

Armenian PM congratulates Iran's Supreme Leader, President on Nowruz

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent congratulatory messages on Nowruz to has congratulated Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani on Nowruz.

The message to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in particular, reads:

“Your Highness,

I cordially congratulate you and the friendly people of Iran on Nowruz – the Iranian New Year.

May the coming year be a year of achievements, peace and prosperity for Iran in all areas.

I am convinced that the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our countries



will be further strengthened for the benefit of our peoples' progress and regional stability and peace.

I also wish the friendly people of Iran good health and patience to withstand the epidemic that has afflicted us all with the help of God and to quickly recover from the damage it has caused.”

Prime Minister Pashinyan's message to

the Iranian President says:

“Your Excellency,

I cordially congratulate you and the friendly people of Iran on the beautiful spring holiday of Nowruz.

May this ancient holiday bring peace and prosperity to friendly Iran.

I am confident that through joint efforts we will be able to implement the agreements reached during my visit to Iran for the benefit of our two peoples.

In these days of calamity, I wish to express the support of the Armenian people to the friendly people of Iran and wish everyone good health. I am sorry that due to the current situation Armenia was not able to host our friendly Iranians during the days of Nowruz. But I am hopeful that next year our doors will be open to all Iranian citizens again.”

Presidents of Armenia, Israel discuss anti-coronavirus measures

President Armen Sarkissian had a telephone conversation with the President of the State of Israel Reuven Rivlin.

The Presidents exchanged information on the current state of the new coronavirus spread in their countries, the steps taken to prevent and overcome the infection.

Given that Israel has the world's best medicine and healthcare system based on advanced, state-of-the-art scientific innovation, President Sarkissian noted that Israel's support in the form of professional consulting, as well as equipment and supplies would be a significant



assistance to Armenia in overcoming the infection.

According to the agreement reached between Armen Sarkissian and Reuven Rivlin, for the purpose of more subjective and professional discussion of the issue, the

health authorities of the two parties will have a telephone conversation today or tomorrow. If necessary, specialists will hold an extended discussion to assess the needs.

During the conversation, the interlocutors referred to President Sarkissian's visit to the State of Israel to attend the 5th Holocaust International Conference.

During meetings with the President of Israel and the Knesset Speaker, Armen

Sarkissian raised the issue of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian President also delivered lectures at two of Israel's top universities.

Shopping Centers, bars closed in Armenia over Coronavirus



Shopping centers, bars, night clubs and a number of other entertainment facilities were shut in Armenia on March 22 as the number of novel coronavirus cases reached 194.

The Armenian authorities say the limitations will remain in place for the rest of the one-month national emergency declared over the pandemic on March 16.

Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan, who is the coordinator of the state of emergency, said late on Saturday that the ban will apply to several types of economic activities and will remain in force until April 14.

These include: shopping centers, except those for retail trade in food, beverages, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products; bars, night clubs, dance floors; screening of movies; casinos; bookmakers and gambling offices.

Two of the largest shopping centers in Yerevan – Yerevan Mall and Dalma Garden Mall – have already been closed since March 16 following their own decisions to reduce the risk of the further spread of the

highly contagious and potentially deadly virus.

Armenian Health Minister Arsen Torosyan reported on March 21 that a second patient has recovered from the novel coronavirus infection in Armenia.

In a Facebook post the minister wrote that the patient would be discharged from hospital after testing negative for COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

“His mother, who has spent 21 days in the same room with him, has not got infected, or got the infection, but quickly recovered. At least she has tested negative for the coronavirus,” wrote Torosian, wishing health to all other patients.


“I urge the rest of our citizens to observe all individual protection measures, as well as the rules of the state of emergency,” the minister added.

The first coronavirus patient declared recovered in Armenia was discharged from hospital earlier this week. The authorities said it was a 29-year-old man hospitalized on March 1 after being evacuated from Iran.

On Saturday, Minister Torosyan said that Armenia had 11 coronavirus patients diagnosed with pneumonia. He said three patients required intensive care, but added that none of the patients were in critical danger.

Armenia has recorded no coronavirus fatalities yet.

Hundreds of people remain in quarantines or self-quarantines.

page 1  the minimum wage, detention for one or two months, or imprisonment for one to three years.

Violation of the rules of isolation or self-isolation or other restrictions on the right to freedom of movement during the state of emergency, which has negligently caused a person to be infected, shall be punished with a fine of up to 300 times the minimum wage, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or engage in certain activities for up to three years or.

The same act that has negligently caused serious harm to human health or caused two or more people to be infected shall be punished with a fine ranging from 500 to 700 times the minimum wage, detention for up to three months, or imprisonment for up to two years with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or engage in certain activities for up to three years.

The same act that has negligently caused the death of one person shall be punished with imprisonment for the term of two to four years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain posts or engage in certain activities, for up to three years.

certainties around coronavirus around the world, that is, there is no country today that could say it is in control of the situation. We are receiving the most unexpected information. For example, I read yesterday that in one of the most developed countries in the world, I don't want to name it, they have officially confessed that they have shortage of tests, they can't test the required number of citizens, etc. Therefore, we work in such conditions and we must continue with the same logic,” Nikol Pashinyan added.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the activities of the government should be divided into two parts. The first should be the work of the Commandant's Office, which should handle the operational issues and the second should be the development of anti-crisis and strategic steps so that we do not face collapse in this situation.

Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan emphasized that the situation with the prevention of coronavirus in the republic is now under control and all the attention is focused on preventive measures.

Health Minister Arsen Torosyan added that among 194 people infected with coronavirus, no one is in serious or extremely serious condition.

Situation with COVID-19 could last longer than initially expected – PM



Analysis shows that the situation with the new coronavirus could last longer than initially expected, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at a meeting of the commission coordinating the anti-coronavirus measures.

“In this respect, we need to develop some vision of how we are going to organize life in our republic,” he said.

“One thing is clear that there are huge un-

Aurora to provide ten lung ventilation devices to Armenian hospitals

Aurora Humanitarian Initiative will provide ten lung ventilation devices for Armenian Hospitals using the funds raised via #AraratChallenge campaign.

“On behalf of the partners and supporters of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, we would like to confirm that during the outbreak of COVID-19 we fully intend to continue our global efforts to help the most vulnerable while supporting local health professionals on the front lines,” Aurora co-founders and chairman said in a statement.

“At the core of Aurora’s mission is the drive to offer life and hope to those in urgent need of basic humanitarian aid anywhere in the world. It couldn’t be more relevant after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organiza-



tion on March 11, 2020. Today, we are more committed than ever to lending a helping hand to those who might otherwise be overlooked or forsaken entirely,” the statement reads.

“This global outbreak has shifted the global agenda. While the world is focusing on manufacturing the vaccine and minimizing the damage, refugees and other vulnerable communities inalterably supported by Aurora continue to suffer and face addi-

tional pressures in light of COVID-19. It is important for us not to lose sight of their hardship,” the co-chairs added.

Aurora will continue giving a second chance to those who have already been through so much. At the same time, the Initiative will contribute to fighting the pandemic and supporting the medical staff by providing ten lung ventilation devices for Armenian Hospitals using the funds raised via #AraratChallenge campaign.

“As a universal movement, we take the safety and health of our global community extremely seriously. In these trying and uncertain times, one thing is very clear: every day, more and more people in the world will need assistance, and it is our duty and responsibility to provide it,” Aurora said.

Minsk Group Co-Chairs call on parties to observe the ceasefire strictly

Noting the current suspension of monitoring exercises by the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office due to the exceptional situation created by the spread of COVID-19, the OSCE

Minsk Group Co-Chairs (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stéphane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America) appealed to the sides to reaffirm their commitment to observe

the ceasefire strictly and refrain from any provocative action that could further raise tensions during this period.

“Recognizing that the region’s medical resources should be dedicated exclusively to combating the spread of the virus and treating those affected, we urge the sides to exercise the greatest possible restraint to lessen the risk of escalation including by making maximum use of the existing direct communication links,” the Co-Chairs said in a statement.

Despite the heavy restrictions on international travel, the Co-Chairs will continue their mediation efforts without interruption, remaining in close contact with each other and with the sides.

Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, announced earlier today that the mission was suspending the monitoring exercises.



Armenian deputy FM, Chinese Ambassador discuss cooperation around COVID-19 fight

Deputy foreign minister Avet Adonts on March 23 had a video discussion with Chinese Ambassador to Armenia Tian Erlong during which they discussed the situation in Armenia and China caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), exchanged information about the actions taken by the two governments on this path, the government of Armenia told Armenpress.



Both sides praised the close cooperation between Armenia and China in fighting against the novel coronavirus. The deputy FM thanked the Ambassador for the 1008 test kits provided to Armenia from China with the support of the Chinese Embassy.

They also discussed extending the current

deadline on temporarily suspending the visa-free agreement between Armenia and China and agreed to stay in touch on the matter.

The Armenian deputy FM highly valued the fact that China constantly shares its best experience in fighting COVID-19. He attached importance to the creation of the

Knowledge Center for China's Experiences in Response to COVID-19 by China.

The Armenian and Chinese sides also discussed issues relating to the supplies of face masks, lung ventilation devices, etc. Deputy FM Adonts asked the Chinese side to continue providing support on this path. The Ambassador said China is ready to provide additional aid to Armenia, by providing medical uniform and lung ventilation devices worth 110,000 USD.

The Ambassador highlighted the readiness of the Chinese side to continue the close cooperation with the Armenian side on solving various problems connected with the COVID-19 fight.

Armenian Humanitarian Mission hands over medical supplies to Syrian medical facilities

In cooperation with the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia and the Syrian Aid Cross in Aleppo, the Humanitarian Mission of the Republic of Armenia has transferred medical supplies to the Armenian Nursing Home in Aleppo, the Darmanatoun Social Medical Center and a number of other medical facilities.

Members of the Syrian Aid Cross and the Darmanatoun Community Medical Center leadership expressed gratitude to Armenian doctors for the medical care provided at a number of medical facilities.

