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"I am ready to take with me all mine field maps and I call on Aliyev to bring all captives" - Pashinyan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has reaffirmed his readiness to meet with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

"The President of Azerbaijan has announced that he is ready to meet with me. Back in July I had declared that we are ready to meet at both high and highest level, which means on the level of Foreign Ministers and leaders of countries. In a recent speech at the UN General Assembly, I stated that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue is awaiting resolution. On several occasions I have welcomed the statements of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, in which they stress

the need to solve the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and resume the peace process towards this end," the Prime Minister said at a meeting with representatives of the Armenian community of Lithuania.

In this context, the Prime Minister noted that as before, he declares that he is ready to meet with the President of Azerbaijan. Pashinyan added he is ready to take the maps of all minefields that do not divide the Armenian and Azerbaijani Armed forces, i.e., are only of humanitarian significance and do not solve military and security issues, because the fields are deep in the rear of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

"I am ready to take all the maps we

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have with me and I call on the President of Azerbaijan to bring all our prisoners with him. You see, the President of Azerbaijan complains that the quality of the maps we transferred before is not good. We gave the maps that we have, that is, we do not keep the maps of better-quality maps in the drawer. I do not rule out and I knows that there is a problem with the quality of the maps. Why? Because the quality of the map depends on the professional qualities of the cartographer. And we are sincere here, we are open, and we do not intend to deceive anyone, because here we are talking not only about Azerbaijan, but also our mediating partners, which are our

friendly countries. This will not be honorable to do something in a different way in this situation," Pashinyan stated.

"We have given the maps that we have, we simply do not have other maps of the area. This is a fact, and this must be recorded as a reality. As for trust, it is clear that in this situation Azerbaijan does not trust us, we do not trust Azerbaijan, the whole problem is to try to move forward in small steps so that at least some trust is built," he said.

The Prime Minister noted that the trust is important for solving humanitarian issues, including the return of Armenian cap-

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Former Armenian De fense Minister arrested

donate Lithuania to 50,000 doses of Moderna vaccine to Armenia

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Armenia reiterates willingness to resume peace talks



Armenia is ready to resume the Karabakh peace process on the basis of wellknown principles and elements, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan said at a joint press conference with his Czech counterpart Jakub Kulhánek in Yerevan.

The Foreign Minister said Armenia values the Czech Republic's stance on the Nagorno Karabakh issue, which overlaps with that of the European Union, i.e., support for the continuation of peace talks in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship and search for a lasting and sustainable settlement of the conflict.

The Foreign Minister attached importance to the meetings in New York with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs and the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister with the mediation of the latter, which, he said, come to prove that the peaceful political settlement of the conflict remains on the agenda.

Ararat Mirzoyan said that he discussed the Karabakh issue with his Czech counterpart. Reference was made to the issue of Armenian prisoners of war and civilians held in Azerbaijan, attaching importance to their immediate release.

Armenian Defense Minister briefs Iranian Ambassador on situation in the region

Minister of Defense Arshak Karapetyan received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Armenia Abbas Badakhshan Zohuri at the administrative complex of the Ministry of Defense. The military attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Armenia, Colonel Bahman Sadeghin also

took part in the meeting.

During the meeting, the Minister of Defense presented the situation in the region, stressed the role of Iran in ensuring regional security.

The parties also discussed the deepening of Armenian-Iranian cooperation and other issues related to regional issues.



Newly appointed Ambassador of France to Armenia Anne Louyot presents copies of credentials to Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan

On September 29, newly appointed Ambassador of France to Armenia Anne Louyot presented copies of credentials to Foreign Minister of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan.

Ararat Mirzoyan expressed confidence that Anne Louyot will contribute to the deepening and strengthening of cooperation between Armenia and France in all spheres.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia noted that Armenia greatly attaches importance to the further development of the existing privileged relations with France. In this context, the interlocutors first of all

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discussed the implementation of concrete programs aimed at promoting and expanding the Armenian-French cooperation in the economic sphere, as well as the further prospects of strengthening ties in the educational and cultural fields.

During the meeting, the sides touched upon the situation resulting from the Azerbaijani-Turkish aggression against Artsakh, as well as the infiltration of the Azerbaijani armed forces into the sovereign territory of Armenia.

Minister Ararat Mirzoyan commended the great attention of France, its Parliament and personally President Macron, paid to



the return of Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians, and the protection of historical-cultural heritage in the territories of Artsakh fallen under Azerbaijani control.

Both sides stressed the need for the resumption of the peace process within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship for a comprehensive settlement of the conflict and the establishment of stability and security in the region.





Citizens of Armenia must feel the impact of Government-implemented initiatives on their lives on daily basis — Nikol Pashinyan



A regular Cabinet meeting took place on September 30, chaired by Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan.

The Government approved the draft law of the Republic of Armenia "On the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia for 2022".

Before starting the discussion of the draft law, the PM said, 'Dear colleagues, today the Republic of Armenia is facing difficult challenges. The catastrophic economic, social, and security-linked consequences of the pandemic and the 44-day war have not yet been overcome. As a result of the National Assembly elections of 2021, the domestic political crisis was overcome, creating quite firm basis for consolidation and fulfillment of the Armenian people's aspiration to look to the future. In August, we presented the Government's Action Plan for 2021-2026, which should create the basis for the peace-

ful, sustainable and inclusive development of the Republic of Armenia in the medium term. Our goals, reflected in the budget for 2022, and also in the Action Plan, are ambitious and realistic.

