EBRD funds largest road project in Armenia



The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is lending €236 million to Armenia to finance the construction of the southern section of the Sisian-Kajaran road.

This is the largest road infrastructure project ever financed by the EBRD in Armenia. It was previously complemented by technical cooperation funding generously provided by the European Union (EU). These funds were used to undertake the feasibility study as well as the environmental and social impact assessment.

The loan agreement was signed on May 15 by the Minister of Finance of Armenia, Vahe Hovhannisyan, and EBRD Managing Director, Sustainable Infrastructure Group, Nandita Parshad during the EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum in Yerevan. The signing took place before the Armenia Investment Outlook session, in front of more than 200 official guests.

The funding will allow the Government of Armenia to build 24 kilometres of a new southern road section between Sisian and Kajaran, which is part of the North-South Road Corridor. The new road will enhance Armenia's local, regional, and international connectivity, and the country's access to international markets via the Black Sea. This important infrastructure project is aligned with EU flagship initiatives for

improved land transport connectivity and building resilience in the southern regions of Armenia. The EBRD actively supports the EU Global Gateway strategy. The road will also enhance local and inter-regional connectivity by providing a faster and safer connection between the Syunik region and Yerevan, reducing the travel distance and time by half.

As Armenia is landlocked, solid road infrastructure is crucial for an efficient flow of trade that can support the value chain, increase diversification and accelerate the growth of the private sector and the economy as a whole.

EBRD Managing 🖝



Iran's president, foreign minister martyred in copter crash – Iranian media No new Armenia-Azerbaijan border created, the border existing at time of USSR collapse being reproduced - PM's Office Armenian, Azerbaijani border commissions sign Protocol

Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg unanimously adopts motion expressing support for Armenia

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Pashinyan sends condolence message on the occasion of the death of the President of Iran and his accompanying staff



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent a message of condolence to His Highness the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyyed Ali Khamenei in connection with the death of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and his accompanying staff as a result of the helicopter crash.

The message reads as follows, "Your Highness,

I am shocked by the death of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and his accompanying staff as a result of the helicopter crash.

On behalf of the government and the people of the Republic of Armenia, I convey to you my sincere condolences and words of consolation on the tragic death of my dear friend and colleague President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their accompanying persons.

I express my solidarity with the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, wishing strength and steadfastness at this difficult time.

The Republic of Armenia and its people stand by our good friend and neighboring state and people in this difficult period for the Islamic Republic of Iran".

Iran's president, foreign minister martyred in copter crash – Iranian media

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the country's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian were martyred in the helicopter crash that occurred on Sunday, Mehr news agency reports.

President Raisi was returning from a ceremony to inaugurate a dam on Iran's border with the Republic of Azerbaijan, when his helicopter crashed upon landing

in Varzaqan region on Sunday.

The helicopter's passengers, including Ebrahim Raisi, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iran's East Azerbaijan Province Governor Malek Rahmati, and Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Ale-Hashem, the representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to East Azarbaijan province, along with several other people were martyred in



the incident, the report adds.

Alen Simonyan and Sahiba Gafarova met in Geneva

Within the framework of the first session of the Preparatory Committee of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), on May 16, Armenian National Assembly Speaker Alen Simonyan met with Azerbaijan's Milli Mejlis Speaker Sahiba Gafarova through the mediation of the organization.



It is reported by Armenian National Assembly. No other details are provided.

Earlier it was reported from the National Assembly that, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Alen Simonyan, and the Speaker of Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis, Sahiba Gafarova, had a short conversation in Geneva. The main meeting of the speakers of the parliaments of the two countries is expected to take place in the evening.

Uruguay House of Representatives approves bill declaring April 24 as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day

On May 14, the House of Representatives of Uruguay unanimously approved a bill that declares April 24 of each year as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day," Diaro Armenia reports.

The initiative had been approved by the Senate on May 7, so if no observations are made by the Executive Branch, it will be promulgated as law in the coming days.

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The project approved by both Chambers is based on an initiative by Dr. Gustavo Vaneskahian of the Evangelical Harmony Church, which after becoming public, received the support of different institutions of the Armenian community, including the Armenian National Committee of Uruguay.



The Noyan Tapan Highlights

Armenian, Azerbaijani border commissions sign Protocol

On May 15, 2024, the 9th meeting of the Commission on Delimitation and Border Security of the State Border between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Commission on the Delimitation of the State Border between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia was held on the border between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Mher Grigoryan and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev.

During the meeting, the Commissions, in accordance with the Protocol of the the 8th meeting dated April 19, 2024,



discussed the accomplished work and, taking into account the adjustment of coordinates based on the geodetic measurements on the ground, in accordance with the 1976 topographic map of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces, that passed duty procedure in 1979, agreed on the Protocol-description of the

borderline sections immediately between the settlements of Baghanis (Republic of Armenia) – Baghanis Ayrum (Republic of Azerbaijan), Voskepar (Republic of Armenia) – Ashaghi Askipara (Republic of Azerbaijan), Kirants (Republic of Armenia) – Kheyrimli (Republic of Azerbaijan) and Berkaber (Republic of Azerbaijan) – Ghizilhajili (Republic of Azerbaijan), in order to bring them into compliance with the legally justified interrepublican border that existed within the Soviet Union at the moment of its dissolution.

A Protocol was signed on the meeting results. The sides agreed to set the date and the place of the next meeting of the Commissions in working order.

