January 30 two days of fresh negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which official Baku said were the “most intensive” in years.

Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov met in Geneva for two consecutive days in the presence of the U.S., Russian and French diplomats co-heading the OSCE Minsk Group. The two ministers and the mediators shed little light on the talks in an ensuing joint statement issued there.

The statement said that the “intensive discussions” focused on “possible next steps to prepare the populations for peace; prin-

ciples and elements forming the basis of a future settlement; and timing and agenda for advancing the settlement process.”

The mediators again stressed the importance of “confidentiality in the settlement process” and “the need for creativity and a spirit of compromise,” it said.

“The Ministers agreed to meet again in the near future under Co-Chair auspices,” added the statement. It gave no further details.

The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministries also issued separate and largely identical statements.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry

spokeswoman, Leyla Abdullayeva, described the Geneva talks as “the most intensive discussions between the sides over the last years.” “The sides held thorough discussions over agenda items presented by the OSCE [Minsk Group] co-chairs,” she tweeted in English.

Both parties to the Karabakh conflict support the “intensification of negotiations,” Abdullayeva wrote after Wednesday’s meeting which she said lasted for seven hours.

Mnatsakanyan and Mammadyarov previously met in Slovakia’s capital Bratislava on December 4. Mammadyarov described those talks as “tough.” The mediators said, for their part, that the two ministers will meet again in early 2020 “to intensify negotiations on the core issues of a peaceful settlement.”

Mammadyarov claimed later in December that the Bratislava meeting touched on the most recent version of a framework peace accord originally drafted by the mediators in 2007. He said Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov presented it to the conflicting parties two years ago.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry insisted, however, that “no document is being discussed” by the parties at present.

Azerbaijan authorities responsible for the death and torture of an Armenian man, European Court says

The European Court of Human Rights has obliged Azerbaijan to pay 60,000 euros in respect of non-pecuniary damage and EUR 2,200 in respect of costs and expenses to an Armenian family.

The case of Saribekyan and Balyan v. Azerbaijan concerned the death of the applicants' son, an Armenian citizen, while in military police detention in Azerbaijan.

The European Court of Human Rights held that there had been, by five votes to two, a violation of Article 2 (right to life) of the European Convention on Human Rights owing to the applicants' son's death in detention in Azerbaijan, and, by six votes to one, a violation of Article 2 owing to the lack of an effective investigation into the son's death, and, by six votes to one, a violation of Article 3 (prohibition of torture and ill-treatment) because the applicant's son had been tortured before his death, and, unanimously, no violation of the rights of the applicants under Article 3.

The Court found in particular that the applicants had made a prima facie case that their son, Manvel Saribekyan, had died as a result of the violent actions of others, no-



tably personnel at the Military Police Department in Baku, where he was being held. It could not accept the Azerbaijani authorities' version of events that he had hanged himself. Furthermore, Azerbaijan had not provided any evidence to question Armenian forensic findings on injuries suffered by Mr Saribekyan before his death, including signs of beating and a head trauma, ill-treatment which had to be classified as torture

The applicants, Mamikon Saribekyan and Siranush Balyan, are Armenian nationals. Their son, Manvel Saribekyan, born in 1990, was arrested in Azerbaijan in September 2010. His family state that he inadvertently crossed the border in the fog in a forest while looking for wood and stray cattle, however, the Azerbaijani authorities

accused him of being part of a plan to blow up a school in a nearby Azerbaijani village.

He was taken to the Military Police Department of the Ministry of Defence in Baku and placed in a cell, where he was found dead in October 2010, with the Azerbaijani authorities subsequently finding that he had hanged himself. A forensic report was issued. The body was returned to Armenia in November 2010 and

the authorities there opened a criminal investigation. A forensic report found injuries on his neck, head and body.

The Armenian Prosecutor General asked for legal assistance from Azerbaijan but as no reply was received the Armenian pre-trial investigation was suspended in December 2011. An investigation in Azerbaijan found in January 2011 that Mr Saribekyan had committed suicide, that he had been held in proper conditions and that he had not been assaulted while in custody.

The Court held by six votes to one that Azerbaijan was to pay the applicants 60,000 euros (EUR) jointly in respect of non-pecuniary damage and EUR 2,200 in respect of costs and expenses.

Former NSS Director Artur Vanetsyan questioned by investigators

Former National Security Service Director Artur Vanetsyan has been questioned at the Investigations Committee, the investigative agency's spokesperson Naira Harutyunyan told Noyan Tapan.