We realize that not only economic intervention by the Government but also social and cultural transformations are needed to bring them to life. First of all, we highlight the increase of the efficiency of the public administration system, and the transformation and development of the working culture. The most important, perhaps, is the culture of planning and implementation, the process of implementation of programs, the imperfection of which leads to underperformance of capital expenditures, and consequently to the slowdown in the implementation of the goals set by the Government, thus hindering economic growth.

Here, the capacity building of the private sector also plays an important role. And the Government's efforts aimed at that goal have begun to bear fruit, in the person of the companies making investments for becoming competitive in the state-owned capital construction sector, thus striving to deliver quality projects on time. The Government intends to continue its investment promotion policy in this area, using three

main tools for that. The first is the transparency of the public procurement system, the second is the increase of the scale of the tenders, the third is the legislative innovations aimed at simplifying the relations with reliable companies.

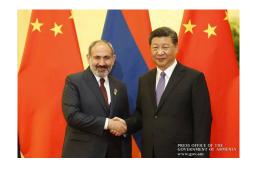
The next key issue is the development of analytical skills, which will increase the cost-effectiveness of expenditures, investments, the correct targeting of social programs, which is one of the most important issues. As a result, the confidence of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia that their taxes are spent more efficiently and targeted will increase. The citizens of Armenia must feel the impact of the measures taken by the Government on their lives on daily basis. An important component of this is the broad public involvement of in the various stages of budgeting and its implementation, in the direction of which many steps have already been taken during the past 3 years, and much attention will be paid in the future as well.

The budget for 2022 is based on 3 main priorities. The first is the reform of the security system, the second is the development of infrastructure, and the third is the modernization of education and science. We will be greatly fo-

cused on ensuring secu-



Armenian PM congratulates China on PRC 72nd anniversary



Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping on the 72nd anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, the PM's

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Office said.

"On behalf of the Armenian people and myself personally I congratulate you and the good people of China on the 72nd anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China. The Armenian-Chinese friendly relations, based on traditional close ties, mutual respect and trust, have steadily developed and strengthened since the establishment of the diplomatic relations. As a key role-player in international relations, China brings its contribution to the global development agenda and is one of the key partners of Armenia.

We can confidently state that ahead of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations we managed to reach our cooperation to an important level in political, economic and cultural spheres. I am full of hope that the Armenian-Chinese cooperation will deepen and expand with our joint efforts for the benefit of our peoples.

I wish, Your Excellency, good health and further success, and to the good people of China – lasting welfare and peace", Pashinyan said in his letter.

Former Armenian Defense Minister arrested

The National Security Service (NSS) confirmed on September 30 that it has arrested former Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan in an ongoing criminal investigation into supplies of allegedly faulty ammunition to Armenia's armed forces.

In a statement, the NSS said that Tonoyan and Davit Galstyan, an arms dealer also arrested late on Wednesday, are accused of fraud and embezzlement that cost the state almost 2.3 billion drams (\$4.7 million).

Later in the day a court in Yerevan allowed the NSS to hold Tonoyan in detention pending investigation. A lawyer for the former minister said he denies the accusations and will therefore appeal against the decision.

"The criminal case contains plenty of information that disproves the accusations," Sergei Hovannisyan told journalists.

Galstyan also protested his innocence during a separate court hearing on his pre-



trial arrest.

Galstyan owns several firms that have for years sold weapons and ammunition to the Armenian military. He was already arrested in February on charges of supplying the military with unusable artillery shells worth \$1 million. Armenia's Court of Appeals released the businessman reputedly close to Tonoyan from custody four months later.

It was not immediately clear whether or not Tonoyan, who served as defense minister from 2018-2020, will plead guilty to the accusations.

The NSS statement said that criminal

proceedings have also been launched against other serving and retired military officials as part of "large-scale operational-investigative measures" taken by its investigators. It did not name those officials.

A deputy chief of the Armenian army's General Staff, Lieutenant-General Stepan Galstyan, was summoned to the NSS for questioning late on Wednesday. According to the Hraparak newspaper, investigators searched his and Tonoyan's apartments.

In what appears to be a related development, the NSS also arrested late last week the commander of Armenia's Air Force. It claimed that the general abused his powers to arrange for personal gain a \$4.7 million contract for the supply of outdated rockets to the armed forces.

According to the security service, the Defense Ministry had refused to buy the same batch of rockets from a private intermediary in 2011.

OSCE Minsk Group is the platform for solving NK conflict: Armenian Deputy PM, UK Ambassador hold meeting



Deputy Prime Minister Suren Papikyan received on October 1 UK Ambassador to Armenia John Gallagher, the deputy PM's Office said.

At the meeting the deputy PM said that the development of the relations with the United Kingdom is important for Armenia. He added that there are many opportunities in the bilateral relations which are not used yet, stressing the need for the formation of new agenda with joint efforts. Papikyan expressed the readiness of the government

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to develop the bilateral cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural and scientific-educational areas.

The UK Ambassador in his turn thanked for the reception and also congratulated Suren Papikyan on assuming office, wishing a productive work. Presenting the results of his meetings with different state and political circles of Armenia, the Ambassador said that the United Kingdom is interested in multilateral partnership.

The officials also discussed the bilateral partnership prospects in various areas, such as entrepreneurship, tourism, new technologies, fight against climate change, effective governance and development of civil society institutes. Deputy PM Papikyan assured that Armenia is committed to the policy of administration system reforms and development of democratic in-

stitutions and mechanisms.