Armenian, German Foreign Ministers discuss security situation in South Caucasus



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan had a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany Annalena Baerbock.

The parties noted with satisfaction the

active dynamics of the high-level political dialogue between the two countries, emphasizing the opportunities provided by the deepening of partnership both bilaterally and within the EU platform, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

According to the source, steps to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in Armenia, as well as issues of cooperation with international partners in this direction were discussed.

"The government of Armenia is committed to both democratic reforms and the peace agenda, and the continued support of our international partners is crucial

for ensuring tangible progress," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

There was also an exchange of views on regional economic programs and Armenia's participation in them, including in the field of renewable energy.

Continuing the discussion on regional topics, the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Germany addressed the security situation in the South Caucasus. Minister Mirzoyan briefed his counterpart on the latest developments in the process of normalizing Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, including the negotiations on the draft peace treaty in Almaty.

EU welcomes continuation of border delimitation process between Armenia, Azerbaijan

The EU welcomes the continuation of the border delimitation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the EU said in a statement published on its official page.

"The EU welcomes progress made in the framework of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border delimitation process, based on the 1991 Almaty agreement, and more specifically the protocol signed during the 9th meeting of the border commissions of

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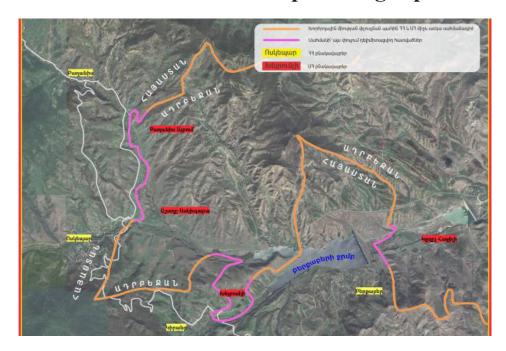
Armenia and Azerbaijan on Wednesday 15 May, leading to an agreement on several sections of the border.

The EU encourages the parties to take further decisive steps to tackle other outstanding bilateral issues and remains committed to supporting the efforts aimed at bringing sustainable and lasting peace to the South Caucasus region," the statement reads.





No new Armenia-Azerbaijan border created, the border existing at time of USSR collapse being reproduced – PM's Office



No new border is being created between Armenia and Azerbaijan; rather, the existing de jure border at the time of the USSR's dissolution is being reproduced, the Information and Public Relations Department of the Prime Minister's Office said in comments to Armenpress.

The questions and answers are presented below:

Question: The border delimitation commissions of Armenia and Azerbaijan have issued a joint statement, which states that the Protocol-description of the borderline sections immediately between the settlements of Baghanis (Republic of Armenia) - Baghanis Ayrum (Republic of Azerbaijan), Voskepar (Republic of Armenia) - Ashaghi Askipara (Republic of Azerbaijan), Kirants (Republic of Armenia) - Kheyrimli (Republic of Azerbaijan) and Berkaber (Republic of Armenia) - Ghizilhajili (Republic of Azerbaijan) has been agreed on the basis of he 1976 topographic map of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces. What does it mean?

Answer: You are already aware that

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border markers have been installed by the respective working groups in the mentioned areas to locate the pre-agreed coordinates. Those coordinates are taken from the 1976 maps mentioned above. Now, cartographers have already agreed upon the border crossing lines between these markers, again based on the same maps. In other words, the reproduction of the borderline in these sections has been completed, agreed upon, signed, and the border is considered delimited in these areas.

Question: Why have maps from 1976 been chosen, which, as stated in the press release of the delimitation commissions, were used by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR?

Answer: In fact, it is a map that had a de jure legal basis at the time of the USSR's dissolution. It was important for the government of the Republic of Armenia to adhere to the principle according to which a new border is not created between Armenia and Azerbaijan; rather, the existing de jure border at the time of the USSR's dissolution is reproduced.

Question: The press release issued by the border delimitation commissions states that these maps went through the duty procedure in 1979. What does this mean, and why haven't maps from, for example, 1990 been chosen?

Answer: This formulation is legal terminology, which means that in 1979, the authorized body in the field of cartography and geodesy of the USSR verified the accuracy and legal basis of the map. These maps were used until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. That is, these are the latest maps verified by competent state bodies of the USSR.

Ouestion: Not all border markers have been installed in the village of Kirants in the Tavush region. How will this issue be resolved? In general, how are issues being resolved in the Kirants area? Will there arise a problem about building a new road or expropriating houses?

Answer: Three coordinates in the Kirants area have been determined using a computer; the markers will be installed later. The other markers have been installed. Good news for Kirants is that the village will regain about 25 hectares of agricultural land that has been inaccessible to Kirants for the past 33 years. The border description is exactly as presented on the 1976 map.

As mentioned earlier, the issue of road relocation will arise, but it can be addressed within 2-3 months. Additionally, the road leading from highway H-26 to Acharkut and further to Kirants, which serves as an alternative for Kirants, will be repaired. Regarding property matters, their scope will not be large, and any damage suffered by citizens



Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg unanimously adopts motion expressing support for Armenia



On May 16, the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg unanimously adopted a motion expressing support for Armenia, as well as establishment of peace and stability in the region, the Embassy of Armenia to Belgium said.

The motion condemns the forced

exodus of more than 100,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of Azerbaijan's unjustified military operation; referencing ICJ order of November 17, 2023 underscores the importance of adhering to international law, as well as calls for the immediate release of Armenian PoWs by Azerbaijan.

