

Armenia, Iran keen to expand economic ties: Armenian PM Visits Iran



Iran - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan make statements to the press, Tehran, November 1, 2022.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan paid a short working visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's Vice President Masoud Mir Kazemi met Prime Minister Pashinyan at Tehran International Airport.

Then Prime Minister Pashinyan headed to Sa'dabad Palace, where the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi welcomed Prime Minister Pashinyan, and the official welcoming ceremony took place. Before starting the negotiations, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures of Armenia Gnel Sanyan and Iran's Deputy Minister of Petroleum and CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company Majid Chegeni signed a memoran-

um of understanding on cooperation in the field of natural gas.

First, the meeting of the leaders of Armenia and Iran took place in the narrow format and then in an expanded format. The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to the development of Armenian-Iranian relations. In particular, the opportunities for the expansion of trade and economic relations, continuous increase of trade turnover volumes were discussed. In particular, the need to increase the volume to 3 billion USD per year was emphasized, for which, according to Prime Minister Pashinyan and Ebrahim Raisi, there is enough potential.

The sides also discussed issues related to

➔ page 3

Armenia says Belarusian President's statements go against the nature of allied relations

p. 2

Spain's Congress of Deputies expresses solidarity to Armenia, votes against agreement with Azerbaijan

p. 4

Armenia's Central bank sets refinancing rate at 10.5%

p.7

We are mobilized for Ukraine but silent on Armenia: Valerie Boyer shames Europe for gas deal with Azerbaijan

p. 5

Armenian, Russian Security Council Secretaries discuss security situation in the region



Secretaries of Security Councils of Armenia and Russia have discussed the secu-

urity situation in the region.

Armen Grigorayn and Nikolai Patrushev met in Moscow on the sidelines of the 10th meeting of the secretaries of the Security Councils of the CIS member states.

The Secretary of the Armenian Security Council presented the large-scale aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan on the sovereign territory of Armenia on September 13 and its consequences. He emphasized that

it was not a border incident, but a large-scale invasion of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia.

Nikolai Patrushev emphasized the need to achieve peace in the region.

The interlocutors also referred to the prospect of effective cooperation between the two Offices of the Security Councils of the two countries.

Armenia says Belarusian President's statements go against the nature of allied relations



The Belarusian President's statement are cut off from the logic of negotiations and go against the nature of allied relations, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia says.

"We do not consider it appropriate to

comment on the chaotic, unfounded statements of the President of Belarus, which have nothing to do with the logic of the negotiations, and are not in the spirit of allied relations, and cast doubt on the obligations of a CSTO participating state," MFA Spokesman Vahan Hunanyan told Armenpress.

Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly Alen Simonyan earlier dismissed the recent remarks by Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko as "unserious." He said the words of the Belarusian leader "were not his own" and "were suggested

by someone else."

During the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council, Alexander Lukashenko stated that it would not be right to oppose the CSTO to Azerbaijan.

At a later meeting with CSTO Secretary General Stanislav Zas Lukashenko expressed bewilderment at "why the European Union and the OSCE are being drawn into the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border", calling it "a certain game." He also added that he sees no need to send additional observers to the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

Steps towards establishment of direct air communication between Armenia, Sweden discussed

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the Armenian member of the Swedish Parliament, chairman of the Sweden-Armenia friendship group Arin Karapet, who has arrived in Yerevan to participate in the first World Armenian Summit.

The Prime Minister welcomed Mr. Karapet's visit to Armenia and his constant contacts with the Motherland. Nikol Pashinyan emphasized the development of Armenian-Swedish inter-parliamentary and intergovernmental relations, including in the areas of economy, promotion of Armenia's democratic agenda and other directions. In this regard, the necessity of

organizing high-level mutual visits was emphasized.

Arin Karapet shared his impressions from the first World Armenian Summit and hailed the its effective work and discussions. The lawmaker emphasized the establishment and strengthening of permanent ties between the Armenian deputies of the parliaments of different countries, which will contribute to the pro-Armenian activities abroad.

The implementation of steps aimed at the organization of air communication between the two countries was emphasized. A number of issues related to the expansion of cooperation

between the two countries in various fields were discussed.

Issues related to the strengthening of Armenia-Diaspora relations and the possibilities of making the first World Armenian Summit an annual event were also discussed.



Armenia agrees to Russian proposal to postpone the issue of Artsakh's status indefinitely – PM

The meeting in Sochi was a step forward towards the implementation of the peace agenda, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the budget discussions at the National Assembly.

He called a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev “very useful.”

“Before the Sochi meeting there were a lot of discussions among the public on whether

Armenia was moving along the most optimal path of normalization of relations with Azerbaijan and the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh issue. There was much talk about to what extent the policy pursued by the government meet the interests of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. I think one of the most important nuances of the Sochi meeting



was the answer to this question,” the Prime Minister said.

He added that the answer existed even before the Sochi meeting, but the discussions have now become maximally public.

“You know that there are Russian and non-Russian proposals and attempts are being made to create an impression as if the steps of the Armenian government con-

tradict the so called Russian concept. This is not the case,” he said.

“Our Russian colleagues have announced that they think the right approach will be to postpone the issue of the status of Artsakh indefinitely. They support the proposal by the fact that at the moment there is practically no chance to find a status that would be mutually acceptable,” PM Pashinyan said.

He said it fully complies with the policy of the Republic of Armenia.

“We have agreed with our Russian partners that we should not try to solve the issue now, because it will inevitably lead to a crisis,” the Prime Minister said.

During the meeting in Sochi the Armenian side also proposed to extend the mandate of the Russian peacekeepers in Artsakh, but the proposal was rejected, he said.

page 1 ➡ the development of cooperation in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, construction and other fields. The implementation of joint projects for the facilitation of cargo transportation, the need to complete the construction of the third power transmission line between Armenia and Iran were highlighted.