She said that Vanetsyan, who is also a former President of the Football Federation of Armenia, was questioned as a witness amid the criminal investigation into the 2018 wiretapping case as well as another criminal investigation into misconduct committed at the federation.

In 2018, when Vanetsyan was NSS Di-



rector, his phone conversation with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was wiretapped and the audio recording was leaked online.

Vanetsyan's phone conversation with

Special Investigations Service director Sasun Khachatryan was also leaked. In the audio recordings they are discussing high profile criminal proceedings against ex-president Robert Kocharyan and Yuri Khachaturov, a former military commander who also served as CSTO secretary general.

Separate investigations are underway, one to determine whether the discussions constitute obstruction of justice and another is focused on the illegal wiretapping itself.

Macron lauds French-Armenian brotherhood, slams Turkey for genocide denial

President of France Emmanuel Macron attended the annual gala dinner of the Co-ordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF) in France and delivered remarks.

President Macron spoke about the Armenian Genocide international recognition process, and emphasized that France is engaged in the process for already 19 years. Macron was pleased to note that it has already been a year that his promise on declaring April 24th as the National Commemoration Day of the Armenian Genocide in France has been fulfilled.

“The struggle that the Armenians are carrying out for the recognition of the genocide is also a struggle against silence, against forgetting. As for the issue of truth, there is brotherhood between the Armenian and French peoples,” President Macron said.

Macron underscored that Turkey has based its policy on revisionism. “No great history is shaped on lies, denial and revisionism,” Macron said.

At the beginning of the event, those in attendance observed a minute of silence



in honor of former French President Jacques Chirac’s memory, who died in September 2019.

Turkish historian Taner Akcam, a renowned advocate for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, participated in the event a guest of honor.

Emmanuel Macron congratulated Turkish historian on Taner Akcam for denouncing the Armenian Genocide denial.

“You denounced the denial,” Mr. Macron told Mr. Akcam, author of the book “Orders to kill”.

According to the French president, Taner Akcam’s book constitutes “the scientific establishment of clear intentionality of organized crime.”

“You brought out what some wanted to plunge into oblivion, Genocide denial,”

said Macron. “It is an essential stone in this deeply political debate with the Turkish leaders,” he added.

Taner Akcam “Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and Armenian Genocide” has been presented in France earlier this week.

This book provides a major clarification of the often-blurred lines between

facts and truth in regard to these events. The authenticity of the killing orders signed by Ottoman Interior Minister Talat Pasha and the memoirs of the Ottoman bureaucrat Naim Efendi have been two of the most contested topics in this regard. The denialist school has long argued that these documents and memoirs were all forgeries, produced by Armenians to further their claims.

Taner Akcam provides the evidence to refute the basis of these claims and demonstrates clearly why the documents can be trusted as authentic, revealing the genocidal intent of the Ottoman-Turkish government towards its Armenian population. As such, this work removes a cornerstone from the denialist edifice, and further establishes the historicity of the Armenian Genocide.

France ratifies protocol on readmission agreement signed with Armenia

France has ratified the protocol on implementing the agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization, the French migration service said.

“France has ratified the protocol signed between the French and Armenian governments in Paris on October 27, 2016 on



implementing the “Agreement between the

European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorization” signed in Brussels on April 19, 2013”, the statement says.

Armenia’s Migration Service said the protocol defines the technical details, time-frames of the readmission process and the cooperation format. Armenia has ratified that protocol on September 14, 2017.

Armenia, Jordan to expand commercial cooperation



Minister of Economy of Armenia Tigran Khachatryan received the delegation of Jordan led by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Tareq Al-Hamouri, the Armenian ministry told Noyan Tapan.

The delegation arrived in Armenia for the preparation of the upcoming visit of King Abdullah II of Jordan to Armenia, as well as for discussing the bilateral cooperation agenda.

“Welcome to Armenia”, the Armenian minister said in his opening remarks. “We are happy to host you in Armenia to discuss the agenda of economic relations. Our countries have a huge economic potential which is not utilized, and the opportunities of its utilization are in our today’s dialogue agenda”.

Minister Khachatryan introduced the recent changes in Armenia’s economy and stated that all participants of the

economic life in Armenia have equal opportunities.

“On behalf of myself and my delegation I want to thank you for such hospitality in our friendly country. This derives from the high-level political relations between our countries. Nevertheless, in such relations the mutual economic partnership is very modest”.

The Armenian minister proposed the Jordanian delegation to discuss the cooperation in the tourism sector as a dynamically developing direction in the two countries. They also discussed increasing the trade turnover volumes between the two countries based on bilateral interests. He informed that the Investment Support Center operating in the ministry will assist the delegation on holding discussions and establishing contacts with the private sector in Armenia.