Emphasizing the recognition of the territorial integrity of the countries of the region on the basis of Alma-Ata Declaration of 1991, it encourages the demarcation works between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as establishment of the diplomatic

relations in the region.

The motion also commends Armenia's democratic progress and its ratification of the Rome Statute.

Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of deepening EU-Armenia relations through a new partnership program and advocates for the EU's increased role in mediating the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Additionally, it encourages the strengthening of economic, scientific and educational ties between Luxembourg, the EU and Armenia.

Deputy Foreign Minister Paruyr Hovhannisyan receives EU Delegation

On May 15, Deputy Foreign Minister Paruyr Hovhannisyan received the delegation led by Adrien Kirali, Director of Neighbourhood East and Institution Building of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission (DG NEAR), the foreign ministry said.

According to the source, the interlocutors highly appreciated the Joint EU-US-Armenia high-level meeting held on April 5, 2024 in Brussels and discussed the new



EU "Resilience and Growth" plan, envisaged for Armenia for 2024-2027.

Paruyr Hovhannisyan stated that the effective implementation of the priorities outlined in this plan will greatly contribute

to the strengthening of Armenia's relevant capacities and economic development.

It is noted that both sides commended the current stage of EU-Armenia multifaceted cooperation, furthermore they highlighting the importance of the full implementation of the provisions of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and expressed willingness to adopt a new, enhanced and more ambitious agenda of Partnership priorities in the near future.

Armenia signs Council of Europe's Bioethics Convention

On a working visit to Strasbourg, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan signed the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (Oviedo Convention).

Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejčinović Burić was present at the signing ceremony.

Since joining the CoE, Armenia has signed and ratified 70 CoE conventions and joined 12 CoE partial agreements.

The Oviedo Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine is the only international legal instrument that defines the principles for the protection of human rights in the field of medicine and biological medicine. Armenia is the 37th country



o join the Convention.





India awaits clear proposals from Armenia on Chabahar Port use -**Ambassador**

Regarding the use of Chabahar port, India is waiting for details from the Armenian side and will definitely consider them once clear proposals are received from Armenia.

Nilakshi Saha Sinha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Armenia, said this in an interview with 'Armenpress,' noting that Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Gnel Sanosyan visited Chabahar port in December 2023 regarding the issue of using the port.

The Indian ambassador drew attention to the fact that the Chabahar port is being jointly developed by India and Iran. "We are waiting for the details from the Armenian side, and we will definitely take it into account when we receive clear proposals from the Armenian side," the ambassador emphasized, noting that in the discussions between the two countries, Armenian representatives showed interest in using the Chabahar port.

Referring to the possible role of

Yerevan in the development of the communication route from India to Chabahar port and then to the Black Sea, Ambassador Nilakshi Saha Sinha noted that Armenia, being a landlocked country, definitely needs more communication projects.

"If it comes true, I think it will help Armenia overcome the fact that it is a landlocked country," concluded the ambassador.

The full interview of the ambassador read on 8-9 pp.

EBRD and USAID to develop connectivity in the South Caucasus

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, also known as the Middle Corridor, to further enhance connectivity between Asia and Europe, via the South Caucasus.

The partnership will focus on expanding trade, green energy, investment in new industries, as well as transport and digital infrastructure in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Strengthening the Middle Corridor will create new, transformative economic opportunities across the region and provide



an alternative transport route to existing commercial corridors.

The MoU seeks to enhance the planning, design and construction of critical energy, transport, digital and agricultural infrastructure in the region. It also aims to: improve the efficiency of customs, tariff and border operations; attract private capital investment into the South Caucasus economies for the development of the Middle Corridor; and adopt the highest international standards to promote economic connectivity with Europe and among South Caucasus countries.

Other cooperation priorities focus on expanding investments in carbon-free energy opportunities and advancing policy and governance reforms to combat corruption and expand engagement with civil society.

The MoU was signed by EBRD Vice President, Banking, Matteo Patrone, and Erin Elizabeth McKee, Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia at USAID, on the margins of the EBRD's Annual Meeting and Business Forum taking place in Armenia.

Director, Sustainable Infrapage 1 structure Group, Nandita Parshad said: "We appreciate Armenia's aspiration to develop a transport and logistics infrastructure that will enhance its regional connectivity and integration with external markets. We support this project because it meets our strategic objectives in Armenia and the region. We are also grateful to our partner, the European

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Union, which provided technical cooperation support to ease the implementation of this important initiative."

The EBRD is one of the largest institutional financiers in Armenia. For the past five years the Bank has invested €640 million in the country, supporting private sector development, infrastructure enhancement, renewable energy generation and rural digitalisation.

To date, the EBRD has invested over €2.1 billion in 211 projects across Armenia.



The Noyan Tapan Highlights







Armento to open Embassy in Cyprus

Armenia will open an Embassy in Cyprus. The decision was approved at the government sitting on May 16.

According to the government, the diplomatic representation in Cyprus will contribute to the further development of relations between the two friendly countries.

Traditionally friendly countries, Armenia and Cyprus have managed to develop strong interstate relations. A high-level

political dialogue is currently under way between the two countries, and there is a multi-sector bilateral agenda.



The continuous development of Armenian-Cypriot relations has been highlighted by mutual visits of high-ranking

officials, the creation of a broad legal framework and an active political and economic dialogue between the two countries.