The head of the Aleppo military hospital, General Fayeze al-Ayoubi, praised the joint efforts of Armenian and Syrian doctors, their dedicated work, high professional qualities, not only in providing medical assistance to those affected by the war, but also for their readiness to fight any threat.

“Our Armenian partners are committed



to the noble principles of humanity and help the Syrian people with a professional approach every day. The Syrian people appreciate that Armenians are with us in this difficult situation,” said the general.

The Director of the Hospital thanked the Armenian Humanitarian Group, the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia in Aleppo and the authorities for their continuous support.

Inflation in Armenia to remain at low level in coming months – CBA Board member`

(RFE/RL- Yerevan) - The fall in world oil prices that has led to a sharp depreciation of the Russian ruble has not had any serious impact on Armenia's financial system, according to a Central Bank representative.

Andranik Grigoryan, head of the Central Bank's Financial System Stability and Development Department, said the Armenian financial system enjoys a "fairly high liquidity". "There is no need for panic," Grigoryan said on March 11. "Our banks are well capitalized and have sufficient liquidity in any currency. Investors in our financial system can rest assured both in terms of their deposits and in terms of servicing loans. Our exchange rate is a free floating one, and I don't see anything extraordinary here."

As for the possible depreciation or appreciation of the Armenian national currency, the dram, against other currencies, Grigoryan said that the Central Bank has been conducting various analyses to understand the potential impact of both trends. "In both cases we can say that our system is quite liquid," he added.

The Central Bank official said the closed border with Iran due to the new coronavirus



infection has not yet had any impact on Armenia's financial system, but cautioned that certain risks are always present when borders are closed – "be it in Armenia, Germany or the United States."

"For the time being we do not see any problems here. Our financial system does not have that level of related assets for the closed border with Iran to lead to problems in it," Grigoryan added.

The Ministry of Economy declined to comment on the possible impact of the closed border with Iran on the Armenian economy in general.

Economist Vahagn Khachatryan believes, however, that a closed border with the neighboring country cannot but have a negative effect on Armenia's economy. "We all

understand that a closed border means that there will be problems. It is clear that there will be some impact and that impact will be negative. Here we just need to be able to assess how solvable the problem will be over time," he said.

The economist said that no business in Armenia could possibly guess in January how the situation would unfold in order to take long-term measures like storing supplies in warehouses for several months. But according to Khachatryan, it is important not to panic now and even more important for the government to take proper action through its relevant agencies.

"Entrepreneurs should be kept updated on the situation, as many are asking questions now, wondering when the border can be reopened. But no one can make any forecasts in this matter even by following the international news. On the one hand you hear more positive news from China [on coronavirus], but news coming from European countries, especially from Italy, are more negative," Khachatryan said.

The closed border regime with Iran is expected to be in place at least until March 24.

Over AMD 100 million raised in support of anti-coronavirus measures in Armenia

Over AMD 100 million has been transferred to the special treasury account set up to support the efforts to fight the coronavirus infection. A total of 650 payments have been made, the Ministry of Finance reports.

The Ministry of Finance has created the treasury account for supporting the measures aimed at preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus in the Republic of Armenia.

In line with numerous inquiries from citizens and organizations, we are expanding the scope of target areas and include

Healthcare needs such as:

- Bonuses for medical staff
- Medical supplies and equipment



- Improvement of conditions of medical facilities

Social safety net such as:

- Food, means of individual protection, and other essentials for socially vulnerable and risk groups, including those with dis-

abilities

- Supplies required for the operation of volunteer support groups

- Transportation

To ensure public accountability and transparency, the public will be regularly informed about the amount of funds received and the areas covered.

While making a transaction, please, indicate the purpose as follows: "Support for the fight against coronavirus disease." The preferable area may also be indicated.

Recipient: Central Treasury of the Republic of Armenia

Treasury Account Number: 900005001947

Armenian IT specialists to model the possible spread of COVID-19



A research group involving analysts, information technology and artificial intelligence specialists, and other experts has been set up to collect, analyze data on the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and compare it with that of international partners.

Armenia's Minister of High-Tech Industry Hakob Arshakyan met with specialists of

group to discuss upcoming steps and opportunities.

The group is expected to use the modern technologies to map the hearths of the disease, combine the data on people's movement, the spreading zones and other information to model the possible spread of the coronavirus, which could be a major support to the work of health infrastructure.

Hakob Arshakyan expressed confidence that the activities of the research group would allow to receive accurate information on the situation, which would, in turn, contribute to better coordination and management of the disease prevention activities.

The Minister emphasized the importance of individual efforts of each specialist in the realization of this joint project.

The project is implemented by the initiative of the RA Ministry of High Technology Industry in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.

Armenia, Iran to allow more goods to be transported

The list of exceptions for freight traffic between the Republic of Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran has been expanded, the Armenian Ministry of Economy informs.

The Armenian government's decision of 24 February 2020 has been amended to allow the transportation of goods of economic importance between the two countries.

At the same time, the transportation of some goods shall be authorized by the State Revenue Committee on the basis of the written consent of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia.

