

## New Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan: “We March Forward, to New Victories”



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On October 27, 2016 Turkmenistan has celebrated the country’s most important national holiday - the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence. This day is inscribed in the glorious history of the Turkmen people by golden letters and is considered as an important page of a new era of Turkmenistan.

Opening ceremonies of large industrial, social and cultural, scientific and educational, medical and sport facilities, which meet increased modern requirements, are being held in honor of the main holiday of independent neutral Turkmenistan in the capital and all regions of the country.

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## Armenia's PM visits Artsakh

On 4 November Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan received prime-minister of the Republic of Armenia Karen Karapetyan.

A wide range of issues related to economic cooperation between the two Armenian states were on the discussion agenda.

President Sahakyan once again congratulated Karen Karapetyan on being appointed to the post of head of the RA Cabinet of Ministers, wished him new successes and expressed hope that during his premiership

high-level economic ties between the RA and NKR would continue their consistent development and expansion.

Bako Sahakyan handed in the "Mesrop Mashtots" order to Karen Karapetyan which was awarded to him on 30 August of the current year for support shown to Artsakh in realization of significant socioeconomic projects and in connection with the 25th anniversary of the NKR proclamation.

Prime-minister Arayik Haroutyunyan and other officials partook at the meeting.



## Nalbandian, Steinmeier discuss Karabakh peace process

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian had a meeting with his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin.

The interlocutors held a detailed discussion on the steps towards reinforcement of bilateral cooperation in different spheres.

Edward Nalbandian and Frank-Walter Steinmeier exchanged views on a number of urgent international and regional issues, namely the situation in the Middle East, flow of migrants and their integration. Reference was made to issues of Armenia-EU cooperation.



Minister Nalbandian drew Frank-Walter Steinmeier's attention to Azerbaijan's refusal to implement the agreements reached at

Vienna and St. Petersburg summits aimed at creating conditions for furthering the Karabakh conflict settlement process. Moreover, he said, Azerbaijan keeps aggravating the situation at the line of contact with the Karabakh forces.

Edward Nalbandian hailed the support of the OSCE German chairmanship to the efforts of resolving the issue exceptionally in a peaceful way. The interlocutors agreed that there was no alternative to a peaceful settlement.

## PM Karapetyan "Key" Member Of Ruling Party's Political Team

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan may or may not join the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), but will remain a key representative of its political team, according to party spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov.

Speculation about Karapetyan's possible membership in the HHK first began soon after the former Gazprom executive was appointed head of the Armenian government in September. He and some members of the new cabinet, who are widely viewed as technocrats, have pledged to remain committed to the implementation of the programs of the majority party and its leader, President Serzh Sargsyan. The talk about Karapetyan's possible HHK membership has gained momentum lately as the ruling party is preparing for its convention later this month.

"At this moment the respected Mr. prime minister has not yet submitted an application for membership," Sharmazanov told media following a regular sitting of the HHK executive body late on Thursday.

"But I said once and now repeat: don't be surprised if Mr. prime minister submits such an application and don't be surprised if he doesn't. Mr. prime minister is a key representative of our political team, and the head of this team is Mr. President," the party spokesperson added.

In the past, Armenia had both partisan and technocratic prime ministers. Tigran Sargsyan, a former Central Bank governor, for example, became prime minister in 2008 without any party affiliation. But he and a number of key ministers of his cabinet joined the HHK the following year.

Referring to the future plans of the HHK, Sharmazanov stressed that they never adjust their programs to any individuals, no matter how respected these individuals are.

"Moreover, after the constitutional reform it is a reality in Armenia that the role of political parties will sharply increase, and, naturally, our program changes in a certain sense will be connected with the new challenges, this new role that political parties

will have," he said.

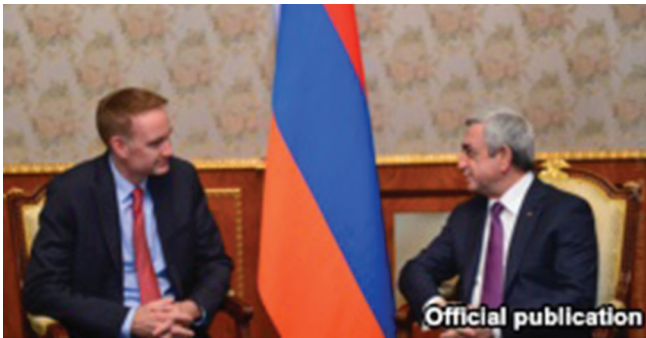
"Now we embark on the path of strong political parties rather than strong individuals, and, naturally, even Armenia's pivotal political force needs to be reformed, needs to review its program. We are changing our program not radically. As a conservative party that espouses timeless rather than old values, we add new strokes to the timeless, intransigent basis that will help us work more efficiently."

Sharmazanov said that in the future the HHK will remain a national conservative party and the teachings of Garegin Nzhdeh, an early 20th-century statesman and military strategist, will continue to have their own place in the party's program and ideology. "Simply, new provisions relating to human rights, national ideology, and Christian-democratic values will be added. This is still under discussion," he said.

The HHK plans to hold its convention on November 26. Armenia's next parliamentary elections are due to be held in April.



## Armenia, US discuss defense cooperation



The United States has “excellent” cooperation with Armenia in a number of areas, including in various peacekeeping efforts in which the South Caucasus nation “has proven that it is willing and able to contribute internationally,” according to a visiting Pentagon official.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter met on November 2 with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan to discuss issues related to the deepening of cooperation in the military, international, and regional security areas.

According to the presidential press service, during the meeting Carpenter expressed his gratitude for Armenia’s contribution to the peacekeeping efforts, including NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and KFOR in Kosovo.

In an interview with RFE/RL’s Armenian Service ([Azatutyun.am](http://Azatutyun.am)) the Pentagon official also spoke about cooperation with Armenia.

“We do training here, we do joint exercises, we have robust engagements, consultations. So, generally speaking, we are very pleased with the level of cooperation. Of course, we would like to deepen it and do more. And that is part of what I came here to discuss as to where there might be areas where we can expand our training,” he said.

Carpenter said that while the United States and Russia do have a complicated relationship and disagree “on many fronts”, including Ukraine and Syria, “here in Armenia and within the broader region we are partners as co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group and we have very much sought to compartmentalize this area and work collaboratively together.”

“It is in our interest to see a diplomatic resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. So, we are willing to work with our Russian partners and try and seek that resolution, if it’s possible,” the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense said.

Asked about his position on Russian arms deliveries to the region, the Pentagon official said: “I think it’s unfortunate and highly destabilizing for a country to be providing an influx of weapons into an area where clearly lives are lost almost every month along the line of contact on both sides. And so for a country that is mediating to be selling weapons or providing weapons, I believe, is inappropriate.”

Carpenter stressed that in that regard the U.S. policies have been not to provide additional military capabilities. “That doesn’t mean that we don’t have defense relationships with both Azerbaijan and Armenia. But I think pumping weapons and capability into a region like this is not a way to resolve the conflict peacefully,” he said.

Russia, which is Armenia’s top military and political ally, has supplied up to 4 billion dollars’ worth of arms, including some modern offensive weapons, to Azerbaijan since 2011. Azerbaijan used some of these weapons during the brief deadly hostilities with ethnic Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh in April.

According to Carpenter, the clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh earlier this year showed that the conflict is “far from frozen”. “So we are worried that things could escalate. It is a dangerous situation and it underscores the need for finding a diplomatic resolution as soon as it’s possible,” he said.

## Azerbaijan fails to meet international commitments, Armenian FM says



Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian held a meeting with members of the German Bundestag, leading analysts and political scientists at the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation. Bundestag Vice-President Edelgard Bulmahn was present at the meeting.

Minister Nalbandian hailed the adoption of the Armenian Genocide recognition resolution and praised the Bundestag’s principles stance on the issue.

Issues related to the Armenian-German cooperation, the perspectives of its deepening and expansion were discussed at the meeting.

The Armenian Foreign Minister briefed the attendees on the details of the large-scale military actions unleashed by Azerbaijan against Nagorno Karabakh, which was accompanied by harsh violations of

the international humanitarian law. He also presented the results of the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits, the efforts of Armenia and the international community aimed at furthering the negotiation process.