During the talk the deputy prime minister specified the possible directions of the Armenian-British cooperation in economic sector. In particular, the necessity for restoring direct flights between Yerevan and London was emphasized.

Commenting on the post-war situation in Armenia, the deputy PM highlighted the necessity for multilateral efforts aimed at establishing peace and stability in the region. He appreciated the UK's position that the OSCE Minsk Group is the platform for solving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, which will bring stable and lasting peace.

The security and socio-economic situation in Armenia's Syunik province were also discussed.





UN Court to hold hearing in Armenia v. Azerbaijan case in mid-October



The International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, will hold public hearings in the case concerning Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (<u>Armenia v. Azerbaijan</u>) on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 October 2021, at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the seat of the Court.

The hearings will be devoted to the request for the indication of provisional measures submitted by the Republic of Armenia.

In view of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the hearings will be held in a hybrid format. Some Members of the Court will attend the oral proceedings in person in the Great Hall of Justice, while others will participate remotely by video link. Representatives of the Parties to the case will participate either in person or by video link.

Members of the diplomatic corps, the

media and the public will be able to follow the hearings through a live webcast on the Court's website, as well as on UN Web TV, the United Nations online television channel.

On Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 October 2021, the Court will hold public hearings in the case concerning Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Azerbaijan v. Armenia).

On September 16 the Republic of Armenia instituted proceedings against the Republic of Azerbaijan before the International Court of Justice with regard to alleged violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

The Applicant contends that "for decades, Azerbaijan has subjected Armenians to racial discrimination" and that, "as a result of this State-sponsored policy of Armenian hatred, Armenians have been subjected to systemic discrimination, mass killings, torture and other abuse".

Azerbaijan has filed a similar suit against Armenia, accusing the latter of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing.

UK reiterates unconditional support for the efforts of OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs

The United Kingdom welcomes the recent joint meeting of the OSCE Co-Chairs, Armenian Foreign Minister Mirzoyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Bayramov during the 76th UN General Assembly, Deputy Head of UK Delegation to the OSCE Deirdre Brown said.

"We are pleased that the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson in Office, Ambassador Kasprzyk, was also able to participate. We

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echo the Co-Chairs' 24th September statement highlighting the important work and

activities that the Personal Representative and his team are undertaking," she said.

"The United Kingdom reiterates its unconditional and full support for the efforts of France, Russia and the United States in their capacity as Co-Chairs and the Minsk Group. We encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue engagement with the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to seek a permanent end to tensions in the region and to resolve all outstanding matters related to the conflict," the Deputy Ambassador noted

Next



Armenian Mining Giant Changes Hands

(RFE/RL) - A Russian company has bought a majority stake in Armenia's largest mining enterprise and immediately ceded part of it to the Armenian government.

The GeoProMining group and the government announced the deals in a joint statement issued on October 1 more than two months after law-enforcement officers raided the offices of the Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine (ZCMC) in a crackdown promised by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The statement said a GeoProMining subsidiary acquired 60 percent of ZCMC on Thursday and then "granted" a quarter of that stake to the Armenian government.

"The granted 25 percent of the shares constitute 15 percent of the equity of ZCMC that will consequently belong to the Republic of Armenia," it said.

"We intend to expand cooperation with the Government of Armenia," the GeoProMining owner, Russian billionaire Roman Trotsenko, was quoted as saying.

The statement gave no clear reason for Trotsenko's lavish donation to the government. Nor it did specify from whom the Russian company purchased the majority stake in ZCMC.

The Armenian mining giant employing some 4,000 people is based in Kajaran, a small town in southeastern Syunik province. A German metals group, Cronimet, officially owned 75 percent of its stock for



many years. The rest of the company belonged to two obscure Armenian firms.

ZCMC's ownership structure changed significantly but remained opaque after Cronimet reportedly sold its controlling stake in 2019. A former senior Russian government official, Mikhail Zurabov, became one of its new minority shareholders.

ZCMC was believed to be controlled until recently by a group of individuals at odds with Pashinian's government. One of them, former Syunik Governor Vahe Hakobyan, is a senior member of the main opposition Hayastan alliance led by former President Robert Kocharyan.

Contacted by RFE/RL's Armenian Service on Friday, Hakobyan refused to comment on the change of the company's ownership.

Campaigning for the June 20 parliamentary elections, Pashinyan pledged to crack down on ZCMC's "corrupt shareholders" and make sure that their shares are "returned to the people." He accused the ZCMC management of banning workers from attending his campaign rally in

Kajaran

"The Zangezur Copper-Molybdenum Combine, you have crossed the red line, which means that this blue hammer will first smash your heads," the prime minister declared during that rally. "Whatever you say, your fate is sealed, you just quietly wait for your verdict."

In July, masked officers of Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) repeatedly searched ZCMC's offices and detained the company executives. At least one of them remains under arrest.

Also arrested were the mayors of Kajaran and two other Syunik communities affiliated with Hayastan. They are facing different charges rejected by them and the opposition bloc as politically motivated.

Also in July, the Armenian parliament approved a government proposal to impose a new 15 percent tax on exports of copper and other metals. Government officials denied that the main purpose of the measure is to hurt ZCMC owners.

ZCMC has long been one of Armenia's top three corporate taxpayers. The government collected 41.7 billion drams (\$86 million) in various taxes from it last year.

GeoProMining already owned two other Armenian mining companies before the latest acquisition. One of them operates a massive gold mine located in eastern Gegharkunik province.