Transportation of other goods is authorized by the State Revenue Committee of the Republic of Armenia, taking into account the capacity of the Meghri crossing point and the quantities and specifications



of the goods transported.

Goods subject to transloading will be transloaded either on the territory of the Meghri Crossing Point or the Agarak Terminal LLC Customs Control Area.

The movement of goods not subject to transloading, their unloading and the re-

turn of the vehicle to the Islamic Republic of Iran will be coordinated and controlled by RA Police, taking into consideration the instructions and recommendations of the Ministry of Health.

World Bank approves \$20 million loan to support social investments across Armenia

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved today a EUR 17.9 million (\$20 million equivalent) loan for Additional Financing (AF) of the Social Investment and Local Development (SILD) Project in Armenia. This project will further assist the Government of Armenia in improving the quality, access to, and use of community and intercommunity infrastructure and services.

In support of strengthening intercommunity dialogue, the Additional Financing would finance publicly owned infrastructure and services through sub-projects to further improve the socioeconomic and human capital development of regions or groups of communities.

The project will allow local populations throughout Armenia to benefit from renovated and rehabilitated social infrastructure in kindergartens, schools, water supply systems, sanitation systems, community centers, health care facilities, minor irrigation systems, and other local infrastructure facilities, through microprojects. These will be selected based on both a ranking of community vulnerability and an assessment of the potential socio-economic impact of the submitted subproject applications. Priority needs will be identified by the communities.

"The new project will directly benefit about 55 communities, of which 35 are in newly consolidated communities, mostly



rural, enabling them to identify their own investment needs," said Sylvie Bossoutrot, World Bank Country Manager for Armenia. "I am particularly pleased that this project will also seek to support income generating activities at the community level that could help open economic opportunities."

The project has three components. The first component supports socio-economic development and capacity building at the local level. The Additional Financing would continue financing microprojects that target 20 vulnerable communities to address priority basic community infrastructure needs.

The second component – inter-community social and economic development initiatives – will finance 35 initiatives with the potential for longer-term development impact, by bringing together two or more communities. This new collaborative development approach will provide additional incentives for communities to explore development synergies and opportunities in

line with the concept of the territorial reform.

The third component will support the institutional strengthening of the Armenian Territorial Development Fund (ATDF). In line with the territorial reform, the ATDF is gradually transitioning from implementing mostly social infrastructure microprojects to increasingly focusing on sustainable territorial development projects by the consolidated communities.

"Operational regulations and procedures will be enhanced to strengthen community outreach and participation," says Ivan Drabek, World Bank Task Team Leader of the Project. "Furthermore, the citizen engagement framework will be strengthened by using tools for better capturing and measuring feedback from beneficiaries. Finally, gender gaps will be identified and addressed to ensure stronger participation by women in the decision-making processes at the local level."

The EUR 17.9 million (equivalent to \$20 million) is an IBRD loan of variable-spread, with a 14.5-year grace period and a total repayment term of 25.5 years. The Government of Armenia and beneficiary communities will provide total co-financing in the amount of EUR 7.52 million.

Since joining the World Bank in 1992 and IDA in 1993, commitments to Armenia have totaled approximately \$2,434,734 million.

Armenian President appoints Chiefs of Police and National Security Service

President Armen Sarkissian has signed decrees appointing the Director of the National Service and the Police Chief.

Arman Sargsyan has been appointed Chief of Police of the Republic of Armenia.

Eduard Martirosyan has been appointed Director of the National Security Service.

The appointments have been made taking into consideration the Prime Minister's recommendation.



Erdogan Should be Tried by International Criminal Court for Supporting Terrorism



By Harut Sassounian

Last week, I reported that President Erdogan's office sent a letter to the heads of religious minorities in Turkey demanding that they sign it and send it back to the President. In that letter, Erdogan falsely claimed that Turkey was alone on the forefront of the fight against international terrorism.

Contrary to Erdogan's claims, there have been dozens of reports in the international media proving that Turkey was in fact on the forefront of those assisting ISIS terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

Ahmet S. Yayla is someone who has first-hand knowledge of the Turkish government's support for ISIS as he was the Chief of Counterterrorism and Operations in Turkey from 2010 to 2013, and Chief of Public Order and Criminal Investigations in Sanliurfa, Turkey, from 2013 to 2014. Sanliurfa was the endpoint of the ISIS "jihadi highway." Yayla wrote an in-depth article on March 6, in *The Investigative Journal*, exposing Erdogan's complicity in terrorism. The article was titled "Try Erdogan at the International Criminal Court for Enabling ISIS."

Yayla wrote that he had to leave his job in 2014 and retire "in order not to be involved with Erdogan's atrocities, which rise to the level of crimes against humanity."

According to Yayla, "ISIS would not have swelled to power or killed so many if the Erdogan regime had not decided to support it directly or indirectly from its emergence in 2014. The fact is, when ISIS set up shop in Raqqa [Syria] in 2014, the Turkish Intelligence Agency (MIT) was guarding its front door and putting out an elaborate welcome mat for jihadist volunteers on their way to martyrdom. Turkey was a central hub for the travel of over 50,000 ISIS for-

eign fighters, and the main source of ISIS logistical materials, including the majority of ISIS IEDs, making Turkey and ISIS practically allies."

