

The Noyan Tapan Noah's Ark

Weekly Newspaper

HIGHLIGHTS

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Armenia hands protest note to Russian Ambassador over Solovyov's statements



The Armenian Foreign Ministry has handed a letter of protest to the Russian Ambassador regarding statements made by Russian TV host Vladimir Solovyov.

Russian Ambassador to Armenia Sergey Kopyrkin was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, where he was presented with a protest note expressing deep indignation over Solovyov's remarks, Foreign

Ministry spokesperson Ani Badalyan told Armenpress.

According to Badalyan, the letter stressed that the statements made on the air of a program that is part of the state media holding, constitute an unacceptable encroachment and a hostile manifestation against the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia, grossly violating the

fundamental principles of friendly relations between Armenia and Russia.

Solovyov had stated that losing Armenia is not in Russia's interests and that Russia should conduct a "special military operation" not only in Ukraine but also in territories within its sphere of influence, disregarding international law.

Deputy Prime Minister, US
Ambassador discuss regional
developments

p. 2

Pashinyan says Karekin II
will be 'smoothly' forced out
like Serzh Sargsyan

p. 4

Armenia and Azerbaijan ex-
change lists of potentially
tradable goods, PM says

p.3

Can't establish contact with
Iranian-Armenians amid black-
out, says Diaspora chief

p. 5

Next

Deputy Prime Minister, US Ambassador discuss regional developments

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan received Kristina Kvien, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States to Armenia, who is completing her diplomatic mission in the country.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister personally thanked the Ambassador, on his own behalf and on behalf of the Government, for the work carried out during her tenure and her contribution to the consistent development of Armenia–United States



relations.

Grigoryan wished the Ambassador further success, emphasizing that she will always remain a friend of Armenia. The Ambassador, in turn, thanked the Deputy Prime Minister for the effective and constructive cooperation.

During the meeting, the parties touched upon regional developments and emphasized the importance of the implementation of the TRIPP project.

Armenian minister of environment meets Bulgarian ambassador

Armenian Minister of Environment Hambardzum Matevosyan held a meeting with Bulgaria's Ambassador, Nikola Nikolov.

During the meeting, organizational and agenda-related matters of the 17th Meeting of the Parties (COP17) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity were discussed, Matevosyan said in a statement.

The Minister emphasized that Armenia will continue to make every effort to ensure the conference serves as an effective platform for important decisions in environmental protection, as well as for strengthening priorities on



the international agenda and developing strategic documents.

The discussion also addressed other sectoral issues, including deepening

cooperation in water resource management, exchanging experiences in implementing climate policies, and exploring opportunities for joint initiatives and capacity building.

The parties highlighted the importance of expanding bilateral partnerships, particularly in the areas of sustainable development, adaptation, and environmental protection. The Minister and the Ambassador reaffirmed their commitment to

continue effective dialogue and practical cooperation to promote mutually beneficial projects and achieve tangible results.

Secretary of Armenia's Security Council, UK ambassador discuss regional cooperation

Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Armenia Armen Grigoryan received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Armenia Alexandra Cole on January 8, Grigoryan's office said.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the results of Grigoryan's visit to the United Kingdom in December last

year and the progress in implementing the agreements reached.

They praised the steady development and deepening of multi-sectoral Armenia–UK relations and reaffirmed their mutual commitment to elevating bilateral cooperation to the level of a strategic partnership.

The sides also exchanged views on opportunities for regional cooperation.



Armenia and Azerbaijan exchange lists of potentially tradable goods, PM says

Armenia and Azerbaijan have exchanged preliminary lists of goods of potential interest for trade, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said during a briefing, noting that discussions between the two sides are ongoing and remain at an exploratory stage.

According to the Prime Minister, the exchange of lists reflects a process in which the two countries are assessing which products they may be interested in buying and selling. He stressed that these lists are still under review and that no final decisions have been made. "When there are concrete developments, the public will be informed," Pashinyan said.

Addressing questions about the renewed import of fuel from Azerbaijan, Pashinyan explained that during a meeting

of deputy prime ministers, the Azerbaijani side expressed readiness to sell petroleum products to Armenia. Following an initial assessment of the market, the Armenian government informed business operators that such an option exists.

He emphasized that the government did not impose any obligation on companies to purchase fuel from Azerbaijan, nor were there any restrictions limiting participation in the process. "The market and the opportunity are open to everyone. Any company that wishes can take advantage of it," the Prime Minister said.

Pashinyan added that, to the best of his knowledge, two Armenian companies established contacts with Azerbaijani counterparts. He also acknowledged that during the import of the first batch

of fuel, some retail chains refused to sell Azerbaijani gasoline, which effectively amounted to a boycott. According to him, this confirmed the government's earlier concerns that such imports could be politicized.

Despite this, Pashinyan reiterated that the government's role was limited to informing businesses about the opportunity. He noted that discussions between Armenia and Azerbaijan extend beyond fuel and include broader talks on potential trade in various product groups.

"At this stage, there is a discussion process underway," the Prime Minister said, adding that the exchanged lists of goods are preliminary and subject to further study.

Foreign Minister Mirzoyan, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister discuss bilateral relations

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan received Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, who is in Yerevan to hold Armenia-Iran political consultations, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The sides discussed issues related to the development of bilateral relations between Armenia and Iran. Both emphasized the existing political agreement to elevate relations to the level of strategic partnership and addressed the work currently underway in this direction.

Mirzoyan stressed that Armenia



attaches great importance to relations with neighboring and friendly Iran, noting that these relations are of strategic significance. In this context, he recalled that

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan have agreed to officially elevate bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership this year.

The interlocutors also exchanged views on the unblocking of regional infrastructure. Mirzoyan reaffirmed Armenia's clear position that any unblocking process should take place within the framework of fundamental principles. The meeting also addressed the programs being developed in this regard and the opportunities they provide.

Armenian consulate in Aleppo remains open despite clashes

The Consulate General of the Republic



of Armenia in Aleppo has announced that it continues to operate normally, providing

consular services to citizens of Armenia as well as foreign nationals, despite the deteriorating security situation in the city.

In a statement, the consulate said that for inquiries related to consular services, the following contact numbers are available:

+963 964 422 005

+963 942 000 690

Clashes erupted in Aleppo around midday on January 6 between the Syrian army and Kurdish internal security units of the

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Armenian-populated neighborhoods are located in areas adjacent to the fighting and have also fallen within the danger zone. According to official sources, by the evening hours at least four people had been killed and 15 others injured, including children.