The Jordanian minister touched upon Armenia’s IT development potential, stating that in this sense the economies of the two countries have commonalities, and thus cooperation opportunities.

Central Bank denies HSBC considers Armenia exit

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has denied reports claiming the HSBC considers withdrawing from the country.

“During regular meetings with the Chairman of the Central Bank of Armenia and the leadership of HSBC Group, the presence and involvement of the Bank in the financial system of the Republic of Armenia has always been highly appreciated,” the CBA said in a statement.



Moreover, it added, the Bank’s activity in the Republic of Armenia is regarded as a “success story.”

The comments come after Reuters quoted “sources familiar with the matter” as saying that HSBC considers exit from a number of countries, including Armenia, Turkey, Greece and Oman.

The Armenian Central Bank stated in this regard that it has received a request from HSBC Bank Armenia to register a new country director, who will take office in March.

Armenia suspends Visa-Free regime with China amid coronavirus fears

The Armenian government on January 31 suspended for two months visa free-travel between Armenia and China, citing the need to guard against a new coronavirus that has killed more than 200 people in China.

A bilateral agreement allowing Armenian and Chinese citizens to stay in each other's country visa-free for up to 90 days was signed last year and went into force as recently on January 19.

Its suspension announced by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan means that Chinese nationals travelling to Armenia between February 1 and March 31 will need to have Armenian visas. Avinyan attributed the decision to the "epidemiological situation conditioned by the coronavirus."

The government announced earlier in the day that it has set up an interagency commission tasked with preventing the spread of the deadly disease to Armenia. The commission is headed by Avinyan.

The government warned Armenians against all travel to China last week. It also banned imports of Chinese food and raw materials.

Health authorities say they are monitoring all people arriving from China to Armenia via third countries.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, some 400 Armenians lived in China before the outbreak of the virus which the World Health Organization declared a global emergency on Thursday. At least six of them remain in the Chinese city of Wuhan lying at the epicenter of the outbreak.

At least 213 people in China have died from the coronavirus, with nearly 10,000 cases registered. A total of 98 cases have been confirmed in 18 other countries, but no deaths outside of China have been recorded, according to the WHO.

Embassy sending coronavirus test protocol to Armenia from China



Armenia already has an agreement with a Chinese company and will soon acquire the laboratory test for the novel coronavirus, Healthcare Minister Arsen Torosyan said at a news conference on January 31.

"We have a problem of medical diagnostic tests, everyone has this problem because this is a new disease, and the test is under development. However, we already have an agreement with a Chinese manufacturer for acquiring this test. Our embassy will acquire these tests in a few hours and will send it to Armenia in order to be used in the event of necessity," he said.

He said the testing methods are used only in the event of a patient displaying clinical symptoms.

So far, he said, there hasn't been any suspected case in Armenia among arriving travelers. Those who had fever or other flu-like symptoms turned out to have simple respiratory infections or illnesses.

"I can say with 99,9% certainty that we don't have any [confirmed coronavirus] case in Armenia as of now," he said.

On January 30, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

Armenia economic activity index grows 7,8%

The economic activity index of Armenia grew 7,8% in 2019 January-December compared to the previous year, the Statistics Committee said in a report.

During the reporting period the volume of industrial output grew 9%, the gross agricultural production dropped 4,2%, construction grew 4,6% and trade turnover grew 8,9%. Volume of services grew 15%.



Consumer price index increased 1,4%,

while the industrial product price index 0,5%.

Electricity production dropped 1,9%. Average monthly wages grew 5,8% - totaling 182750 drams (8,4% increase in public sector and 3,8% increase in private sector).

The volume of foreign trade turnover grew 10,4% (exports grew 9,4% and imports grew 10,8%)

Israel will not win the battle against antisemitism until it recognizes Armenian Genocide – Armen Sarkissian

Israel will not win the battle against antisemitism until it recognizes the Armenian Genocide, President Armen Sarkissian told The Jerusalem Post.

Sarkissian, who was in Israel over the past week for the Fifth World Holocaust Forum, which marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, said that most of the Armenian population does not understand the logic behind Israel's refusal to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

"A lot of Armenians ask, 'Why on earth would Israel, a country whose people have seen their own huge tragedy, not recognize the Armenian Genocide?'" Sarkissian said. "There is no logical answer. I cannot say that Israel has relations with Turkey and that is why – I cannot say that."

But he acknowledged that Israel-Turkey relations, which were formalized in March 1949, are likely the catalyst for Israeli silence.