At a joint press conference with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Tehran, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi described the visit as a turning point in the path of developing bilateral occasions between the two countries.

Dr. Raisi stated that there has been a 43 percent growth in the turnover between Armenia and Iran over the past months, noting that during current talks, the goal was to bring the level of economic partnership and trade exchange between the two countries to 3 billion dollars, and this goal could be reached with the political will that exists today.

President Raisi stressed that the good relations between the two countries are the reason for the good relations at the inter-



national level and said: “The Caucasus region is part of the history, civilization and culture of Iran, and we are sensitive about it, and attach special importance to its security and peace.”

He voiced hope that the agreements reached during the visit would contribute to the further development of relations between the two countries.

“In the negotiations with Mr. Pashinyan, we came to the conclusion that the issues and problems of the region must definitely be solved through the representatives of the countries of the region. The presence of foreign powers not only does not solve any problems, but adds to them,”

he said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in turn, stressed that there were comprehensive and useful talks with the Iranian President. “We emphasized the historical and cultural commonalities between the two countries in our talks, and indicated the potentials of development of relations between the two countries.”

He noted that economic relations, trade exchange were at the core of discussions. Reference was made to the development of relations in the fields of energy, agriculture, infrastructure and water resources management.”

“We support the vision of Mr. Raisi regarding the establishment of sustainable peace, stability and security in the region,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

He added: “There are wide opportunities for developing the partnership between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia, and we commend Iran’s principled positions regarding peace and security in the region.”

Armenian, Azerbaijani border commissions meet in Brussels

Deputy prime ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Brussels on Thursday for the third round of negotiations on delimiting the volatile border between the two states.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Shahin Mustafayev head commissions on border demarcation and delimitation set up by their governments this spring. They chaired the first joint session of the two commissions in May.

The latest session was arranged and facilitated by European Union officials, including Toivo Klaar, the EU's special envoy to the South Caucasus.

Stefano Sannino, the secretary gen-

eral of the EU's External Action Service, greeted the Armenian and Azerbaijani officials at the start of the meeting.

"The European Union urges the sides to take steps to improve security on the ground and to achieve progress on delimitation, Sannino tweeted afterwards.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said that the two sides "continued discussing delimitation issues " in view of understandings reached by Armenia's and Azerbaijan's leaders "in different formats."

They addressed "organizational and procedural issues" and agreed to speed up efforts to work out practical modalities of their joint work, the ministry said in a statement. No other details were reported.

Both the EU and Russia have been trying to facilitate the delimitation process. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday again expressed readiness to provide Soviet-era military maps for that purpose.

Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of Armenia's Security Council, said on October 12 that Baku and Yerevan are planning to both complete the delimitation and sign a bilateral peace treaty before the end of this year. He said they reached such understandings during high-level peace talks that followed the September 13-14 fighting on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

The talks were organized by the EU and the United States.

Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty to be a product of compromise — Putin



Russian President Vladimir Putin says it is too early to speak about the basic elements of the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

During a press conference in Sochi following the trilateral meeting with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Putin said that the future peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be a result of compromises by both sides.

"The peace treaty is not here yet, and it

is too early to speak here about its basic elements, because it is a product of compromises, which should apparently be shown by both sides during a mediated effort, including with the participation of our country, if both sides want," TASS quotes Putin as saying.

Commenting on the question that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan proposed to extend the mandate of the Russian peacekeeping mission in Nagorno Karabakh even for up to 20 years, the Russian leader said that they have discussed it, but added that a joint agreement is necessary for that.

"As far as the issue of peacekeepers is concerned, it is outlined in our joint statement dated November 2020, [issued] when

the conflict was over. There is nothing to add here," he said. "We have discussed it. But our joint agreement is necessary for that."

In his words, the issue of extending the mandate depends on other issues, including a peace treaty and delimitation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

"If those issues are resolved, then the issue of peacekeepers will be a different matter. If they are unsolved, or resolved partially, then the future of our peacekeeping contingent will depend on that," the Russian leader said, adding that Armenia and Azerbaijan "conveyed their words of gratitude to Russia" for its work in Nagorno Karabakh.

Spain's Congress of Deputies expresses solidarity to Armenia, votes against agreement with Azerbaijan

The Congress of Deputies of Spain, the lower house of the parliament, did not approve the international agreement signed with Azerbaijan as a sign of solidarity with Armenia.

In an interview to ARMENPRESS, Spanish member of parliament Jon Inarritu said that the agreement, which was signed in Madrid in December 2021, involved exchange of classified information with Azerbaijan and protection of that information.

But the agreement was not ratified as 174 lawmakers voted against it and 132 voted in favor.

During the debate of the agreement before the voting Jon Inarritu called the signing of such an agreement an "absurdity", especially now "when aggressor Azerbaijan has carried out an attack on Armenia in September, occupying several square kilometers of the territory of Armenia".

"The Azerbaijani regime is corrupt, aggressor and intolerant to dissidents", the lawmaker said, emphasizing the fact of violations of human rights and freedom of speech and the high number of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Another lawmaker Marta Rosique con-



demned the Spanish government for staying silent over the aggression carried out by Azerbaijan against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. She also criticized Spain that it has not yet recognized the Genocide committed against Armenians.

We are mobilized for Ukraine but silent on Armenia: Valerie Boyer shames Europe for gas deal with Azerbaijan



We are rightly mobilized for Ukraine but silent on Armenia, French Senator Valerie Boyer said during a debate on Public Sénat political and parliamentary channel.

“Are the lives of Armenians worth less than those of Ukrainians?” she asked.

She said we have a corrupt and racist state, Azerbaijan attacking the borders of Armenia, with an aim of ethnic cleansing and genocidal pursuit.