The situation in the affected districts remains tense as residents face ongoing security risks.

Pashinyan says Karekin II will be ‘smoothly’ forced out like Serzh Sargsyan



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Thursday that the process of deposing Karekin II of the Armenian Apostolic Church would be smooth and imbued with “Christian tolerance and love.”

Pashinyan has accused Karekin II, whom he refers to by his secular name, Ktrich Nersisyan, of holding office illegitimately. The prime minister has called on the Church leader to step down, but the latter has refused to do so.

“We intend to make him reconsider,”

Pashinyan said at a press briefing when asked to comment on Karekin II’s refusal to resign. “Serzh Sargsyan also had no intention of leaving, but he was forced to leave; the same will happen to Ktrich Nersisyan — he will be forced to leave as well,” Pashinyan said, referring to the former president whom he ousted in 2018.

Pashinyan has previously stated that Catholicos Karekin II is illegitimate, alleging that he violated his vow of celibacy by fathering a child. Karekin II and several clergymen have accused Pashinyan of waging an anti-church campaign. Pashinyan has denied this, describing himself as a “devoted follower of the Armenian Apostolic Church” who is fighting against those who have “desecrated the Church’s sanctities.” The Pashinyan administration has also accused Karekin II of being a foreign agent.

Earlier in December, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan presented a plan he described as a “roadmap for reforming” the Armenian Apostolic Church after Catholicos Karekin II steps down.

The roadmap envisions the election of a locum tenens following Karekin II’s removal. It also calls for the adoption of a new Canon Law, which would address, among other issues, rules and guarantees related to the integrity of clergymen and the financial transparency of the Church. Ultimately, the plan envisions the election of a new Catholicos in accordance with the provisions of the new Canon Law, to be adopted by an authorized church body.

Furthermore, Pashinyan and several clergymen have formed a Council for the Reform of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The Church leader has denied accusations of illegitimacy.

Most repatriates to Armenia in 2025 came from Russia, says Diaspora Commissioner

In 2025, trends in repatriation to Armenia were normal, Zareh Sinanyan, High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of Armenia, noted that last year, due to “hot spots,” there was no major wave of repatriation, but nor was the flow noticeably reduced.

“In recent years, the largest increase occurred in 2022–2023, related to the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Last year, most repatriates came from Russia. This is natural, as a large number of Armenians live there. In addition, they are close geographically,

psychologically, and in terms of origin. The next largest group of repatriates comes from Syria, followed by Lebanon and Iran. We also have repatriates from the U.S., Argentina, Australia, and other countries,” Zareh Sinanyan said.

The Repatriation and Integration Center at the High Commissioner’s Office continues to develop its programs, making them more targeted and serving those relocating to Armenia. The services cover a wide range of areas, including assistance with documentation, enrolling children

in schools and kindergartens, Armenian language courses, and familiarization with the job market.

“Repatriation needs to be on a larger scale, as we are facing a demographic challenge. Achieving this depends on several factors, including the allocation of financial resources. I am confident that we will reach that stage. Once our pressing security issues are addressed, we will turn our attention to reshaping the demographic picture through repatriation,” Zareh Sinanyan stated.

Court orders house arrest and bail for businessman Samvel Karapetyan

A court in Armenia has partially granted a motion filed by the defense team of businessman Samvel Karapetyan, ordering that his pretrial detention be replaced with house arrest and bail, according to one of his lawyers, Aram Vardevanyan.

Karapetyan has been in custody since June 18, 2025. Under a court decision dated November 18, his detention had been

extended by an additional two months. Vardevanyan said the defense recently submitted another motion seeking a change to the preventive measure, which the court has now partially approved.

Karapetyan is charged under Article 422, Part 2 of Armenia’s Criminal Code. The provision concerns public calls aimed at the seizure of power, violation

of territorial integrity, renunciation of sovereignty, or the violent overthrow of the constitutional order, when committed through mass media or information and communication technologies.

Further details regarding the amount of bail and the specific conditions of the house arrest have not yet been made public.

Can't establish contact with Iranian-Armenians amid blackout, says Diaspora chief

High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of Armenia, Zareh Sinanyan, said on January 12 that his office has lost contact with the Armenian community in Iran amid the ongoing demonstrations and the recent internet shutdown.

He was asked on the situation in Iran during a press briefing.

"In Iran, since Friday, when the protests intensified, we have had no information. At the moment, we are also unable to get in touch with our compatriots, which is a great cause for concern to us. We will continue our efforts to establish contact with Iranian-Armenians," said Zareh Sinanyan.

He said that during the 2025 June Israeli-Iranian war, authorities were gathering information through resources set up at the Meghri border crossing on the Armenia-Iran border.

"At that time, we were receiving information about Armenians in Iran through our compatriots crossing the border. Perhaps we should begin doing the same in this case as well, starting today, since this



information blackout is causing us great concern," Sinanyan noted.

The High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs noted that at present there is insufficient information to organize an evacuation of Armenians. "As soon as we see that we have adequate information regarding our compatriots in Iran that allows us to make such an assessment, we will certainly do so," Sinanyan said.

Addressing the question of whether it is possible to send an expert team to Iran, Zareh Sinanyan stated that this is currently unrealistic.

"Under these conditions, it is unrealistic to send an expert or any other team, as the situation remains unclear to us. We cannot know where we would be sending them. We need to understand, at least approximately, what is happening, particularly in cities with large Armenian populations, and then determine our further course of action accordingly," Sinanyan emphasized.

The High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs also touched upon developments in Syria, particularly in Aleppo, noting that, unfortunately, what is happening in Syria has taken on a chronic nature, and people have already become accustomed to it.

"I say this with great sadness, of course. Our position is that life in Armenia is much better, and if you have the opportunity, come to Armenia, because the future in Syria is very uncertain," Sinanyan said, addressing Syrian-Armenians.

Hundreds have died in the anti-government protests in Iran, according to various media reports.

Trump 'immediately' imposes 25% tariffs on countries that do business with Iran



U.S. President Donald Trump said that countries that do business with Iran will face a new 25% tariff.

"Effective immediately, any Country doing business with the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a Tariff of 25% on any and all business being done with the United States of America," Trump wrote on Truth Social on January 12. "This Order is final and conclusive," he added.

CNN reported that the White House declined to share additional information on the tariff and how the Trump administration plans to implement it.

Trump's announcement comes amid his suggestions of U.S. military intervention to "rescue" anti-government protesters in Iran, as various reports place the death toll in the hundreds.