Ten more electric car charging stations to be installed in Armenia

Ten more electric car charging stations will be installed in Armenia by the end of the year at the initiative of the Union of Armenians of Ukraine, <u>AnalitikaUA.net</u> reports.

It is also planned to expand the geography, says Roman Chobanyan, the initiator and coordinator of the social project.

There are currently 19 stations in Armenia located in capital Yerevan, the cities of Ijevan, Aparan, Stepanavan, Abovyan,

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Sevan and Jermuk.

The Union launched the project in 2019, opening 5 electric filling stations in

the cities of Ijevan and Dilijan, Tavush region.

"We hope that with this we will contribute to the development of electric transport in Armenia and will be useful to those who want to buy an electric car. The opening of stations in different regions of Armenia will be continuous," Roman Chobanyan noted.

The Union of Armenian of Ukraine is also building a modern skate-park in Yere-van.





EBRD and EU offer fresh funding for SMEs in Armenia



The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is providing a US\$ 5 million financial package to Inecobank in Armenia to facilitate the private sector's transition to more sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient practices. The project is supported by the European Union (EU) with €523,000 of grant incentives.

The package comes under the EU-4Business-EBRD Credit Line, with incentives for on-lending to local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that have potential to boost their exports. It will be used for investments in climate-change mitigation and adaptation as well as for upgrading technologies and services to EU standards while promoting the use of green technologies. This is the third project to be signed in Armenia under the programme, paving the way for more local enterprises to benefit from the framework.

The Credit Line is a flagship initiative helping local companies increase their competitiveness at home and abroad by upgrading their production facilities and processes to EU standards. At least 70 per cent of individual loans are used to finance investments in green technologies in accordance with the EBRD Green Economy Transition (GET) approach. Borrowers are eligible to receive incentive grants and technical advice funded by the European Union under its EU4Business initiative. The programme is also available in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Dimitri Gvindadze, EBRD Head of Armenia, said: "This new funding will boost the competitiveness of local firms in Armenia by helping them to invest in modern technology. It will allow companies to strengthen their operations locally and take advantage of international trade opportunities."

Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, said: "The EU is committed to supporting small businesses in line with the Economic and Investment Plan for the Eastern Partnership and the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. The EU4Business- EBRD facility will support green businesses which we believe are the future of Armenia. The overall contribution of the EU to the EU-4Business-EBRD facility covering various Armenian banks is €6 million."

Aren Naltakyan, CEO of Inecobank, said: "Holding a strong portfolio of private-sector lending, Inecobank has been supporting and providing customised solutions to businesses for 25 years, from the day it was established. Together with our longstanding partners, we are excited to announce this new opportunity, which allows our SME clients to build resilience and increase competitiveness, by also providing them with attractive incentives."

Lithuania to donate 50,000 doses of Moderna vaccine to Armenia

Continuing to support third countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has decided to donate to Armenia 50,000 doses of Spikevax vaccine manufactured by Moderna.

In consideration of Armenia's request for assistance,

the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania has been instructed to allocate, by 4 October 2021, 50,000 doses of Spikevax vaccine for humanitarian aid to Armenia out of the existing stock or out of planned purchases of COVID-19 vaccine doses under the Advance Purchase Agreement concluded between the European Commission and the pharmaceutical company Moderna on 25 November 2020. The transfer of humanitarian aid consignments

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to responsible authorities will be organized by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

'I am glad that today we can share with the people of Armenia not only AstraZeneca, but also Moderna vaccines, as Armenians had to wait much longer than Lithuanian citizens for their jab,' said Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė. She stressed that Lithuania will continue to share vaccines with countries that find it

more difficult to obtain them than the EU member states.

This year, Lithuania has already donated 200,000 doses of Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca) vaccine to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia, and 255,900 doses to Taiwan. It is the first time Lithuania is donating a Moderna-manufactured

vaccine.

Lithuania will continue to contribute to the Team Europe initiative of the EU's global efforts to manage the pandemic. The EU member states share vaccines with third countries through the COVAX Facility that helps the low- and middle-income countries obtain vaccines, as well as on a bilateral basis through the EU vaccine-sharing mechanism.

rity, without which it will be page 3 impossible to implement the long-term development goals.

In this sense, not only the modernization of the army's defense capabilities is important, but also the creation of a favorable external environment around the Republic of Armenia, the consistent implementation of the agenda of opening an era of peaceful development for Armenia, Artsakh and the region. I spoke in detail about our vision for the implementation of that agenda during the parliamentary debates on the Government Action Plan.

In this sense, the reopening and development of regional economic and transport infrastructure is also important, which can qualitatively change the content and structure of the economy of the Republic of Armenia, become an additional impetus for the development of domestic infrastructure, ensure long-term inclusive economic growth, creating equal conditions for Armenian citizens to engage in economic activity and to significantly increase the attractiveness of our country for foreign direct investments. In this context, the development of education is of key importance for Armenia, therefore, access to education, inclusive development and substantive reform is our long-term priority. Our goal is to make a person's

education and continuous development a life style. This is the only way to become a competitive nation and individual in the modern world. The development of science and technology is the logical continuation of this process, and here the Government is introducing new funding formulas. Of course, it is not possible to solve all the problems facing the state with one budget, but we must abandon the wheel-slipping situation of doing everything, but in fact, doing nothing.

In the budget for 2022 we have tried to carefully balance the Government's priorities, while ensuring the management of various fiscal risks. We set our strategic goals and the priorities for their implementation in a way that the implementation of each of them creates the basis for the effective implementation of the others. We are confident that the Government's Action Plan will be successfully implemented, ensuring the security, welfare and dignified life of the citizens of Armenia".