Yayla also quoted an October 2019 U.S. Department of State publication, which reported that "Turkey remains a transit point for foreign fighters looking to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, which could help the terrorist group to reorganize and regain influence." The U.S. Government further warned that "foreign fighters transiting through Turkey could help Islamic State to regenerate." ISIS was able to relocate many of its high-profile and senior members to Turkey, where they ran the terrorist organization's day-to-day operations.

Yayla reported that, "on December 3, 2019, terrorist kingpin Hamid Shakir Saba' al-Badri – cousin of deceased Abu Bakir al-Baghdadi – was captured south of Kirkuk, Iraq, having returned from his safe haven in Turkey. A Turkish ISIS prisoner in Syrian Democratic Forces custody told journalist Lindsey Snell about a giant safe house ISIS maintained in Gaziantep, Turkey. The prisoner said, 'There were so many foreigners there; so many different languages. They (Turkey) knew what we were there for.'"

Since Turkish leaders assisted ISIS, there was widespread support for ISIS among the Turkish public. Reuters reported that, according to "Turkey's Social Trends Survey," conducted by an Ankara think tank, 9.3 percent of the respondents stated that ISIS was not a terrorist organization, with 5.4 percent supporting its actions.

According to PEW research, 8 percent of the Turkish population had a favorable view of ISIS. As a result, according to a recent Combating Terrorism Center report, Turks contributed the highest number of fighters to ISIS. There were up to 9,476 Turkish ISIS terrorists, whereas there were more than 900 Azerbaijanis in the ranks of ISIS.

Turkey was also the source of continued supply of various materials for ISIS, including boots, uniforms, vests, food, and most importantly explosives. Quoting from Conflict Armament Research, Yayla reported that ISIS had "first, a major acquisition network operating in Turkey and, second, a clear supply route from Turkey, through Syria, to Iraq." CAR also revealed that "Turkey is the most important chokepoint for components used in the manufacture of IEDs" by the Islamic State. In fact, CAR

documented that ISIS fighters "source most of the products used in the manufacture of weapons and ammunition from the Turkish domestic market."

A Turkish journalist, Tolga Tanis, was fired and slapped with a libel investigation filed by Pres. Erdogan, when Tanis revealed how Turkish companies were exporting explosive materials to ISIS.

Yayla also reported that, "on November 18, 2019, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control designated two Turkish brothers, Ahmet and Ismail Bayaltun, as Turkey-based 'ISIS procurement agents' in addition to four ISIS-linked companies operating in Syria and Turkey. Bayaltun brothers were known for their role in supplying ISIS, specifically shipping 48 tons of aluminum paste to be used in ISIS IEDs. More importantly, the Bayaltun brothers had a close relationship with AKP chairman Mustafa Bayaltun in Sanliurfa, where their office is located."

The role of the Turkish National Intelligence in supporting terrorism was revealed when the Turkish police stopped three trucks operated by MIT on January 19, 2014 and found military-grade weapons hidden underneath medicine boxes being transported to Syria.

Beyond supporting terrorism, Erdogan also purchased ISIS oil through a Turkish front company named Powertrans controlled by his son-in-law Berat Albayrak, according to Yayla. "Albayrak paid up to \$3 million a day at the height of ISIS oil production. In fact, Erdogan passed a bill to grant the rights to transfer oil by tanker and contracted Powertrans without a public bid as the sole authorized company. In addition to purchasing the ISIS oil, Erdogan tasked his son, Bilal Erdogan, through his Maltese shipping company, the BMZ Group, to sell ISIS oil on the world market." In addition, Turkish money transfer centers passed hundreds of thousands of dollars a day to ISIS.

"In the end, ISIS would not have killed, wounded, enslaved, and raped thousands of innocent people without the vast support it enjoyed through Turkey. Erdogan and his co-conspirators must be tried at the International Criminal Court in The Hague for their crimes against humanity.... Turkish President Erdogan and his co-conspirators have blood on their hands. Based on the well-documented, incontestable, and undeniable evidence [that] exists, it is clear that Erdogan has been directly and indirectly supporting ISIS," Yayla concluded.

Armenian sports legend Shavarsh Karapetyan appointed Adviser to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan

Armenian sports legend Shavarsh Karapetyan has been appointed Adviser to the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan Radiy Khabirov, Bashinform reports.

Karapetyan will work on voluntary basis and will advise Radiy Khabirov on issues of development of physical education and sports in the region.

Born in Armenia's third largest city of Kirovakan (now Vanadzor), Shavarsh Karapetyan moved to Yerevan with the family in 1964. He started swimming at a young age, and later switched to finswimming.

Karapetyan is a Merited Master of Sports of the USSR and a ten-time World Record-breaker in finswimming.

He became well known across Armenia and the former Soviet Union after rescuing 20 people from drowning in 1976, which cost the world champion in his health and further achievements in a brilliant athletic career.