Armenian Minister of Environment participates in Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week

Minister of Environment Hambarzum Matevosyan is visiting the United Arab Emirates from January 12 to 15 to participate in the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) forum, the ministry reported.

According to organizers, ADSW sets the tone for global ambition, collaboration, and impact, reinforcing the UAE's role as a bridge between nations and a source of inspiration for the world. The 2026 Abu

Dhabi Sustainability Week will mobilize leaders from government, business, and society to chart the next era of sustainable development. With the theme "The Nexus of Next: All Systems Go", ADSW will connect ambition with action across innovation, finance, and people, showcasing how the world can move forward with confidence.

Ahead of Armenia hosting the 17th

Meeting of the Parties (COP17) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2026 in Yerevan, the participation of the Republic of Armenia in the conference aims to promote the deepening of international cooperation, advance the climate agenda, and facilitate the exchange of best practices in the field of sustainable development, the ministry of environment said in a statement.

WIPO extends ISDA trademark protection to Armenia

According to the decision adopted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on November 13, 2025, the protection of the ISDA trademark has been extended to the territory of the Republic of Armenia, the Central Bank said in a press release.

The extension of ISDA trademark protection in the Republic of Armenia ensures legal clarity and alignment with international standards. The protection of templates, definitions, guidelines, and educational materials published under the ISDA name guarantees their authenticity and prevents unauthorized use in

the Armenian market. This is particularly important in a context where the local market is implementing contracts based on international standards.

In addition, it contributes to the development of the financial market and international integration. The introduction of ASDA is aimed at the development of derivatives, repo, and securities financing transactions by reducing legal risks and enhancing the confidence of market participants. The protection of the ISDA trademark further strengthens this process by creating a reliable environment for both local and international partners

and by promoting the dissemination of a risk management culture in Armenia that is consistent with global practices.

Overall, the extension of ISDA trademark protection and the introduction of the ASDA standard contract jointly constitute an important step in the modernization of Armenia's financial market infrastructure, contributing to market transparency, transaction predictability, and the enhancement of the competitiveness of Armenia's financial system at the international level.

Gasoline, diesel prices expected to drop amid increased imports from Azerbaijan, Armenian economy minister says

Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan said on Friday that gasoline and diesel prices are expected to drop due to the latest imports from Azerbaijan.

In a statement on social media, Papoyan presented statistics on grain and gasoline imports via rail through Azerbaijan.

"In 2025, 6,580 tons of grain entered Armenia via railway through the territory

of Azerbaijan, of which 1,000 tons were Kazakh and 5,580 tons were Russian, as well as 1,210 tons of Azerbaijani gasoline," Papoyan said on social media.

"As of January 8, 2026, 8,485 tons of Russian grain have entered Armenia via railway through the territory of Azerbaijan, and 4,103 tons are en route. In addition, 7,600 tons of Azerbaijani petroleum

products are en route, of which 6,100 tons are gasoline and 1,500 tons are diesel. As I mentioned earlier, a price reduction of up to 80 drams per liter for gasoline and diesel is expected compared to last month's prices. I am pleased to inform you that, driven by these developments, other fuel-selling companies are also working toward lowering prices," he added.

Electric vehicles to be exempt from VAT in Armenia in 2026

Electric motor vehicles imported into or sold within Armenia will be exempt from value-added tax (VAT) in 2026, according to a new legislative amendment, the **State Revenue Committee of Armenia** has announced.

The exemption is предусмотрен by Law No. HO-487-N of December 17, 2025, "On Amendments to the Tax Code of the Republic of Armenia," which entered into force on January 1, 2026.

Under the law, VAT exemptions will apply in two phases. From **January 1 to January 31, 2026**,



VAT will not be charged on the import or sale in Armenia of electric motor vehicles

classified under EAEU HS codes **8702 40 000, 8703 80 000, 8704 60 000, and 8711 60.**

From **February 1 through December 31, 2026**, the VAT exemption will apply to electric vehicles under the same classification codes, provided that they were manufactured **after December 31, 2023.**

The measure aims to promote the use of environmentally friendly transportation and support the development of electric mobility in Armenia.

Armenian Government approves doctrine on economic and institutional transformation



The Armenian government has approved a doctrine on Armenia's economic and institutional transformation, setting out the ideological foundations of a new economic paradigm described as the "Real Armenia" model.

Presenting the document, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the doctrine serves as a long-term development guideline aimed at reviewing and strengthening the country's economic structure and state institutions. He stressed that the document is both a roadmap and a declaration of intent, designed to give strategic coherence to government policies.

According to the government, the doctrine seeks to eliminate fragmentation in economic and institutional policymaking, establish a clear long-term vision and principles, and introduce a unified structural system for programs and subprograms. The goal is to ensure that state policy becomes more visionary, systematic, and predictable. As a result, authorities expect greater confidence in the investment environment, improved efficiency and accountability in public administration, and enhanced economic resilience and security.

Pashinyan said the doctrine reflects where Armenia stands today and where it intends to move, emphasizing that the

country is adopting a new economic paradigm. He noted that the need for revision is driven in part by significant economic growth since 2018. According to him, Armenia's economy has grown by more than 50 percent since the 2018 revolution, while GDP per capita has more than doubled. If GDP per capita stood at USD 3,882 in 2017, preliminary data for 2025 indicate a level of around USD 9,400 – an increase of about 2.4 times.

The prime minister also pointed out that the Central Bank of Armenia collected more than USD 2 billion from the market last year, which, he said, indicates significant financial inflows into the Armenian economy. "This means we now have a completely different economy and a different country compared to 2018," Pashinyan stated, while underlining the importance of clearly defining the government's role in these processes.

According to the prime minister, the government's key contribution since 2018 has been the removal of restrictions on economic activity, including monopolies and barriers. He said this approach has allowed Armenia to maintain macroeconomic stability and achieve strong growth despite political, regional, and geopolitical challenges, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and recessionary pressures.

Pashinyan emphasized that the results

should primarily be credited to people working, creating value, and paying taxes in Armenia. He described the achievements as the outcome of cooperation between the government and citizens, arguing that Armenia has developed not only a democratic political system, but also a democratic economic system, where the state intervenes only where necessary.

A central pillar of the new economic paradigm, according to the doctrine, is education. Pashinyan stressed that without accessible, modern, and competitive education – and without embracing lifelong learning – the effectiveness of reforms is undermined. He described education as the core of the doctrine, determining economic growth, the effectiveness of public administration, national identity, and the long-term sustainability of the state.