According to the draft law, the state budget of the Republic of Armenia for 2022 will make 1 trillion 946 billion 236 million 135.6 thousand drams in terms of revenues, 2 trillion 188 billion 428 million 509.7 thousand drams in terms of expenditures, and the deficit will make 242 billion 192 million 374.1 thousand drams.

The Government also approved a package of draft laws on amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Non-Cash Transactions, on the Civil Code of the Republic of Armenia and a number of related laws. The purpose of the bills is to reduce cash transactions. The package of the draft laws will create conditions for citizens to make non-cash payments.

The Government has made redistributions in the state budget, and changes in the decisions made earlier, aimed at providing funding for covering the expenses for electricity, gas and communication services of the population of Artsakh for October 2021, as well as for providing funding for paying salaries, benefits, pensions and health expenses for October, envisaged by the state budget of Artsakh for 2021. The decision envisages allocating 13 billion 473 million drams.

Nikol Pashinyan noted that with this decision, the financial assistance provided to Artsakh since November 2020 is approaching 100 billion drams. "This is very important. We will continue this process with a view that we must transform the logic of merely social assistance with the logic of development with each step-in order to foster economic activities in Artsakh", the Head of the Government said.

Any border change in the region a red line for Iran, MPs say in a statement



In a joint statement released on October 3, 165 members of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Majlis) praised Iranian Army's war game in northwest region of the country, saying that any border change in the region represent a red line for Iran, <u>IRNA</u> reports.

Any geopolitical change and alteration

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of borders of neighbor countries is a red line for the Islamic Republic of Iran, said the statement read out at the open session of the parliament.

"Iran would neither tolerate any action by aliens in this regard nor allow the soil of other countries to be a base for the Israeli regime's provocations," the statement underlined.

The MPs also said in the statement that the military exercise held along northwest borders of Iran was a peace message to neighbors and "warning to the Israel."

Iran has frequently proved brotherhood and good neighborliness with bordering countries, including Azerbaijan Republic, the MPs noted, adding that they expect Azerbaijani government to reject any mischief-making by aliens and counter divisive actions.

They asked Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deliver their message to the governments playing role in the Caucasus region.

Iran's recent military drills in the country's northwestern border area were criticized by the Republic of Azerbaijan, whose President Ilham Aliyev said he was "very surprised" by Iran's decision to hold drills near the border and questioned the timing of the maneuvers.





"Going Green: A Global and Armenian Perspective on Sustainable Development and Management" conference held in Yerevan



A conference titled "Going Green: A Global and Armenian Perspective on Sustainable Development and Management" was held in Yerevan with support from the British Embassy Yerevan and in partnership with the CITY College, University of York Europe Campus.

This event was a precursor to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which the UK will host between 31 October and 12 November in Glasgow.

The conference sought to address sustainability topics for supply chains in Armenia and provide a premier platform for policy makers, researchers and the private

sector to present and discuss trends, opportunities and practical challenges encountered in the field. It enabled participants to learn from top sustainable and supply chain executives and experts with the aim of inspiring and driving forward sustainable supply chain initiatives in Arme-

The conference attracted over 150 participants from across government, business, academic community, international institutions, civil society organizations and youth playing an active role in the climate change and sustainability initiatives.

In his welcoming speech, **UK Ambassador to Armenia** John Gallagher said:

"In the run-up to UN Climate Change Summit (COP26) which the UK, in partnership with Italy, will host in Glasgow in November, we are working with every country to reach an agreement on how to tackle the

urgent challenge of climate change. We are encouraged by Armenia's commitments and are keen to support Armenia in delivering their climate goals. A critical part of the solution is putting green supply chains and sustainable economic growth at the forefront of Armenia's climate response. Alongside all countries, Armenia can play a positive role in reducing emissions in order to achieve 'net zero' and meet the goal of keeping global temperature rise to within 1.5 degrees."

Professor Leslie Szamozi, Director Pan-European Executive MBA, City College, University of York Europe



Campus, mentioned:

"This conference is providing us with the opportunity to showcase how far the country has come in terms of sustainable development and management but also chart a pathway forward that takes into account the unique aspects of the country and its people. On the path to Glasgow there are things that we need to learn about BUT also knowledge that we can pass on!"

The conference was followed by keynote addresses and panel discussions on topics such as sustainable green development, circular economy, green supply chain management, agro industry, and digitalization.

Next



Lilit Makunts, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, held a virtual meeting with Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA).

The Ambassador expressed her gratitude for Congressman's continuous support and commitment to the issues related to Armenia and Armenian people. She also

extended gratitude for the recent amendment co-sponsored by Congressman Schiff and other colleagues to be included in the National Defense Authorization Act Bill 2022.

Ambassador Lilit Makunts presented the security issues after the 44-day war

Armenian Ambassador, Rep. Schiff discuss security challenges after 44-day war

and in that context emphasized the establishment of lasting and sustainable peace in the region through the comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship.

In that regard Congressman Schiff expressed his determination and readiness to continue his efforts on overcoming the security and humanitarian challenges Armenia is facing.

The interlocutors stressed the need for unconditional repatriation of Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians held in Azerbaijan.

Iran starts military drills near Azerbaijan border

Iran began on October 1 major military exercises along its border with Azerbaijan which were criticized by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev earlier this week.