As a trolleybus entered a bridge in central Yerevan, the trolleybus veered off course and rolled downhill into a water reservoir, known as Yerevan Lake. The noise of the crash drew the attention of athletes practicing nearby, 23-year-old finswimming champion Shavarsh Karapetyan among them.

Without giving it much thought, Shavarsh jumped into the water, ordering his brother Kamo, another swimming champion, to help him from the shore.

Savarsh pulled 37 people out of the lake, and nine others escaped on their own

through the broken window. The rescue operation was set up in a matter of minutes. Doctors who arrived from a nearby hospital treated the victims right on the shore. Unfortunately, only 20 of those Shavarsh rescued could be saved.

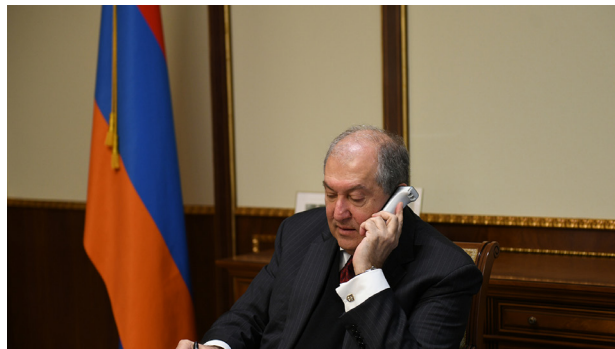
Karapetyan was hospitalized along with victims of the accident. Septic fever, double-sided pneumonia and nervous prostration had doctors fighting for his life for over a month. When he was finally discharged, Shavarsh went right back to practice, but swimming underwater echoed painfully in his lungs. Yet the athlete refused to retire without one more medal.

During the next championship he swam in a haze as his brother Kamo ran along the pool, ready to jump in should Shavarsh suddenly lose consciousness. But Shavarsh came in first and set another world record, without realizing it at the time.

Moderna's Noubar Afeyan briefs Armenian President on the testing of COVID-19 vaccine

President Armen Sarkissian had a telephone conversation with Noubar Afeyan, a well-known American-Armenian entrepreneur and philanthropist, Aurora Humanitarian Initiative co-founder.

The American Moderna Therapeutics biotechnology company, co-founded and chaired by Noubar Afeyan, has developed a vaccine against coronavirus that has been undergoing [clinical trials](#) since March 17 at the Kaiser Permanente Health Research Institute in Seattle, Washington.



During the telephone conversation, Noubar Afeyan touched upon the development and testing of the vaccine against coronavirus.

The interlocutors discussed the situation in the world, including the situation caused by the spread of the new coronavirus infection in Armenia, as well as the measures taken to prevent and overcome the infection and their effectiveness.

Speaking about the steps to prevent and overcome the spread of the coronavirus infection in Armenia, President Sarkissian attached importance to the joint efforts and cooperation with international partners.

Supermarkets in Armenia asked to set aside time for seniors to shop



Considering that the new type of coronavirus is dangerous especially for the elderly, Armenia’s Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan has called on all grocery stores and supermarkets to serve only pensioners from 10 am to midday.

He also asks citizens in other age groups not to go to the store during these hours and

thus reduce contact and maintain the health of the senior citizens.

Tigran Avinyan has shared photos of seniors holding up posters reading “We are safe, when you are at home,” “Our health is in your hands,” “Your self-isolation saves lives,” “Keep social distance,” “Wash your hands frequently.”



WHO Director General gives healthy lifestyle advises for stay-at-home period amid COVID19 pandemic

World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has given some advises on how to stay healthy and stress-free while staying at home during the global novel coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic.

“Life is changing dramatically for many of us, but it’s important to continue looking after your physical and mental health”, the WHO chief said on Twitter.

Ghebreyesus advises to:

1. Eat a healthy & nutritious diet, which helps your immune system to function properly.
2. Limit your alcohol consumption & avoid sugary drinks.
3. Don’t smoke. Smoking can in-



crease your risk of developing severe disease if you become infected with #COVID19

4. Exercise WHO recommends 30 minutes of physical activity for adults, and 1h/day for children.
5. Look after your mental health. It’s normal to feel stressed, confused and scared”

“If your local or national guidelines allow it, go outside for a walk, a run or a ride, and keep a safe distance from others. If you can’t leave the house, find an exercise video online, dance to music, do some yoga, or walk up and down the stairs. If you’re working at home during #COVID19, make sure you don’t sit in the same position for long periods. Get up and take a 3-minute break every 30 minutes. #HealthyAtHome,” the WHO director added, advising also to listen to music, read books or playing gamed. “Try not to read or watch too much news if it makes you anxious. Get your #COVID19 information from reliable sources once or twice a day.”

Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator: Wellbeing of Subscribers and Society is Always the Priority

COVID-2019: effective March 17 our service centers get temporarily closed

“Viva-MTS informs that with the situation in the country and with the wellbeing of our subscribers and our society in mind effective March 17, 2020 the Company's service centers will be temporarily closed.