"Israel has relations with Turkey," Sarkissian said. "Today, those relations are good, tomorrow they are bad, and then the other way around. But the truth will remain the truth."

He said that recognizing human tragedy is a matter of morality more than anything else, and he can only hope that one day Israel will recognize the genocide and that "human values, moral values and the importance of history will prevail. Recognition will not be connected with this or that interest of the State of Israel or something else that is important only in the moment."

But he also believes that Israel's failure to commiserate with Armenia over their comparable tragedies – the Holocaust and the



Armenian Genocide – is harming Israel and the Jewish people's efforts to combat an ever-expanding epidemic of antisemitism. "

All of the reasons why this happened have not disappeared," Sarkissian told the Post, referring to both the Holocaust and the genocide. "Antisemitism is alive. Extreme nationalism is alive everywhere in the world.... It can all come back."

He said that human tendency is to forget the lessons of history for the convenience of the present.

Sarkissian believes that Turkey has not recognized the genocide because it would be "inconvenient: millions of people lost their lives; a culture was destroyed; and Turkey is probably afraid of claims – material and moral claims.

"Maybe they are afraid because for years they didn't tell the truth to their children and grandchildren in their schools," he continued.

"It does not matter to me personally whether this country or that country will or will not recognize [the genocide]. It will not change my life or the lives of the millions of Armenians who lost their homes and are scattered all over the world in the Armenian diaspora. But it is going to backfire. "He said that a country's recognition of the genocide or not will decide if that coun-

try is able to build for itself a tolerant society. A country that does not recognize the genocide, he said, is a country that will ultimately lack tolerance for other people's religion, nationality, faith and culture. "

The biggest disease of humanity today is not a virus in Hong Kong," Sarkissian said. "It

is not AIDS or cancer. With new technologies we are learning more and more how to fight cancer and defeat viruses. But technology will not teach us how to cure the disease of inhumanity. "No medicine can be taken with water to help you become more human, more tolerant – this is much more problematic," he explained.

And he said that only in the moment that Israel recognizes the genocide will it truly be able to move into its rightful role as the worldwide leader in the fight against antisemitism and extremism. "It will make Israel's case much stronger when it partners with Armenia, Rwanda, Cambodia," Sarkissian stressed.

"Then, we can come together and say, 'This is enough.' If we don't do that and everyone plays the game on their own, we are going to lose the battle."

Sarkissian said that he attended the World Holocaust Forum because he does not think "it would have been right for any Armenian to connect the remembrance of the Holocaust tragedy" with whether the Israeli parliament recognizes the Armenian Genocide or not. "There is no way that, as president of Armenia, I would ever consider not being here," he said.

India Celebrates 70th Anniversary of Republic Day

Remarks of Ambassador Kishan Dan Dewal on the occasion of the Reception marking 70th Republic Day of India

Dear friends, today is the day when India declared itself Republic on 26 January, 1950. Since the declaration of the republic, India has travelled a long journey. Today India is the second largest country by population and third largest economy on PPP terms, Seventh Largest economy on GDP basis and we are geared to become a five trillion economy by 2025.

India has achieved commendable progress in its scientific development. Apart from being a nuclear power and having a strong defense capability, India has achieved remarkable achievement in the field of space technology. India has its own space satellite production and launching facility.

Last year, India undertook Chandrayan-2 project to explore the surface of moon with an indigenous project. The project was less than 100 percent successful, since at the final stage, it could not land smoothly on the moon surface as connection was lost but it established that India has the capacity to reach moon on its own capabilities. Before that India had launched Mangalyan Mission, a project for exploration and study of planet Mars, budget of which was less than Hollywood movie Gravity. India has also announced its Human Space Mission: Gaganyaan which will be launched in 2022. In future, India will have its own Space Station.

The Government of India has launched a number of welfare campaigns, and what is especially noteworthy about them is the fact that citizens have voluntarily turned them into popular movements. The 'Swachhh Bharat Abhiyan' has achieved astounding success in such a short time. The same spirit can be seen in other endeavors. The success of the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' is a matter of pride, as the target of 8 crore beneficiaries has been achieved. With this, those in need have access to clean fuel. The 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana', that is, 'Saubhagya' too has brightened people's lives.

Access to health and education are often considered the foundation of good gov-



ernance. In both these sectors, we have come a long way in the seven decades. The Government has rightly focused its attention on the health sector, with its ambitious initiatives. Starting with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya, and expanding to the Ayushman Bharat, which is the world's largest publicly funded universal healthcare programme, the Government has shown its care and concern for the well-being of the poor. Quality of healthcare has improved,



so has its reach. The Jan Aushadhi Yojana has brought down the healthcare budget of common people in the country by providing quality generic medicines at affordable prices.