Currently Armenia's Ambassador to Greece also serves as Ambassador to Cyprus (seat in Athens). The seat of the Cypriot Embassy in Armenia is in Moscow.

On March 14, 2024, the Cypriot side informed in an official statement about the decision of the Council of Ministers of Cyprus

of February 27, 2024 to open a diplomatic representation (embassy) of Cyprus in Armenia (seat in Yerevan).

Armenia, French Development Agency to expand cooperation

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the Deputy CEO of the French Development Agency Bertrand Walckenaer.

The Prime Minister highly appreciated the cooperation with the French Development Agency and expressed hope that it would further develop to embrace new areas. Nikol Pashinyan noted that Armenia is interested in deepening and expanding cooperation with France in all fields, and noted that consistent steps are being taken

in this direction.

Bertrand Walckenaer noted that the Agency plans to expand the directions of cooperation with the Armenian government and the scope of programs, contributing to the development of various infrastructures in Armenia.

During the meeting, issues related to the projects implemented in cooperation with the French Development Agency, including the construction of the Vedi



reservoir, were discussed.

page 4 in such cases will be compensated by the state through property or financial means according to their preference. Government representatives will commence inventorying potential issues and engaging in discussions with Kirants residents early in the morning.

Question: How do you evaluate the results of the delimitation in the areas of Baghanis, Voskepar, and Berkaber?

Answer: One of the most sensitive issues in the Voskepar-Baghanis area was related to the Church of the Holy Mother of God in the village of Voskepar, and the other was related to the Voskepar-Baghanis

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road, which has existed since the time of the USSR. Both issues have been resolved in the best possible way. The road remains entirely within the territory of the Republic of Armenia, as is the church, while the borderline is quite far from both the road and the church. There was and is no sensitive situation in Berkaber.

Question: When will border guards from the both sides be stationed along the agreed border?

Answer: This will happen within the next 8-9 days. In the most sensitive part of Kirants – a little later because some details there require additional clarification.

Question: There is an opinion that the

current border delimitation process is a unilateral concession from the Republic of Armenia, and the security threats to the villages of Baghanis, Voskepar, Kirants, and Berkaber will become more acute.

Answer: Having a delimited border cannot pose a threat to the security of the country or any settlement. On the contrary, such a borderline neutralizes the threat. As for the concession, reproducing the border based on the Alma-Ata declaration cannot be considered a concession because we are reproducing our internationally recognized border line. The process should continue with the same logic and principles in other parts of the border as well.





Armenia-India defense cooperation is going very well, we are working to expand it further. Indian Ambassador's interview



The defense cooperation between Armenia and India is proceeding very well. It is not only a defense technical cooperation; the two sides are also looking at capacity building.

In an interview with Armenpress, Nilakshi Saha Sinha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Armenia expressed such an opinion addressing the high-level relations between Armenia and India in recent years, the active defense and military cooperation between the two countries, as well as the security situation in the South Caucasus, the possible opening of infrastructure in the region, the permanent closeness of the Armenian and Indian peoples and other issues.

- Madam Ambassador, there has been significant activity in the relations between Armenia and India recently. Last year, Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan visited India. This was followed by a visit of the Secretary of the RA Security Council, Armen Grigoryan. How would you assess the political level of relations between Armenia and India and what important points would you highlight?
- First of all, Namaste and Barev dzez! Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to come and talk to you and talk about relations between India and Armenia. You are very right when you say that our political relations are very warm, and they have always been historically. But in the recent past, and I can say surely since the visit of our Foreign Minister in 2021, Dr. Jaishankar, since then, we can see renewed vigour. There is a lot of dynamism in our political contacts. As you mentioned, we have had visits by Foreign Minister Mr. Mirzoyan in 2022, then in

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2023. And if you look at 2023, practically every month, we have had visits between the two countries. Different ministers visited India. You mentioned the visit of your Secretary of the Security Council. The relations are on an upward trajectory. They are warm, and there are frequent contacts.

- Armenia is interested in developing defense ties and cooperation with India. We know that back in 2022, Armenian Defense Minister Suren Papikyan paid a working visit to India. Recently it was also reported by the Indian news agencies that India aims to create an air corridor to Armenia for exports of strategic importance. Tell us, please, what prospects do you see for cooperation in the military area?
- Yes, indeed, our defense cooperation is proceeding very well. Defense cooperation is not only defense technical cooperation, but also we are looking at capacity building. On both fronts, whether it is military technical cooperation or on training and capacity building, both those fronts are proceeding very well. You are absolutely right. In 2022, Defense Minister Mr. Papikyan visited India, and since then we have seen that a lot has happened in the field of defense. We are still working on this to enhance it further. As far as the air corridor is concerned, I think those reports were not correct. Indeed, we are looking at how to get the equipment here to Armenia. But as far as this air corridor is concerned, that was just, I think, some kind of misinformation. So, I would like to put the record straight. I think the prospects for our military cooperation are indeed very good and we are working to further strengthen it.
- In February, the Minister of National Defense of Greece, Nikos Dendias, was in Armenia. During a joint press conference with the Defense Minister of Armenia, Suren Papikyan, the Greece Minister spoke about the possibility of Armenia-Greece-France and India quadrilateral cooperation in defense area. How likely do you consider the cooperation in this kind of format, and

what will the mentioned countries gain from this?