The Iranian military reportedly began massing troops there after Baku set up on September 12 a roadblock on the main highway connecting Armenia with Iran. The Armenian government controversially ceded a 21-kilometer section of the road to Azerbaijan following last year's war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijani police and customs have since been collecting a hefty "road tax" from Iranian trucks and other vehicles passing through it, causing significant disruptions in cargo traffic between Armenia and Iran.

Aliyev said on Monday that Baku set up the roadblock because Tehran ignored repeated its warnings to stop Iranian trucks

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from shipping cargo to Karabakh. He described the Iranian military buildup as "very surprising."

"Every country can carry out any military drill on its own territory. It's their sovereign right ... But why now and why on our border?" Aliyev told Turkey's Anadolu news agency.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry dismissed the criticism on Tuesday. A ministry spokesman effectively linked the drills to Azerbaijan's military ties with Israel, say-

ing that Iran "will not tolerate Israeli presence near its borders."

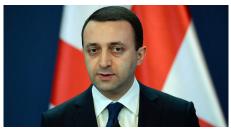
Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian likewise told Azerbaijan's new ambassador in Tehran on Thursday that the Islamic Republic is taking measures

against the "Zionist regime's activities against its national security."

The Iranian army did not specify the number of soldiers involved in the exercises. The commander of its ground forces, Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, was quoted by Iranian news agencies as saying only that they will be backed up by tanks, artillery, combat helicopters and drones.

Heidari also said the war games are aimed at assessing the army's combat readiness and "testing" its weapons.





Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili has said he plans to visit Azerbaijan and Armenia and hopes to play a positive role in the normalization of relations between neighboring countries.

"Tomorrow I leave for Baku. I will have a meeting with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, whom I respect very much. We have very good relations. Most importantly, we trust each other. When there is trust between countries and lead-

Georgian PM hopes to play a role in normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan

ers, I think that all issues will be resolved properly, "Garibashvili said on Tuesday in an interview with IMEDI TV channel.

"I have the same relationship with the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, who was in Tbilisi a few weeks ago. I also plan to visit Armenia in the near future. I think I can put all my energy into the settlement of relations between Yerevan and Baku and play a positive role," he said.

Earlier, Garibashvili, during his speech at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, proposed to world leaders a "Peaceful Neighborhood Initiative" to ensure peace and stability in the Black Sea region. The Georgian prime minister noted that Tbilisi is ready to host the first meeting within the framework of the peace initiative. According to him, the new format will help build a dialogue and will be a practical solution to regional issues.

Later, the head of government said that Georgia came up with an initiative to create a platform in Tbilisi for high-level contacts between the Armenian and Azerbaijani sides.

Architectural design and planned works of Park of Life presented to PM Pashinyan

The architectural design of the Park of Life to be established in the Yerevan Botanical Garden and the works planned for the near future were presented to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in the Republic Square of Yerevan, near the trees guarded by the Guard of Honor.

Trees symbolizing aliveness and presence of all the victims of the Artsakh wars will be planted in the park, which will cover an area of 25-30 hectares, while the Tree of Life will symbolize all our martyrs and their lives sacrificed for the Motherland.

In his message dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Armenia's independence, the Prime Minister had noted that it will be a

park of life, where children will run, make noise, play, young people will have fun, adults will walk and talk. "That Park will be about that all they fell in order all these people, Armenia and Artsakh can live. And the living Armenia, living Artsakh, peaceful and developing Armenian statehood





must become the victory they shaped.

Here, in the heart of this bright square, wrapped in Armenian flags and guarded by the guard of honor, these trees will be moved to the botanical garden, symbolizing the beginning of a new era in the history of the Republic of Armenia, the beginning of an era of peaceful development", Nikol Pashinyan had said.

Armenian, French culture ministers discuss cooperation in preservation of Artsakh's cultural heritage



Armenia's Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Vahram Dumanyan met on September 30 with Minister of Culture of France Roselyne Bachelot in Paris.

The Armenian minister arrived in Paris to attend an event dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Henri Verneuil, the ministry's press service said.

A number of issues of bilateral interest were discussed during the meeting of the two ministers. Vahram Dumanyan highlighted the cooperation of Armenia and France and expressed confidence that the opportunities of implementing joint projects in culture sector will contribute to the development and deepening of the bilateral relations, by creating new opportunities for the expansion of productive cooperation.

The ministers also discussed the cooperation in the field of preserving the cultural heritage of Artsakh. Vahram Dumanyan thanked for sharing the concern on preserving the Armenian cultural heritage of Artsakh in the territories currently under the control of Azerbaijan and for the readiness to support.

The sides also considered drafting and signing a cultural cooperation document between Armenia and France.

Minister Dumanyan invited his French counterpart to Armenia to continue the discussions.





Yemenidjian family donates \$10 million for 'TUMO Armenia' campaign

Asbarez – Marking TUMO's 10 year anniversary and the inauguration of the new TUMO Gyumri building, the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies last week announced a five year, \$50 million initiative to make its leading edge educational program available to all teenagers throughout Armenia and Artsakh. With 110 satellite facilities called TUMO Boxes connected to 16 fully equipped TUMO Hubs in regional centers, the program will serve 80 thousand students and reach all young Armenians even in the most remote villages.

A \$10 million seed fund donated by the Yemenidjian family will launch and support hubs in Vanadzor, Kapan and Koghb, along with TUMO Boxes that feed into these and three existing hubs. To raise the remaining \$40 million, TUMO is kicking off an international fundraising campaign. The Armenian General Benevolent Union and Elie & Elzbieta Akilian have each pledged to match up to \$10 million of funds raised in the first 2 years of the campaign. With \$10 million in seed funding, a \$20 million fundraising goal, and an additional \$20 million in matching contributions, the deployment initiative is already underway.