This year Olympic games will be organized in Tokyo. Traditionally, India has shown good performance in the Olympic games and India will look forward to this year's Olympic games with great expectations.

The message of Mahatma Gandhi has played a vital role in the world peace. He has inspired numerous political leaders with his new weapon and method of non-violence. Last year, India has celebrated the 150th Birth Anniversary of the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi which coincided with the 150th Birth Anniversary of famous son of Armenia "Komitas".

Dear friends, India's relations with Armenia are rooted in centuries old cultural and political contacts. After the independence

of Armenia, our relations have remained consistently excellent. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Armenia His Excellency Nikol Pashinyan has named India as one of the 4-5 top priorities countries for Armenia. We are honoured by this recognition.

This year, first time ever a large cultural troupe Masunq Group participated in the International Folk Festival organized by Indian Council for Cultural Relations in India. They performed in New Delhi and Rajkot. I am happy to see them today with us. Also, In the Surajkund International Crafts Mela which will be held in February, 2020, a big delegation of 15 artists from the Kayt band of Armenia will be performing.

Also, a large delegation from Armenia is participating in the prestigious DefExpo to be held in the first week of February, 2020 in Lucknow.

The Prime Minister of India attended the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September, 2019. This was a suitable occasion of first ever meeting of Hon'ble Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to meet our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the sidelines.

At the General Assembly, our Prime Minister underscored India's firm commitment to multilateralism during a period of global uncertainty. Prime Minister called for making the UN more effective and purposeful through fundamental reforms.

India is a country of diverse religion, different languages, different cultures but one nation. There is a contribution of each Indian national in the well-being of our nation. Ordinary citizens have done commendable work in various fields

As our republic day is the celebration of constitution, I quote few words of chief architect of our Constitution, Baba Saheb Ambedkar:

"If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgment we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives."

With these words once again, I thank you to join us to celebrate our Reception Day.

Viva-MTS: The Lighting System of Hrazdan City has been Upgraded

In the frames of the “Eco Villages Network” Project, the Hrazdan City lighting system has been upgraded. The City’s problem has been in the focus of partner organizations, Viva-MTS and the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) in 2019. Due



to the work done this year, there has been a significant change in the Constitution Square, Fountain Park and adjacent central streets. Low-light and more costly fluorescent lamps have been replaced with modern, energy-saving and sustainable lighting LED lamps.

The former 105 and 150 Watt 101



lamps have been replaced by 60 and 80 Watt LED Lamps. According to estimates, it will result in significant savings. 5.2KWh electricity will be saved in one hour; in money equivalent the savings will amount



to about half a million AMD in one year. There will also be significant savings in the community budget due to the “durability” of LED lamps. There will be no need for frequent replacement of the fluorescent lamps in use.

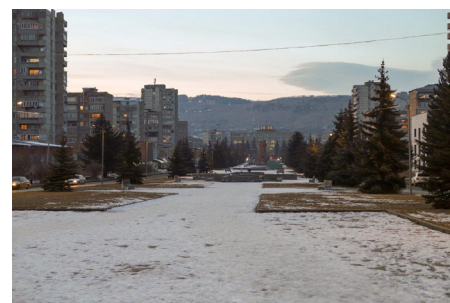
The launching ceremony of the modern lighting system was attended by Viva-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian, FPWC Director Ruben Khachatryan, Hrazdan Community Head Sevak Mikayelyan, and community residents.

“We have always paid particular importance to programs with long-term effect. The new tech-based lighting program is one of those programs. It lets communities decrease

excess spending, provide for better illumination of streets, and be more efficient in spending community budgets. Another advantage of the modernized lighting system is in its environmental friendliness. Direct and equally

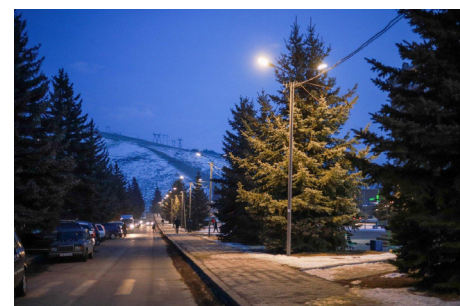
*proportionate development of communities remains in the focus of our attention,” Viva-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.*

Environment-friendly and energy-efficient LED lamps consume 80% less electricity and serve up to 50 times longer. The streets will be illuminated during the summer months from 21:00 to 01:00 and in winter from 18:00 to 01:00. Holiday lighting will be provided throughout



the night.