The prime minister also said the doctrine reflects Armenia's intention to shape its economy in the context of regional stability and peace. He noted that the country is adapting its economic and institutional model to a changing regional and foreign policy environment, emphasizing that peace and its institutionalization remain among Armenia's top priorities.

Under the doctrine, the state assumes a more active and responsible role in critical infrastructure sectors, including energy, transport, water, and digital security, while ensuring transparent and economically justified privatization in areas where it promotes competition and efficiency. The document also addresses education reform, artificial intelligence, digitalization, agriculture, energy development, and intensive farming.

Summing up, Pashinyan said the doctrine is based on a core principle: the state is a continuous institution, while governments change, and economic policy logic must remain stable and predictable. "The foundation of all this is the idea of the state's continuity and the understanding that economic development is the state interest," the prime minister said, adding that without economic growth, no national agenda can be sustained.

Interview: Perspectives on Peace and Sovereignty



Noyan Tapan hosts political scientist **Edward Antinyan**

Read the full interview below:

Noyan Tapan: According to Armenia's Prime Minister, the government has fulfilled the greatest promise and obligation written in its program: opening an era of peace and peaceful development for both Armenia and the region. We see that the adversary is no longer firing; they have even lifted the ban on cargo transportation through their territory and are now selling gasoline. Do you agree with the Prime Minister that he has brought peace?

Edward Antinyan: That peace does not depend on him. If he believes he "brought" this peace or that it was promised to him or Armenia, we must ask: on whose behalf is Ilham Aliyev speaking? Do we trust Ilham Aliyev? Have we started to believe he honestly wants peace, or does he simply want to obtain in peacetime what he otherwise wouldn't need to go to war for?

Look at it this way: while talking about peace, Aliyev continues to say that if you don't change your Constitution, it means you have territorial claims, which in turn means you don't want peace. Aliyev claims *he* was the initiator of peace, yet he continues to claim that the state of Armenia does not exist—calling it "Western Azerbaijan." He organizes international symposiums to present this narrative.

Noyan Tapan: But people in Armenia ask, "Why do you believe Aliyev?"

Edward Antinyan: How can we *not* believe Aliyev's actions? Peace wasn't promised to us on Aliyev's behalf. When Nikol Pashinyan stated that the international community believes Artsakh should be part of Azerbaijan, what could we do? We say Artsakh was Armenian, but we negotiated poorly, resulting in the international community's current stance. Now Aliyev explains to the world that Armenians are newcomers and that 300,000 Azerbaijanis must return to Armenia. 57 countries of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), including Iran—whom we consider a friend—condemn Armenia on this.

Noyan Tapan: I might have missed something. When did this condemnation happen?

Edward Antinyan: On June 20th, after meeting with Erdogan, the OIC gathered in Istanbul. They decided Armenia should pay \$180 billion in fines for "occupying" Azerbaijani territory and condemned the fact that 300,000 Azerbaijanis haven't returned. Even Palestine condemned Armenia—a state Armenia recently recognized. This is the problem: if tomorrow the international community decides Armenia is "Western Azerbaijan," will Pashinyan again say, "I have to accept the international community's view to avoid war"?

Noyan Tapan: But what about the

Washington document or the Alma-Ata Declaration? They recognize territorial integrity.

Edward Antinyan: First, those documents are often initialed but not fully ratified or in force. Second, Aliyev demands a constitutional change the day after such declarations, or he tells the U.S. that Armenia doesn't respect the mediation. If he recognizes our integrity, why does he fund "Western Azerbaijan" conferences? He is setting the stage. He will tell the international community: "If Germans can live in France, why can't 300,000 Azerbaijanis return to Armenia?" If Armenia refuses, Aliyev will threaten to enter by force—with cars or tanks.

Noyan Tapan: Mr. Antinyan, Aliyev often uses loud, boastful rhetoric. Does that mean we should take everything he says as absolute truth?

Edward Antinyan: He is a liar, but peace was promised to us by Trump, by Pashinyan... and now you add Aliyev. The U.S. wants a business project via the Syunik road. People got excited, thinking America "entered" Armenia and pushed Russia out. But if America enters a place, it's a tsunami effect. Have you seen Russia leave? Immediately after, Pashinyan said he offered the project to Putin first.

Noyan Tapan: How would you describe the current situation if not "peace"?

Edward Antinyan: Since 1994, we had a ceasefire. During that time, Azerbaijan armed itself and worked with the international community to avoid being labeled an aggressor. When the 44-day war started, there were "concerns," but no one stopped Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan knew Russia wouldn't stop them—they signed a strategic partnership with Russia two days before the invasion of Ukraine.

Noyan Tapan: Regarding the U.S. "business project" in Syunik—doesn't a business project provide security guarantees?

Edward Antinyan: No. When the U.S. flag was flying at the Yeraskh steel plant construction, Azerbaijan

➡ page 9

page 8 ➡ shot at it. What did the Armenian authorities do? They moved the plant. The flag wasn't a guarantee; it was a business project. When Iran expressed dissatisfaction with U.S. presence, Armenian officials reassured them it was *just* business, not security. They tell the Armenian people it's "security" and tell Iran it's "just business."

Noyan Tapan: Why is Aliyev allowing things like gasoline sales now?

Edward Antinyan: It's a pre-election bribe on behalf of Pashinyan. Aliyev prefers Pashinyan because he knows no other Armenian leader would concede as much. By lowering gas prices or allowing transit, he helps Pashinyan stay in power. He wants to convince the Armenian public that "Aliyev brought cheapness." But once our economy collapses because

we produce nothing and rely on Turkish/Azerbaijani imports, we won't even be able to afford the "cheap" goods.

Noyan Tapan: If Pashinyan is not re-elected and a former president like Kocharyan or Sargsyan returns, how would they handle these agreements?

Edward Antinyan: The former presidents have no chance of returning. Both worked in Azerbaijan during the Soviet era; Aliyev likely has dossiers on them. He keeps them "in the game" as boogymen to scare the public into voting for Pashinyan. The real alternative isn't the past; it's a normal force that seeks true European integration, not just "playing games" like Pashinyan.

Noyan Tapan: Why didn't Aliyev attend the informal CIS summit?

Edward Antinyan: To show the West:

"I am your friend, I am too busy for Putin." He uses Putin when he needs to, but for the public eye, he acts independent. Pashinyan, meanwhile, rushed to the meeting while Aliyev stayed "busy."

Noyan Tapan: To conclude, is there any achievement that serves our interests?