The Minister noted that Azerbaijan refuses from implementing the agreements reached at the summits and keeps aggravating the situation, thus causing a serious harm to the efforts of reaching a peaceful settlement.

The Armenian Foreign Minister said the large-scale drills planned to be held in Azerbaijan in a week are yet another provocation. The military exercises will involve almost the whole armed forces and military equipment, which constitutes a harsh violation of the international commitments of arms control. “This is the response of the Azerbaijani leadership to the calls of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries to further the negotiation process,” he said.

The Armenian Foreign Minister briefed the German lawmakers and experts on the reforms under way in Armenia, attaching importance to the support of partner countries and international organizations in the process.

Reference was made to a number of urgent international and regional issues and the perspectives of their resolution.

## OSCE promotes extra-judicial solutions to media-related disputes in Armenia

How to resolve media-related disputes without referring to the courts was the focus of a working seminar organized by the OSCE Office in Yerevan on 5 November 2016 for journalists and media lawyers in Tsaghkadzor, Armenia.

Around 25 participants, including journalists, lawyers involved in freedom of expression litigation, civil society members and representatives of the police took part in the event. Participants discussed the work of the Information Disputes Council (IDC), an extra-judiciary body that provides expert opinions on resolving media-related disputes. They examined a broad range of issues including cases of violence against journalists and the protection of journalists' rights when covering civic unrest, defamation and insult, personal data protection and free expression, presumption of innocence, as well as pre-trial publicity and the media's coverage of court trials.

"Extra-judicial dispute resolution mechanisms for media should be strengthened," said David Gullette, Democratization Programme Officer at the OSCE Office in Yerevan. "They promote media quality and ethics, they can help minimize expensive and time-consuming court litigation and help maintain constructive dialogue between journalists, lawyers and other parties involved, over important aspects of journalistic work particularly on sensitive issues."

Established in 2011, the mandate of the IDC is to protect freedom of speech and improve access to information, as well as to protect human dignity and the right to a private life by publishing expert opinions and recommendations based on Armenia's constitution, international legal acts and ethical norms, in cases when judicial disputes occur. The IDC also identifies cases for intervention through its own initiative and advocates for improvements in the issues concerned. Where applicable it also issues joint decisions together with the Media Ethics Observatory, the media self-regulation body in Armenia.

The OSCE Office in Yerevan has been supporting the IDC's work since its inception to help achieve better protection of free speech in Armenia in line with OSCE commitments in this field.

## Armenian, Georgian Leaders Inspect "Friendship Bridge" Site

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili visited on November 4 the site of what is going to be a "Friendship Bridge" connecting the two South Caucasus neighbors over the Debed River.

The current Sadakhlo-Bagratashen Bridge on the territory of an Armenian-Georgian border checkpoint was built back in the 1960s and is hardly fit for its function.

A few years ago the governments of Armenia and Georgia agreed to build a new, modern bridge that will meet international standards.

Work on the construction of a new bridge across the Debed River is carried out as part of Armenia's Northern Corridor Modernization Program and is funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) within the framework of a loan agreement worth a total of 10.3 million euros (about \$11.2 million). The project is co-financed by the governments of Armenia and Georgia and work on the bridge construction is coordinated by a joint Armenian-Georgian intergovernmental commission.

Construction of the bridge proper is set to begin in 2017 after the results of international tenders for the advisor on technical control and a contractor are summarized. It is expected to be completed within two years.

"The planned bridge is expected to further facilitate the quality of service of cargo and passenger traffic between the two countries, provide a time-saving, safe and convenient movement through the border checkpoints," a statement released by the Armenian president's press office said.

"It will also improve the quality of passenger service and freight traffic and save time, facilitating trade with Georgia, Russia and European countries," it added.

Also On November 4 President Sargsyan and Prime Minister Kvirikashvili inaugurated a new checkpoint built at the Armenian-Georgian border.

The process of modernization of checkpoints on the state border of Armenia commenced back in 2010 upon a presidential decree on the approval of an integrated border management strategy and the security of the state frontier. Under the program three checkpoints at Bagratashen, Bavra and Gogavan were designated for priority modernization.



With the purpose of the modernization of checkpoints located on the northern border of Armenia in August 2012 the Government of Armenia and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a relevant program concerning the three checkpoints.

The modernization program envisages the commissioning of checkpoints at Bagratashen and Gogavan at the first stage. The checkpoint at Bavra where work is still underway is due to be opened at the second stage of the program.

In his remarks at the ceremony President Sargsyan said that it is important that after the technical start of the crossing points all bodies located there properly carry out their operation, provide quality services that meet modern requirements. He stressed that an opinion about the country begins to form at the border checkpoint.

The total budget of the program is 52.13 million euros (about \$58 million). The purpose of the program is to promote the free movement of people and goods across the borders while observing the border security, as well as to improve both bilateral and regional cooperation.

It is expected that the modernization of the checkpoints at the frontier will also contribute to the improvement of the living standards of the local population, providing both temporary and permanent jobs.

After the ceremonies the Armenian and Georgian leaders held a meeting during which they reportedly expressed satisfaction that "the two friendly and neighboring states consistently develop their political cooperation, boost their interstate relations, thus creating a solid foundation for raising their bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level."

Sargsyan and Kvirikashvili also discussed possibilities of expanding trade and economic cooperation, including in the spheres of transportation, energy, tourism, agriculture and others.



## Armenia “not subsidizing” planned gas price cut



The Armenian government is not subsidizing – in an open or concealed manner – an expected reduction of natural gas prices offered for the country’s households and businesses by a Russian monopolist’s local subsidiary earlier this week, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan assured the public on November 4.

Gazprom Armenia submitted an application to the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC) on Tuesday, suggesting a 5-percent decrease in tariffs for consumers in Armenia as well as offering new tariffs to low-income families and several types of businesses.

The move came days after President Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister Karapetyan met with visiting Gazprom chief Alexey Miller to address the matter.

Karapetyan, who himself served as a Gazprom executive before assuming his duties as the head of the Armenian government in September, explained that by offering lower tariffs the Russian company tries to “motivate the expansion of the market so that businesses can become profitable at the expense of the reduction of self-cost.”

Gazprom Armenia did not immediately explain in its statement at what expense it was going to reduce the tariffs, triggering speculations that it would again come “at a cost” for Armenia.

In 2013, the Armenian government ceded its remaining 20-percent stake in the gas distribution network to Gazprom on account of debts accumulated over several years when, as it turned out, the government had subsidized the price for consumers.

Karapetyan indicated four sources using which Gazprom Armenia can afford to lower its prices today. “The [company’s] transit agreement with Georgia ends on January 1 and there are expectations that the transit fee will be lowered. Secondly, as a result of tariff reductions Gazprom Armenia expects the expansion of the consumer market, which will compensate for the loss of margin. Thirdly, it is optimization of certain financial costs and decrease in the share of loans at Gazprom Armenia. And fourthly, in order to stabilize and expand the market the founder of Gazprom Armenia is going to take on certain financial risks,” the head of the Armenian government said.

If approved by the PSRC, the new gas tariffs are likely to become effective in Armenia already on January 1, 2017.

## Armenia set to have single water operator

Water prices in Armenia are expected to rise for most consumers beginning next year as the country plans to have a single utility operator applying the same tariff for all regions.

Currently, there are five companies managing drinking water supply in Armenia and their tariffs vary from area to area.

According to the State Committee of Water Resources, the single tariff will be applied countrywide soon after Veolia, a French company currently managing water supply only in Yerevan, will become a single operator.

An agreement with the company for the next 15 years is expected to be signed in mid-November.

State Committee of Water Resources head Arsen Harutyunyan said that the new operator will pay a rent of a total of about 89 billion drams (approx. \$186 million) and invest 36.5 billion drams (over \$76 million) in the system during the next 15 years.

According to the official, as a result of negotiations they agreed on the tariff that

will be applied for the first year of operation, which is the average rate of the five operating companies - 180 drams (\$0.38).

Depending on the location the water tariff today in Armenia is between 170 to 204 drams. The final decision on this account is to be made by the Public Services Regulatory Commission. If the suggested tariff is approved, all residents of Armenia except those who live in the western Armavir province will see a rise in water prices.