The announcement was made during the anniversary celebration of the official opening of the new TUMO center in Gyumri in the presence of government representatives, partners and friends. TUMO founders Sam and Sylva Simonian joined via live video and gave opening remarks.

"Our vision has always been to empower all young Armenians to achieve their full potential," said Sam Simonian. "And now we are setting out to fulfill that vision throughout Armenia and Artsakh."

Also attending were Armen Yemenidjian, representing the Yemenidjian family, Vasken Yacoubian and Vera Setrakian on behalf of AGBU, Elie Akilian, on behalf of Elie & Elzbieta Akilian, via video feed, and TUMO CEO Marie Lou Papazian.

"My family is extremely excited and proud to be a part of this vital initiative to arm the next generation of Armenians with the tools necessary to compete in the global technology marketplace, no matter where they live in Armenia," said Armen Yemenidjian. "We hope this initiative encourages our Armenian brothers and sisters in the diaspora to invest in the future leaders of our country and economy."

"AGBU has supported the incredible mission and vision of TUMO since its expansion in Armenia and Artsakh, and this gift will solidify a partnership to benefit Armenian children for generations to come. It is an honor to be able to strengthen the relationship between TUMO, AGBU, and students and their families. I also wanted to thank the other generous donors who will be joining this important campaign," said Dr. Eric Esrailian on behalf of the AGBU



Council of Trustees and Central Board of Directors.

Donations in the United States are tax deductible, and can be made in the form of one time or recurring contributions to the general project or earmarked to specific hubs or boxes.

TUMO Center for Creative Technologies is a free-of-charge education platform that puts teenagers in charge of their own learning. The TUMO program is made up of self-learning activities, workshops and project labs that cover a wide range of focus areas at the intersection of technology and design, including computer programming, animation, game development, music, robotics, 3D modeling, writing, filmmaking, graphic design and more. Over 20 thousand students currently attend TUMO centers in Armenia on a regular basis. In recent years, TUMO centers have also opened in Paris, Moscow, Tirana, Berlin and Beirut, with additional centers expected to open in Lyon, Los Angeles, Lisbon, Milan, Tashkent and Seoul. Licensing revenues from international locations contribute to the long-term sustainability of TUMO in Armenia and Artsakh.



The premier of Australia's biggest state economy New South Wales (NSW), Gladys Berejiklian, resigned on Friday after a corruption watchdog said it was

investigating whether she was involved in conduct that "constituted or involved a breach of public trust," *Reuters* reports.

Berejiklian's shock resignation comes as the state, which has an economy larger than Singapore, Thailand or Malaysia, battles the biggest COVID-19 outbreak in the country and is poised to begin ending

months-long lockdowns as Australia sets to reopen international borders in November.

Berejiklian said the issues being investigated were "historical matters" but she felt compelled to resign because of the

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Australia's NSW state premier Gladys Berejiklian resigns over corruption probe

long time frames likely to be involved in the investigation. She also said the state needed certainty over its leadership amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"I state categorically I have always acted with the highest level of integrity" she said at a news conference.

The NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) said in a statement on its website that it will hold further public hearings as part of its ongoing investigation, Operation Keppel, on Oct. 18.

That investigation has already heard Berejiklian was once in a secret relationship with a state legislator who is the focus of its corruption investigation.

"My resignation as premier could not occur at a worse time, but the timing is completely outside of my control, as the ICAC has chosen to take this action during the most challenging weeks, the most challenging times in the state's history," Berejiklian said.

Berejiklian, of Armenian descent, became premier in 2017. Berejiklian is the

second NSW premier to resign because of an ICAC investigation. NSW leader Barry O'Farrell quit in 2014 after giving evidence in which he forgot to tell the commission he had accepted a gift of a \$3,000 bottle of Grange wine.

Berejiklian said she had told ministers in her government if they were the subject of an integrity investigation they should stand aside until their name was cleared, but in her case, as premier this wasn't an option. She will leave parliament as soon as a by-election can take place.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said she had "displayed heroic qualities" as premier, while former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull wrote on Twitter that she was a dedicated reformer who had "led the State bravely and tirelessly through the bushfires and the pandemic".

Berejiklian gave evidence at an ICAC hearing 12 months ago, and denied any wrong doing.





Armenian CBA issues collector coin on 30th anniversary of Commonwealth of Independent States



On October 1, 2021 the Central Bank of Armenia puts into circulation the silver collector coin "30th Anniversary of Commonwealth of Independent States."

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is an intergovernmental union founded on December 8th of 1991 under an Agreement on the establishment of the CIS by the leaders of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. In view of the shared history of the peoples and friendship they enjoyed, taking into account the intention of the countries to develop their relations on the basis of mutual recognition and respect for state sovereignty, the parties had agreed

upon the formation of the CIS.

At present, the CIS members include nine states, with key areas of combined activity being economic integration, cooperation between the bodies in the field of humanitarian, political, legal and security issues, and the establishment of a common information platform.

The CIS is based on the principles of equality in sovereignty of the member states and serves to strengthen friendship, good-neighbor's policy, inter-ethnic harmony, trust, mutual understanding and cooperation between the countries.