“The enemies of Armenia openly say they want to exterminate the Armenians and yet we continue to receive these leaders and Europe buys gas from Azerbaijan with Ursula von der Leyen declaring that Aliyev is a reliable partner,” Boyer said.

Ursula von der Leyen’s complicity with Azerbaijan is shameful, she said, adding that “The energy crisis does not excuse everything, especially when we are faced with real war crimes.”

“France could have done more for Armenia, especially when we had the Presidency of the European Union. Sending observers is the minimum service. In Cyprus or Greece, we also turn a blind eye to the repeated Turkish invasions,” the Senator stated.

French MPs visit Syunik villages affected by Azerbaijani aggression

Syunik Deputy Governor Nare Ghazaryan and Assistant Governor Suren Kesegjian met with members of the delegation of the France-Armenia Friendship Group of the French Parliament that arrived in Goris.

Head of Goris community Arush Arushanyan also participated in the meeting.

The purpose of the delegation’s visit was to get acquainted with the details of the accommodation created in the region.

Representatives of the regional gov-



ernment briefed the French MPs on the situation in Syunik after the Azerbaijani military aggression in September and the problems arising as a result.

The deputy governor thanked the guests for their interest in Syunik and for responding to the problems.

The French MPs noted that they are raising Armenian issues in the parliament and after the recent aggression, they aim to intensify the French and international efforts in this regard.

Nare Ghazaryan and Suren Kesegjian also accompanied the members of the delegation to the villages of Verishen and Vaghatur, which were affected by the military operations, where they saw the consequences of the aggression on the ground.

No misunderstandings between Armenia and Iran – MFA Spokesman



Armenia has no misunderstandings with Iran, Armenian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Vahan Hunanyan said in an interview with Iranian *Mehr* news agency.

Vahan Hunanyan said Armenia and Iran have enjoyed very long historical relations, and these are not limited to government relations.

Describing Iran as a key partner for Armenia, he voiced hope the relations would become stronger in all fields.

“I think we don’t have any misunderstandings with Iran,” he said and added that the opinions of Yerevan and Tehran coincide on most issues.

As a result, the two countries’ relations will get stronger in the future, the Arme-

nian diplomat noted.

Asked about the country’s relation with Azerbaijan, he said, “Armenia seeks to establish peace in the South Caucasus region. In this regard, we entered into negotiations with the Azerbaijani side, but they always raise their maximum demands in the negotiations.”

Noting that all the problems should be solved at the negotiation table, he expressed hope that Azerbaijan, like Armenia, would follow the same procedure at the negotiation table.

Iran's gas exports to Armenia to double – official

Iranian deputy oil minister says the gas exports to Armenia will double in the future, *Mehr News* reports.

Majid Chegeni, the deputy minister of oil for gas affairs and National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) CEO, made the announcement after Iran and Armenia signed a memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation in the energy field earlier today.

The two countries thus extend the “gas



for electricity” deal until 2030.

“Now we export one million cubic

meters of gas to Armenia on a daily basis, which will be doubled based on the new memorandum,” Chegeni said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited in Tehran on November 1 at the invitation of President Ebrahim Raisi, at the head of a high-ranking delegation of political and economic officials, and was officially welcomed by the Iranian president.

by the Iranian president.

Armenia defense spending will increase by 113% in 2023 compared to 2018 - PM

In 2023, the spending in the defense sector of Armenia will increase by 113 percent, or by 270 billion drams, compared to 2018; defense spending in 2023 will amount to 509 billion drams, or \$1.2 billion. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced this in the National Assembly, at Wednesday's joint session of parliamentary standing committees, during the latter's debates on the draft 2023 state budget of Armenia.

“We have undertaken the process of army reforms, a number of legislative

amendments have already been sent to the National Assembly; I hope they will be passed in the near future. Their purpose is to first set a standard, and secondly, to set a standard salary,” he said.

According to Pashinyan, the objective and meaning of this whole process is a transition to a professional army in Armenia, as well as to increase its defense capability.

“Let me stress in particular that the significant increase and reforms of spending

in the defense sector, our goal of transitioning to a professional army, do not in any way contradict the peace agenda adopted by Armenia's government.

The army is one of the most important institutions of the state, which should be established. We have a task to have an army of high standards, which on the other hand does not contradict the peace agenda in any way. Armenia will consistently advance the declared peace agenda,” said Pashinyan.

Economy Minister sees need for increasing number of hotels in Armenia

In July-August 2022, the hotels in Armenia were fully booked, therefore, it is necessary to increase the number of hotels, Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan said during the debate of the 2023 state budget draft at the joint session of parliamentary standing committees.

“Travel agencies of other countries have told us that they have rejected many tourists who wanted to visit Armenia because they couldn't solve their accommo-

dation issues. This first of all relates to Yerevan and Gyumri. In these two cities we have strong deficit in hotel rooms in peak months”, the minister said.

He stated that one of the problems in tourism sector in Armenia is that during summer the hotels are fully booked, but the situation is different in winter months.

“In other words, the problem must be divided into two parts. Obviously, the number of hotels must increase. We con-

sider various opportunities how to do that”, he said.



Armenia's Central bank sets refinancing rate at 10.5%



At a meeting on November 1 the Board of the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) decided to raise the refinancing rate by 0.5 percentage points, setting it to 10.5%.

In September, 2022, the 12-month inflation rose amounting to 9.9%. The 12-month core inflation also increased, reaching 10.5%.

Slowing trends of economic activity are observed in the global economy. The central banks of advanced countries continue to significantly tighten monetary conditions. This is expressed by a certain drop in prices in international commodity markets, however, headline inflation in the main

partner countries of Armenia is still high. Notwithstanding certain recovery in supply chains, risks related to their disruptions in individual markets remain. As a result, weak inflationary effects on the Armenian economy from the global economy are expected.