To get information about our services and products please visit the Company's official website at www.mts.am, or our [Facebook page](#); the information about your phone number, tariff plan and other matters is available through our mobile application “My Viva-MTS”, which can be downloaded from “Google Play” or “App Store”. Information is also available through USSD menu by dialing *130#.

The questions, including questions related to SIM cards, can be addressed by a private message on Facebook messenger, through an electronic message on our website, or by a call to Viva-MTS Hot Line.

The Hot Line of the Company is avail-



able 24/7, as always. The Hot Line is available for Viva-MTS phone numbers at 111. When in roaming please call the Hot Line at +374 93 297 111 (free for Viva-MTS subscribers). For fixed and cloud services call at 060 61 00 00.

Payments can be made through “MobiDram” app.”

And, importantly, Armenia's leading telecom operator company was the first one who stated the following immediately after State of Emergency was announced:

“Please also be informed that with the current situation in mind, the deadlines of payments for postpaid services will be extended till April 16.

Stay healthy!”

Viva-MTS has launched specially equipped delivery mobile service center in Yerevan. Delivery is free-of-charge

Viva-MTS has launched specially equipped delivery mobile service center in Yerevan. Delivery is free-of-charge.

The service center will be traveling in Yerevan to deliver the orders made via Viva-MTS online shop (<https://shop.mts.am>). Mobile phones, Wi-Fi routers, mobile accessories and also SIM cards, will be delivered. Delivery will start on Monday.

To order devices with delivery one needs to visit the Viva-MTS online shop (<https://shop.mts.am>), choose the product, and fill in the simplified electronic application, or call at the phone number 093298700, mentioned on the webpage of the e-shop. Our agents will contact the customer shortly and will direct to the location where the mobile service center is expected to arrive to deliver the device, as well as the SIM-card, if requested.

Transactions will be made both in cash and cashless. Sales on installment are not available.

The services will be presented and rendered contactless through a specially designated window opening.

The mobile service centers have been organized in “Ford Transit” vehicles specially equipped for this purpose and bearing the Viva-MTS logo.

Delivery mobile service centers will be working from 11:00-16:00, Monday through Saturday.

Viva-MTS delivers in the shortest possible time taken the current load into account.

Attention: In case of possible queues the customers are strongly recommended to keep a 2-meter distance from each other and to wear masks.



Opera and Ballet Theatre: #StayHome #Itcouldsavelives and #ArtVsVirus Enjoy the House Best Performances Online...

By Gourgen James Khazhakian
Chief Correspondent

In the evening of 16 March, just after the State of Emergency was declared in Armenia, General and Artistic Manager of the Al. Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre **Constantine Orbelian** appealed to “His Majesty the Spectator”))) with the following:

“Dear friends,

You are aware that all theaters and concert halls of Armenia are closed during this period. During this time, I want you to have the opportunity to view our opera, ballet performances, concerts through our official Facebook page, to get acquainted with the biography of our great artists. We are thinking about you and hope to meet you soon in our theater.”

#StayHome #Itcouldsavelives:

So, declaring #ArtVsVirus, the Opera House offered to its Spectator enjoy its best numbers in the online way. Below you could find some pieces of “virtual” repertoire:

#Stayhome and enjoy the wonderful performances of our soloists.

Arshak’s arioso from T. Tchoukhajian’s “Arshak II” opera.
 Performed by soloist of Armenian Opera and Ballet Theatre **Hayk Tigranyan**
 Conductor: Honored Artist of RF **Constantine Orbelian**
 Symphony orchestra of Armenian Opera and Ballet Theatre

On March 24 at 7 pm

#StayHome and watch A. I. Khachaturian’s “Gayane” ballet that was recorded in 2018 during First Yerevan Ballet Festival named after Aram Khachaturian.

