

“10 million trees shall be planted by 10 million Armenians on the 10th day of the 10th month” – PM sows cedar seeds as part of new initiative



PRESS OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ARMENIA
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Nikol Pashinyan traveled to Lori Marz of Armenia on March 7. Accompanied by Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Suren Papikyan and Governor of Lori Marz Andrei Ghukasyan, the Prime Minister first inspected the newly refurbished Gulagarak road. Note that the 2.5 km-long road section was completely repaired in 2019.

“This is the road leading to the Stepanavan Arboretum - one of the most picturesque and rare destinations in Armenia. Due to this road’s poor state, the flow of tourists to this important venue was blocked for a long time. About 25,000 people come here every year, and now this number is expected to increase by 10%. The construction of this road will have an economic chain effect,” Nikol Pashinyan said, adding that our country boasted a 43% increase in inbound tourism, while some 1.9 million foreign tourists arrived in Armenia last year.

“This means that we have increased the level of our national security, since the better our citizens know their homeland, the more their perception of the homeland changes,” the Prime Minister said.

The Head of Government next visited the arboretum to get acquainted with the species of trees growing here. He sowed cedar seeds, which will be planted on October 10 as part of his initiative to plant 10 million trees coun-

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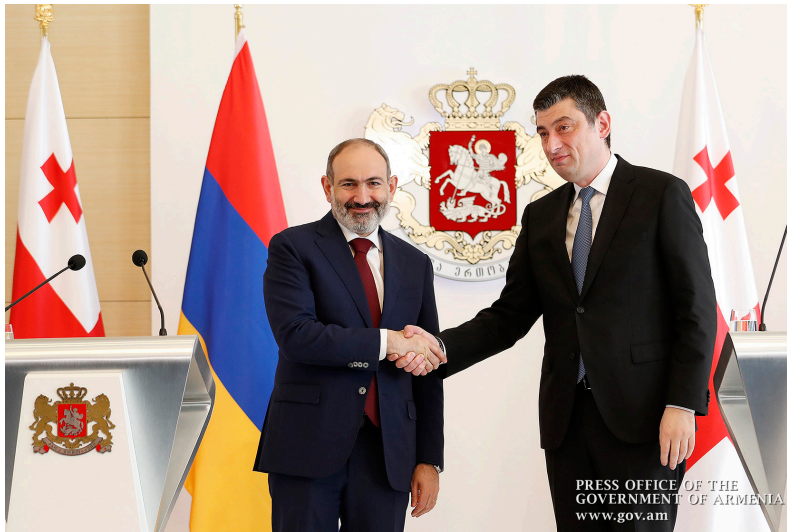
Development of relations with Georgia among Armenia's foreign policy priorities – PM

Further development of relations with Georgia is one of Armenia's foreign policy priorities, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said after a meeting with his Georgian counterpart Giorgi Gakharia in Tbilisi.

“It is beyond doubt that the centuries-old friendship built on common values and historical heritage provides a solid foundation and fertile ground for our cooperation,” he said.

“I am pleased to note that new factors have emerged today that make our friendship inseparable and further strengthen our desire for cooperation. It is first and foremost a shared vision of our two peoples of building a future based on democratic values that is no longer irrevocable in us and has gained the power of faith,” the Prime Minister stated.

He added that the victory of democracy and establishment of rule of law open up new horizons for the expansion of cooperation between the two countries in most different spheres.



PM Pashinyan said the meeting with Giorgi Gakharia was a good chance to continue discussions that started in October 2019 in Yerevan.

“We hailed the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission after a long break. We also referred to the need for consistent implementation of promising projects in the transport, energy and other fields. The importance of developing the transit potential of the two countries was underlined. This is not just about land routes, but also about electricity and tele-

communications (internet / cable),” the Armenian PM stated.

The Prime Ministers of the two countries discussed cooperation in a number of fields, including high technologies, education and science. The emphasized the importance of links between the youth.

Speaking about regional security and peace, the Prime Ministers agreed that the Armenian-Georgian partnership is one of the most important guarantees of stability in the region.

Nikol Pashinyan said peaceful negotiations are the only way for solving regional issues, and there is no alternative to this.

“I am also sure that every conflict has its own peculiarities. In this respect, I attach great importance to maintaining a balanced position on sensitive issues,” he added.

He emphasized the role of the Armenian-Georgian community in the development of traditional brotherly ties between the two countries.

New projects of JHM Foundation and TUMO center in tech education presented to PM Pashinyan

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received founder of JHM Foundation, benefactor Lysa Grigorian and CEO of Tumo Center for Creative Technologies Marie Lou Papazian.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia, the guests presented to Pashinyan the pending projects and events in the sphere of tech education among children and youngsters, particularly in Gyumri and other cities of the country. They mentioned that investors now have trust in the Government as a result of which such projects are brought to



life and new initiatives emerge.

PM Pashinyan showed interest in the ideas and initiatives presented to him, noting that the Government highlights the activities of JHM and TUMO. Nikol Pash-

inyan emphasized that TUMO has become Armenia's brand in the international arena and the Government expresses support to the expected projects. Nikol Pashinyan added that TUMO's programs are in line with the vision of future of the Government, as well as with Government's priorities for education. According to Nikol Pashinyan, they are aimed at re-modeling of specializations for fitting them with market demands. “It's important that your projects are not just acts of charity but investment in the future”, Pashinyan said.

Armenian Parliament Approves Asset Seizures



(RFE/RL -Yerevan) - Armenia's parliament passed in the first reading on March 5 a government bill allowing authorities to confiscate private properties and other assets deemed to have been acquired illegally.

Under the package of legal amendments drafted by the Armenian government late last year, prosecutors will be able to investigate individuals in case of having "sufficient grounds to suspect" that the market value of their assets exceeds their "legal incomes" by more than 25 million drams (\$52,400).

Should the prosecutors find such discrepancies they can ask courts to nationalize those assets even if their owners are not found guilty of corruption or other criminal offenses. The latter will have to prove the legality of their holdings if they are to retain them.

During a parliament debate on Wednesday, Justice Minister Rustam Badasyan insisted that corruption suspects, notably current and former state officials, are the main targets of the bill portrayed by the government as a major anti-corruption measure. The authorities will also use it against crime figures and carriers of "criminal subculture," he said.

"Nobody beyond this circle can fall under the

jurisdiction of this law except in cases where assets were artificially registered in a particular person's name," Badasyan told lawmakers.