Viva-MTS and FPWC, partners through long years, consider the use of state-of-the-art technologies as crucial for environmental conservation, energy saving and community development.



Congratulations Professor Armen Charchyan!

Universally beloved world famous doctor, scientist, educator, health manager, frontline surgeon, benefactor celebrates his FIRST 60s jubilee...

By Gourgen James Khazhakian,
Chief Correspondent

...An extract from the Armenian Health Ministry official FB page, 29.01.2020:



“Today the Minister of Health Arsen Torosyan received the Executive Director of the “Izmirlian Medical Center” CJSC, Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor Armen Charchyan. The Minister said warm words of appreciation to the long merited doctor. On the occasion of long-term, devoted and selfless work as well as a significant contribution to the development of medicine and also his 60th birthday, the Minister awarded Armen Charchyan Memorial Medal of Ministry of Health of Armenia”.

...If to put all the merits, titles, scientific inventions, talented alumni names working today in fact in all the medical centers of Armenia and abroad, highest state awards of both Armenian Republics, of Armenia and Artsakh, world unique surgeries, international recognition, scarcely the whole issue of The Highlights would have enough space for it...

...Dr Charchyan’s role in the days of the devastating Spitak earthquake’88 is really invaluable, - the whole (freezing) month he lived/doing operations in a tent on the



ruins of the town...

And...Armen Charchyan’s birthday is on 28 January that is marked by all the Armenians in the world as the Armenian Victorious Army Day, and there is a great symbolism here: from the very first days of the Liberation War in Artsakh (Karabakh) Dr Charchyan, a world class traumatol-



ogist and ortopedist became one of field hospitals organizers in which he himself saved lives of unaccountable wounded combattants as well as of civil population...

But the Number One title of Armen Gerasimi Charchyan is MAN, the Kindest and Selfless, and your author is proud to have honor to consider himself his Friend.

These days Professor Charchyan has been receiving congratulatory messages and the warmest wishes from all the world, and a lot of people opens his office door to do it personally. But undoubtedly the most touching visit was of little **Monte**

from the “Sun Children” NGO that helps children having Down Syndrome. So on 1 February, Fr. **Ter-Grigor**, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of “Sun Children” NGO and Monte, on behalf of other children of the “Sun Children” congratulated their beloved friend, Dr. Armen Charchyan. So Prof. Charchyan’s working day began with such a pleasant surprise. Monte gifted the Doctor an icon, and with his luminous presence gave Dr. Charchyan happy and brightest moments. Armen Charchyan expressed his joy, noting that the gift of the “sun children” is one of the greatest



gifts of his life. Fr. Gregory, in the words of congratulation and gratitude adressed to the Doctor, said:

“We have the joy of knowing you personally and have seen in you a deep and sincere love for our children. You are one of the first friends to reach out to our children, we pray that the Almighty will grant you a healthy and blessed life filled with happiness.”

Rep. Pallone marks 30th anniversary of anti-Armenian attacks in Baku

Congressional Armenian Caucus founding Co-Chair Frank Pallone (D-CA) called on his Congressional colleagues to join him in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the brutal anti-Armenian attacks in Baku, which resulted in over 90 murdered and some 200,000 displaced during January of 1991, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).



“For over three decades, Azerbaijan has taken steps to cover up these crimes against humanity and dismiss the atrocities at Sumgait and Baku. Even more disturbing is that the perpetrators of this event and similar violent attacks have been lauded as national heroes by the Azeri government,” stated Rep. Pallone in his Congressional statement. “Tragically, the Azerbaijani government’s approach toward the Armenian people has changed little since the pogroms were initiated. We still hear the same violent rhetoric and witness intimidation tactics aimed at the people of the Republic of Artsakh.”

“As Congressman Pallone makes compellingly clear, the central lesson of the Baku Pogroms is that there is no going back – no return to Azerbaijani massacres, no restoration of Stalinist borders, and no retreat from Artsakh’s freedom,” said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. “It’s in this light, that we remain so deeply grateful for all that Congressman Pallone is doing to strengthen Artsakh and break down barriers to U.S.-Artsakh relations – from his visits to Stepanakert to his leadership on the U.S.-Artsakh Travel and Communications Resolution.”

Rep. Pallone is the lead sponsor of the Artsakh Travel and Communication Res-

olution (H.Res.190) which promotes stronger U.S.-Artsakh ties and supports Artsakh’s return to full participation in the peace process. The resolution currently has 23 co-sponsors.