Edward Antinyan: I believe in the future—specifically a future in the EU and NATO, and a strategic partnership with the USA. But we must change the public mood. Currently, people are being conditioned to think that anyone who speaks of the danger from Turkey or Azerbaijan is "pro-war." It's absurd. We are being told to welcome them with salt and bread while our statehood is being dismantled. To prevent this, we need a firm determination to see our future as a secure, sovereign, and democratic European nation.

President: Independent and impartial courts are the essence of democracy

President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan highlighted the significance of an independent judiciary in ensuring the protection of citizens' rights and maintaining public trust in the state system.

He made the remarks at a high-level forum dedicated to the Judiciary Day.

"The viability of a democratic

state depends not only on the existence of political institutions, but also on their real effectiveness. At the core of this system lies the judiciary, as the principal guarantor of the constitutional order and the rule of law.

The Constitution is the foundation of a legal state, and the judiciary is the mechanism through which that foundation is transformed into a living reality. The independence and impartiality of the courts



Judicial independence is a constitutional value and, at the same time, a great responsibility. It requires judges to make every decision solely on the basis of the law and their conscience, free from any influence. Upholding this principle is of decisive importance for maintaining the balance of the entire state system.

This day is also an opportunity to acknowledge the service rendered by representatives of the judicial system. Your work plays an important role in

strengthening the rule of law and democratic statehood in Armenia.

I am confident that through continuous and consistent efforts, we will be able to develop a judiciary that fully fulfills its constitutional mission and serves the public interest.

I congratulate you on Judiciary Day and wish you success in your responsible service," the President of Armenia said.

are not merely formal attributes of democracy, but its substantive essence. Without independent courts, it is impossible to ensure both the protection of citizens' rights and public trust in the state system.

Trust in the judiciary is formed when justice is not only delivered, but is also perceived as fair, accessible, and transparent. It is this trust that connects citizens to the state and strengthens the foundations of the rule of law.

Interview: Regional Security, Global Shifts, and the Future of Armenia



Noyan Tapan hosts a Head of the Center for Democracy and Security and member of the Political Council of the “For the Republic” Party, **Artur Bleyan**

Read the full interview below:

Host: We are starting 2026 with concerning news, specifically the events unfolding in **Iran**. We’ve seen ongoing protests following another sharp devaluation of the Iranian currency, leading to clashes and, unfortunately, casualties. What is your analysis? What scenarios do you foresee, and how will they affect us?

Artur Bleyan: One scenario is that the protests will gradually fade away, as they did back in 2019 or 2022. However, a more constructive scenario involves the reformist government under **President Pezeshkian** realizing that they cannot continue this way. Even if these protests die down now, the economic hardship will inevitably lead to new outbursts. Pezeshkian must find a way to move the Ayatollahs away from absolute power. While this seems less likely, it would be the most stable path.

There is also the possibility of a full revolution. This could go two ways: either we get a stable Iran that is open to the international market and part of the civilized world—which would be hugely positive for Armenia—or we face uncontrollable ethnic instability in a very diverse country. For us, it is vital that Iran is not isolated or viewed only as an ally of Russia, North Korea, and Venezuela. We need a truly strategic, value-based alliance with Iran,

beyond just the friendly “hospitality” we currently share.

Host: Should we expect American intervention? We saw **Donald Trump** declare support for anti-government protests.

Artur Bleyan: Historically, Iranians do not tolerate foreign-dictated scenarios. However, the world is changing. We see posters in Iranian streets saying, “Trump, we are waiting for you.” With modern information technology and VPNs, the society is no longer completely closed. I think a Trump intervention is possible, and it might even be viewed more positively than an Israeli one, given the specific geopolitical tensions.

Venezuela and the Global Order

Host: Speaking of Trump, his recent actions in **Venezuela** surprised many. Some analysts here compared the arrest of the Venezuelan leadership to the way the Artsakh leadership ended up in Baku prisons. Is this a sign of a collapsed international order?

Artur Bleyan: Unfortunately, the international order is indeed fractured. We saw it in the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh, the blockade, and the war in Gaza. Russia started this breakdown in 2014 with Crimea, and even earlier in 2008 in Georgia.

Regarding Venezuela, the fall of the Maduro regime—much like the fall of the Assad regime in Syria—shows that **Russia**

is a “paper tiger,” as Trump described. They have nuclear weapons, but they cannot protect their proxies. While the US intervention in Venezuela is problematic from the standpoint of international law, the difference is that Ukraine is a democracy fighting aggression, whereas Venezuela was a dictatorship where the leadership was replaced without trying to annex territory. For Armenia, weakening the “Russia-Iran-North Korea” basket generally strengthens the democratic world’s position.

The War in Ukraine

Host: In Paris, the leaders of France, the UK, and Ukraine signed a declaration regarding the deployment of multinational forces after a ceasefire. How realistic is this?

Artur Bleyan: It’s a positive symbolic gesture, but I am skeptical. A ceasefire requires Russia’s consent. This declaration suggests a future where Ukraine develops its own military-industrial complex with Western help. This contradicts Putin’s goal of “demilitarization.”

For Putin, this war has become a matter of survival. He has reached a dead end: he lacks the resources to win, but also the resources to stop. I believe this will continue until the **Russian elite** realizes they must replace their president. It is difficult to defeat Russia only on the battlefield; the change must come from within.

Armenia-Azerbaijan Relations and Aliyev’s Statements

Host: Recently, **Ilham Aliyev** gave an interview stating that Armenia would only benefit from opening communications and that there are no “losers” in economic trade. This has sparked intense debate. Your thoughts?

Artur Bleyan: We must look at this through the lens of the agreements signed with the US President. Bringing the US into the region as a key player in Armenia-Azerbaijan regulation was a strategic move. Interestingly, Aliyev—who is a very pragmatic politician—praised Trump in that

➡ page 11

page 10 ➡ interview, despite Maduro being his “old friend.”

Aliyev realizes the geopolitical map has changed. He has found the wisdom not to remain a “blunt tool” or proxy for Russia against Armenia. While we cannot say everything is 100% perfect, economic cooperation is a guarantee against future military aggression. We had feared that with Biden leaving and Trump returning, Azerbaijan might launch a new attack with Russian encouragement. Instead, we have a stabilized situation.

We must set emotions aside. Economic ties might eventually create the conditions for our compatriots to return to Artsakh

and for the release of our prisoners. Using Azerbaijani gas or oil is no different from the 30 years we spent using Russian fuel while they sold weapons to Baku to kill us. We must prioritize state interests over emotions.

Internal Affairs: The Church and the State

Host: To conclude, some say PM Pashinyan’s recent actions “ruined” the Christmas ceremonies. Meanwhile, the movement against the Catholicos continues.