The minister thus sought to allay fears that many well-to-do Armenians will now risk losing their properties. He specifically ruled out the confiscation of assets acquired with remittances received from abroad.

The bill was tentatively backed by 100 members of the 132-seat National Assembly. They included deputies from the ruling My Step bloc and the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK).

Still, LHK leader Edmon Marukyan voiced some misgivings about the effectiveness of the measure. He said that corrupt officials who registered their wealth in their relatives' name may well be let off the hook. Marukyan said his party will propose a number of amendments when the bill is debated in the second reading.

The opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) also said that it will propose changes to the bill. BHK deputies abstained in Thursday's parliament vote.

Other critics of the government have challenged the legality of the government plans for asset seizures. They also claim that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is intent on a far-reaching "redistribution of property" in the country.

Pashinyan has denied having such plans. He insisted in December that the planned asset forfeiture is essential for rooting out corruption and will not be arbitrary.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan openly objected to the bill at the time, however. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, the former banker said he is worried that it could scare away investors and lead to capital flight from Armenia.

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trywide. The Premier called on our compatriots to follow his example, sow the seeds of their own trees and plant them.

Aida Aghajanyan, a student from Charentsavan Secondary School No. 2, joined the Prime Minister, who wrote a letter to the Minister of the Environment Eric Grigoryan about the need to plant trees throughout Armenia. Aida Aghajanyan sowed ash seeds. Tree seeds were also sown by Suren Papikyan and Minister of the Environment Eric Grigoryan.

According to Mr. Grigoryan, the idea of planting 10 million trees has to do with 10 million Armenians living around the world. The Minister noted that now we are interconnected by something new that will be a driving force behind unity. The Prime Minister followed up: "You can plant a tree in the name of a loved one, relative, parent, ancestors. We need to invest spiritual, civic and national contents. We invite all Diaspora Armenians to take part in this initiative. Dear compatriots, 10 million trees shall thereby be planted by 10 million Armenians on the 10th day of the 10th month."

The Head of Government discussed development prospects with Arboretum's representatives, highlighting the need for consistent work to attract tourists. Nikol Pashinyan praised the work done by Arboretum Manager Vitaly Leonovich and instructed to present him with a state award.

Armenian Lawmakers to have unfettered access to detainees

The Armenian parliament accepted on March 6 an opposition proposal to give its members unfettered access to people held in police custody.

An Armenian law already allows parliament deputies to visit criminal suspects and convicts for the purpose of protecting their rights. But such visits can be banned or restricted by investigators.

An amendment to that law drafted by the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK) would lift this restriction. The National Assembly passed it in the first reading by 77 votes to 21, with 22 abstentions, despite objections voiced by some senior pro-government lawmakers.

One of them, Nikolay Baghdasaryan, said the existing legal mechanism contains sufficient safeguards against mistreatment of detainees. "This is why the parliament



committee on legal affairs gave a negative assessment [of the proposed amendment,]" he said before the vote.

LHK leader Edmon Marukyan sought to dispel concerns that criminal suspects' unrestricted contacts with parliamentarians could make it harder for law-enforcement bodies to solve crimes. He also argued that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan advocated a similar bill when he was in opposition to Armenia's former leadership.

"If this bill is not passed now it will mean that there is no difference between its interpretations by the current and former authorities," said Marukyan.

Another opposition deputy, Naira Zohrabyan of the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK), voiced support for the LHK proposal. She said that she has been unfairly barred from entering detention centers "on numerous occasions."

The LHK won sufficient support from deputies from the ruling My Step bloc to push the bill through the parliament. My Step's Sisak Gabrielyan said some changes could be made in the bill before its passage in the second and final reading. In particular, he suggested that the parliament consider banning deputies from visiting their relatives suspected or accused of various crimes.

Armenian schools to reopen amid coronavirus fears

Armenia's universities and schools will resume classes on March 9 one week after being closed by the government following the first case of coronavirus confirmed in the country.

The government has reported no new cases of the virus since then. Health Minister Arsen Torosyan said on Friday that all 31 persons placed under quarantine on March 1 continue to "feel well" and show no respiratory disease symptoms.

They were isolated at a hotel in the resort town of Tsaghkadzor because of being in physical contact with a 29-year-old Armenian man who tested positive for the virus after returning from Iran last week. Earlier this week, Armenian authorities tightened controls at the partly closed Armenian-Iranian border.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting in Yerevan on Thursday, Education Minister Arayik Harutiunyan said there is no reason to extend the one-week closure of the



universities, schools and kindergartens. A senior official from his ministry, Ashot Arshakyan, told the Armenpress news agency afterwards that they will reopen on Monday.

The first coronavirus case also led to the last-minute cancellation by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of a March 1 demonstration which was due to mark the 12th anniversary of the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan. Even so, the Armenian author-

ities did not ban or restrict other public events in the country.

In another sign of their confidence that Armenia is not at risk of a major coronavirus outbreak, Pashinyan announced on Friday that he will start campaigning next week for a "Yes" vote in the April 5 referendum on constitutional changes drafted by his administration. He said he will visit all Armenian cities and towns and hold rallies there.

Turkey will not play a role in Karabakh conflict settlement – Armenian MFA

Turkey cannot play a role in the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Spokesperson for the Armenian Foreign Ministry Anna Naghdalyan has said.

The comments follow a meeting between Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Cavusoglu advised the Co-Chairs to produce more in terms of a settlement for the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan responded with the words from the New



Testament.

"Mevlut Cavusoglu's advice to OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs on Nagorno Kara-

bakh conflict invites reflection on Luke 4:23 – 'Physician, heal thyself',” Minister Mnatsakanyan said in a Twitter post.

“With its unfriendly policy towards Armenia and the Armenian people, which is also reflected in the unilateral military and political support to Azerbaijan in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkey cannot play any role in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict,” Anna Naghdalyan said.

UAE evacuates Arab nationals from China, evacuees to receive medical care at Emirates Humanitarian City

ABU DHABI, 4th March, 2020 (WAM) -- The United Arab Emirates has coordinated the evacuation of Arab nationals from Wuhan City in China. The evacuees will be received at the newly established Emirates Humanitarian City in the UAE, and will undergo medical testing and monitoring to ensure their health and safety.

The move follows the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, to establish a healthcare facility that will provide the individuals hailing from neighboring Arab countries with the necessary monitoring and preventative medical care following their evacuation



from the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak - China's Wuhan City.