According to Harutyunyan, the calculation of the tariff includes three main components: water consumption, the electricity price and inflation. He said that depending on circumstances, the tariff can be changed again.

Environmentalist Inga Zarafyan, meanwhile, argued that it is a “big mistake” to transfer such a strategic area to a single operator, because this way, in her opinion, it becomes a monopoly.

The head of the State Committee of Water Resources head dismissed such concerns, saying that the single operator will not have any advantages. “There is

a concept of a natural monopoly, and this is the case of a natural monopoly. Over years we have had one gas distribution network, one electricity distribution network. Do you think the situation would be better if we had several operators,” he said.

Veolia, represented as Yerevan Jur in Armenia, over the past 10 years provided maintenance of water supply and sewerage in the Armenian capital. Company spokesman Murad Sargsyan said they are now going to continue their work countrywide, putting the emphasis on upgrading the network in the regions.

While the tariff can be reviewed every year, Sargsyan said the company will not seek to put the burden on consumers. “We are going to focus not on increasing tariffs, but on reducing losses through effective management, maintenance and reduction of energy costs,” he said.

The head of the State Committee of Water Resources said that the new agreement will have tougher requirements and will imply stricter penalties if the single operator fails to comply with them.

## EBRD leaves Armenia's economic growth outlook for 2016 and 2017 unchanged

All EEC economies are expected to generate positive growth in 2017, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development said in a report on the Regional Economic Prospects in EBRD Countries of Operations in November 2016.

The EBRD leaves the growth forecast for Armenia unchanged at 2.0 per cent in 2016 and 2.0 per cent in 2017.

"Armenia's economy made a good start in 2016 but growth slowed in the second quarter; GDP growth decelerated from 4.5 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter to 1.5 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of the year. In the first half of 2016, growth in exports and government consumption was offset, in part, by contraction in gross fixed capital formation and household consumption.

Deflation in the first eight months of 2016 reflected weak domestic demand and low import prices. Armenia's economy remained exposed to spill-overs from the recession in Russia. In the first half of 2016, net FDI inflow was low and remittances declined, albeit at a lower rate than in 2015.

The current account deficit remained contained in the first half of 2016 after sizable adjustment in 2015 which was driven by a reduction in imports. In the first nine months of 2016, the dram was mostly stable vis-à-vis the US dollar," the report reads.

"International reserves provided approximately five months of import coverage as of September 2016. Tax and customs revenues were affected by deflation and by decreased nominal value of import



flows. The fiscal deficit is expected to widen in 2016 on the account of revenue shortfall, followed by fiscal consolidation in 2017.

In response to slowing growth, negative inflation and a stabilizing exchange rate, the Central Bank of Armenia gradually lowered re-financing rate from 10.50 per cent in August 2015 to 6.75 per cent in September 2016. In the first seven months of 2016, commercial bank lending remained mostly flat in the context of weak domestic demand and continued consolidation in the banking sector.

The conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region presents a risk to the growth outlook. Our growth forecast for Armenia is unchanged at 2.0 per cent in 2016 and 2.0 per cent in 2017," the EBRD said.

### Russia hands mobile laboratories to Armenia

Rospotrebnadzor, the Russian Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare, has donated mobile labs to the Health Ministries of Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as part of its support to the CIS countries in fighting infections, RIA Novosti reports.

Rospotrebnadzor provides material and technical support to CIS participating states, reinforcing the capacities of the healthcare services in revealing and preventing the outbreaks of dangerous infectious diseases.

The mobile labs are equipped with self-contained life support systems, have a high level of biological safety and are used to indicate the infectious agents through accelerated and rapid diagnosis methods.

### China, Armenia can cooperate on Belt and Road Initiative: top political advisor

China's top political advisor Yu Zhengsheng met with Vazgen Manukyan, chairman of Armenia's Public Council on November 3, calling for joint efforts on the Belt and Road Initiative, Xinhua agency reports.

Describing Armenia as China's good friend and important partner in the south Caucasus, Yu said both countries have a healthy and stable relationship based on equality, mutual benefit and respect.

"China and Armenia have understood and coordinated with each other on issues related to their core interests and major concerns," said Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

"China is willing to work with Armenia to consolidate the political and public opinion foundations for bilateral relations, and jointly push forward the Belt and Road Initiative and practical cooperation," he said.



Yu said the CPPCC National Committee is ready to strengthen exchanges with Armenia's Public Council in state governance.

Manukyan said Armenia is along the ancient Silk Road and has great interest in China's Belt and Road Initiative, welcoming more cooperation with China in all fields.

Du Qinglin, vice chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, held talks with Manukyan later Thursday.



## Armenia, Iran initial MoU on purchase and sale, transit of gas



Armenia and Iran have initialed a Memorandum of Understanding on the purchase and sale and transit of gas.

The document was signed during the visit of a delegation of the Armenian Ministry of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources to the Islamic Republic of Iran from October 31 to November 1.

The Armenian delegation led by Deputy Minister Hayk Harutyunyan had a number of meetings within the framework of the visit.

Issues related to the current cooperation between the two countries, the expansion of regional cooperation, namely the perspectives of transiting gas to third countries through Armenia's territory were discussed at a meeting with Hamid Reza Araghi, Deputy Petroleum Minister for Gas Affairs & Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Company.

During the meeting with Iran's Deputy Minister of Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Houshang Falahatian the parties discussed issues of increasing the volumes of electricity exchange and the perspectives of expansion of regional cooperation.

## ADB to help improve strategic road connection on Armenia-Georgia border

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$50 million loan to improve the transport efficiency and safety of the M6 Highway from Vanadzor in Armenia to the border with Georgia at Bagratashen, one of the most strategic roads for internal and external trade.

"Road transport plays an important role in the national economy of Armenia, which relies heavily on trade with neighboring countries like Georgia," said Jiangbo Ning, principal transport specialist with ADB's Central West Asia Regional Department. "ADB supports the government's priority to develop and increase the efficiency of the transport system as a prerequisite for economic growth, and for increased access to social and economic services."

The M6 highway is a vital link connecting Armenia with Georgia and beyond, providing the shortest link between the respective capitals: Yerevan and Tbilisi. In 2014, the Bagratashen border crossing handled 0.85 million tons of import and export freight, representing almost half of the country's total import freight tonnage and goods by road.

The conditions of this vital highway, though, are deteriorating and imposing high transport costs on users. Some structures are dangerous and need to be rehabilitated immediately. Every year, landslides, flooding, falling rocks, and heavy snowfall cause road closures. These factors have contributed to a poor safety record – about 30 crashes and six fatalities per year during 2012–2014.

These problems are mainly attributed to a historical lack of maintenance and limited

ed maintenance funding, old road design and technical specifications, and a lack of qualified human resources and contractors, as well as consulting companies with the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct maintenance.

The project will rehabilitate and upgrade 51.5 km of the total 90 kilometers of the two-lane M6 highway, as rehabilitation of the remaining 38.5 kilometers will be financed by the European Investment Bank. Facilities and safety along and in the vicinity of this road section in northern Armenia will be improved, and the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Transport and Communications will be strengthened.

ADB is also providing additional support to help the government take proactive steps to increase the budget allocation for road maintenance, and enhance its effectiveness through policy dialogues.