Technical specification of the collector coin

Face value	1000 dram
Metal/fineness	silver 9250
Weight	33,6 g
Diameter	38,61 mm
Quality	proof

Edge ribbed
Quantity of issue 500 pcs
Year of issue 2021

Obverse: the coat of arms of the Republic of Armenia, a bunch of grapes with grains symbolizing the number of CIS member states, an Armenian ornament.

Reverse: the CIS emblem.

Designers: Eduard Kurghinyan (obverse), Lusine Lalayan (reverse).

The collector coin is minted in the Lithuanian Mint.

Notice

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

Forty doctors from Fresno on mission to Armenia

The sixth medical mission from Fresno to Armenia is underway. A team of forty doctors and medical experts will spend two weeks providing free care to people who need it, *Yourcentralvalley.com* reports.

Berj Apkarian, the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Armenia in Fresno, is the mission leader. "Our agenda is full. our efforts are fruitful," Apkarian says.

A first stop for the doctors: a history lesson at the Armenian Genocide Monument in Yerevan dedicated to the one and a half million Armenians who lost their lives in the 1915 genocide. Apkarian says it's important that the mission begins with that visit. "Make them aware that crime against

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humanity is unacceptable. Not only against Armenians, against any nation," he says.

An important focus of this mission trip is treating soldiers wounded in last year's war with neighboring Azerbaijan. Physical therapists are on the team this year, as well as surgeons. Ear, nose and throat specialist Dr. Brien Tonkinson of Fresno saw 54 patients on his first day. According to Apkar-

ian, "He was so tired at the end of the day yet people kept coming from the different villages and Brien was with this big heart and compassion—he did not want to turn any patients down."

While covid is a concern, Apkarian says the team is taking all the necessary precautions. He says the doctors are determined to do what they came to do. "They just want to see patients. They want to deliver the care. They want to meet their own expectation and be gratified with that," he says.

The team is already planning for next year's medical mission—year seven. They hope to be joined by doctors from other countries, making it a truly international effort







Armenian tenor Rouben Elbakian awarded Gold Medal of the Grand Prix Humanitaire de France



French-Armenian tenor Rouben Elbakian has been awarded the Gold Medal of the *Grand Prix Humanitaire de France*.

"Very honored to be decorated in the

French Senate with the Gold Medal of the *Grand Prix Humanitaire de France* for my Charity Recitals in France and abroad. I would like to thank President Lucie CALDERON, who often attends my performances for this touching distinction," Elbakian said.

Founded in 1892, the *Grand Prix Humanitaire de France* has been awarded to more than 15,500 people, including Princess Grace of Monaco (1965), Princess Diane of Orleans (1990), Prince Albert II

of Monaco (2007) and others.

Rouben Elbakian is rewarded for his numerous charity Recitals, the most notable of which are the Recital at the National Opera of Armenia in 2007 for the benefit of the Vladimir Spivakov Foundation; the Recital at the Church of the Trinite in Paris in 2012 for the benefit of the Abbé Pierre Foundation and the Ave Maria Recital at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris in 2019 for the benefit of the largest Foundation in France – Secours Catholique.

Open-air exhibition in Brussels raises awareness about Artsakh War

An open-air exhibition dedicated to the anniversary of the second Artsakh War opened in one of the busiest squares in Ixelles municipality of Brussels on October 1.

The official opening ceremony of the exhibition titled "Nagorno Karabakh: Scene of an ignorant war" was accompanied by Armenian music.

The community initiated a series of public awareness events thanks to a petition submitted by Lisa Abajyan, a resident of Ixelles. The Committee of Armenians of Belgium (CAB) and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) joined the initiative.

The Committee of Armenians of Bel-



gium organized a candlelight vigil in memory of those killed in the war in front of the pictures installed in the square on September 27.

The photos on displayed were authored by Roberto Travan from Italy and Olivier Papegnies from Belgium, who were present during the war and documented the brutal daily life and aftermath of the conflict.

In his speech, the Chairman of the Committee of Armenians of Belgium Ni-kolas Tavitian thanked the community of Ixelles for initiating and organizing the event. "It is not only about Armenians, because the future world will be the way we build it: a world of power, wars and indifference, or a humane and united world. The choice is ours," he noted.

Armenian pavilion opens at Expo Dubai 2020



The Armenian pavilion was opened at the Expo Dubai 2020 exhibition in the United Arab Emirates, the Armenian Ministry of Economy reports.

The Armenian delegation led by Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan was the first to visit the pavilion. Russian Deputy Minister of Industry Alexei Gruzd was also present at the official opening.

In the Armenian pavilion, Minister Kerobyan also hosted UAE Minister for Foreign Trade Tani Bin Ahmed Al Zaidi.

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During the tour, Vahan Kerobyan introduced his counterpart to the Armenian pavilion, talked about the "ethnotech" concept, which Armenia presents in the expo, presented the technological and digital solutions and their application (AR and VR zones), the tourism sector, as well as the cultural exhibits that have been moved to Dubai from Armenia.

During the meeting, the Ministers also exchanged views on further strengthening and expansion of cooperation between the



two countries. As a result, an agreement was reached to discuss the future steps more substantively.



Expo 2020 Dubai opened on Thursday with a lavish ceremony of fireworks, music and messaging about the power of global collaboration for a more sustainable future.

Stars headlining the opening ceremony, which was projected in public spaces around the UAE, included Italian tenor singer Andrea Bocelli, British singer Ellie Goulding, Chinese pianist Lang Lang and Saudi singer Mohammed Abdu.

The expo has brought together representatives from 190 countries.







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