A special aircraft carrying some 215 individuals from Wuhan was equipped with HEPA cabin air filtrations systems, medical supplies and equipment necessary to carry out the evacuation procedure, along with medical response teams and cabin crew trained to carry out the evacuation.

The Emirates Humanitarian City has

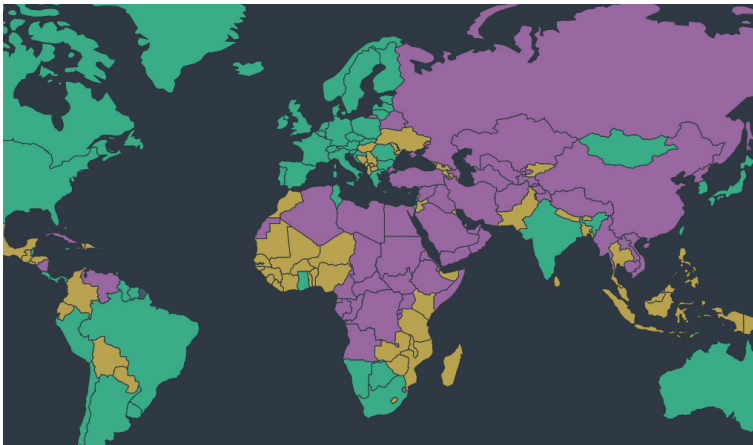
been set up as per the highest of standards to facilitate high-quality care for individuals admitted, ensuring their privacy and dignity are maintained throughout their stay.

Individuals will undergo a 14-day quarantine period during which they will undertake the necessary medical and laboratory tests, and be monitored to ensure their health and safety.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the UAE Embassy in China have coordinated with the embassies of the countries concerned to organize the evacuation process as part of the UAE's continuous efforts to enhance cooperation with the Chinese government to contain the spread of the virus.

WAM/Nour Salman/Rasha Abubaker

Freedom in the World 2020: Republics of Armenia and Artsakh rated as 'partly free'



Armenia and Artsakh have been rated as "partly free" in a new report published by the Freedom House

In the reports titled [Freedom in the World 2020: A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy](#) the Washington-based human rights watchdog notes that democracy is under assault around the globe, and the effects are evident not just in authoritarian states,

those making gains by nearly two to one, marking the 14th consecutive year of deterioration in global freedom. During this period, 25 of the world's 41 established democracies experienced net losses.

Armenia's neighbor Georgia is also ranked as "partly free," while Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran are all labeled as "not free."

but also in countries with a long track record of upholding basic rights and freedoms.

According to the report, countries that suffered setbacks in 2019 outnumbered

European Economic Union Members Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus also have the "not free" status, while Kyrgyzstan is "partly free."

Of the 195 countries assessed, 83 (43 percent) were rated Free, 63 (32 percent) were Partly Free, and 49 (25 percent) were Not Free. The share of Free countries has declined by 3 percentage points over the last decade, while the percentage of Partly Free and Not Free countries rose by two and one points, respectively.

Freedom in the World is an annual global report on political rights and civil liberties, composed of numerical ratings and descriptive texts for each country and a select group of territories.

The 2018 edition covers developments in 195 countries and 14 territories from January 1, 2017, through December 31, 2017.

iGorts: Armenia launching program for Diaspora professionals

The Republic of Armenia's Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs is launching "iGorts", an unprecedented program that invites Diaspora Armenian professionals to work in Armenia's state institutions.

Within the framework of the program, Diaspora Armenian professionals/specialists will be placed in government agencies in need of their expertise and will have the opportunity to lend their experience and knowledge toward improving and developing the state institution and its policies and



programs.

To apply for the program, one needs to have a master's degree or higher, and be willing to live and work in Armenia for one year.

Program costs for the participants will be covered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in the form of round-trip air ticket and monthly fee (336.000 AMD) to cover living expenses.

The program will begin on July 1, 2020, and last 12 months

High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan briefed Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the details of the program.

Armenia receives grant from EBRD to light up city of Gyumri

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Ministry of Finance of Armenia and the Municipality of Gyumri have signed an agreement to allocate a grant of €2 million to support an ongoing EBRD investment in modernizing roads and street lighting in the city of Gyumri.

In May 2016, the EBRD committed €22 million to finance a road and pavement rehabilitation programme in Gyumri, the second-largest city in Armenia. The financing funded the rehabilitation of the city's major streets, as well as the modernization of its street lighting system, which was achieved by introducing new energy-efficient technologies.

The E5P grant will support the EBRD loan of €4 million to make the lighting system in Gyumri more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The refurbishment will introduce new energy-efficient LED lighting, a control and monitoring system, new poles and power cables.

This will reduce energy consumption and minimize operating and maintenance costs, resulting in better service quality and improved environmental standards. The new LED lighting is expected to cut the cost of energy consumption significantly and will result in annual electricity cost savings for the municipality.

Gyumri, located some 125 kilometers north-west of Yerevan, suffered a major earthquake in 1988 which left the city in ruins. Gyumri has since been rebuilt and



is an important economic center of commercial significance and touristic appeal, which will be further enhanced by an improved urban infrastructure. The project will create jobs and help the 146,000 inhabitants of Gyumri and visitors enjoy better, safer streets.

Dimitri Gvindadze, EBRD Head of Yerevan Resident Office, said: "This project will improve safety and quality of life in Gyumri. We are grateful to our partners, the EU and all contributors to E5P fund, for supporting us in this important project"

The E5P supports Armenia with a pool of grants of €23 million. The European Union (EU) is the largest contributor to the Armenian window of the E5P fund, with a contribution of €10 million. Other contributors include: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the Taiwan Business – EBRD Technical Cooperation Fund. Armenia is both a beneficiary and a contributor, having contributed €1 million.

The grants help Armenia improve energy

efficiency, contributing to energy security and economic competitiveness, while having a positive impact on the environment. The Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, commented that "energy efficiency and renewable energy are the EU's priorities in Armenia; the EU's contribution to this programme shows its willingness to help Armenians foster their energy independence".

The E5P is a €220 million multi-donor fund initiated during the Swedish Presidency of the European Union in 2009. The main objective of the E5P Fund is to use grants to leverage loans dedicated to municipal infrastructure projects, for example the rehabilitation of water and wastewater systems, solid waste management, street lighting and the insulation of public buildings, combining a strong commitment to reforms and policy dialogue.

Transport, energy and the environment are areas covered by the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). As part of the CEPA implementation, the country has the ambitious goal to align its legal framework with the EU energy law.