In the third quarter of 2022, the trends of high activity in the Armenian economy are persisting. The economic growth primarily bears the positive effects of external demand, reflected as a significant increase in the services sector. Continued increase in the inflow of international visitors and money transfers from the Russian Federation contributes to the expanding of demand. This is also expressed in the improvement in Armenia's external balance position and dram exchange rate appreciation. High demand also contributes to the heating of labor market, the expanse of overall inflationary environment and persistence of high inflation expectations.

In current circumstances, the conduct of contractionary and coordinated fiscal and monetary policy is important.

In the current situation, the Board of the CBA finds it appropriate to raise the policy rate. A relatively tightening monetary policy and the dram appreciation will gradually contribute to containing demand and reducing inflationary expectations. The Board of the CBA will be consistent in taking adequate actions to stabilize inflation and absorb any risk of de-anchoring inflation expectations. In accordance with the monetary policy scenario, the 12-month inflation will gradually decrease and stabilize around the 4% target in the medium run.

The Board of the CBA estimates that the risks of inflation deviating from the projected path are mainly balanced; should such risks materialize in either direction, the CBA will respond accordingly to fulfill of the price stability objective.

Armenia unilaterally terminates contract with Jordanian arms-producing company, demands it to pay a fine

The Armenian Ministry of Defense has terminated an agreement with the Jordanian company Jadara Equipment & Defense Systems Co.

A relevant [letter](#), signed by Deputy Defense Minister Karen Brutyan, has been published on the website of the Procurement System of the Armenian Finance Ministry.

The letter says that under the agreement signed between the Ministry of Defense of Armenia and Jadara Equipment & Defense Systems Co, dated August 6, 2021, the company was supposed to deliver the goods envisaged by the contract during 2021.

The Armenian Defense Ministry notified the Jordanian company that it was unilaterally terminating the contract on Oc-

tober 10, 2022 and demanded that the company pay a fine of 23 million drams (about \$57,000) within five days after receiving the notification.

JADARA Equipment & Defense Systems Co PSC is a Jordanian military-industrial company, which produces and sells short and medium range anti-tank systems, as well as Opto-Electronic, Night Vision, and Thermal sighting systems for various military applications.

In September 2022 the company

partnered with Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense to develop a new anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system. The company unveiled the Terminator-FM at ADEX 2022 in Baku.



IMF reaches staff-level agreement with Armenia on \$165.6 mln stand-by loan



International Monetary Fund staff have reached agreement with Armenia on a \$165.6 million, three-year precautionary stand-by lending arrangement, the IMF said on Wednesday.

The fund said the agreement is subject to approval by its executive board, which is expected to consider it next month.

It said the three-year deal would support the Armenian government's economic program to preserve macroeconomic, fiscal, and financial stability, while moving forward with reforms aimed at promoting inclusive growth.

At the request of the Armenian authorities, a staff team from the International Monetary Fund, led by Ms. Iva Petrova, visited Yerevan from September 26 to October 6 to discuss a three-year economic program supported by an IMF precautionary Stand-By Arrangement. At the conclusion of the discussions, including a series of virtual meetings, Ms. Petrova issued the following statement:

"I am pleased to announce that the IMF team and the Armenian authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on a precautionary Stand-By Arrangement for SDR 128.8 million (about \$165.6 million) to support the government's economic program to preserve macroeconomic, fiscal, and financial stability, and to advance reforms to promote inclusive growth. The agreement is subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board, which is expected to consider it in December 2022.

"Guided by sound macroeconomic policies amid significant global and regional challenges, Armenia is on course to achieve growth of about 11 percent in 2022, in part driven by large inflows of external income, capital, and labor into the country. Fiscal overperformance and dram appreciation have contributed to a significant decline in public debt, which is expected to drop to 51 percent of GDP

this year from 60.3 percent of GDP in 2021. While inflation has temporarily increased on the back of supply and demand shocks, the Central Bank of Armenia has proactively raised the policy rate by 625 basis points since December 2020, aiming to steer inflation toward its medium-term target of 4 percent. International reserves have risen, while the dram has appreciated strongly in the past few months. Important structural reforms have taken place in the areas of public financial management, revenue administration, the inflation targeting framework, the financial sector, and governance.

"Economic growth is expected to decelerate in 2023, reflecting weaker external demand and tighter global financial conditions, and to remain in the 4-5 percent range over the medium term. CPI inflation is projected to gradually converge to the CBA's target over the medium term, supported by tight monetary policy and as the impact of external shocks wane. The current account deficit, which has widened with the rapid growth of the economy, is expected to gradually narrow to around 5 percent of GDP. The risks to the outlook are mainly external.

"Given a highly uncertain outlook and overheating risks, the 2023 budget needs to avoid creating excessive demand pressures. Within the budget envelope, priority should be given to high-quality expenditure and strengthening the social safety net. The increase in much needed capital spending should be supported by expanding reforms of the public investment management process to ensure a strategic, transparent, and consistent project selection and timely and efficient implementation. Continued compliance with the rules-based fiscal framework would keep the debt to GDP ratio on a declining path.

"The authorities' efforts to adopt a more transparent, equitable, efficient, and environmentally friendly tax system and a stronger revenue administration will support the government's revenue raising objectives and create space for much needed development spending. Plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government spending, enhance public financial

management—including through robust fiscal risk management, transparency, and governance—and ensure higher-quality public investment are also welcome.

