

## Armenia, Germany keen to strengthen relations: Pashinyan, Merkel meet in Berlin



*Germany -- Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and German Chancellor Angela Merkel meet at the Chancellery in Berlin, February 13, 2020*

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin. Welcoming the visit of the Armenian Prime Minister, Mrs. Merkel said it provides an opportunity to discuss issues on the agenda of bilateral relations.

The Chancellor noted that her country's government would continue to support the Armenian side in various ways to promote democratic reform effectively.

Prime Minister Pashinyan touched upon the economic developments in Armenia, noting that high growth rates were recorded in different sectors of the economy. The Prime Minister emphasized that the Government of Armenia is interested in expanding the German business and capital market presence in the Armenian market and inviting German companies to participate in different investment projects.

During the meeting the sides discussed various issues, including cooperation in the fields of industry, infrastructure, tourism, information technologies, education.

Prime Minister Pashinyan also referred to the constitutional referendum in Armenia on April 5 and its circumstances, noting that the Armenian government is going to invite international observers to observe the referendum.

Angela Merkel expressed support to the German government for judicial reforms in Armenia and highlighted the steps taken by the Armenian government to develop democratic institutions.

In a statement to the press prior to the meeting, Chancellor Merkel said she still fondly remembers the trip to

[page 3](#)

**Germany supportive of Armenia's judicial reform – PM Pashinyan meets with Bundestag President**

**p. 2**

**More Armenian opposition parties to shun Constitutional Referendum**

**p. 4**

**Armenia's economic dynamism remains strong – WB**

**p.7**

**Unilateral actions will not help solve the Karabakh issue, Armenian PM says**

**p. 5**

## Germany supportive of Armenia's judicial reform – PM Pashinyan meets with Bundestag President

Nikol Pashinyan met with German Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble in Berlin on the sidelines of his working visit to Germany.

Welcoming the Armenian Premier to his country, the Bundestag President was pleased to state that the pledge made exactly a year ago was fulfilled: The Bundestag has ratified the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Wolfgang Schäuble expressed confidence that Nikol Pashinyan's visit to Berlin will impart fresh impetus to the furtherance of Armenian-German relations.

Thankful for CEPA ratification, Prime Minister Pashinyan said it will facilitate the reform process in Armenia. "Armenia has recorded tangible progress in its international ratings as regards democracy. Our government sets another important goal in developing relationships with Germany. We are interested in your country's experience as a long-established and well-organized



parliamentary state, given the fact Armenia embraced the semi-presidential system of governance in 2018," the Prime Minister said, highlighting the importance of German know-how from the perspective of building a more functional system of governance in our country.

Nikol Pashinyan underscored that his government's ultimate goal is to ensure that democracy is irreversible in Armenia, supported by an independent and reliable judicial system. The Prime Minister gave details of the decision to hold a referendum on

constitutional reforms this April 5. Nikol Pashinyan invited German Bundestag to send observers to monitor the upcoming referendum.

The Bundestag President voiced support for the judicial reform and the democratic process underway in our country. He advised that they are closely following Armenia's domestic developments.

Taking the opportunity, the interlocutors touched upon the development of cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the European Union. Wolfgang Schäuble expressed hope that Armenia and Prime Minister Pashinyan personally will continue to promote interactions between the two Unions.

The Head of the Armenian Government stressed the need to look for new partnership formulas between the EAEU and the European Union, noting that the issue is being discussed within the EAEU.

## IAEA hails Armenia's efforts towards enhancing nuclear security

On a working visit to Austria, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan met with Rafael Gross, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Hakob Vardanyan was also present at the meeting.

Minister Mnatsakanyan noted that Armenia, being a proponent of peaceful use of nuclear energy, attaches great importance to the cooperation with the IAEA. The sides highly appreciated the effective cooperation existing between Armenia and the IAEA and expressed their readiness to make joint efforts



to point out new horizons of cooperation and make full use of the existing potential.

The parties touched upon a number of issues on the agenda of the Armenia-IAEA interaction, in particular the terms of op-

eration and safe operation of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant, the development of nuclear energy and nuclear security. The IAEA Director General highly appreciated Armenia's ongoing reforms aimed at enhancing security in the field of nuclear energy.

The Minister emphasized the importance of peaceful use of nuclear energy in the economic development and energy security of Armenia. In this context, the two sides underscored the effective cooperation between Armenia and the Agency in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy.

## ‘Nagorno Karabakh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan’ - Pashinyan tells Aliyev in Munich



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan once again reaffirmed that Nagorno Karabakh has never been a part of independent state of Azerbaijan.

Participating at a panel discussion on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict together with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, the Armenian PM said he sees a necessity for new ideas for the negotiations of resolving the conflict.

Commenting on Aliyev’s “overview” of history, Pashinyan said there was no need to go so far into the history. “I would ask President Aliyev not to go so far into the history because when Armenian King Tigran the Great was negotiating with Pompey, a Roman military leader, there wasn’t any country in the South Caucasus and around the world in general named Azerbaijan. So, I don’t think that it is right to go so far because I can go even further and start from for example 400 BC, but I wouldn’t do that because I don’t think that it is right way to go”, he said.