The E5P Fund in Armenia has been recently extended until the end of 2029. Moreover, in 2019 the EU launched the High-Level Energy Efficiency Initiative so that the EU and international finance institutions can step up cooperation for large-scale energy efficiency measures.

Armenian Central Bank issues three collector coins

The Central Bank of Armenia has issued three collector coins: Khrimyan Hayrik-200 (silver), Jansem-100 (silver), Jansem-100 (gold).

Khrimyan Hayrik-200

Mkrtich I Vanetsi Khrimyan (Khrimyan Hayrik, 1820-1907) is a public, political and cultural figure, Catholicos of All Armenians since 1893.

He received informal education at parochial schools on Lim and Ktuts islands in Lake Van (Vaspourakan Province, Western Armenia). He founded Armenian periodicals "Artsvi Vaspourakan" (1855) and "Artsvik Taron" (1863), and established Zharangavorats schools (schools for clergymen) at Varagavanq Monastery and St. Karapet Monastery of Moush. In 1854 Khrimyan became a celibate priest (vardapet) and in 1868 he was consecrated as bishop.

He appealed to the authorities of a number of European countries to settle the Armenian Issue diplomatically. In 1878 he headed the Armenian delegation at the Congress of Berlin. He supported the creation and operation of "Black Cross" and "Protector of Homeland", underground organizations in Van and Karin, respectively, fighting for national liberation, for which he was exiled to Jerusalem. As the Catholicos of All Armenians, he continued his national liberation activities.

He authored books that tackled religious, philosophical, poetic and other relevant topics, by which he expressed the emotions and suffering of the people.

Obverse: the building of the Khrimyan Museum-gallery, a rosace, a fragment from the "Metal scoop" spring – monument (author – Areg Israyelyan), a behest by Khrimyan Hayrik and his signature.



Reverse: a portrait of Khrimyan Hayrik. Designed by Eduard Kurghinyan.

Jansem-100 (silver)

Jansem (Hovhannes Semerdjian, 1920-2013) is a French-Armenian painter, a Foreign Member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

In 1922 Jansem emigrated with his family from Turkey to Thessaloniki and then to Paris. He studied at Montparnasse Free Academy, and in 1939 graduated from the Paris High School of Decorative Arts.

Jansem created dozens of artworks with national motifs, thematic groups of paintings and portraits. His distinctive works are realistic and penetrated with humaneness. Expressive light colors in combination with sensual drawing make faces and movements of the represented figures more impressive and help to go insight into the aura of painting.

Jansem was honored with a number of international and state awards, including Order of St. Mesrop Mashtots (2002) and Order of the French Legion of Honor (2003), Order of Honor of the Republic of Armenia (2010).

Jansem's works are exhibited in many countries of the world. Many paintings are exposed in the National Gallery of Armenia, and the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute exhibits the famous "Genocide" (1998-2001) group of paintings.

Obverse: a fragment from the "Poppies" (1982) painting.

Reverse: a portrait of Jansem and a fragment from the "Woman in yellow" (1968) painting.

Designed by Lusine Lalayan.

Jansem-100 (gold)

Obverse: a fragment from the "Woman with Masks" (1978) painting.

Reverse: a portrait of Jansem.

Designed by Eduard Kurghinyan.

Notice

Collector coins are made of precious metals and are issued to present to the society the national, international, historical and cultural, spiritual and other values of the country, to immortalize these values in the metal and to meet the demands of the numismatic market.

Like any other currency the collector coins have face value which makes them the means of payment. However, the face value of these coins is much lower than their cost price which includes the cost of the precious metal used for manufacturing of the coin, mintage and other expenses.

Low face value and high cost price allow these coins to be considered as the items of collection and not the means of payment used in money circulation. The collector coins have also the sale price set by the Central Bank of Armenia.

As the items of collection, the collector coins are issued in very restricted quantities and are not reissued.

Numismatists, collectors and all interested persons can buy the Armenian collector coins in the sales salon "Numismatist" which is in the building of the Central Bank of Armenia and is open for everyone.

IMF provides \$50bn to fight coronavirus outbreak



The International Monetary Fund has announced \$50bn (£39bn) of support for countries hit by the coronavirus.

The organization also warned that the outbreak had already pushed this year's global economic growth below last year's levels.

The emergency measure came after the virus has spread rapidly outside China to more than 70 countries.

The IMF said it is making the money available to help poor and middle-income countries with weak health systems respond to the epidemic.

At the same time the fund said the spread of the coronavirus has erased expectations of stronger economic growth this year, and

will push 2020 global output gains to their slowest rate since the financial crisis in 2008.

But IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva warned that it is hard to forecast just how big the effect will be: "Global growth in 2020 will dip below last year's levels, but how far it will fall and how long the impact will be is still difficult to predict".

She also declined to say whether the escalating health crisis could push the world economy into a recession.

“The all-Armenian potential can guarantee the existence of an independent and powerful Armenian state” - PM meets with Armenian community representatives in Georgia



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Armenian community representatives at the Shota Rustaveli Theater in Tbilisi. The meeting was attended by numerous representatives of the Armenian community not only from Tbilisi, but also from Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Welcoming those present, Nikol Pashinyan reminded that he made his first foreign visit to Georgia after taking office as prime minister. “I have kept fond recollections of our meeting in the courtyard of the Armenian Church in Tbilisi. The meeting in Samtskhe-Javakheti was also unforgettable. During that visit, I suggested building our relationships according to a new formula: Georgia and the Georgian people should be confident that Armenia and the Armenian people will never participate in any anti-Georgian conspiracy, have no negative attitude towards Georgia and the Georgian people. On the contrary, we are keen to see a well-developed and stable country. According to this formula, Armenia and the Armenian people should be sure that Georgia and the Georgian people will never be involved in any anti-Armenian conspiracy, and on the contrary, they are interested to see that the Republic of Armenia is a developed country,” the Prime Minister said.

According to Nikol Pashinyan, over the past year and a half, the Armenian-Georgian relations stemmed from this very formula. The Prime Minister emphasized that the atmosphere between the two countries is exceptionally good, and, according to Nikol Pashinyan, our bilateral relations have never been better than now.