Artur Bleyan: It is striking that in Venezuela, a president is changed in 90 minutes, but here we cannot change a Catholicos for years. I believe change

in the Church must come from within. The bishops and priests should convince **Catholicos Garegin II** to step down for the sake of the Church. It’s no secret that Russia influences his stay, but the Church must be **pro-state (petakanamet)**, not pro-government or pro-opposition.

The Church should be above parties. It shouldn’t matter if someone is a supporter of Nikol, Robert, or Serzh—they are all children of the Church. We need to hear prayers for all, not political labels like “you are a member of the Civil Contract party, you cannot enter.”

Host: Thank you, Mr. Bleyan, for this comprehensive analysis.

The Occupation of the Mind: Why “Professionalism” is Armenia’s Ultimate Weapon in Cognitive Warfare



In a profound and wide-ranging discussion on the **Noyan Tapan TV** series, **Hayk Trunyan**, a Candidate of Sociological Sciences and a repatriate to Armenia, diagnosed the silent crisis currently facing the Armenian nation. Beyond the physical borders and geopolitical shifts, Trunyan argues that the real battlefield is the **Armenian mind**.

Here are the key takeaways from his analysis on identity, social engineering, and the roadmap to national recovery.

1. Identity is Sociology, Not Just DNA

Trunyan opened with a personal revelation: a DNA test showed he is genetically diverse (60% Slavic, 25% Portuguese), yet he remains unequivocally Armenian.

“Identity is culture, history, and the form that shapes you. If you have that, you cannot be changed... change only happens through specific methods of psychological and cognitive warfare.”

He warned that the Armenian state has largely abandoned its duty to shape the “face” of its citizens, leaving a vacuum where three fundamental questions remain unanswered:

- **Who are we? * Where are we today? * Where do we want to go?**

2. The Generational “Lost in Transition”

Trunyan highlighted a dangerous psychological gap between generations:

- **The 60s-70s:** Driven by collective interest and national victory.
- **The 80s (The “Cold and Dark” Years):** A pivot toward survivalism and “only being responsible for one’s family.”
- **The 90s-00s:** A shift toward hyper-individualism, where responsibility often doesn’t extend beyond the self.

This “social engineering” of the last 30 years has replaced national values with **consumer values**. Trunyan noted that society is currently suffering from “**learned helplessness**,” a psychological state resulting from five years of intense stress that has manifested physically in rising rates of heart attacks and strokes among younger Armenians.

3. Cognitive Warfare: The New Occupation

Trunyan argues that capturing territory is no longer the primary goal of modern warfare—capturing **lifestyles and ideologies** is.

“We are living in a state of occupation of the mind. If you can spread your ideology to your enemy and they accept it,

you’ve won without a shot.”

He criticized Armenia’s “open information field,” comparing it to democracies like Taiwan or Israel, which treat narrative attacks as matter of national security managed by specialized military and intelligence units.

4. “Professionalism” as a National Shield

Perhaps the most provocative part of the interview was Trunyan’s proposal to adopt **Professionalism** as a national narrative. While it sounds neutral, he argues it is a powerful tool for cognitive defense:

- **Critical Thinking:** A professional demands logic, data, and results, making them nearly impossible to manipulate with fake news or emotional triggers.
- **Healing Trauma:** By shifting the narrative from “victimhood” to “excellence,” the lost generations of the 80s and 90s find a “why” for their existence.
- **Global Hub:** If “Armenian” becomes synonymous with “the best in the field,” Armenia becomes a hub of expertise that the Diaspora—the “Armenian World”—can plug into.

5. The “Anti-Armenian” Fragility of the Enemy

Trunyan offered a comparative look at Azerbaijani society, noting that their identity is currently built

➡ page 12

page 11 ➡

almost entirely on being “anti-Armenian.”

“That is a very fragile foundation. Once the conflict reaches a certain stage, that ‘glue’ begins to fail because it doesn’t offer a positive vision for their own internal life.”

Armenia’s advantage, he claims, is an ancient, deep cultural layer that doesn’t

need to be invented—it only needs to be “re-activated.”

Final Verdict

The interview concluded with a call to action for the “Armenian World.” While the current state administration may have stepped back from its ideological duties, the nation is much larger than the

government. By aligning the Diaspora with the state through a shared goal of **national excellence**, Trunyan believes Armenia can transform from a “depressive” society into a “creative” global force.

“We have to stop talking about ourselves only as victims of history and start talking about ourselves as a solution-oriented nation.”

Armenian government approves tourism development strategy for 2026–2030



The Armenian government has approved the Tourism Development Strategy of Armenia for 2026–2030, aimed at providing comprehensive solutions to challenges facing the sector and coordinating ongoing reforms, including legislative changes.

The strategic program is designed to serve as a unified policy framework, enabling coordination on issues that directly affect tourists and their experiences but fall outside the direct authority of the state body responsible for tourism. These include improving access roads to tourist destinations, ensuring cleanliness, and developing essential infrastructure for visitors, such as public restrooms and other amenities.

The strategy defines Armenia’s tourism development vision, key priorities, and goals, which will form the basis for future strategic programs and action plans. It also outlines concrete steps to transform Armenia’s tourism potential into an attractive and competitive tourism industry both domestically and internationally.

With the adoption of the strategy, the government expects to have a guiding

policy document for the next five years to support sustainable tourism development, attract investments, improve infrastructure and service quality, advance institutional reforms, strengthen Armenia’s image as a safe and welcoming destination, and increase the country’s visibility and accessibility.

According to projections, if the strategy is implemented effectively, Armenia is expected by 2030 to record 3 million inbound tourist visits, tourist spending equivalent to USD 3.8 billion, and 4.5 million domestic tourism visits. The program also envisages the creation of an additional 20,000 jobs.

Presenting the strategy, Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan said Armenia must position itself as a tourism crossroads – an attractive, high-quality, safe, peaceful, competitive, and distinctive destination. He outlined three main development pillars: cultural tourism; gastro-tourism, including cuisine, wine, and the Armenian brand; and adventure tourism, including winter tourism. The strategy also prioritizes the development of agro-tourism, MICE tourism, religious, medical, and wellness tourism.

Papoyan noted that the strategy sets four core objectives. The first is economic, aimed at fully utilizing tourism’s economic potential to drive growth through sectoral reforms. The second focuses on increasing international attractiveness by strengthening Armenia’s image as an appealing destination, with emphasis on hospitality

and safety. The third objective is ensuring quality, including the provision of distinctive and unique tourist experiences. The fourth is social, centered on expanding the workforce, improving service standards, and promoting tourism education.