From 1988 to 1990, the Armenian population in Soviet Azerbaijan was the target of racially motivated pogroms against Armenians in the cities of Sumgait (February 27-29, 1988), Kirovabad (November 21-27, 1988) and Baku (January 13-19, 1990). At the time, Members of Congress condemned these premeditated and officially-sponsored attacks against Armenian civilians and passed amendments and resolutions demanding respect for the democratic aspirations of the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

These pogroms set the stage for two decades of aggression by Azerbaijan, during which it launched and lost a war against Artsakh, and later used its oil wealth to buy a massive military arsenal that its leaders, to this day, vow to use to renew their attempts to crush Artsakh.

Yerevan 37th healthiest capital city in Europe.

Yerevan is the 37th healthiest capital city in Europe, according to a ranking by Treated.com.

The healthiest capital cities in Europe have been calculated using an expanse of data, collected from a number of sources including Numbeo, HPI Think-Tank, World Population Review, World Bank Group and Index Mundi.

Data has been collected for 10 variables: fitness club, monthly fee for 1 adult; life expectancy; air quality; water quality; overall quality of life; percent of GDP allocated to healthcare; cost of 5 fruit or vegetables; CO2 emissions; walk or cycle to work; quality of green spaces.

The 5 capital cities which ranked the

Rank	Country	City	1. Monthly fee for a gym membership, in euro	2. Life expectancy, in years	3. Air quality index, in ppm	4. Water quality index, in ppm	5. Overall quality of life index, in points	6. Percent of GDP allocated to healthcare	7. Cost of 5 fruit or vegetables, in euro	8. CO2 emissions index, in kg per person	9. Percent of GDP allocated to healthcare	10. Walk or cycle to work index, in points	11. Quality of green spaces, in points
1	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
2	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
3	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
4	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
5	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
6	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
7	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
8	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
9	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92
10	Denmark	Copenhagen	81.53	83.21	76.15	88.04	10.26	41.95	1,592.51	18.33	68.13	83.33	92

highest, and were therefore deemed healthiest, were Copenhagen (Denmark), Vienna (Austria), Bern (Switzerland), Helsinki (Finland) and Berlin (Germany).

Georgian capital Tbilisi is 41st in the list, Azerbaijan’s capital Baku is the lowest ranking capital city in Europe.

While Baku was found to be an affordable city for things like organic food and the cost of a gym membership, it failed to score highly among other variables such as CO2 emissions, air quality, water quality and health expenditure.

Our results, in full, are as follows:

German MPs probed over lobbying for Azerbaijan

The anti-corruption organization Transparency Deutschland has welcomed the investigation by the public prosecutor's office in Frankfurt am Main into corruption allegations against Karin Strenz and Eduard Lintner.

In March 2019, Transparency Germany filed criminal complaints against these current and former members of Bundestag for bribery and corruption of public officials in the course of the Azerbaijani Laundromat scandal, in accordance with Section 108e of the Criminal Code. The Rostock public prosecutor decided in May 2019 not to launch an investigation.

Hartmut Bäumer, Chairman of Transparency Germany said: "It is time that the wrongdoing by Karin Strenz and Eduard Lintner is finally also prosecuted, after their right to access the Council of Europe was withdrawn for life. We are pleased that the Frankfurt public prosecutor's office assesses the situation differently than the Rostock public prosecutor's office."

In September 2017, it became public that the authoritarian regime of Azerbaijan created a network in which 2.5 billion Euros flowed through banks and shell companies,



with bribes paid to political decision-makers across Europe. Karin Strenz is said to have received money from Azerbaijani sources as a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) – officially in the form of consultancy contracts with Eduard Lintner's company.

During her time at PACE, she participated in election observation missions in Azerbaijan, led a delegation tour of German MPs and was involved in PACE votes on politics in the country, in most of which she held a pro-Azerbaijani position.

The Frankfurt prosecutor accuses Karin Strenz of "pro-Azerbaijani" behaviour and collection of at least 22,000 Euros in bribes. Former PACE member Eduard Lintner is accused of having received funds from Azerbaijan in the amount of around

4 million Euros through British shell companies between 2008 and 2016, in order to pass them on to members of PACE. In return, they are said to have expressed positive opinions about the Azerbaijani government and deliberately spoken out against the release of political prisoners.

At the end of August 2019, Eduard Lintner referred to Transparency Germany's criminal complaint as a "PR comedy". The public prosecutor's office in Rostock justified its decision not to initiate an investigation on the grounds that there were neither indications of an agreement according to Section 108e of the Criminal Code, nor an offence that meets the requirement of occurring "when exercising the mandate". In addition, payments from third parties for past actions are not captured by the Section.