- Well, you know, all the four countries that you have mentioned have very good relations, very warm ties, close ties, whether it is India-Armenia, India-France or India-Greece. We are now celebrating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the strategic partnership between India and France. With Greece also, we have established a strategic partnership. I do find that all the four countries are like-minded, very close partners. At the moment, I think it is still a little premature to talk about the quadrilateral format. But yes, there are convergences. And I'm sure that in case this kind of cooperation happens, then all the countries will benefit. They will be able to cooperate what they are doing on the bilateral sphere which will then be extended to the four countries. At this juncture, I can only see a positive agenda if this happens.
- Recently, several Indian news agencies also reported that India is going to post Defense Attachés to African, Asian countries, including Armenia, in order to strengthen the military links with the mentioned countries. So, what could you tell about this?
- This government, the government of Prime Minister Modi, we have a very clear-cut policy and initiative of "Make in India". So, we have "Make in India" in the defense sphere as well. We find that our defense industry, whether they are in the public sector or the private sector, they are indeed producing world-class defense equipment. And we are now seeing that many countries in the world are buying our defense equipment. In fact, to make that process smooth and to be able to coordinate better, that is why Defense Attachés are being posted to the places that you mentioned. And yes, indeed, for Armenia as well, we will have a Defense Attaché.
- Yes, thank you. And any specific types of equipment or weapons?
- Well, you know, both the Ministries of Defense are in touch and they keep discussing and page 9





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they are looking at various options.

- Madam Ambassador, since 2020 Azerbaijan continues to take destabilizing steps in the region of the South Caucasus. We all know that more than 100,000 of Armenians, ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh were forcibly displaced from their historical homeland due to ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Azerbaijan in September And besides, today Azerbaijan even refuses to withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Armenia. So, what do you think, how do these actions affect the peace agenda in the region of the South Caucasus?
- India has always been in favor of achieving long-term peace through dialogue and diplomacy. And we are encouraged to see the recent steps that have been taken by the two countries. Both Foreign Ministers, Foreign Minister Mirzoyan and Foreign Minister Bayramov have had a meeting in Almaty. So, I think the fact that both the countries are now speaking to each other across the table, they are taking forward the peace agenda. India always feels that through discussions only there can be long-term peace in the region. And that is what we would ardently wish for.
- Let's talk about the economic relations and cooperation between Armenia and India. What was the volume of trade between the two countries last year in 2023? And what trends are seen in the bilateral export and import markets?
- As far as our trade and economic cooperation is concerned, I think it is definitely much below the potential. If you look at the trade figures last year, it was below USD 200 million bilateral. So, the aim of our Embassy is to make sure that we can work towards getting business people from both the countries together. We organized three business forums last year. Already this year, we have organized a business forum where we did it in a hybrid format so that more business persons could join in from India and not necessarily travel. We would thus, have a greater outreach to business people. Our endeavor has been to increase bilateral trade. And there are certain areas where

we see good potential. You know that India is known as the "Pharmacy of the World". Our pharmaceutical products are world leaders. In fact, more than 60% of the vaccines worldwide come from India, including those supplied through the WHO and other mechanisms like GAVI. So, this is one area where I see more potential. Both sides are working towards increasing the import of Indian medicines and vaccines into Armenia. Also, both countries have a good high-tech sector. This is one area where I feel that given the strength of this particular sector, we can look at ramping up cooperation to the mutual benefit of both the countries.

- Last year, at an expert conference in Yerevan, you emphasized that India is ready to participate in infrastructure development programs in Armenia. Which are the fields of India's interests?
- You know, in our discussions with the Armenian side, they have been telling us about infrastructure development, in particular about the North-South highway project. Given that Indian infrastructure companies have world-class expertise, as you know, in India we are undertaking major infrastructure development, whether it's roads, railways, highways, waterways, airports, bridges etc. There is a very big thrust on infrastructure development. Our companies have gathered a lot of expertise and experience, not just in our country, which is very big and there are a lot of projects, but also worldwide. Across the world, Indian infrastructure companies are building bridges, roads, railways, ports, airports. In this connection, your Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Mr. Sanosyan, along with the Deputy Foreign Minister, visited India in October last year for the Global Indian Maritime Summit. At that time, they were able to meet many Indian infrastructure companies. Those discussions are ongoing and we hope that Indian infrastructure companies will be able to participate and contribute in the development of infrastructure in this country.
- Last year, the Government of the Republic of Armenia published the "Crossroads of Peace" project. There were opinions that "Crossroad of Peace"

project matches with India's vision in the South Caucasus. What is India's opinion on this initiative?

- You know, when countries need to prosper, connectivity is the key. And connectivity is something that we, in our own region, have been working very closely with our neighboring countries. Connectivity projects linking India and India's neighbors, this is something that we have developed in a very big way in the last decade or so. So similarly, we find that for any region, if you want to move to the next level of prosperity, you need to have connectivity projects. And naturally, we see this "Crossroads of Peace" project of the Armenian government in that light, that it would be a win-win situation for all the regional partners. So indeed for us there is no other way than having more connections between countries, whether it is in terms of roads, railways etc. We look at it positively and enthusiastically.

- And the last question, Madam Ambassador, is there any planned high-level visit from India to Armenia in the near future?