Once completed, the project will help improve access to social services, agriculture, tourism, and jobs, with the aim of reducing regional economic and social disparities. The upgraded road link will particularly benefit the Lori region, a major destination that attracts local and international tourists, by help it transition from its high dependence on minerals and chemicals to a more diversified economy with an emphasis on the tourism and service sectors.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, ADB in December 2016 will mark 50 years of development partnership in the region. It is owned by 67 members – 48 from the region. In 2015, ADB assistance totaled \$27.2 billion, including cofinancing of \$10.7 billion.

welcome to

# ARMENIA 2016

TOURISM FORUM

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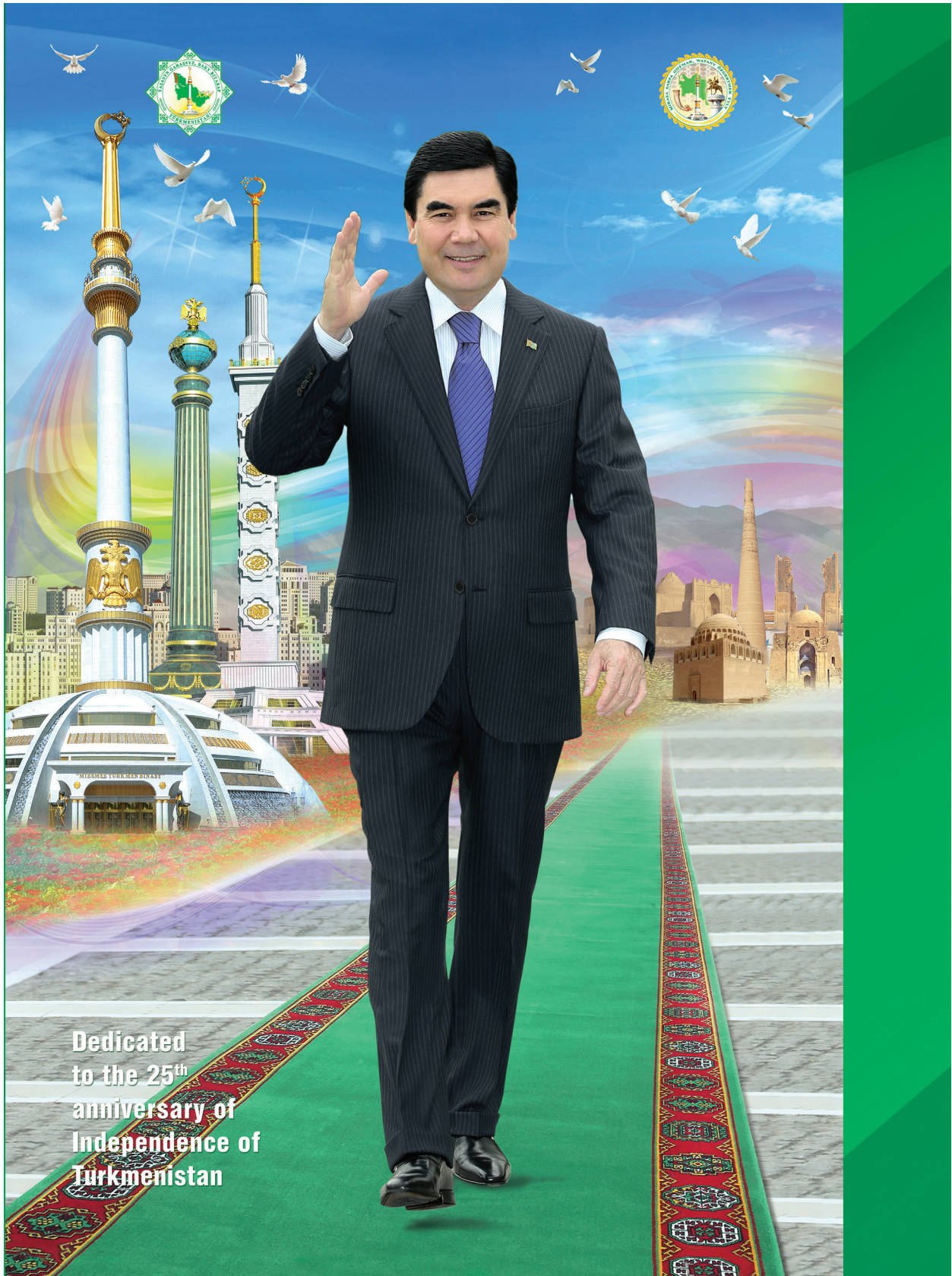
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**THE 25<sup>th</sup> GLORIOUS JUBELEE OF INDEPENDENCE  
OF TURKMEN STATEHOOD**



Dedicated  
to the 25<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of  
Independence of  
Turkmenistan



*from page 1*

During this period Turkmenistan has launched the present stage of its historical development - building an open democratic state with a socially oriented market economy, free and independent life. As a result of declaration of Independence Turkmenistan stepped the path of genuine state creating the necessary political and legal basis for its statehood, inherent to the way of life, national customs and traditions of the Turkmen people.

Having gained the independence, the State Flag and the State Emblem embodying the sovereignty of Turkmenistan has been created, glorious heroic history was revived, the original heritage, humane principles and noble tradition of the Turkmen people restored.

Since gaining the independent status, the country challenged the following strategic goals and objectives laid down in the Constitution: a shift to the full processing of domestic raw materials and production of products in all spheres beginning from agriculture to the industrial and oil and gas spheres; development of science as a strategic direction of the state policy; strengthening the economic power through introduction of new technologies to production processes. As a result of the successful implementation of these goals today Turkmenistan is transforming into a mighty industrial country.

At modern stage of independent development of the Motherland, a large-scale work, paying special attention to stable economic growth is undertaken. According to our main motto "The State for the Individual!", we realize comprehensive reforms of all branches of economy, science, education, public health, sport, culture and tourism.

The entrepreneurship and private sector are being developed at great speed, providing high social and living level of the people, making new modern villages, settlements, industrial complexes, promoting the consolidation of the principles of the state sovereignty.

Construction of Turkmen part of international railroad Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Tajikistan, the Olympic

village facilities in Ashgabat, National tourist zone "Avaza", Turkmenbashi Sea Port, large bridges, accommodation houses of high comfort, hotel complexes, recreational and health centers undergo at high speed. It should be mentioned that the V Asian indoor and martial arts games will be conducted in the capital of Turkmenistan in September 2017.

Modern kindergartens, schools, cultural houses and industrial enterprises are being built all around the country. All of these are a visual evidence of grandiose successes and achievements of the sovereign country.

In the speech of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov delivered during the session of the Council of Elders on September 14, 2016, a broad picture of the country's achievements over 25 years of its independent development in political, social-economic, and humanitarian spheres, and assessed the current state of the country and society were pronounced.

Speaking about achievements in social and economic area, the President of Turkmenistan, in particular, noted that over the past 25 years in the country, investments worth 144 billion US dollars have been developed, 544 large facilities of industrial and non-industrial purpose have been constructed and commissioned.

The volume of foreign trade turnover in comparison to 1995 increased 8 times. Turkmenistan carried out two large-scale energy projects – Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline and Turkmenistan-Iran gas pipeline. In December 2015 construction of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline has begun.

It was noted that since 2007 fundamental reforms in the national economy, financial and banking systems has been started. Thus, today the state strategy of accelerated transformation of Turkmenistan from primarily agrarian state into a developed industrial power with high level of technological and production cycle is becoming a reality.

Private sector is developing at high rates in industry, agriculture, construction, services sector and other spheres.

To date, the share of non-state sector in the structure of GDP amounted to 68% (excluding energy sector). The total number of non-state enterprises reached 25,000.

It should be mentioned, that the international reputation of neutral Turkmenistan as an independent state, consolidating efforts to strengthen peace and harmony in the world, asserting the principles of positive neutrality, peace and good neighborly relations in the name of global progress and prosperity is being raised from year to year. Also, in this context, it is remarkable, that the Regional Center for preventive diplomacy of the UN is functioning in Ashgabat since 2007.

The strategy of political development chosen by Turkmenistan as a democratic, constitutional state and the general outlines of the eloquent political processes in the country create a solid foundation for the formation of the foreign policy of Turkmenistan.

Today Turkmenistan has established diplomatic relations with more than 130 countries all over the world and became a member of about 43 international organizations. Turkmenistan is actively cooperating with the UN agencies and has its representatives in such authoritative international organizations as the UN, ECO, CIS, EU, OSCE, UNESCO, and also is a member of such international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and others.

The real achievement of Turkmenistan's foreign policy was the declaration of the status of permanent neutrality on December 12, 1995 on the basis of UN General Assembly Resolution № 50/80 and repeatedly declared in 2015, where it is highlighted that the UN "expressing the hope that the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan will contribute to the peace and security in the region, recognizes and supports Turkmenistan's acknowledged status of permanent neutrality".

In this context it should be noted that in the year 2015 Turkmenistan had cel-

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## THE 25<sup>th</sup> GLORIOUS JUBELEE OF INDEPENDENCE OF TURKMEN STATEHOOD

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celebrated another glorious date - the 20th jubilee of neutrality. Dedicated to Turkmenistan's neutrality numerous international conferences and celebrations were organized throughout the entire year. On December 12, a top level International Conference was held in the capital Ashgabat, which was attended by the Heads of States and Governments of several countries.