Papoyan presented current tourism statistics. He said that 2,263,642 tourists visited Armenia this year, representing a 2.5 percent increase compared to last year and a 19.4 percent rise compared to 2019. December recorded 139,933 tourists – the highest December figure in Armenia’s history. Papoyan added that seven of the twelve months this year set all-time records for tourist numbers.

According to the minister, Armenia’s best year for tourism remains 2023, when the country received around 50,000 more tourists than this year.

Commenting on the decision, Pashinyan said several developments during the year had a significant impact on tourism growth. Among the key factors he cited were a major concert by Jennifer Lopez, the development of the aviation sector, which has increased Armenia’s attractiveness for both local and foreign airlines, progress in the peace process, and the country’s growing capacity to host large-scale, high-quality public events.

The prime minister described the newly approved tourism strategy as another landmark document that will guide government action, stressing that it is closely linked with Armenia’s broader development priorities.

Universal health insurance fully implemented as Armenia reviews 2025 healthcare results

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Ministry of Health of Armenia to review the ministry's 2025 performance report, with a strong focus on the rollout of the Universal Health Insurance system, sector-wide digitization, and expanded infrastructure investment.

Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan reported that the implementation of Universal Health Insurance began at the end of the year. In its first phase, coverage includes children under 18, citizens aged 65 and over, people with first- to third-degree disabilities, individuals with functional limitations, socially vulnerable groups and beneficiaries of social assistance programs—including families of fallen servicemen—as well as employees earning AMD 200,001 and above per month. In the first days of the year, 771 citizens had already used services under the insurance scheme.

Officials noted that all targets set for 2025 have been fully met: the system is fully operational, secondary legislation has been adopted, and registries of services, medicines, and eligible beneficiaries have been approved.

Prime Minister Pashinyan underscored the importance of eliminating cash payments in healthcare. He stressed that non-cash transactions are a cornerstone of an effective insurance system, ensuring transparency, traceability of patient care,

and proper state oversight. Any services delivered without the state's visibility, he warned, risk distorting the entire system. Pashinyan called for strict enforcement measures and sanctions against medical institutions that fail to comply.

The meeting also highlighted a substantial budget increase for the sector. In 2026, healthcare funding will rise to AMD 220 billion, up from AMD 164 billion in 2025—an increase of more than USD 100 million aimed at systemic reforms and improved service delivery.

Significant progress has been made in digitization. Birth registration is now fully digital and completed at maternity hospitals; immunization processes are entirely digital; and electronic prescriptions are widely used, with an average of 807,732 prescriptions issued and 720,217 dispensed in the last quarter. Digital sick-leave certificates are in place, and the digitization of laboratory services is ongoing.

Administratively, management authority over 42 regional healthcare institutions has been transferred to the Ministry of Health. Over the next three years, these facilities will be reorganized through mergers into single regional medical centers.

Infrastructure upgrades continue nationwide. Construction and renovation projects are underway at multiple facilities, including the Sisian Medical Center, the National Center for Mental Health, the

National Center for Infectious Diseases, branches of the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and medical centers in Etchmiadzin, Masis, Ashtarak, Yeghvard (Nairi Medical Center), Tashir, and Tsaghkahovit.

The government has launched individual physician licensing and introduced five-year licenses for medical organizations. Organ and tissue transplantation programs also continued, with 15 kidney and 55 bone marrow transplants performed by December 15.

Early disease detection remains a priority. Screening programs expanded for colorectal cancer, with 4,287 tests conducted among people aged 50–75 and 2,870 tests among those aged 45–70 in 2025, leading to six cancer detections. Breast cancer screening included 7,779 free mammography exams for women aged 45–68.

Maternal and child health initiatives continued with seven neonatal screenings for early detection of congenital and hereditary diseases. In 2025, adrenogenital screening expanded to 28,565 newborns, and an eye screening program for newborns was launched toward the end of the year.

Finally, the ministry reported that in 2025 the state centrally procured 95 medicines for 16 diseases, making them accessible to 238,964 beneficiaries.

Trump withdraws US from dozens of international and UN entities

US President Donald Trump has withdrawn the US from dozens of international organisations, including many that work to combat climate change, the BBC reports.

Among the 66 groups, nearly half of them are bodies of the United Nations, including the UN Framework Convention

on Climate Change – a treaty that underpins all international efforts to combat global warming.

The White House said the decision was taken because those entities “no longer serve American interests” and promote “ineffective or hostile agendas”.

Trump has already stripped many multilateral organizations he dislikes of funds and previously rejected the scientific consensus of man-made climate change as a “hoax”.

Ten found guilty of cyber-bullying Brigitte Macron

Ten people have been found guilty of cyber-bullying Brigitte Macron, the wife of French President Emmanuel Macron, by a Paris court, the [BBC](#) reports.

The defendants were accused of spreading false claims about her gender and sexuality, as well as making “malicious remarks” about the 24-year age gap between the couple.



Most of the defendants were handed suspended prison sentences of up to eight months, but one was jailed immediately for failing to attend court.

The judge said the eight men and two women had acted with a clear desire to do harm to Brigitte Macron, making remarks online that were degrading and insulting.

Turkish Ministry to support restoration of earthquake-damaged Armenian church

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey will support the restoration of Surp Karasun Manuk Armenian Church of Iskenderun, which was severely damaged during the February 6 earthquake, Armenian Patriarch Patriarch Sahak II announced.

The Patriarch made the statement on January 6, 2025, during a meeting with representatives of Armenian community organizations at the Harutyun Amira Bezjian Hall, adjacent to the Holy Mother of God Patriarchal Cathedral in Istanbul's Kumkapı district. Referring to his recent visit to Ankara, His Beatitude said the damaged church in Iskenderun has been included in



a support program of the Ministry, raising expectations that restoration work will begin in the near future.

In his address, the Patriarch also reviewed developments over the past year, noting that the Armenian clergy had been

strengthened through new ordinations. He touched on key challenges facing the community, including efforts to address budget shortfalls in Armenian schools, highlighting the relative success of fundraising initiatives organized to support them.

His Beatitude pointed to numerous cultural, artistic, and sporting events held throughout the year, describing them as proof of the community's vitality and effective organization.

The meeting concluded with a prayer and the Patriarch's blessing. Attendees exchanged holiday greetings and received blessed pomegranates before departing.