"The current monetary policy stance is appropriate, and further policy changes should remain dependent on the evolution of inflation and inflation expectations. Efforts to foster capital market development and deepen financial inclusion will continue to enhance the effectiveness of the monetary policy transmission mechanism. Staff welcomes the CBA's continued commitment to the existing flexible exchange rate regime, which has served Armenia well in the face of successive external shocks, and to maintaining healthy reserve buffers.

"Thanks to prudent risk management and strong supervision, the banking system is well capitalized and liquid. Continued monitoring of financial sector risks and enhancing the macroprudential tools would help stem risks associated with the rapid rise in housing prices and mortgage lending. Staff welcomes the CBA's plans to strengthen risk-based bank supervision and incentivize banks to improve their risk management capacity, as well as to develop an enhanced bank resolution framework.

"The government's structural reform agenda appropriately focuses on improving the business environment, fostering productivity, reducing unemployment and poverty, and addressing pressing climate mitigation and adaptation challenges. Achieving these objectives requires developing stronger trade links, building infrastructure to support connectivity; improving transportation, land, and water management and encouraging green energy generation; fostering access to financial services and labor force participation; completing governance reforms, and reducing informality. Ambitious digitalization efforts should spearhead public administration reforms and improve public service quality and delivery.

"The IMF team thanks the Armenian authorities, private sector, and development partners for fruitful discussions and cooperation."

Ruben Vardanyan appointed Artsakh's Minister of State

President of the Artsakh Republic Arayik Harutyunyan has signed a decree, releasing Artak Beglaryan from the position of the Minister of State. Ruben Vardanyan will replace him on the post.

According to another decree, an amendment has been made to the decree “On Coordination of the Activities of Ministers by the Minister of State of the Artsakh Republic,” according to which the Minister of State will coordinate the activities of the following ministers:

- 1) Minister of Healthcare
- 2) Minister of Justice
- 3) Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 4) Minister of Agriculture
- 5) Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports



- 6) Minister of Social Development and Migration
- 7) Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure
- 8) Minister of Municipal Engineering
- 9) Minister of Finance and Economy.

Pursuant to another decree of the President signed on the same day, changes and amendments have been made to the de-

creed “On Establishing the Procedure for Organizing the Activities of the Artsakh Republic Government and Other State Administration Bodies,” according to which the Minister of State is also assigned the functions of coordinating the activities of the heads of the following state administration bodies of the Artsakh Republic:

- Head of the State Supervision Service,
- Chairman of the Cadaster and State Property Management Committee,
- Chairman of the Committee on Material Damages,
- Chairman of the State Revenue Committee,
- Chairman of the Management Committee of State Inspectorates,
- Chairman of the Water Committee.

Armenia's territorial integrity cannot be subject to bargaining – Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan

Things are more promising than they were a few months ago – but political will and compromise are needed to find a long-term solution, Armenian Ambassador to UK Varuzhan Nersesyan said as he weighed on perspectives of “just peace” between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In an article published by *The Telegraph*, the Ambassador reminded of the atrocities carried out during the mid-September attack on Armenia's sovereign territory and noted that two years after the fighting stopped, Azerbaijan still holds dozens of Armenian prisoners of war. Furthermore, Azerbaijan's government has announced that it intends to erase Armenian inscriptions on religious sites in the

territory that it occupied in the 2020 war against Nagorno-Karabakh.

“The tragedy in Ukraine has been a useful distraction for Azerbaijan but perhaps it's also a lesson we should all heed. There must be vigilance against any further military escalation and recognition that a clear path towards a comprehensive peace has already been laid out. Since the end of the war in 2020 the Armenian Government has adopted the “peace agenda” and has committed to opening an era of peaceful development in the South Caucasus,” Varuzhan Nersesyan said.

The Ambassador said “Armenia is ready for compromise but one that opens a path for a real and long lasting peace be-



tween neighboring countries.”

“Its territorial integrity cannot be subject to bargaining and Azerbaijan's forces must withdraw from the areas it now occupies since May 12, 2021,” he said.

“The war in Ukraine and the energy crisis will not be enough to provide Azerbaijan with cover for any further aggression. Only constructive engagement, political will and mutual compromises will lead to a just peace for both countries,” the Ambassador noted.

Armenian Security Council Secretary meets head of EU observation capacity mission in Armenia

Secretary of Armenia's Security Council Armen Grigoryan received the head of the EU observation capacity mission in Armenia, Marek Szczygieł the head of the EU observation mission in Georgia. The meeting was also attended by the head of the EU delegation in Armenia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Andrea Victorin.

The Secretary of the Security Council welcomed the visit of the head of the mission to Armenia and expressed satisfaction with the results of bilateral cooperation. The secretary emphasized with confidence that bilateral cooperation has the potential to contribute to the strengthening of the security environment in the region.

Marek Szczygieł the head of the EU

observation capacity mission in Armenia, expressed his gratitude for the support shown at both the state and local levels, in particular, he emphasized the willingness to contribute to bilateral cooperation.

At the meeting, the interlocutors reflected on the activity of the EU civil mission.

Armenian Genocide discussed at UK House of Lords

The Genocide Determination Bill sponsored by Lord David Alton was given a Second Reading in the House of Lords as peers agreed to commit it to a Committee of the whole House for further consideration.

“Next year will mark the 75th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, but we are nowhere near having clear mechanisms to help us deliver on the duty contained therein to prevent the very core of the convention—“never again”—happening all over again,” Lord Alton said at the debate.

Lord Ara Darzi paid tribute to the noble Lord Alton for the passionate and determined way he has pursued this vital issue over many years.

“As the first Armenian in the British Parliament, and as a descendent of a genocide survivor, I owe him a particular debt. I was born in Iraq to Armenian parents made refugees by the 1915 genocide, in which more than 1 million ethnic Armenians were massacred by the Ottomans. I say that I am a genocide survivor, and in 33 countries around the world that description would be acknowledged, yet the country I have made my home is not one of them,” he said.