“This creates new opportunities for Armenia and Georgia. Our next proposal is that we should consider our relations from the perspective of centuries in a way to have a common understanding, since we have lived side by side in this region for millennia,” the Prime Minister said, noting that one can hardly find such neighboring nations that boast a thousand-year history and no hostilities. The Premier underscored that this is an important factor which needs emphasizing. Nikol Pash-



inyan noted that the two peoples have faced numerous challenges throughout history and were forced to confront them together, so it would be good if the two states considered their future from this point of view.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister especially welcomed the Armenians of Tbilisi. “Many giants of our culture and identity were born and used to live in Tbilisi. It is difficult to say what our identity would be like, if it were not for the great cultural heritage generated in Tbilisi. In general, our modern identity has three pillars, large cultural pillars - Tumanyan, Tamanyan and Komitas. I think that Tumanyan, in fact, is the most vivid example of the Armenian genius in Georgia, which reflects the importance of Tbilisi-domiciled Armenians for our people,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister once again thanked the Georgian authorities for their thoughtfulness of the Armenian heritage on Georgia. According to Nikol Pashinyan, this is another key factor behind modern Armenian-Georgian

relations. “We are united by Christianity and the Christian heritage. We must do everything possible to ensure that our relations have a strategic content,” the Prime Minister said.

Nikol Pashinyan emphasized that one of the most important features of our current activity should be that today we are creating a future in which our generations will live fifty, one hundred years later.

“From now on, the Armenian statehood must exist on planet Earth forever; we should

rule out the emergence of any such power as may put an end to the history of Armenian statehood. Armenia is not only the birthplace of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, but also that of all Armenians, regardless of their citizenship. We are eager to see that the Georgian Armenians are full-fledged responsible citizens of Georgia, since this is one of the most important prerequisites for the normal development of our relations. We also believe that

the attitude of Armenia towards those living outside of Armenia, and vice versa, should change; it should be more constructive, more strategic. That is why we have placed the idea of pan-Armenianism at the heart of our policy. The all-Armenian potential can guarantee the existence of an independent and powerful Armenian state. We, the Armenians, have the potential to take control of our fate. We need to have as many friends in the world as possible and do everything to bring our friends closer to us. Therefore, the main task in building the Armenian-Georgian relations is to make them more reliable just as between strategic partners. And I assure you that we are confidently following this path,” Prime Minister Pashinyan said.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister and the members of his delegation answered the questions of interest to Georgian Armenians, which bore on bilateral relations, repatriation, economy, the new government’s personnel policy, as well as on the anti-corruption campaign and other issues of topical interest.

Cypriot community joins Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks in demanding Australia rejects visit by Erdogan



The Cypriot-Australian community has joined with the Armenian-Australian, Assyrian-Australian and Greek-Australian communities in calling on the Australian Government to reject a proposed visit by Turkey's dictator, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Last week, the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek communities – who are made up of descendants of survivors of the Ottoman Turkish-committed Genocide of 1915 – launched their *Joint Justice Initiative* with the goal of advocating “...against any attempt by the Turkish Government to use the sacred ANZAC graves in Gallipoli (and access by Australians to those graves and memorials) as ‘hostages’ or bargaining chips in coercing or persuading the Australian Government in being complicit in the Turkish State’s denial campaign with respect to the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocides”.

The Joint Justice Initiative announced that a reported visit by President Erdogan in and around Anzac Day 25th April would be “disrespectful to the legacy of our Anzacs and unacceptable to our communi-

ties”, especially as the Armenian Genocide is commemorated on 24th April.

The President of the Federation of Cyprus Communities of Australia & New Zealand, Michael Christodoulou said that Erdogan had no place in Australia while denying genocides and practicing Turkey’s expansionist policies in the region.

“Australia cannot add to the false credibility some countries in the world afford to Erdogan’s Turkey while it continues its illegal occupation of 37% of Cyprus’ territories,” Christodoulou said.

“Impunity for Turkey’s genocidal history has led to Ankara thinking its expansionist policies in Cyprus will also go unpunished, and Australia hosting Erdogan would add undeserved legitimacy for a dictatorship, by a democracy that shares none of his values,” Christodoulou added.

Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU) Executive Director, Haig Kayserian welcomed Cypriot-Australians joining the calls to reject Erdogan made by the Joint Justice Initiative.

“Cypriot-Australians, who are terribly

concerned about the security of their compatriots back home, have every reason to be concerned about news that Australia is apparently considering hosting this despotic dictator,” Kayserian said.

“Australians remember that It was only last year, following the Christchurch terrorist attack, that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to return Australians and New Zealanders traveling to Gallipoli for ANZAC Day Commemorations ‘in their coffins like their grandfathers’,” Kayserian added.

“Now we are hearing this friend of ISIS, who has created a state of terror by arresting, jailing or dismissing more opposition leaders, minority rights advocates, journalists and academics than any world leader, might be a guest of the Australian Government.”

On 25th February 2020, over 100 Federal Australian parliamentarians, diplomats, departmental officials, political staffers, academics, media and community leaders were treated to cultural performances, food, wine and brandy, as well as the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, which affirmed that the signatory public affairs representatives of the three communities were jointly committed to seeing Australia recognize the Turkish-committed Genocide against the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian citizens of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

The [Joint Justice Initiative’s Memorandum of Understanding was signed](#) by the Armenian National Committee of Australia, the Assyrian Universal Alliance – Australia Chapter and the Australian Hellenic Council.

World Bank pledges \$12bn to help fight coronavirus outbreak

As COVID-19 reaches more than 60 countries, the World Bank Group is making available an initial package of up to \$12 billion in immediate support to assist countries coping with the health and economic impacts of the global outbreak.

This financing is designed to help member countries take effective action to respond to and, where possible, lessen the tragic impacts posed by the COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Through this new fast track package, the World Bank Group will help developing countries strengthen health systems, including better access to health services to safeguard people from the epidemic, strengthen disease surveillance, bolster public health interventions, and work with the private sector to reduce the impact on economies. The financial package, with financing drawn from across IDA, IBRD and IFC, will be globally coordinated to support country-based responses.

The COVID-19 support package will make available initial crisis resources of up to \$12 billion in financing — \$8 billion of which is new — on a fast track basis. This comprises up to \$2.7 billion new financing from IBRD; \$1.3 billion from IDA, complemented by reprioritization of \$2 billion of the Bank's existing portfolio; and \$6 billion from IFC, including \$2 billion from existing trade facilities. It will also include policy advice and technical assistance



drawing on global expertise and country-level knowledge.