The year 2016 was declared as the Year of Honoring the Heritage and Transformation of the Fatherland in Turkmenistan, and throughout this period the opening ceremonies of the International Airport and the building of the Engineering and Technology University after Oguz Khan in Ashgabat were held, as well as the openings of different splendid buildings of production and socio-cultural facilities in regional centers, towns and villages were held. All these ceremonies give special elevated mood to the Independence Day celebrities, increasing pride in own country.

Embassy of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Armenia has also conducted various events to mark the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Motherland and the Year of honoring the heritage, the transformation of the Fatherland.

At the beginning of the 2016 the Embassy jointly with the Yerevan State University and Turkmen State University held a presentation of the book of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov "Neutral Turkmenistan" dedicated to the 20th anniversary of neutrality of the country. During the presentation it has been noted, that the book of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov represents the chronicle of the Turkmen neutrality, thinking about the positive core of which the Turkmen leader underlines the crucial importance of this unprecedented in-

ternational and legal status in achieving impressive breakthroughs in economy, social sphere, spiritual and cultural life of the Turkmen society and at the international arena.

On April 2016 the Embassy organized a tournament on mini football among diplomats, employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and representatives of the diplomatic corps of the country dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Turkmenistan's independence and announcement of the Year of honoring



the heritage, the transformation of the Fatherland.

On May 2016 the Embassy held a bowling and billiards tournament in a festive atmosphere also dedicated to the glorious jubilee of independence among Turkmen citizens, studying at different universities of Armenia.

For introducing the general Armenian audience with the socio-political life of Turkmenistan, with the important events taking place in the country, throughout all the year the Embassy periodically published different articles on Turkmen unique culture, the rich historical heritage of the country, about the folk traditions and customs, as well as of the foreign policy course of Turkmenistan and the cooperation with various countries of the world, including articles about the

friendly and fraternal relations between Turkmenistan and Armenia.

In this context it should be emphasized that today - at the point of a new historical turn - the two sovereign states demonstrate mutual aspiration and readiness for creation of a universal formula of the mutually beneficial partnership which will fully meet the available potential and interests of Turkmen and Armenian people. And it can be stated with confidence and big satisfaction that the firm and solid bridge of friendship and co-operation was built between our two ancient countries and hard-working nations, which unites our common striving for peace, prosperity, progress and happy future.

Likewise, it should be noted, that in the beginning of October, together with the Yerevan State University the Embassy held a scientific conference "Turkmenistan - 25 years of prosperity and sustainable development", dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Independence of Turkmenistan.

Furthermore, as a special edition the Embassy has published an illustrated magazine devoted to this significant date, aimed at informing the general Armenian public about the political, economic and cultural achievements of Turkmenistan, about the successes gained in a short period of sovereign development in the era of independence of the Motherland.

Moreover, after the publication of the magazine the Yerevan State University hosted a round table dedicated to the main holiday of the country, in frame of which the presentation of the special edition of the magazine was held. The representatives of the diplomatic corps of the country, the students and professors of the university were presented the colossal work done throughout the 25 years of independent existence, the main stages of the implementation of Turkmenistan's foreign policy in a quarter century.

*Embassy of Turkmenistan  
to the Republic of Armenia*





## Vigen Sargsyan: “We March Forward, Towards to New Victories”

### New Defense Minister of the Republic of Armenia takes active steps

Compiled by Gourgen Khazhakian  
Chief correspondent

It is one month sharp since a Presidential decree was signed, according to which Mr Vigen A. Sargsyan who served for several years as the Chief of the RA President’s Staff, an intellectual considered by many a new (long awaited) type of leader, a person having reputation of a good manager who has received both Western and Rus-

of Defense. It was dedicated to the planning and organization of professional and command preparation of the operational link of the Armed Forces, current challenges in this sphere and vectors for its enhancement. Within the frames of co-operation and coordination of operations between the Armed Forces of the two Armenian states, representatives of the commanding staff of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army took part in the meeting as well.

Below the readers could find speech by the Minister **Vigen A. Sargsyan** delivered at the meeting we put with no cuts ‘cause of its all-encompassing, program character:

“...Honorable members of the Board, generals, officers, and special civilian servicemen,

Our nation’s military security is a critical, immediate, but also long-term challenge. We did not make this choice, it was forced upon us. Awakened from a centuries-long slumber, we rediscovered our national identity, and not only declared independence, but also defended it in a brutal and asymmetric, but all the more heroic, war. The monumental canvas that is “Armenia” was reborn from a fabric torn by earthquake ruins, economic collapse, an energy crisis, and a degradation of social relationships.

Twenty five years ago, history delivered a surprise; one for which we had waited and prepared for a long time and of which we had dreamed, without anticipating that it could materialize so quickly. We leapt forward like a child whose dream came true, failing to notice the power of the cold headwinds blowing

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sian education, was appointed the RA Defense Minister.

After the “Four-Day-War” in April that costed the Nation 103 lives, it has become ABSOLUTELY obvious that our Armed Forces need new approaches and methods of the governance, logistics etc.

And we believe that this KIND of leaders are able to make ORDER, FINALLY in THE ARMENIAN VICTORIOUS ARMY.

Below The Highlights readers could find recent Army news courtesy RA Defense Ministry Press and Information Dept.:

On October 29th, the meeting of the Board under the Minister of Defense of the Republic took place at the Ministry



## Vigen Sargsyan: “We March Forward, Towards to New Victories”

### New Defense Minister of the Republic of Armenia takes active steps

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into our face. The superpower crumbled before our eyes, or more appropriately, around us, taking with it our perceived well-being, tranquility, predictability and confidence concerning tomorrow.

Life rendered us accustomed to things we deemed impossible with lightning speed; thing such as digging trenches, communicating with improvised radio devices, burying friends, waiting in line for bread with a food stamp, and burning firewood in apartment buildings. It seemed as though the entire world was crumbling down, and that life could never be the same again.

The Armenian Army is truly one that is born of the people. It is an army which has fought for our people's security for 23 years. It is an army which as brought pride and delight to its people. Its a Nation Army, since it always served the Nation, and national interests.

Nevertheless, an Nation-Army is far more than a national Army. While a National Army serves the Nation, the Nation-Army is itself the Nation. Taking into account the fact that our armed forces are incomparably large in relation to our land and population, they cannot be separation from one another. Our society cannot isolate itself from our army, not can our army shut itself out, and distance itself from our people. Just think about it, one in every 40 nationals, from newborn infants to the elderly, are in uniform. There is not a single family, for whom the army does not entail a personal story.

The Nation-Army is that society that operates in unity. This does not imply militarization of society or state. To the contrary, it implies a democratization of the army, and its complete integration into society and the fields of economy, culture, education, science and sports. This implies using that which the army created and structured, to serve the purposes of society and state at large, and strengthening the armed forces with the accomplishments reached in civilian society.

*The Nation-Army is the Army, to which the connection neither commences nor concludes with compulsory military service.*

*It is that Army, which has the potential to educate, cultivate, and train, and passes this potential to its people.*

*The Nation-Army is that society and armed forces, between which transition is seamless; where only one step divides scientific innovations and the military industrial complex where the economy grows and becomes stronger with orders, investments, and creative contributions from its Army, as opposed to straining itself to carry all of its weight on its shoulders.*

*The Nation-Army is that trust which society has towards its Armed Forces and its officers.*

*It is that society where the officer is the most highly respected and venerated citizen. It is also that officer, who is the embodiment of knowledge, leadership, and confidence, but never presumptuousness.*

*The Nation-Army are schools and military bases which are logical continuations of one another; where the teacher, the parent and the commander work together to raise future generations.*