“My great-grandfather, who lived in Erzurum in what is now north-east Turkey, was executed along with his sons by the Ottoman forces. My grandmother, then just a teenager, escaped with her mother, and the two of them walked barefoot for weeks before finally finding sanctuary in Mosul in northern Iraq. They were the lucky ones. Many other women and children were sent on a death march across the desert from which they would never return. Half a century later, my family and I emigrated from Iraq to Ireland, where I studied medicine, before moving to London in the 1990s, where I have dedicated my career to the NHS,” he noted.

“As the first Armenian in this House,



I was overjoyed when President Biden decided a year ago to break with his predecessors and recognize the Armenian genocide. The vote in the US House of Representatives in October 2020 was overwhelming. It was a hugely emotional moment for me and for Armenians all over the world. Most European countries—including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden—have recognized the Armenian genocide, but the UK has not,” Lord Darzi stated.

He reminded that as Hitler planned the Holocaust in 1939, he asked his fellow Nazis: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

“Unless we, as members of the international community, call out genocidal violence wherever it occurs, its perpetrators will feel encouraged to continue. We should use the experience not to fuel bitterness and revenge but to set a stake in the ground and declare, “Never again”—not just for the Armenians but for people all over the world. We cannot protect the Uighurs in Xinjiang, the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Tigrayans in Ethiopia and others experiencing genocidal attacks in the 21st century without telling the truth about the past. Indeed, sacrificing the truth about the past for the convenience of the present is dangerous. In 2020, the invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan, supported,” Lord Darzi said.

He noted that the bill is not simply about addressing a historic injustice. “It is about how our understanding of the past

shapes our actions in the present. It is about giving the full message of meaning when we say, “Never again”. I ask that your Lordships give the Bill your full support,” he said.

“I was very struck by the speech of the noble Lord, Lord Darzi. I have read *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by the Jewish writer, Franz Werfel. It is a novel about the experiences of the Armenians during their genocide. It is a very powerful account. It is not surprising that Adolf Hitler had that Jewish writer’s books burned, because, as the noble Lord told us, Hitler himself said, “Who now remembers the Armenians?”—effectively, “Why should we worry when nobody else seems to worry?”” Lord Alton said.

“I have been to Nagorno-Karabakh with my noble friend Lady Cox. I took my daughter with me, and said to her, “If ever you go into public life, speak up for those for whom there is no voice”. My grandfather gave me pictures that he brought back from the Holy Land during the First World War that showed executed Armenians who had been murdered as the Ottoman Turks retreated from Jerusalem. We saw those same photographs in the genocide museum in Yerevan. I was personally very taken not only by what the noble Lord, Lord Darzi, had to say but by what everyone has said in this debate,” he noted.

“This Bill should be committed to a Committee and we should have further discussion. We should thrash out the details and honor the promises that were given to me by two former Foreign Secretaries, who are also now former Prime Ministers. We should be as good as our word in politics. They said that this would be reformed. This Bill provides an opportunity for it to be reformed. I commend it to the House.,” Lord Alton said.

Armenian Ombudswoman, President of “Institute of Liberal Politics” sign MoU on joining efforts in fighting hate speech

On November 3, the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, Ms. Kristinne Grigoryan, and the President of “The Institute of Liberal Politics” NGO, Ms. Tatevik Matinyan, signed a memorandum of cooperation, the Office of the Ombudsperson said.

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Armenia, H.E. Mr. Nico Schermers, attended the ceremony.

By signing the memorandum, the parties agreed to cooperate in defense of human dignity and freedom from discrimination, regardless of gender, race, skin color, language, religion, political or other



opinions, national or social origin, belonging to a national minority, property, birth status or any other factor of identity as well as to combine their efforts within the framework of the “Combating hate speech

for the sake of pluralism and tolerant, democratic society” project funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Republic of Armenia.

During the meeting preceding the memorandum signing, the Defender and Ms. Matinyan expressed their gratitude to H.E. Mr. Schermers for providing productive assistance in the fight against hate speech. In response, the Ambassador expressed hope that

due to joint work, it will be possible to develop an effective toolkit that will be applicable to prevent the dissemination of hate speech not only in Armenia but also in any other country, including the Netherlands.

Australia acknowledges Azerbaijani aggression

The Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has finally named Azerbaijan as the responsible party for a specific series of crimes against Armenian prisoners of war, in response to the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU)’s latest appeal to the country’s Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong.

The ANC-AU received correspondence articulating what represents a significant shift in narrative from DFAT, which had until now preferred statements calling on both sides to show restraint, refraining from joining allies in naming Azerbaijan as the sole aggressor in the South Caucasus conflict targeting Armenia and Artsakh.

The department stated: “The government shares the international community’s condemnation of the deliberate targeting of civilians and mistreatment of military personnel, in particular the reported executions of Armenian troops by Azerbaijani forces and mutilation of a dead female soldier.”

The ANC-AU welcomed the statement



received from DFAT on behalf of Minister Wong.

“For the first time, Canberra has called out instances of Azerbaijani aggression against the Republic of Armenia, without resorting to both-sideist, victim-blaming rhetoric, which our community has become accustomed to during the Nagorno Karabakh conflict,” said ANC-AU Executive Director Michael Kolokossian.

“We welcome this as a step in the right direction for Canberra and one that is more aligned with the position of her allies. We now expect our Government will bring Australia to parity with the United States, France and others by calling on the aggressor regime of Azerbaijan to withdraw its invading troops from Armenia’s sovereign

borders,” added Kolokossian.

Minister Wong also delivered a similar response to the National Council of Churches of Australia (NCCA) General Secretary Elizabeth Stone, who had joined in conveying the Armenian-Australian community’s concerns over the brutal assault and invasion against Armenia and the desecration of cultural and religious heritage sites in the occupied areas of the Republic of Artsakh.