“We are working to provide a fast, flexible response based on developing country needs in dealing with the spread of COVID-19,” said World Bank Group President David Malpass. “This includes emergency financing, policy advice, and technical assistance, building on the World Bank Group’s existing instruments and expertise to help countries respond to the crisis.”

The financial package will provide grants and low-interest loans from IDA for low income countries and loans from IBRD for middle income countries, using all of the Bank’s operational instruments with processing accelerated on a fast track basis. International Finance Corporation, the World Bank Group’s private sector arm, will provide its clients with the necessary support to continue operating and to sustain jobs.

The World Bank support will cover a range of interventions to strengthen health

services and primary health care, bolster disease monitoring and reporting, train front line health workers, encourage community engagement to maintain public trust, and improve access to treatment for the poorest patients. The Bank will also provide policy and technical advice to ensure countries can access global expertise.

IFC will work with commercial bank clients to expand trade finance and working capital lines. IFC will also directly support its corporate clients — with a focus on strategic sectors including medical equipment and pharmaceuticals — to sustain supply chains and limit downside risks. These solutions will leverage the lessons learned from similar events in the past with a goal to minimize the negative economic and social impacts of COVID-19 globally.

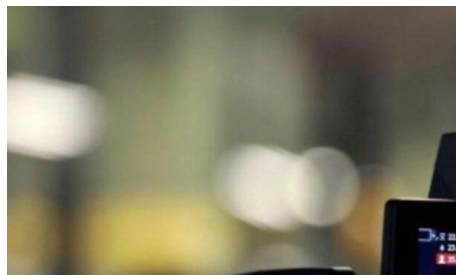
Countries face different levels of risk and vulnerability to COVID-19, and will require different levels of support. The Bank Group support will prioritize the poorest countries and those at high risk with low capacity. As the spread of COVID-19 and its impact continues to evolve, the World Bank Group will adapt its approach and resources as needed.

The World Bank Group is actively engaged with international institutions and country authorities to help coordinate the global response.

Iran produces fever screening cameras

Iran has developed the technical know-how to manufacture thermal cameras for fever screening systems inside the country, IFP News reports.

In an interview with ISNA, Director of the Strategic Technologies Centre of the Iranian Vice Presidency for Science and Technology Esmail Qaderifar said a series of special plans have been devised after the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in Iran to satisfy the country’s demand for modern technologies in the fight against the disease.



Highlighting the special support for the domestic knowledge-based companies producing technological products, he said one of the Iranian enterprises has managed to manufacture thermal cameras for fever screening

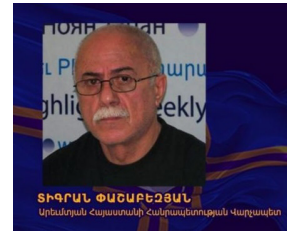
systems.

The company researchers have developed thermal cameras that can detect fever with a margin of error of less than half a degree, Qaderifar noted, saying the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology has sponsored the activities of the enterprise.

He finally explained that the homegrown cameras are used for fever screening at crowded public places such as the airports, terminals and subway stations.

The formation of the Government of Western Armenia is not an end in itself

On the occasion of the 9th anniversary of the Government of Western Armenia



The formation of the Government of Western Armenia (and not only the government, but also the entire state system, as well as the parliament and the presidential system) was originally intended in 1918-20 to protect the rights granted to the Armenian people by the international community.

The process of forming a Government began in 2001, February 4. Formation of the Parliament of Western Armenia and the Presidential System began in 2014. The first session of the 1st convocation was held on January 18-20, 2014.

The principles and provisions of the Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (September 13, 2007) provided the legal and political basis for the formation of the Republic of Western Armenia, on the basis of which was formed a system of national identity and citizenship of the Armenians of Western Armenia and the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia), along with the legal, political and state system. In accordance with an Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) has created all branches of authorities - the National Assembly (Parliament), the Government and the institute of Presidency.

In November 2013, the first online parliamentary elections were held in Western Armenia. About 18 thousand voters from 41 countries took part in the elections, 64 deputies were elected.

The 2nd convocation was held on September 1-5, 2018. 51,505 voters from 47 countries took part in the elections of the National Assembly (Parliament) of Western Armenia, and 101 deputies were elected.

At present, Radik Khamoyan is the President of the Republic of Western Armenia, Tigran Pashabezyan is the Prime Minister, Armen Ter-Sarkisyan is the Chairman of the National Assembly (Parliament).

Since 2014, the full name of the state system of Western Armenia is the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia).

We mention, among other, those decisions on the implementation of which all the activities of the state system of Western Armenia are directed:

1. Decree of the Government of Russia (Council of People's Commissars of Russia) "On Turkish Armenia" (On Western Armenia) dated January 11, 1918;
2. Decision of the Supreme Council of the Union States during the Paris Conference on the recognition of the de facto independence of the State of Armenia dated January 19, 1920;
3. Decision of the Supreme Council of the Union States on the recognition de jure of the independence of the State of Armenia dated May 11, 1920;
4. Discussion of the mandate of Armenia, held in the US Senate May 29 - June 1, 1920, meaning that the United States de facto recognized the right and title of the Armenian state in relation to the Armenian territories, thereby invalidating the right and title of the Ottoman Empire in relation to these territories;
5. Declaration of independence of Armenian Cilicia dated August 4, 1920;
6. The Sevres Peace Treaty (Articles 88-93 of which concern the State of Armenia) dated August 10, 1920;
7. The Arbitral Award of the 28th US President Woodrow Wilson, dated November 22, 1920, on the establishment of the state border between Turkey and Armenia, on the landing borders of Armenia to the sea and on the demilitarization of Turkish territories adjacent to the Armenian border.

Based on these considerations, the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia) sent the following Statements to the UN in 2018 and 2019:

1. Application for the entry of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) into the membership of the United Nations dated May 25, 2018;
2. Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) dated May 29, 2018 "On the implementation of the Arbitral Award of the 28th President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson of November 22, 1920 "The Decision of the President of the United States of America Woodrow Wilson on establishing a state border between Turkey and Armenia, on landing borders of Armenia to the sea and the demilitarization of the Turkish territories adjacent to the Armenian border ", calling for the establishment of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) within the territories established by Arbitral Award of the 28th US President Woodrow Wilson;
3. Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) "On the demilitarization of the territories of Western Armenia and Cilicia and the withdrawal of the occupying forces of the Republic of Turkey from there" dated November 20, 2018;
4. Statement of the Republic of Western Armenia (the State of Armenia) "On the demarcation of the border between the State of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated August 7, 2019.