*It is that Army whose country is the leader in effective management, eradica-*

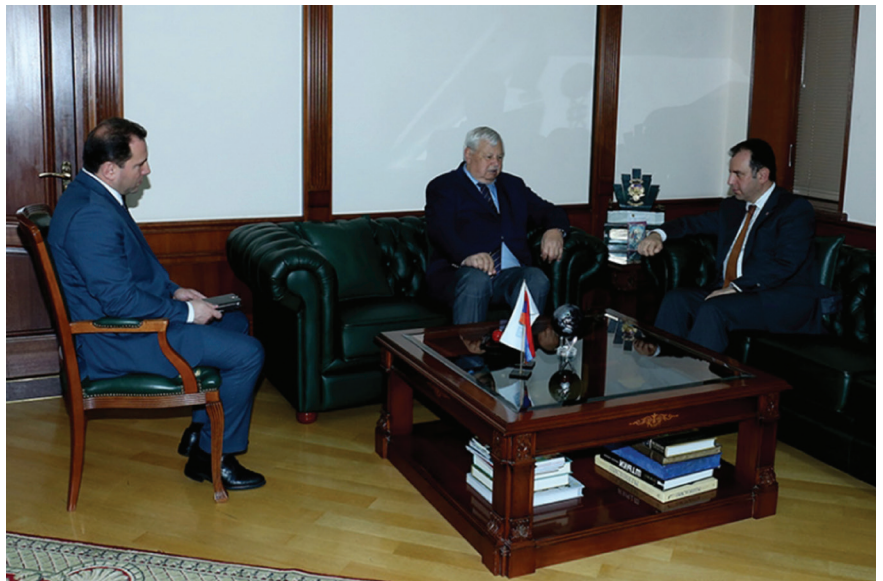
*tion of corruption, integrity, modernization, and cultivation of future generations of elites.*

*The Nation-Army is that system of defense, in which everyone is ready for mobilization, and is well aware of his or her duties, assignments and resources.*

*The Nation-Army is that country, where the contrast between civilian and military personnel is limited to the fact that some citizens were uniform whereas others were civilian clothing.*

*The necessity to support an armed forces that is large relative to our capabilities will continue to exist for a long time. This implies, that a disproportionate number of our citizens will be demobilized and transitioned to military pensions. In order for those pensioners to not pose a drag, we must take steps to enable Armenian officers to enhance their knowledge and skills during service, in order to prepare them for the transition to civilian life, injecting military discipline, patriotism, professionalism, and good courtesy in the economy, industry, science, education and education, thus reinforcing our state's impregnable nature.*

*The Nation-Army is that society which always stands besides the families of military casualties, whether they are disabled or in an irreversible condition, meaning*





fallen.

*The Nation-Army is that family, in which the father trains and strengthens his son from the day of his birth, while the mother sends her son off to the army with a strong feeling of longing but with confidence.*

*But that is also the army which never allows itself to do business with a dishonest supplier, who has dishonest desires to benefit his family and fulfill impossible wishes at the expense of the soldier.*

*The Nation-Army is that Army from which people do not steal, whether it be bullets or carrots, which people do not evade by somehow being struck with all possible and impossible diseases, or by simply fleeing after receiving a free medical education by failing final exams on purpose.*

*The Nation-Army is that Army in which the commander does not worry about his soldier being brave, confident or defiant. It is that commander, who does not differentiate between his son and his soldier, and does not attempt to feel better about himself at the expense of a private serviceman.*

*The Nation-Army is that environment where the young officer sees himself as an inseparable part of a family, where he is accepted as junior, but dear friend, who is being prepared to tackle difficult challenges by senior partners, in both age and rank.*

*The Nation-Army is that system of values which rests on the strong foundation of the centuries-old Armenian Apostolic Church in order to prepare soldiers for service.*

*The Nation-Army is the doctor who is always prepared to rush to the field of battle and fight for the life of every founded individual. It is the director in whose films the officers and soldiers are always the most positive characters. It is the singer, whose rendition of "It is my honor" would bring anyone to tears. It is that athlete, who regardless of specialty, dons a shirt with the image of a fallen freedom fighter while being awarded with an Olympic medal. It is that child, who sends packages to the military base with the coins he saved up.*

*The Nation-Army is that Army that contributes to international security and negotiates on an even playing field with its large and small partners.*

*The path toward building the Nation-Army is not an easy one. It demands hard labor, unyielding devotion, a high level of self-awareness, and sacrifice. So who, if not military servicemen, should take the first step in this direction?*

*The greatest paradox lies in the fact that we cannot choose between adopting or not adopting the Nation-Army concept. We*

*can choose to adopt it today with a new vision, and confidently approach its realization. I am sure that we will be able to realize this together:*

*We have everything for this purpose, including the right people, a mature system of government, and demand from society.*

*Most importantly, we have trust and expectations from the Head of State/Supreme Commander-in-Chief to secure to position of the Army in the Nation-Army dynamic.*

*Thus, we march forward, towards to new victories."*

\* \* \*

On November 4th DM Vigen Sargsyan visited RA Defense Ministry's Military University after Vazgen Sargsyan and Armenia's Central Recruiting Station.

\* \* \*

Vigen Sargsyan is well known also as a good diplomat.

Within the last week he has had meetings with several high-ranking foreign diplomats.

On November 1st Mr Sargsyan received the Personal Representative of the OSCE Acting Chairman Ambassador **Andjey Kasprchik**.

During the meeting, the Minister of Defense presented the current situation on the contact line between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces, and noted that Azerbaijan has periodically been raising ten-

sions on the frontline over the past several weeks, increasing the rate of fire and the caliber of weapons used. The Armed Forces of Armenia respond these provocations only if strictly necessary, remaining loyal to adopted strategy of restraint.

In turn, Ambassador Kasprchik noted that "the Office of the Personal Rep of the OSCE Acting Chairman is working to reduce tensions on the line of contact, and that progress is expected in this regard, in the near future".

On November 2nd Armenian Defense Minister received the UK Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Armenia **Judith Margaret Farnworth** accompanied by newly appointed military attache Lt.-Colonel **David Ross Etell**.

And on the same day Mr Sargsyan received delegation headed by Dr. **Michael Carpenter**, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense with responsibility for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia, the Western Balkans and Conventional Arms Control.

**Davit Tonoyan**, the First Deputy DM was present at the mentioned meetings.



## “Sergey Smbatyan is Creator of Unique Ensembles, a Bright Talent...”

By Gourgen Khazhakian

### Sergey Smbatyan and John Malkovich on the same stage

On October 21, 22, 23 the Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia **Sergey Smbatyan** headed the concert program entitled “An evening with John Malkovich” at Teatro Coliseo (Buenos Aires/Argentina). On October 26 one more concert is scheduled at Teatro Independencia in Mendoza (Argentina) with Sergey Smbatyan’s participation.

The world-famous actor **John Malkovich** presented works by poets Ernesto Sabato and Pablo Neruda accompanied with Concerto for Piano and String orchestra by Alfred Schnittke. Well-known musicians – pianist **Anastasia Terenkova** and cellist **Nina Kotova** performed as soloists.

An interesting format of the concert presented a mixture of music, literature, recita-

tion and performance of the great actor. It is noteworthy, that this is not the first collaboration between Maestro Smbatyan and John Malkovich. They performed on the same stage in 2015 in Seoul.

John Malkovich is a famous Hollywood actor, producer, director, screenwriter, who, after his first role (1978) appeared in more than 170 films, performed in many theatrical plays. Malkovich is the laureate of many prestigious awards.

### Yevgeny Starodubtsev performed within the framework of the Khachaturian Festival

The next symphony concert of the 4th Khachaturian International Festival took place on October 11. The State Youth Orchestra of Armenia performed a symphonic poem “Isle of the Dead” and the Piano Concerto No. 1 (soloist **Yevgeny Starodubtsev** (piano/Russia)) by Sergei Rachmaninoff, as well as Sergei Prokofiev’s Symphony No.

7. The last performance was devoted to the 125th anniversary of Sergei Prokofiev.

The SYOA Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Sergey Smbatyan noted that the Armenian audience still remembers Yevgeny Starodubtsev – the laureate of the Aram Khachaturian International Competition.

“*Yevgeny Starodubtsev is a very famous pianist; he has performed with various orchestras and received numerous high awards. He is going to present Rachmaninoff’s Concerto which is rarely performed. Not every pianist is courageous enough to deal with its complexity*”, – mentioned Sergey Smbatyan.

Speaking of his participation in the Khachaturian Festival Evgeny Starodubtsev noted that he is glad to cooperate with the Youth Orchestra and Sergey Smbatyan, as well as he is pleased to perform at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall.