- As you know, the biggest exercise in democracy in the world is taking place currently in India. We have our general elections which are going on. They started on the 19th of April and will conclude on the 1st of June. Elections are being held in seven phases. We have around 970 million eligible voters. It's a big country, very diverse, very hot at this juncture. So, once the elections are over and the results are declared on the 4th of June, we will have a new government. It is our endeavor, the Government of India and the Government of Armenia, to look at high-level, VVIP visits. And we will work towards that once the new government is in place.

- Is there anything that you would like to add?

- I think I would just like to add that the Armenians are very warm as a people, very hospitable. And I think that is something that I find very similar with Indians because we are also very warm and very hospitable. It's the same kind of culture that I find in both countries. And I think that has been very nice to discover.

Interview by Davit Mamyan

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Demarcation should become one of the tools that will teach Armenia and Azerbaijan to live peacefully – PM Pashinyan

Demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan should become one of the tools that will teach he two countries to live peacefully, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an address to the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Yerevan.

"We need tools to learn to live peace-fully. One of those tools is the "Crossroads of Peace" project proposed by the government, this project is not only for Armenia and Azerbaijan, but if we look at it in this context, one of the important points is that Armenia and Azerbaijan open for each other highways, railways, opportunities to lay pipelines through each other's territory, electricity transmission cables, on the basis of respect for each other's territorial integrity, sovereignty, jurisdiction, on the principle of equality and reciprocity," PM Pashinyan said.

He reminded that these principles for the opening of regional communication channels were agreed on on July 15, 2023 in Brussels at a meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan with the mediation of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel.

"And on October 6, 2022, in Prague, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to recognize each other's territorial integrity on the basis of 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration," the Prime Minister said, noting that "the declaration was signed by the 12 republics of the former Soviet Union to record that the Soviet Union ceases to exist, and the administrative borders existing at that moment between the Soviet republics become state borders because the Soviet republics become independent states."

"On October 6, 2022, in Prague,



through the mediation of French President Emmanuel Macron and European Council President Charles Michel, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed that the Alma-Ata Declaration should be the basis of demarcation between the two countries," he added.

"The demarcation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan has started these days and should become one of the tools that will teach Armenia and Azerbaijan to live peacefully," Nikol Pashinyan stated.

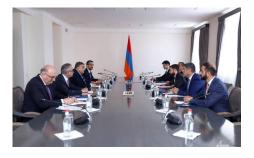
Armenian, Jordanian Foreign Ministers express concerns over tense situation in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem

On May 15 political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia and The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were held in Yerevan. The consultations from the Armenian side were led by Vahan Kostanyan, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia. The Jordanian side was represented by Majed Thalji Al-Qatarneh, the Secretary General for Diplomatic and Expatriate Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said.

The parties commended the current high level of political dialogue between Armenia and Jordan, both highlighting the important role of high-level visits and regular contacts on international platforms.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the prospects of developing cooperation

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between the two countries in the spheres of trade and economy, IT and AI, tourism, science, education and culture, as well as on deepening the partnership within the framework of international organisations.

The sides expressed their concerns regarding the tense situation around the "Cows' Garden" territory in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem, refuting any action that would lead to a change of the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Deputy Minister Vahan Kostanyan

presented to the Jordanian delegation the efforts of the Armenian side towards achieving sustainable peace in the South Caucasus, the "Crossroad of Peace" project recently developed by the Government of Armenia emphasizing the key principles of sovereignty, national jurisdiction, reciprocity and equality, which are the basis of the reopening of communications

He expressed gratitude to his counterpart regarding the statement of Jordanian Foreign Ministry on the border delimitation agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of 1991 the Alma-Ata Declaration.

The Jordanian Secretary General Ambassador Al-Qatarneh, in turn, presented security issues in the Middle East, particularly, the vision of official Amman in solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.





France accuses Azerbaijan of interference in New Caledonia riots



France accused Azerbaijan on May 16 of "interference" in the politics of its Pacific territory of New Caledonia, which has seen deadly riots in recent days, AFP reports.

Azerbaijan swiftly denied the charge by French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, which added to a growing number of tensions between France and the hydrocarbon-rich Caspian Sea state.

The riots in New Caledonia, a French territory lying between Australia and Fiji, were sparked by moves to agree a new voting law that supporters of independence from France say discriminates against the indigenous Kanak population.

French officials have for some time been concerned about the interest taken by Azerbaijan in French overseas territories including New Caledonia, in spite of the vast geographical and cultural distance.

"This isn't a fantasy. It's a reality," Darmanin told France 2 TV when asked if Azerbaijan, China and Russia were interfering in New Caledonia.

"I regret that some of the Caledonian pro-independence leaders have made a deal with Azerbaijan. It's indisputable," he alleged.

But he added: "Even if there are attempts at interference... France is sovereign on its own territory, and so much the better."

"We completely reject the baseless accusations," Azerbaijan's foreign ministry spokesman Ayhan Hajizadeh said.

"We refute any connection between the leaders of the struggle for freedom in Caledonia and Azerbaijan."

Darmanin said Azerbaijan - which has been led since 2003 by President Ilham Aliyev, who succeeded his father Heydar - was a "dictatorship."

Azerbaijan invited representatives of the French territories of Martinique, French Guiana, New Caledonia and French Polynesia to Baku for a conference in July 2023.

The meeting saw the creation of the "Baku Initiative Group", whose stated aim is to support "French liberation and anti-colonialist movements."