Minister Wong wrote: “We are concerned by recent reports of damage to Armenian religious and historical buildings, which continues the disappointing pattern of damage and misuse of civilian, cultural, religious and historical sites in and around Nagorno Karabakh since the 1990s.”

The Armenian National Committee of Australia extended warm gratitude to all community and religious organizations, grassroots community members and local, state and federal political leaders for advocating for this shift in position by the Australian Government.

Armenian companies to present their products during trade show in US

For already the second time Armenian businessmen will have an opportunity to present their products in the United States on the sidelines of the Armenian-American Business Bridge exhibition-festival.

The event will take place in the US city of Glendale on December 1-8, President of the Council of the International Business Relations Support Mariam Manukyan told a press conference in Armenpress, adding that this year the event will have more participants and products.

“More than 500 applications were submitted by the Armenian companies for participation in the exhibition. Both large and small and medium enterprises have applied. 40 companies have been selected. I want to note that it was very difficult to select. Several criteria have been taken into account, in particular, the companies

must have had operated at least for 3 years and the turnover must have started from 20 million”, Mariam Manukyan said, adding that several small companies have been provided with an opportunity to be presented in a single pavilion with several product samples.

The selected companies present different products – textile, shoes, bags, canned food, dried fruits, jewelry, tourism, IT, etc.

Member of the Council of the International Business Relations Support Gevorg Aghabalyan said that major activities are being carried out with Armenian companies.

“There are technical criteria in the US market which the companies need to meet in order to be able to enter an international market. Unfortunately, even large companies, the Armenian manufacturers often are not ready for that criteria. Our working

group has made all efforts to ensure certification, licensing so that our companies will be able to sell their products without any obstacle”, he said.

During the festival the Armenian companies will not only have an opportunity to sell their products, but also to establish business ties. The participants are going to have a busy agenda as meetings are expected with the representatives of the Chambers of Commerce of Mexico, Thailand and Vietnam.

Despite being held for just the 2nd time, the exhibition-festival’s results are already visible. More than 10 companies, which participated in the previous event, have already managed to find partners in the US and export their goods.

Ohan Durian’s statue unveiled in Yerevan’s Freedom Square



The memorial statue of renowned Armenian late conductor Ohan Durian was inaugurated on November 4 in Yerevan’s Freedom Square, in the area near the National Opera and Ballet Academic Theater, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of birth of maestro.

The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, his spouse Anna

Hakobyan, President Vahagn Khachaturyan, ministers, other top officials and cultural figures.

In his remarks PM Pashinyan said he was shocked when he saw the photo of the sculpture. “For me, Ohan Durian was just like this. He didn’t look like this on stage. I remember the documentary of Stas Namin about Onan Durian where Durian wears a short-sleeved shirt during the rehearsal. I was shocked by the work and look of his arms, those muscular, impressive arms, because in a tailcoat Durian is not visible and fully understandable”, he said, congratulating the authors of this initiative.

Author of the idea Vahan Vardapetyan called the ceremony “The third return of Ohan Durian”. “1975 – a return to the Soviet Armenia, 1991 – a return to inde-

pendent Republic of Armenia and today, November 4, 2022, a return to the third or eternal return. A world-renowned conductor, a great citizen and intellectual, but in my own description – the power of the people returned the freest and most independent citizen of Armenia Ohan Durian to the Freedom Square, to the area near the Opera Theater named after A. Spendiaryan”, Vardapetyan said, calling the selection of the location symbolic.

Durian’s widow expressed gratitude to the authors of the initiative. She wished peace to Armenia, wisdom to the people and achievements in cultural and other areas.

The author of the sculpture is Getik Baghdasaryan, the architect is Sahak Saffaryan and the author of the glass pedestal Arsen Petrosyan.

Roxanne Makasdjian appointed as expert at California Governor’s Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education

California Governor Gavin Newsom named nine leading academic experts and advocates to serve on the Governor’s Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education, his Office said in a statement.

The statement says that the decision came “in the wake of a disturbing increase in anti-Semitic hate”.

The new members are distinguished leaders and experts in Holocaust and genocide education, representing organizations that reflect the diverse groups impacted by the Holocaust and genocide throughout history. Among them is Roxanne Makas-

djian, Executive Director of the Genocide Education Project.

The Governor’s Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education is tasked with promoting Holocaust and genocide education throughout California to provide young people with the tools necessary to recognize and respond to bigotry or discrimination on campus.

“An attack on any of our communities is an attack against all Californians and our state will not stand by as the forces of hate instigate acts of violent extremism that put lives at risk,” said Governor Newsom.

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) welcomed and congratulated Roxanne Makasdjian on appointment.



Armenia's HayPost releases new stamp in honor of 2021 Aurora Prize laureate Julienne Lusenge



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has yet again teamed up with HayPost, Armenia's national postal operator, to issue a postage stamp featuring 2021 Aurora Prize Laureate Julienne Lusenge. A human rights defender and co-founder of Women's Solidarity for Inclusive Peace and Development (SOFEPADI) and Fund for Congolese Women (FFC), her boundless courage and tireless activism have shone a light on the desperate plight of thousands of Congolese women subjected to horrific sexual abuse amidst the civil war in the country. Julienne Lusenge was named the Laureate at the Ceremony that took place in October 2021 on San Lazzaro Island in Venice, Italy.

"I'm deeply grateful to Aurora and HayPost for this honor and recognition. Seeing my face on the stamp makes me very emotional, as I know that people from all over the world will now be able to learn about the cause I'm fighting for. Aurora brings a message of peace, solidarity, and support to modern-day heroes around the world risking everything to help others and helps raise the voices of the silenced victims of atrocities. I'm humbled to be part

of the Initiative's community," said 2021 Aurora Prize Laureate Julienne Lusenge.