Starodubtsev is the laureate of numerous international competitions. He performed (also with recitals) in Spain, Germany, France, Netherlands, Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Serbia and other countries. Evgeny has released





two CDs, comprised of the music of the 20th century. The 4th Khachaturian International Festival is dedicated to 25th anniversary of Independence of Armenia. Khachaturian Festival is held under the patronage of the President of RA **Serzh Sargsyan**. It is held thanks to the joint efforts of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia (General Partner of the Orchestra – VivaCell-MTS) and the “Classical Music Support” NGO, with the support of the Ministry of Culture of RA, the “Khachaturian” Foundation and the European Foundation for Support of Culture. The sponsors of the 4th Khachaturian Festival are “Jermuk Group” Company, “Ani Plaza” Hotel, the Yerevan Brandy Factory and the ArmSwissBank.

**“The Khachaturian Festival gives everyone an opportunity to enjoy a high quality music in a high quality presentation,” – the audience about the Festival**

The 3rd symphony concert held on October 20 within the framework of the 4th Khachaturian International Festival was headed by the Italian conductor **Beatrice Venezi**. The concert program included Pavane for Chamber Orchestra by Eduard Hayrapetyan, Concerto Grosso No. 1 for 3 Cellos and Orchestra by Krzysztof Penderecki (soloists: **Aram Talalyan** (cello), **Gayane Khachatryan** (cello), **Anush Yavrumyan** (cello), Leonora Overture No. 3 and Symphony No. 1 by Ludwig van Beethoven.

Earlier, in June 2016, Beatrice Venezi participated in the Aram Khachaturian International Conducting Competition where she was awarded a special prize – the opportunity to perform as a guest conductor of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia during 2016/2017 concert season.

Beatrice Venezi noted that the participation in the Khachaturian International Competition and Khachaturian International Festival was a big experience for her. She highly appreciates the cooperation with the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia.

Cellist **Anush Yavrumyan** is a member of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia and performed with it as a soloist for the first time. Currently cellist **Gayane Khachatryan** studies in Germany. Being aware of the Khachaturian Festival she was very pleased to receive an invitation to perform within its framework.

The audience also looks forward to the concerts of the Khachaturian International Festival. **Nara Abgaryan** is one of our faithful listeners. As a connoisseur of the classical music, she tries not to miss a single chance to attend the Festival concerts.

*“Every year I excitedly expect the launch of the festival to reveal the innovation in the field of classical music suggested by the proj-*

*ect. It’s a real feast to enjoy performances of the world-famous musicians, soloists, conductors, and most importantly – my favorite State Youth Orchestra of Armenia headed by Sergey Smbatyan. The Khachaturian Festival is the best celebration of classical music: it gives everyone an opportunity to enjoy high quality music in a high quality presentation,”* - Nara Abgaryan says.

**The Brass Section of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia performed within the framework of the Khachaturian Festival**

On October 28 the Brass Section and Brass Quintet of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia performed within the framework of the Khachaturian Festival at Komitas Chamber Music House.

**Armen Karagyan** (French-horn), **Tigran Avagyan** (trumpet), **Levon Puchinyan** (trumpet), **Vahram Davtyan** (trombone), **Harutyun Hajhinyan** (tuba) are members of the Brass Quintet. The Brass Section performed during the 1st part of the concert. The presented works were arranged by the order of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and published by the European publishers. The above mentioned pieces were performed in Armenia for the first time.

During the 2nd part of the concert the Brass Quintet presented various pieces by Western European and American composers, which were also presented in Armenia for the first time.

Trombonist **Vahram Davtyan** noticed that together with his colleagues he had intended to perform as a Brass Quintet long before this concert, but the tight schedule and involvement in various projects left no possibilities to realize the idea. *“This concert was just a start, and we hope that in the future we will perform often enough”*, - Vahram Davtyan says.

Let’s remind that the 4th Khachaturian In-

ternational Festival is held under the patronage of the President of RA **Serzh Sargsyan**. It is held thanks to the joint efforts of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia (General Partner of the Orchestra – VivaCell-MTS) and the “Classical Music Support” NGO, with the support of the Ministry of Culture of RA, the “Khachaturian” Foundation and the European Foundation for Support of Culture.

**The SYOA plays with two young but world-known soloists**

On 3 November the SYOA conducted by **Sergey Smbatyan** performed with the soloists **Zohrab Tadevosyan** (violin, Armenia/Spain) and **Johnathan Rooseman** (cello, Finland/Netherlands).

The concert program included Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra by Brahms the Fifth symphony by Shostakovich. The latter performance was dedicated to the composer’s 110th birthday.

**Z. Tadevosyan** stressed that it was the great honor to him to participate in the Aram Khachaturian Fest, - for the third time already. *“No doubt, Khachaturian Fest has its own special place in the world music life”*, - he added.

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And a really terrific news: As the Moscow Intl Music House informs, for the first time National Philharmony Orchestra of Russia (NPOR) will be conducted by **Sergey Smbatyan** at the February 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 concert with **S. Rakhmaninov’s** “The Isle of the Dead” Symphony Poem, Concerto #1 for Piano and Orchestra and “Sheherezada” Symphony Suite by **Rimsky-Korsakov**.

A news release calls **S. Smbatyan** “creator of unique ensembles such as the SYOA, UNICEF Children Orchestra and the World Orchestra 24/04”. It also says: *“...Sergey Smbatyan is an outstanding person, a bright talent.”*



## RA President's GIT Award Seventh Laureate, a Celebrated and Recognized Founding Father of Internet Louis Pouzin of France Starts his Visit with Meeting with the Reps of Media and ICT Community at the VivaCell-MTS Headquarters

On Monday 7 November General Manager of Open-Root organization and one of the recognized and celebrated Founding Fathers of Internet **Louis Pouzin** (accompanied by Madame Pouzin, **Chantal**) visited VivaCell-MTS Headquarters. Monsieur Pouzin is the seventh laureate of the Annual Award of the President of the Republic of Armenia for Outstanding Contribution to Humanity through IT (Global IT Award).

The joint press conference of Louis Pouzin with VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**, Co-Founder of the GIT Award (together with the Synopsys leadership), CEO and Chairman of Viasphere International **Tony Moroyan** and Chairman of Executive Board of GIT Award, Synopsys Armenia Director H.Musaelyan was followed by a brief presentation on the development of Internet by Louis Pouzin.

Louis Pouzin is on a visit to Armenia to receive the 2016 Annual GIT Gold Medal Award of the President of the Republic of Armenia for his Outstanding Contribution to the Humanity through his innovation in the Global IT. The formal award ceremony will take place on November 8 at the Presidential Palace. Let's remind that inaugurated in 2009 by the Decree of the President of Armenia, the Award of the President of the RA for Outstanding Contribution to Global IT is granted on an annual basis to an individual whose internationally acclaimed contributions to IT have resulted in near-revolutionary or revolutionary developments that have positively impacted or hold the potential to positively impact the humanity.

Louis Pouzin is the seventh GIT Award laureate. Armenia hosted the following international titans in the previous years: the retired CEO/Chairman of the Board of Intel Corporation Dr. **Craig Barrett** (2010), co-founder of Apple Computers, Inc. Steve Wozniak (2011), Chairman Emeritus of Synaptics, Inc. Dr. **Federico Faggin** (2012), President of the Society of Semiconductor Industry Specialists, President of Techno Vision company Dr. **Tsugio Makimoto** (2013), Senior Vice President and General Manager for the Insieme Business Unit at Cisco **Mario Mazzola** (2014), and Chairman and CEO of Kaspersky Lab. **Eugene Kaspersky** (2015).



*"Visits of Louis Pouzin and other prominent laureates of the Award to Armenia, their lectures and meetings with the representatives and students in ICT sphere are of paramount importance. Apart from fostering our country's reputation in international platforms, these meetings are also invaluable in terms of presenting innovative ideas, as well as boosting the creative potential and the will of both professional ICT specialists and beginners to aspire and achieve new heights in professional and personal development,"* said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**.