The group published a statement this week condemning the French parliament's proposed change to New Caledonia's constitution, which would allow outsiders who moved to the territory at least 10 years ago the right to vote in its elections.

Pro-independence forces say that would dilute the vote of Kanaks, who make up about 40 percent of the population.

"We stand in solidarity with our Kanak friends and support their fair struggle," the Baku Initiative Group said.

Raphael Glucksmann, the lawmaker heading the list for the French Socialists in June's European Parliament elections, told Public Senate TV that Azerbaijan had made "attempts to interfere... for months."

He said the underlying problem behind the unrest was a domestic dispute over election reform, not agitation fomented by "foreign actors."

"But," he said of Azerbaijan, "they are seizing on internal problems."

Yerevan Mayor visits Missak Manouchian's tomb at French Pantheon

The official delegation led by Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan visited the French Pantheon, where the remains of Armenian poet, French national hero Misak Manouchian and his wife Meline Manouchian are buried.

The pantheonization ceremony of

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Misak Manushyan took place on February 21, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the execution of Manouchian and his fellow soldiers. Attending the ceremony were Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and French President Emmanuel Macron.





Ruben Vardanyan's family call on the internatiocommunity to demand for Vardanyan's unconditional release



The family of Ruben Vardanyan, who has been illegally detained in Baku, call on the international community to demand for Ruben Vardanyan's and the 22 other Armenian prisoners' unconditional release.

"The Azerbaijani court has once again extended the pre-trial detention of Ruben Vardanyan, Armenian philanthropist, and former State Minister of Artsakh, who has been illegally detained in Baku since September 27, 2023.

"For eight months, the Azerbaijani authorities have flouted international law and human decency by keeping Ruben incarcerated without trial and without any proper process. They still refuse to say when any proper trial or hearing will take place on their so called charges. This decision to extend his detention by another five months without any due process is another gross violation of his basic human rights.

"While the international pressure on

Azerbaijan continues to grow through the European Parliament resolution, US congress sanction bill and the French Senate resolution, we, the Vardanyan family, call on representatives of the international community - government, business and civil society - to demand for Ruben's unconditional release and the 22 other Armenian prisoners if Azerbaijan is to maintain the privilege to host COP29, which Azerbaijan has proclaimed to be the "COP of peace," the family's statement reads.

Jared Genser, the Vardanyan family's international legal counsel stated that the extension of pre-trial detention is a flagrant violation of Ruben Vardanyan's rights.

"The repeated extensions of pre-trial detention without an individualized and specific determination to justify the denial of bail is another flagrant violation of Ruben's rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty to which Azerbaijan is a state party. The only explanation for the extended delays is this case is political and that Azerbaijan doesn't have any actual evidence against Ruben to put him on trial. Therefore, he should be immediately and unconditionally released," said Genser.

Armenian, Turkish ministers emphasize cultural cooperation's role in the regulation of relations

The Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia Zhanna Andreasyan on May 17 met the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey Mehmet Nuri Ersoy within the framework of the International Conference of Ministers of Culture held in Ashgabat.

According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of Armenia, as part of the full settlement of relations between Armenia and Turkey, among other matters, the ministers emphasized the importance of cultural cooperation. They also exchanged views on the restoration of the historic Ani Bridge.

Xi Jinping declared the need to create a new global security structure

The President of China, Xi Jinping, believes that in order to settle the Ukrainian crisis, it is necessary to create a new effective structure for ensuring global security, reported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, citing the words of the President of

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China at the meeting with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin.

"The fundamental solution to the crisis in Ukraine is to promote the creation of a balanced, effective and sustainable new security structure," said Chinese President. The message says that Xi Jinping, introducing Putin to China's position on Ukraine, emphasized that the solution to any serious problem should be aimed at eliminating not only the symptoms, but also the root cause.





"Learn & Work: YSU Expo- 2024" launched at Yerevan State University

"Learn & Work: YSU Expo- 2024", dedicated to the 105th anniversary of the Yerevan State University has launched in the University. It has gathered applicants, students, graduates, university divisions, and employers under one roof.

Within the framework of the Expo, the applicants will have an opportunity to get acquainted with competitive educational programs, students will be able to meet their future employers, and employers will be able to present their activities and career opportunities.

Yerevan State University Rector Hovhannes Hovhannisyan welcoming the attendees, congratulated the Alma Mater on its 105th anniversary. He noted that the YSU is the institution through which thousands of people have passed, finding their place in various institutions. According to him, the influence of the Yerevan State University on the development of Armenia is indescribable and invaluable.

"For the second year in a row, we are holding this Expo. Last year, we had more than 20 thousand visitors, and we expect to increase the number this year. I consider it a significant opportunity where employers and education meet. During this time, we have changed many of our programs to meet market requirements, and many of our partners have also been involved in the educational processes," the rector noted.

The Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine CJSC has joined the "Learn & Work: YSU Expo- 2024", which represents modern and in-demand professions in the field of mining industry, breaking the existing stereotypes around the field.

The first Deputy General Director of Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine CJSC Vardan Dzhanyan, emphasizing the role of such events, noted that the Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine had joined the Expo with great pleasure, because the mining industry is one of the most important branches of Armenia's economy.

"Although our field is one of the important links for the country, we have a

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problem: our field is not perceived properly by society and future workers. This is a very good opportunity to present it in the best way so that skilled specialists, including those from Yerevan State University, come and work in our sector. There are myths about the mining industry, and together with YSU, we must do everything so that they do not influence people's decisions.