"Obviously, there are different opinions among the public prosecutor's offices about what Section 108e of the Criminal Code says about bribing officials. This procedure will show whether the law is too narrow and is therefore a toothless tiger in its current form," said Bäumer.

UK welcomes Armenian government's commitment to wide-ranging reforms



The United Kingdom welcomes Armenia's positive progress since its 2015 review, and the Government's commitment to

wide-ranging reforms, the UK government said in a statement delivered at the 35th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

"In particular, we acknowledge Armenia's conduct of elections in December 2018. We also welcome Armenia's advances in media freedom. The UK welcomes Armenia's progress in adopting legislative reforms towards gender equality and combating violence against women", the statement says.

The UK recommended Armenia to ratify the 2014 protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (P029); adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections; sign the Global Pledge on Media Freedom, and commit to international efforts to create a safer environment for journalists worldwide as a member of the Media Freedom Coalition.

EU, Armenia inaugurate Environmental Monitoring and Information Center

On January 31, the official opening ceremony of the newly equipped laboratory of the “Environmental Monitoring and Information Center (EMIC)” SNCO took place, renovated with the co-financing of the European Union and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia.

The works were implemented in the framework of the EU-funded project “European Union Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership Countries” EUWI+ with the objective of increasing laboratory capacities. With EMIC opening the RA Ministry of Environment celebrates together with the EUWI+ its advancements towards sustainable water management as well as the continued effort and commitment of



the European Union and Armenia towards water policies and practices that protect people’s lives and sustainable livelihoods.

Water supports life and is a crucial resource for humanity, generating and sustaining economic and social prosperity. It is also at the core of natural ecosystems and climate regulation. It is crucial for the European Union to promote sustainable

development and protect natural resources.

The EU supports Armenia’s aligning with EU environmental standards through the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Harmonization of Armenian legislation with the EU legislation in the water sector will contribute to environmental protection.

The opening ceremony was attended by the EU Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, the RA Minister of Environment Erik Grigoryan, the Ambassador of Austria to Armenia Alois Kraut, First Counsellor of the French Embassy to Armenia Claire le Flécher, EUWI+ project leader of the EU Member State Consortium Alexander Zinke and other senior officials.

Forbes: Welcome to Armenia – the world’s next tech hub

As Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey join together and engage in major infrastructure projects, Armenia has taken a different path, according to Forbes.

“Rather than diving head first into the promises of the New Silk Road or industrialization, they’re wagering their chips on a completely different table: technology,” author Wade Shepard writes.

He emphasizes that tech is now the largest foreign investment in Armenia and many of the world’s most powerful technology firms—including Intel, Microsoft, Google, IBM, Synopsys and Cisco—all have a physical presence there, as the country’s tech sector grew 33% in 2018 to become a \$250 million a year industry

Armenia is a landlocked country in the bowels of the Caucasus with scant natural resources, Wade Shepard writes, adding that “all the country has is human capital, which it’s doubling-down on as high-tech



research and development has become a national priority—a do or die objective to connect and do business with the outside world and break the blockade that’s building up around it.”

“While Armenia has been making strides towards developing its high-tech sector for many years, it wasn’t until the Armenian Revolution of 2018 that momentum really started to build. Suddenly, the little, insignificant country hidden deep in the center-fold of the world map was full of hope and looking forward to a future that seemed unusually bright,” he continues.

“The Armenian nation has never really been able to live for itself. It’s always had someone dominating it or ruling it or manipulating it,” the article quotes half-Armenian Reddit cofounder, Alexis Ohanian as saying.

“This could mark the start of the first time when this country and especially the young people—the

ones who are the most hungry, the most driven, the most optimistic—to actually have a chance to determine for themselves the fate of the country and where it heads, and that is a part of the Armenian experiment that has not really ever happened,” Ohanian says.

“We have small resources and high technology is one of the main directions of the Armenian economy to overcome the blockade and to import and export our educational brands outside,” says Anzhela Kzhdryan, Spokesperson for Armenia’s Minister of Education and Science.

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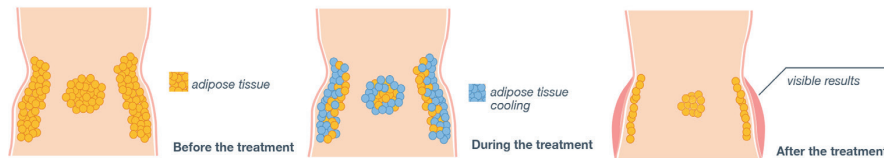
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