Reception at National Cathedral in Washington marks Armenian Christmas and 250th anniversary of US

On January 9, the Embassy of Armenia to the United States organized a formal reception at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., in celebration of the Armenian Christmas and the 250th Anniversary of the United States.

Remarks were delivered by Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States Narek Mkrtchyan, Pastor Paula White-Cain, Special Government Employee and Senior Advisor of the White House Faith Office, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the United States; Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese; and Pastor Chris Halverson, pioneer of the National Prayer Breakfast movement in the United States.

During the event, Ambassador Narek Mkrtchyan read the message of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, addressed to the attendees.

The reception was attended by high-ranking U.S. government officials, representatives of various religious institutions, ambassadors, Honorary Consuls of the Republic of Armenia, and members of the Armenian community in the U.S.

In his remarks, the Ambassador extended Christmas greetings, emphasized the role of Christian values in Armenia-U.S. relations, highlighted the leadership of the United States in promoting religious freedom, expressed gratitude to the Washington National Cathedral

for hosting the reception, and wished the United States continued achievements on the occasion of its 250th Anniversary.

In her remarks, Paula White-Cain thanked the Ambassador for organizing the Christmas reception, underscored Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's dedication to the Armenian people, and noted that Armenia, as the first Christian nation of the world, has endured many trials throughout history while preserving its spiritual heritage and becoming a witness of faith to the world. White-Cain emphasized that the United States stands with the Armenian people in the spirit of faith, partnership, and shared goals.

Pastor Chris Halverson, in his remarks, particularly highlighted the importance of the initiative of the Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to organize the Prayer Breakfast in Armenia, noting that it reflects the commitment of the country to the values of faith, unity, and leadership.

The participating spiritual leaders congratulated those present on the Glorious Feast of Christmas and offered prayers.

The cultural program featured performances by Nare Arghamanyan, pianist and professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna; soloist Edita Dolunts-Kalayjian and organist Armine Khachatryan. The works of Armenian artist Armen Kankanian were also exhibited during the event.

The event concluded with the Lord's Prayer, performed by the students of the

Sunday School of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Washington D.C.

EU proposes ban on Russian gas imports by end of 2027

The European Commission on June 17 proposed a legally binding ban on EU imports of Russian gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) by the end of 2027, using legal measures to ensure the plan cannot be blocked by EU members Hungary and Slovakia, Reuters reports.

The proposals set out how the European Union plans to fix into law its vow to end decades-old energy relations with Europe's former top gas supplier, made after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

First, imports would be banned from January 1, 2026, under any Russian pipeline gas and LNG contracts signed during the remainder of this year.

Imports under short-term Russian gas deals – defined as those lasting less than one year – signed before June 17, 2025, would be banned from June 17 next year.

Finally, imports under existing long-term Russian contracts would be banned from January 1, 2028, effectively ending the EU's use of Russian gas by this date, the Commission said.

EU Energy Commissioner Dan Jorgensen added that the measures were designed to be legally strong enough for companies to invoke the contractual clause of "force majeure" – an unforeseeable event – to break their Russian gas contracts.

Armenia included in Wanderlust's 2026 "Good to Go" list

Armenia has been included in the prestigious British travel magazine Wanderlust's 2026 "Good to Go" list as one of the year's inspiring destinations for curious and responsible travelers.

"The signing of a peace pledge between Armenia and neighbouring Azerbaijan in August 2025 offers hope of an end to nearly four decades of conflict. Turmoil long stymied Armenia's chances of capitalising on its rich culture, fascinating heritage and spectacular landscapes. Now, as capital Yerevan gears up to host the next Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17) in October 2026, the spotlight will shine on a nation where tourism has the potential to transform so many lives," the magazine writes.

According to the publication, this has sparked announcements of new flight routes and accommodation openings, including a five-star Mövenpick hotel in



Yerevan, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. "The capital showcases its unique heritage in museums such as the the Matenadaran, a vast repository of over 23,000 manuscripts, and the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial complex, which commemorates the Armenians who perished in the 20th century under the Ottoman Empire," Wanderlust notes.

"Elsewhere across the country, some 4,000 monasteries (many UNESCO-listed)

and fields of stone-carved *khachkars* (memorial steles) stud gorges, valleys and mountains of impossible beauty. Many of these are linked by the slowly growing Transcaucasian Trail, a hiking route snaking across the region. But you don't have to travel far to see them. Geghard Monastery – encompassing rock-hewn churches and tombs carved from the cliffs of the Azat River Gorge – lies an hour's drive east of the capital, while the ancient pilgrimage site of Khor Virap provides spectacular views of Mount Ararat," the magazine writes.

It also reminds that Armenia is home to the world's oldest-known winemaking culture. The wine route around the vineyards of Vayots Dzor centres on the village of Areni, where you can visit a complex containing evidence of winemaking dating back over 6100 years.

Armenia on New York Times list of '52 Places to Go in 2026'

The New York Times, one of the world's most influential publications, has included Armenia among its recommended [travel destinations for 2026](#), ranking it 20th on the list of the world's top places to visit.

"Set in the rugged Caucasus, Armenia has quietly drawn hikers and nature enthusiasts for decades. But tourism numbers have recently surged, with a record-breaking first eight months of 2025 and a new high for monthly arrivals set in August. Against this backdrop, the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles, one of the

world's top wine competitions, comes to the capital, Yerevan, in May," the New York Times writes.

"Armenia, whose winemaking tradition dates back over 6,000 years, offers aficionados four main wine regions to tour. Along the way, you can also visit Lake Sevan, a mountain-ringed volcanic lake whose shores are dotted with thousand-year-old monasteries. A short drive away, Dilijan National Park encompasses several mountain ranges, with its alpine meadows, vast forests and medicinal springs all connected by a network of



hiking trails. The park features rare and endangered plant species as well as brown bears, wolves and European wildcats," the article reads.

Armenian-American producer Sev Ohanian's "Sinners" wins Golden Globe for Cinematic & Box Office Achievement

Armenian-American producer Sev Ohanian's film "Sinners," produced alongside Ryan Coogler and Zinzi Coogler, has won the Golden Globe for Cinematic and Box Office Achievement.

According to Zartong Media, the latest box office reporting lists "Sinners" at roughly \$280 million domestic, \$88.3 million international, and about \$368.3 million worldwide, placing it among the



year's biggest theatrical successes.

The Golden Globes' Cinematic and Box Office Achievement category is designed to recognize films that demonstrate significant global audience support through major box office performance and overall cultural reach.

Sinners was nominated for a total of seven Golden Globes, including Best Motion Picture - Drama.



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