*"We are extremely delighted that we have been able to convince Mr. Louis Pouzin to accept to be the GIT Laureate of 2016. His devotion to the design and implementation of the technology that is recognized to*

*be the fundamental technology from which TCP/IP was derived. This is what Internet is built upon. He is recognized as an early Father of Internet. Here we accomplish our continued commitment to uphold the very high, enviable and unparalleled standard of GIT Presidential Gold Medal,"* said CEO and Chairman of Viasphere International Tony Moroyan.

The Laureate, asked by The Highlights correspondent about his first reaction when he has got knew about nomination for the GIT Award, said he was "fascinated". He also told he has been knowing many Diasporan Armenians, in particular, those living in France.

Mr Yirikian, asked by yours truly "Do you think this Project is a full success?" replied positively, one more time stressing that it aimed at positioning Armenia in the world as an attractive ICT destination.

And Tony Moroyan's answer to the same question was short: *"It is more than success!"*

In the words of Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator reps, *"the Award of the President of the Republic of Armenia for Outstanding Contribution to Global IT is important in terms of creating new opportunities for the development of the ICT sphere in Armenia and presenting Armenia on the world ICT map as a country having huge yet unrealized potential in the sphere of high technologies"*.



*As they say, "VivaCell-MTS is confident that the Armenian youth has exceptional qualities and potential for self-development and it's necessary to support them to fully unveil their potential. The Award of the President of the RA for Outstanding Contribution to Global IT is also a serious promotion of the ICT sphere among the young generation. The Company's support to the Award is based on its mission to foster the development of the ICT sphere in Armenia"*.

Notably, VivaCell-MTS has been the Sponsor of the initiative for all seven years. The Company has allocated AMD 144.2 million for the realization of the Program.

The Highlights will inform its readers on the details of M.Pouzin's stay in Armenia.



## In Armenia, The “House of Hope” Charity Center Celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



From October 30 to November 2, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of “House of Hope” charity center, official delegation from Germany was in Armenia. The delegation included Vice-President of the Red Cross of BadenWuerttemberg state Wolfgang Haalboom, Governor of Ostalbkreis Klaus Pavel, Mayor of Schwäbisch Gmünd Richard Joseph Arnold accompanied by the four members of municipal council of Schwäbisch Gmünd, and also the editor-in-chief of German «Gmünder tagespост» daily Michael Länge.

On November 1, great friend of the Armenian people Priest Karl-Heinz Sheide, together with Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Armenia Matthias Kiesler and the members of German delegation, launched the start of the 23th season of “Charity Kitchen”.

About 450 elderly needy people from Kanaker Zeytun, Erebuni, Kentron administrative districts and surrounding areas make use of this program of social significance. 130 beneficiaries from Erebuni and Kentron districts are

served at movable service centers allotted free by the administrative districts. Besides getting meals once a day the beneficiaries of the program also make use of other social services rendered by “House of Hope” center. Social assistance services are expanded from year to year and include needy people of different age and risk groups. Sub-projects “Children’s food” and “Home care”

are also implemented in the capital by “Charity kitchen” program. “Home care” sub-project involves lonely elderly people from Kanaker Zeytun, Kentron, Arabkir and Ajapnyak districts who are not able to take care of themselves. Within the framework of the program volunteers show necessary social and psychological aid to beneficiaries, and in the period of “Charity kitchen” project provide them with hot meals.

In his opening speech, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Armenia, Matthias Kiesler mentioned that the success of this project is first and foremost due to the fact that such great number of participants works in the same direction both from the German and Armenian sides.

“It is always a great joy for us to be here. Precisely one year ago, during the opening of the 22th season, my wife and I accepted the honorary proposal to serve as patrons of the project.

The success of the program is also due to the support of the municipal government of Armenia. From the Armenian side I would like to thank those who perform all the work on the spot, among them Director of the center Movses Poghosyan and volunteers.

*continued on page 20*



## Zodiac Weekly Forecast



### **Aries (March 20–April 19)**

There is a lot of chatter all around you. Some of it may be disturbing to your sense of comfort. It is like nibbling ducks at your ankles. Don't buy into it or worry overmuch. The

dust will settle soon and whatever the event, it will be over in a few days' time. It's possible you will have a short bout of a health problem.



### **Taurus (April 20 – May 20)**

A 2nd tier friend may hurt your feelings this week. It's old stuff. Try to let it go. You are feeling restless and need to try something new. Commute by a different route or go somewhere you have never visited before. It is important to make note

of these restless feelings and do something about them. Otherwise you can become hard to live with, even for yourself.



### **Gemini (May 20–June 20)**

This week offers a good opportunity to refresh your self-care regimen. Perhaps you will start a new program of diet and exercise. Helping yourself to better health is on your mind so don't ignore it. We need to

take advantage of the moment when it comes.



### **Cancer (June 21–July 21)**

Your partner may be a source of irritation this week. There's no point in nagging or engaging in meaningless tiffs. Take some time for yourself and do something enjoyable on your own. If you think about it, you probably need some alone time anyway. Maybe that is why the Other feels irritating.

probably need some alone time anyway. Maybe that is why the Other feels irritating.



### **Leo (July 22–August 21)**

This week you probably have the pleasure of opening your home to others. You are serving as guide and negotiator to help people become acquainted and share ideas. Your creativity is readily available and you can easily solve any problems

that may arise.



### **Virgo (August 22–September 22)**

This is an opportune time to clarify your personal feelings and convey them to loved ones without creating a fuss or controversy. It is also a good time to use your creative talent. You probably don't realize how creative

you can be since you don't paint or write music. But it is there. Your problem solving ability is great.



### **Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)**

You may not feel physically your best this week. Even so, this is a time of pleasure and maybe a little excitement concerning a significant other. Let your mind be open to

unusual suggestions. Make it a point to interject new spark into the usual routine. Try something new over the weekend.



### **Scorpio (October 23–November 21)**

You may feel a sense of tension and irritation as this week begins. Give careful attention to your vehicle, which may be subject to minor breakdown. You may have issues

with a friend(s), sibling, or roommate this week. Don't make a big thing of it. The tension passes by within a few days.



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

An ancient issue resurfaces between yourself and a family member. Try not to overreact. This is old stuff. Meanwhile there is a sparkle in the works concerning a lover or a creative project. Your eye for the artistic is working with flair. It is upbeat and contemporary.

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

You may feel stressed by time. There appears to be a communications project, perhaps concerning the law, publishing, the Internet, or a paper to write that nags at your back-

side. There is no doubt you will accomplish the goal immediately in front of you, but it will feel like pulling teeth as you do so.



### **Aquarius (January 20–February 17)**

A career or life direction project is put on hold for reasons beyond your control. This is likely temporary. A casual friend or a group involvement

offers something interesting and unusual to do. You need a break from the routine. Try a new restaurant or go for a walk somewhere that you've never been.



### **Pisces (February 18–March 19)**

This is a relatively quiet period. It may be a good time to organize your estate, or clean out closets and do a give-away that will cheer your soul. Spend some time in the quiet and concentrate on connecting to your

deeper self—the side of you who doesn't often get a word into your thoughts.



# ARMENIA

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## In Armenia, The “House of Hope” Charity Center Celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

from p. 17

As for German side, I am very happy that for this special day an official delegation arrived in Armenia. Obviously, one cannot forget about the German Red Cross organization, which implements projects not only in Yerevan but also throughout whole Armenia”,- according to NT corresponded, mentioned the German Ambassador.

It should be noted that this program functioning for 23 year has been co-financed by Yerevan Municipality for 4 years. During the event, the Director of the Center Movses Poghosyan mentioned, that this year Yerevan Municipality took over 50 % of costs.

During the event, some of the members of the German official delegation donated 1,000 Euros to the “House of Hope” Charity Center.

Coordinator and philanthropist of the “House of Hope” projects, Priest Karl-Heinz Sheide said that he is very impressed by the events. According to him, not only in Yerevan but also in Gyumri, Talin, Koti and other provinces, the volunteers are putting efforts in doing everything for the people who have appeared in the shadow to feel themselves good. He also mentioned that their volunteering contribution is really invaluable in all the projects.



the participants get together at the dinner table and start to eat meals.

Priest Karl-Heinz Sheide also hoped that one day everything will be fine. At the end of the event the Priest read a prayer, after which all

*Sarah Melkonyan,  
Noyan Tapan*

**The Noyan Tapan**  
Noah's Ark

**HIGHLIGHTS**

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