One of the myths is that there is no mining industry in developed countries, but in fact, the most developed Western countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia have highly developed mining industries.

In other words, a developed and modern economy also includes mining industry, but not everyone in Armenia understands this. Secondly, there is an opinion that in our field we need mainly labor force, not scientific specialists, which is not quite true," said Vardan Dzhanyan.

He noted that the students' interest is quite high, and based on that interest; they will work with the YSU to organize similar events, where they will present the company's activities and important directions.

Arayik Margaryan, Head of Information and Public Relations Department of

"Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine" CJSC, emphasized that within the framework of the Expo, the company presents its professions to demonstrate that the mining industry requires the most technological, advanced, and knowledgeable specialists.

"I must note that it is very difficult to produce high-tech devices from stone. Various copper parts and other materials obtained from the stone itself are used in smartphones. In other words, it takes many specialists and a lot of knowledge for obtaining high-tech devices from stone.

We have come today to show the students and explain that the professions they may believe are currently not in demand are, in fact, always in demand and highly paid in the field of mining industry," said Arayik Margaryan.

In an interview with Armenpress, students noted that it is a great opportunity to familiarize themselves with the labor market, establish new connections for future cooperation.

Various conferences will also be held within the framework of the Expo. The event will conclude with a festive concert, during which the results of cultural competitions and the "Best Student of YSU" contest will be announced.



Armenian Ambassador discusses Crossroads of Peace initiative with Ireland's Minister for European Affairs

On May 14th, Armenia's Ambassador to UK Varuzhan Nersesyan met with Dr. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Minister for European Affairs of Ireland.

Ambassador Nersesyan expressed gratitude for Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill's receptive engagement and underscored the importance Armenia places on continued collaboration between with Ireland both bilaterally and within the European Union.

Ambassador Nersesyan highlighted the necessity of addressing Azerbaijan's ethnic cleansing of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, highlighting the devastating events of last September. The Ambassador provided detailed insights into the repercussions of these actions, emphasizing the necessity for international



attention to assist Armenia in dealing with this humanitarian crisis.

Central to the discussions was Armenia's Crossroads of Peace proposal, which is aimed at fostering cooperation and stability in the region. Ambassador Nersesyan stressed that the proposal is rooted in principles of reciprocity, equality,

and the respect of sovereignty, he reaffirmed that the proposal seeks to unblock all transport routes and communications, laying the groundwork for inclusive dialogue and sustainable peace. The Ambassador elaborated on the proposal's vision, highlighting its potential to facilitate constructive engagement among neighboring states and pave the way for comprehensive regional development.

Furthermore, the meeting provided an opportunity to delve into the ongoing process of normalizing Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. Ambassador Nersesyan shared insights into recent developments and reiterated Armenia's commitment to diplomatic solutions and peaceful coexistence. In this regard, he underlined the importance of the Alma-Ata declaration as a foundation for a future peace between the two countries.

CBA puts into circulation "100th Anniversary of Charles Aznavour's Birth" gold collector coin

The Central Bank of Armenia puts into circulation "100th Anniversary of Charles Aznavour's Birth" gold collector coin on May 20, 2024.

Collector Coin Dedicated to the 100^{th} Anniversary of Charles Aznavour's Birth

CHARLES AZNAVOUR (1924–2018), prominent French-Armenian singer, songwriter, film actor, writer, and public figure.

Aznavour was born in Paris to an Armenian immigrant family that escaped the Armenian Genocide.

From a young age he had a strong interest in art. He began his professional career in the 1940s. In 1956 he gained universal recognition after performing at the Olympia concert hall in Paris.

During his musical career, Aznavour wrote and co-wrote more than 1000 songs, including "La mamma", "La Bohème", "Hier encore" ("Yesterday, When I Was Young"), "Sa jeunesse" ("The Wine of Youth"), "She", "Les Deux Guitares" ("Two guitars"), "Une vie d'amour", "Ave Maria," and others, and

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recorded close to 1400 songs in various languages. Among the songs dedicated to Armenia are "Pour toi Arménie" ("For You, Armenia"), "Ils sont tombés" ("They Fell"), "Tendre Arménie" (Tender Armenia).

Aznavour appeared in more than 90 films and has authored a number of books.

After the devastating Spitak earthquake of 1988, Aznavour founded the Aznavour for Armenia association, and, in 2016, together with his son Nicolas Aznavour, created the Aznavour Foundation with the goal of implementing educational, social, and cultural programs.

He has received numerous state

awards and titles, including the French Legion of Honor (knight, officer, and commander ranks), a designation of National Hero of Armenia and the Order of Motherland. Beginning in 2009, Aznavour served as Armenia's Ambassador to Switzerland and as Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN Office at Geneva.

Aznavour's work is a unique interweaving of poetry, music, and acting. Around 200 million Aznavour CDs have been sold to date.

One of Yerevan's squares is named after Aznavour, and a monument to him has been erected in Gyumri.

Obverse: monument to Charles Aznavour in Gyumri (sculptor: S. Petrosyan, architect: A. Tarkhanyan, 2002).

Reverse: portrait of Charles Aznavour, the number 100 in the form of stylized musical notes, piano keys and microphone.

Designers: Vardan Vardanyan (obverse), Karen Melikyan (reverse).

The coin is minted at the Mint of Poland.





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