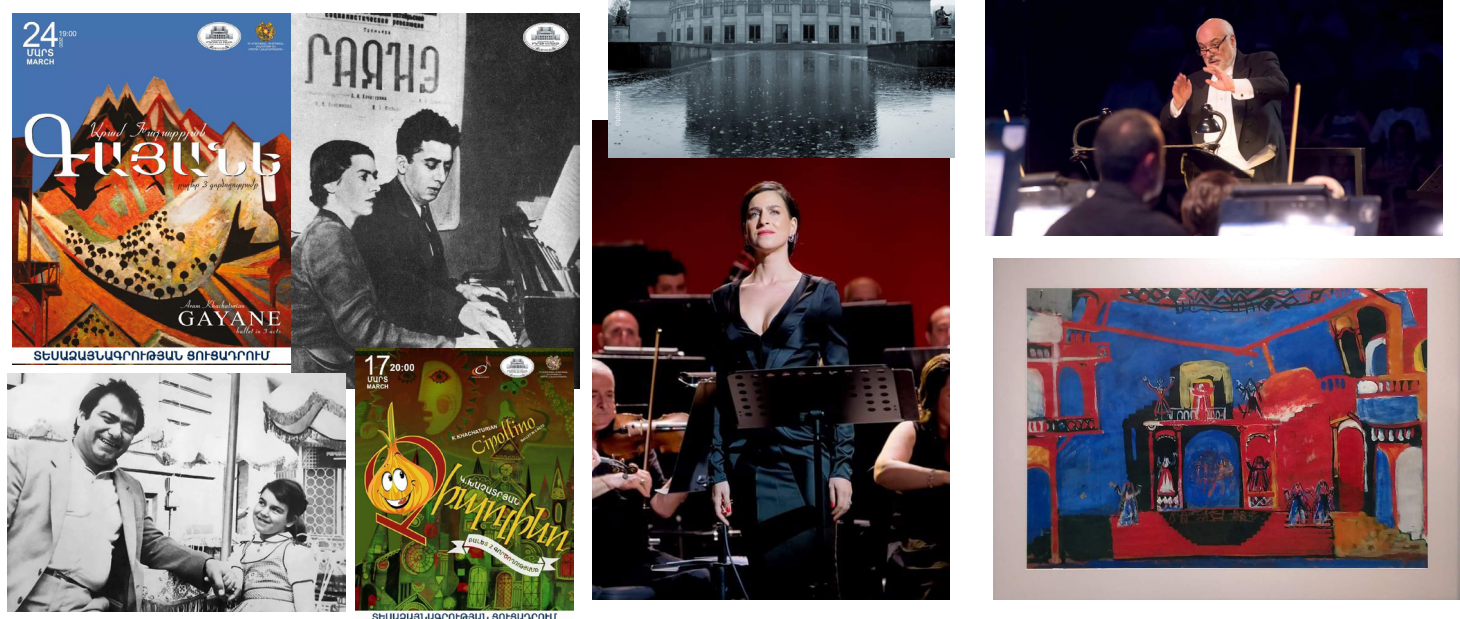
#StayHome and enjoy the wonderful performances of our soloists.

#ArtVsVirus

Aria from G. Puccini’s “Manon Lesqaut” opera
 “Sola, perduta, abbandonata”
 Soloist: **Lilit Soghomonyan**
 Conductor: **Harutyun Arzumanyan**

#StayHome and enjoy the wonderful concert of the world famous opera star **Asmik (Hasmik) Grigoryan**, daughter of legendary tenor, People’s Artist of Armenia and Lithuania, Artistic Director of the Opera and Ballet Theatre **Gegham Grigoryan** of the blessed memory.

Conductor: Constantine Orbelian



Office of Armenian PM's spouse releases details from recent meeting with Melania Trump

The Office of spouse of the Armenian prime minister Anna Hakobyan released details from the March 4 meeting of Mrs. Hakobyan with US First Lady Melania Trump in Washington D.C.

Mrs. Hakobyan's spokesperson Hasmik Harutyunyan told Armenpress that the meeting was held before the International Women of Courage Award.

"Before the award Anna Hakobyan and Melania Trump held a brief meeting. First Lady Melania Trump welcomed Anna Hakobyan's visit to the United States and highlighted her par-



ticipation to the Award. In her turn Anna Hakobyan introduced the activities of the two foundations chaired by her. Both sides

talked about their role and mission, and in this context emphasized the importance of the role of women. Anna Hakobyan and Melania Trump also discussed the holding of the Award and stated that such events are very important and serve as a great example, as well as inspire the other women", Hasmik Harutyunyan said.

On March 4 Armenian PM's wife Anna Hakobyan participated in the annual International Women of Courage Award in Washington D.C. at the invitation of the US Department of State.

Start dreaming of and planning a trip to Armenia and Georgia – The Daily Mail

Britons have been advised against all non-essential travel overseas for a period of 30 days, meaning its time to give up thinking about travelling abroad at all for a while.

dreamed of, T.D. Isacke writes in an article for The Daily Mail.

"These days of self-isolation and social distancing could turn out to be ideal for masterminding a big adventure. So why

First, the article recommends planning a trip to Georgia and Armenia.

"Georgia is hidden away in the high mountains of the Caucasus with remote villages, monasteries, ancient churches and the lively capital of Tbilisi. The tour continues to Yerevan, Armenia's intriguing capital, moving onwards into rugged countryside with medieval castles before stopping at Gori, the birthplace of Joseph Stalin," the author notes.

Other options worth thinking about include a trip from Peru's capital Lima to La Paz, a journey around Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, wildlife cruise along the northern coastlines of Norwegian island Spitsbergen, self-isolation on the Fanjove Private Island off the coast of Tanzania, a trip around the Dodecanese beginning in Bodrum and ending in Marmaris, a four-night stay in Jamaica, hiking in Ethiopia's Simien Mountains and a visit to Victoria Falls.



However, that doesn't mean there isn't time to plan the perfect trip you've always

not put your feet up, start dreaming — and planning too," the author writes

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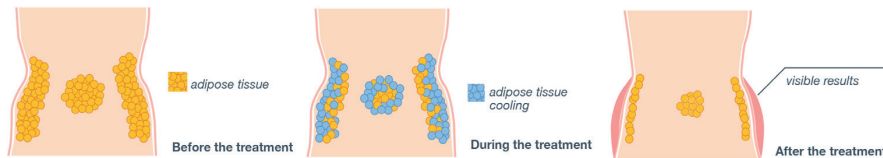
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