In fact, this is an opportunity and a means of best protecting the Republic of Armenia, the Artsakh Republic and the Armenian communities of the Middle East from existing threats and challenges.

Naturally, this is an opportunity and a means to make every effort to bring to life and realize all the rights given to the Armenian people. This is an opportunity and a means to achieve a fair and final settlement of the Armenian cause, suspended for more than 100 years.

Tigran Pashabezyan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia)

February 4, 2020

We congratulate the citizens of Western Armenia, the officials of the Republic of Western Armenia (Armenia) and the deputies of the National Assembly (Parliament) of Western Armenia on the 9th anniversary of the formation of the Government of Western Armenia. We are together. Together we will achieve success and victory.

Armenian journalist Lucy Kocharyan honored with International Women of Courage Award



Armenian journalist Lucy Kocharyan has been honored with International Women of Courage Award.

US First lady Melania Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo honored recipients of the 2020 International Women of Courage Award at a State Department ceremony Wednesday.

The all-female award presented ahead of International Women's Day on Sunday recognizes women across the world who demonstrate "exceptional courage and leadership" in the face of adversity and who have made a positive impact on their communities.

Using her platform as a journalist, Kocharyan has championed children with mental health issues and has emerged as a leading voice in the fight against psychological, physical, and domestic violence against women and children.

Kocharyan has become famous for launching "Voices of Violence" in August 2018. She has become a spokesperson on gender-based violence in Armenia and has continued to speak out despite harsh criticism – from people on the street who yell "shame" as she passes by, to parliamentarians speaking out against her and threatening her with lawsuits.

She successfully started a conversation about domestic and sexual violence that

is slowly leading to some action. Gender-based violence is a pervasive problem throughout Armenia, where traditional social norms regarding masculinity, femininity, gender equality, and the division of household tasks remain rigid, making her achievements and impact all the more impressive.

Addressing the ceremony Melania Trump



said "It is an honor to be here again to celebrate these inspiring women and the incredible impacts they are making through the work they have dedicated themselves to all over the world."

"In my fourth year attending this ceremony, I continue to be inspired by the

personal stories that accompany each of these extraordinary women. Some demonstrate raw courage in the face of terror," she added.

"As first lady of the United States, I'm proud of what this country continues to do for women," Trump continued, "and I'm honored to represent a nation that not only recognizes women around the world who are making a difference internationally but empowers and supports them in their endeavors so they can affect positive change for others."

The first lady centered her remarks on courage and what the word means, including how it is related to other qualities like bravery and strength.

"These women represent the strength of the female spirit," Trump said. "Each of them have demonstrated acts of courage and leadership, often at risk to their own personal safety."

2020 award winners came from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, Malaysia,



INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN OF COURAGE

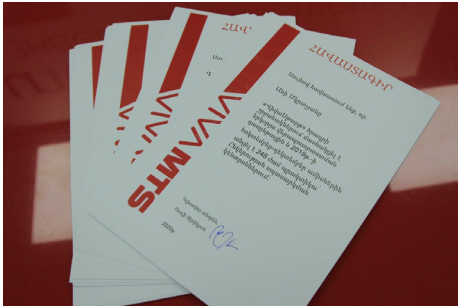
As a dedicated journalist, Lucy is being honored for championing the rights of children with mental health issues and emerging as a leading voice in the fight to combat psychological, physical, and domestic violence against women and children.

#WomenofCourage

Nicaragua, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Zimbabwe. They have faced everything from death threats to lawsuits to social media harassment while taking on their leadership positions and attempting to make positive change.

Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator Recently...

“VivaStart” and “ITStart” programs’ graduation ceremony took place in Viva-MTS



The graduation ceremony of “VivaStart” and “ITStart” programs took place in Viva-MTS headquarters. Viva-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian and “VivaStart” and “ITStart” graduates participated in the ceremony.

The “VivaStart” educational program has been implemented by Viva-MTS, Armenia’s leading telecommunications operator since 2015. It aims to provide an opportunity to the students of different universities to acquire a specialization in sales and customer service. On this occasion, “VivaStart” had 37 alumni who participated in a competition where participants once again demonstrated their professional knowledge and practical skills gained within the program. During the graduation ceremony, Ralph Yirikian awarded the best four graduates (*Silva Karapetyan, Eliza Melikyan, Ani Hovhannisyann and Ruzanna Muradyan*) with “Samsung 30S” smartphones.

“It has been five years now that Viva-MTS has been successfully implementing the “VivaStart” program. We decided to introduce a new format and content and came up with the “ITStart” program, which was launched in 2019. The program had four participants and four alumni. The “ITStart” project is designed to help identify the talent and potential of young people specialized in programming. I think the project’s success is reflected in the fact that one of the graduates of “ITStart” project got the chance to start working at Viva-MTS right after graduation”, Viva-MTS Founding GM **Ralph C. Yirikian**

said.

“VivaStart” and “ITStart” alumni *Lida Khachatryan, Mkrtich Avetisyan* and *Davit Baloyan* have been offered a job by Viva-MTS and will already apply their knowledge and skills within their job.

Ralph Yirikian has awarded certificates to all the “VivaStart” and “ITStart” alumni.



The memories of unbearable housing conditions are now left behind: a family in Lori has moved to a new house



The *Jaghinyan* family from Stepanavan town has gone through many hardships. *Armine Manukyan*, a young woman who lost her husband 11 years ago, raised five children in desperately poor conditions. The house bought 15 years ago has become a real threat ready to collapse any moment. The adjacent houses were demolished three years ago increasing the chances of collapse. Wooden logs have been the only measure against the perspective of being left under the derbies and the hope for a safer life for children.

“There used to be adjacent houses in the territory designed for a military district. The neighboring houses were demolished, leaving the house belonging to *Jaghinyans* ‘hanging in the air’, with only the wooden logs to support the structure. The house could collapse at a blow of a wind were it

not for this effort. Over the years, all had turned into a ramshackle, and there was nothing left: neither normal flooring nor windows or doors. The roof was leaking. I used to put buckets to prevent the house from flooding. It was extremely damp and dangerous here, both in the daytime and in the evening, during rainy weather or the snowmelt. I was afraid to go to bed, and was grateful to be alive in the morning,” said family mother *Armine*.