Aurora has been releasing stamps featuring the Aurora Prize Laureates annually since 2017. The new edition, designed by Alla Mingalyova, Art Director of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, is also a fundraising tool. Attached to the first-class stamp that costs 350 AMD is a donation coupon for 150 AMD. From every sold item, HayPost will transfer the 150 AMD donation to Aurora.

"This is our sixth stamp released in cooperation with the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. HayPost highly values this partnership and appreciates the opportunity to empower modern humanitarians saving lives and giving others hope. The impact that Julienne Lusenge has had upon the lives of the Congolese women is beyond impressive, and we admire her work very much. We are honored to support her while continuing to raise global awareness of Aurora's mission," said Araik Abrahamyan, Interim CEO of HayPost.

As the 2021 Aurora Prize Laureate, Julienne Lusenge has received a \$1,000,000 grant and a chance to continue the cycle of giving by supporting organizations that help people in need. Considering the acute needs of the people of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) affected by the 2020 war, she has selected 13 projects to receive \$250,000 of the Prize funds and use them

to alleviate the suffering of the local population. The Aurora Co-Founders have matched this contribution, bringing the total amount to \$500,000.

In addition, Julienne Lusenge has distributed funds between three organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that support grassroots women's organizations, empower survivors of gender-based violence and reintegrate internally displaced persons:

- In Ituri Province, the Association of Mothers for Development and Peace (AMDP) will directly help over 2,560 people, mostly women and girls, giving local population access to food, proper healthcare, legal support, and education.
- Around 12,000 widows, orphans, and internally displaced persons in the city and territory of Beni will have free access to drinking water thanks to Fund for Congolese Women (FFC).
- In North Kivu and Ituri Province, the League for Congolese Solidarity (LSC) will empower 1584 victims of gender-based violence and conflict who will directly benefit from programs designed to help them thrive.

Since its launch, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative has benefitted over 2,700,000 people worldwide. To join Aurora's vision of a better future and help us make a difference, please support the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative by making a donation.

EU commends willingness to Armenia, Azerbaijan to continue addressing border-related issues



The EU commends the willingness of Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue working on addressing border-related issues. Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Se-

curity Policy of the EU Nabila Massrali made the statement after the EU hosted in Brussels the 3rd meeting of Armenia's and Azerbaijan's border commissions.

This meeting followed agreements reached at the highest level between President of the European Council Charles Michel, President Ilham Aliyev and Prime

Minister Nikol Pashinyan during their trilateral Brussels meetings.

"The EU commends the constructive atmosphere in which the meeting was conducted, and the willingness of the parties to continue working on addressing border-related issues, as well as to improve the security situation," the Spokesperson said.

Under the spell of Ararat: Armenian exhibition in the Netherlands attracts 90 000 visitors



The “Under the spell of Ararat: Treasures from ancient Armenia” exhibition in the Netherlands has over 90 000 visitors over six months, Armenia’s Ambassador to the Netherlands Tigran Balayan informs.

The exhibition opened at the Drents Museum on May 11 in the presence of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and run through October 30.

Visitors of *Under the spell of Mount Ararat* went on a journey through the rich history of Armenia. From the Stone Age, in which *homo erectus* travelled from Africa to Eurasia to settle in what is now Armenia, via the first important leaders who had themselves buried in monumental mounds around 1500 BC, and the Kingdom of

Urartu, to the great realm of King Tiridates III (AD 287-330), who made Christianity the state religion.

One of the exhibition’s highlights was a relic of Noah’s Ark. Saint Jacob of Nisibis is said to have found this piece of wood from the Ark at the foot of Mount Ararat in the 4th century AD. The relic is kept in the oldest cathedral in the world: Etchmiadzin Cathedral in Armenia.

In September it was named the Best Exhibition of the Netherlands 2022.

The prize is presented annually by the Dutch Museumtijdschrift art magazine. A jury of experts decides on the ten nominees, after which the public is asked to vote. The winning museum receives a prize of 10,000 euros.



World-famous soprano Hibla Gerzmava to perform in Armenia for the first time

The world-famous soprano Hibla Gerzmava will perform in Armenia for the first time during the Yerevan Perspectives 23rd International Music Festival, the Festival said in a statement.

The concert will be held on November 12th at 19:00, at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall.

Conductor is Brian Castles-Onion.

The Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra led by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Eduard Topchyan will participate in the concert.

The program includes arias from famous operas.

Hibla Gerzmava is one of the most sought-after singers on the world opera stage. Brilliant and genuine, emotional, and passionate, she performs the leading female roles in the most famous operas. She brilliantly interprets the characters of her heroines, not only guided by a director but also following her own intuition. She



received standing applause at London’s Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Vienna State Opera, Milan’s La Scala, the Bolshoi, and the Mariinsky Theatres.

Hibla Gerzmava’s creative biography is rich in significant, historic events. In 2001, she created the festival “Hibla Gerzmava Invites...”, within the frame of which historical series of concerts happened in Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre, in Vienna in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein, at Carnegie Hall in New

York, and in St. Moritz, Switzerland and other most prestigious venues of the world.

February 2014, Hibla took part in the Closing Ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, performing the Final Song “Olympic Waltz”.

A virtuoso vocalist, Hibla Gerzmava appears on the major opera stages as well as captures the hearts from smaller stages throughout the world. Hibla Gerzmava has sung at the Théâtre du Châtelet and the Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Teatro Comunale in Florence, the Sofia Opera, the Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, the Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo, and made her Royal Opera House debut in Covent Garden in London, at the Metropolitan Opera, the Bavarian State Opera and the Rome Opera, at the Palais Garnier and many other places.

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