Everything has changed for the *Jaghinyan* family now. *Armine’s* son had tried to find a solution when he was back from the army. Viva-MTS and the “Fuller Center for Housing” Armenia assisted the family to ensure it had a new and a safe house. As a result of the joint project by Viva-MTS and the “Fuller Center for Housing Armenia”, the family got rid of the memories of living in a house soon-to-collapse. Five months ago, the *Jaghinyans* moved to a new home.

Armine, who used to live with her husband’s parents, and later in a ruined building, has finally found the opportunity to live peacefully in the new home together with her children. The need for cosmetic renovation in the house is not a problem for her. The family has already celebrated their first New Year and enjoys the positive change.

As a result of the partnership with Viva-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, 25 families have been assisted in Lori region.



“Berd” Historical and Cultural Reserve – From the Depth of Ages to Artsakh Liberation War

By *Gourgen James Khazhakian*
Chief Correspondent



“Berd” Historical and Cultural Reserve was established in May 18, 2017 by the Government of the Republic of Armenia decision N 541-N, being included in the “Service of Preservation of Historical-Cultural Museums and Historical Environment” SNCO.

The Reserve was established on the basis of the “Tavush Museum of History and Living” that, in turn, was founded in accordance of the July 15, 1982 decree by the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR, as a branch of Tavush (Shamshadin) branch of the State Museum of Ethnography of Armenia. Since May 1, 1995, according to the order N55 of April 17 of the Ministry of Culture, the branch has been separated from the Tavush branch and has become an independent museum named “Museum of Tavush History and Living”.

Since January 2011 it has become a structure under the Berd Municipality.

Taking into consideration the importance of this cultural center as well as its being located in an important historical-cultural and archaeological site, in 2012 the Berd Municipality proposed to hand the Museum over to the Ministry of Culture’s “Service for Preservation of Historical-Cultural Museums and Historical Environment” SNCO.

“Berd” Historical and Cultural Reserve (with area 12,9909 hectares) is located in the outskirts of Berd town of Tavush Marz, on the right bank of Tavush River, on a rich historical-cultural layer, near the castles and archeological sites. Tavush and Berd Fortresses, several chapels, churches, mausoleum sites, cemeteries, sanctuaries, etc. are located in the Reserve. Tavush Fortress, or otherwise known as the Tslick Amram Fortress, was first mentioned in the early 10th century as the seat of King *Ashot the Iron*’s Deputies (mainly *Tslik Amram*). In 10th-11th centuries the Fortress was passed to the *Kyurikian* Princely Family of Lori. Clay dishes and other items are still found in the Fortress area today.



The Fortress was a unique one as had its harmonious water supply. As since the XIVth century, the Fortress has been abandoned, and it is now in poor condition. Date of its establishment is unknown. Tavush Fortress was a famous place in IX-X centuries.

The Princes sitting here have rebelled against the Bagratuni Kings for several times.

Ashot II (914-928) breaks their resistance in military way and occupies the Fortress of Tavush. Written sources first mention the Fortress in the X c. beginning as the residence of the governors of King Ashot II (“the Iron”). In X-XI centuries it belonged to the Kyurikyan branch of the Bagratids, and the *Zakaryans* in XII-XIII centuries. By the end of XIV c. Tavush Fortress that has been obliterated, has gradually been destroyed and ruined.

The Fortress of Tavush consisted of a citadel and a lower fortress. The Citadel occupied the narrow top (25 m maximal width) of a hill surrounded by high, steep cliffs. The remains of walls strengthened by semicircular pyramids (up to 12 m in height, built of non-large river stones and fractured andesite stones) have been preserved in the eastern and northwestern parts. The entrance was from the south. No traces of buildings have been preserved in the area. The citadel on the north side continued down a small hill. The lower fortress is located on the eastern foot of the citadel, where Cyclopean walls of fossilized remains, broken-down church walls, traces of dwellings and economic buildings have been preserved. Drinking water was brought to the lower fortress from sources on the south called Glglan with clay tubes (the remains preserved).

In 1966-1968 *Stepan Yesayan* excavated the Berd Fortress mausoleum site, and in the late 1980s archaeologist *Hayk Yesayan* tried to make excavations in the Tavush Fortress area which, however, remained unfinished. In October 2014 the expedition of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the RA National Academy of Sciences headed by *Boris Gasparyan* started a study in the caves at the valley below the Fortress.

The Tavush Museum of History and Living contains historical, archeological and ethnographic materials related to the past and present of the Tavush population, in particular, the region’s archeology, spiritual and material culture, agriculture, livestock breeding, crafts and more.

In 2017 about 800 historical-archaeological objects of “Dilijan National Architecture” Museum-Reserve were transferred to the Museum that complemented the main exhibition.

Notably, the materials related to World War II and Artsakh (Karabakh) Liberation War occupy very special place in the Museum..

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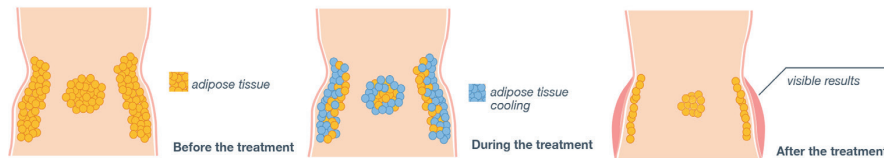
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AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Durachweg 15
CH-8200 Schaffhausen
Phone No: +41 52 632 09 10
Fax: +41 52 632 09 11

AZAD Pharma AG

Bahnhofstrasse 9
CH-3125 Toffen
Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10
Fax: +41 31 810 40 11

Canada

AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.

1895 - 55th Avenue
Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9
Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99
Fax: +1 514 636 75 55

Atlit Inc.

16 Westminster Ave.,
Suite 306A
Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1
Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91
Fax: +1 514 369 81 67

China

Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza,
#102 Moganshan Road
310051 -Hangzhou China

Phone +86-571-8761 5336
Mobile +86-153-5505-0903
Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963

Germany

AZAD Pharma GmbH

Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a
DE-78315 Radolfzell
Phone No: +49 7732 939101510
Fax: +49 7732 9391016

Armenia

AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC

Vanahovit 8, Proshian
Ashtarak Ave., Kotayk Marz
Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62
Fax: +374 93 40 34 40



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URL: www.nt.am

Address in Armenia:

28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA
Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-22 (+374 60) 35-11-24

Address in France:

Masion De L'Armenie,
Paris 17e-95, Bld. Gouvion, France
Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72

Address in USA:

1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112,
Glendale, CA, USA, 91206
Tel.: +1 (818) 646 10 72

Հասցե՝ Իսահակյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009