Pashinyan said that the Caucasian Bureau decided for Karabakh to be a part of Armenia and this was totally a lawful decision. “And after that, according to the personal initiative of Joseph Stalin this decision changed in Moscow. It was like a plot between Stalin, Lenin and Ataturk. Karabakh has never been a part of independent state of Azerbaijan. Karabakh was put into Azer-

baijan only in the process of forming the Soviet Union. And when we are speaking about territorial integrity, we should decide about which country territorial integrity we are speaking. My question is that if Azerbaijan respected territorial integrity of the Soviet Union, becoming independent country, as Azerbaijan left the Soviet Union in the same way as Nagorno

Karabakh left the Soviet Union. You can say that I am now speaking about the country that doesn’t exist, meaning the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Republic which contained Nagorno Karabakh, also doesn’t exist, there is no Soviet Republic, Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan, and that is truth. And like Azerbaijan gained independence from the Soviet Union, in the same way Nagorno Karabakh gained independence both from the Soviet Union and from Soviet Azerbaijan”, Pashinyan said.

Commenting on Aliyev’s statements on Khojaly events, the Armenian PM reminded that in the mid-90s former president of Azerbaijan Ayaz Mutalibov in one of his interviews to a Russian newspaper stated that the provocation in Khojaly was organized by the Azerbaijani opposition to withdraw him from power. “And this happened actually because as a result of that event Ayaz Mutalibov was removed from the post of President of Azerbaijan”, Pashinyan said.

As for the UN Security Council resolutions, Pashinyan said the general meaning of these documents was to unconditionally and immediately establish ceasefire, stop any violence and military actions. “And if we will look at the UN Security Council Resolution 884, we will see that it is written there that Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire and as a result Azerbaijan lost territories.

page 1 ➔

Yerevan 2018.

“Since then we have actually had a very close exchange, and German-Armenian relations have also intensified,” she said.

“I was very happy that we recently signed contracts to set up a TUMO center in Germany. During my visit to Armenia, in Yerevan, I was very enthusiastic about this center, in which young people are taught IT skills and learn a lot. We will inaugurate the first German TUMO center in Berlin this autumn,” Merkel said.

She thanked Armenia for the participation in the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

PM Pashinyan said, in turn, that “Germany is a close partner of Armenia, and we feel the strength of this partnership in both the theoretical and practical areas. “

“Our connection to Germany is one of the bridges that connect Armenia with European culture and science. Today I can underline that our friendship is based on common values and that these common values serve as the basis for any cooperation. I would also like to state that we have common interests in various projects today. We are ready to do our best to strengthen these relationships,” the Prime Minister said.

And first of all it is Azerbaijan that didn’t keep the conditions of the UN Security Council document. And this is very important to state”, Nikol Pashinyan said.

But according to him, it’s not good for the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders every time to repeat the same thing. “But unfortunately, within the past 25, 30 years we are repeating every time the same things. And I am afraid, international community maybe somehow is tired hearing the same things. And I think that we need to bring some new ideas. And when I became the Prime Minister of Armenia through the peaceful, Velvet, democratic Revolution, I understood that it isn’t possible to solve 30 years lasting conflict with one or two steps. And I thought that in order to solve this conflict we need revolutions. And I started the process of micro-revolutions”, he said.

## More Armenian opposition parties to shun Constitutional Referendum

(RFE/RL – Yerevan) - Businessman Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) on February 14 questioned the legality of an upcoming referendum on constitutional changes sought by the country's leadership and said it will avoid any involvement in the process.

Former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) likewise announced that it will not actively campaign against the proposed changes despite considering them "unconstitutional" and "undemocratic."

The draft amendments to the Armenian constitution call for the dismissal of seven of the nine members of the current Constitutional Court accused by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of being linked to the country's "corrupt former regime." The Armenian parliament controlled by Pashinyan's My Step bloc decided last week to put them on a referendum amid serious procedural violations alleged by opposition lawmakers. Some of them said the amendments also run counter to other articles of the constitution.

The BHK, which has the second largest group in the parliament, said after a meeting of its governing body that the government push to replace the high court judges is "questionable in terms of legality." In a statement, it said Tsarukyan's party will



therefore "not participate in the process of holding a referendum on the constitutional changes."

"It is evident that right from the beginning of the process the authorities moved the issue from the legal to political plane, turning it into a destructive black-and-white confrontation," said the statement. "For the BHK, the practice of spreading divisions within the society and building barricades has always been unacceptable."

The Bright Armenia Party (LHK), the second opposition force represented in the current parliament, went farther earlier this week, calling the referendum scheduled for April 5 "completely illegal." But it too decided not to officially campaign for a "No" vote.

The former ruling HHK, which has repeatedly voiced support for Constitutional Court Chairman Hrayr Tovmasyan and the six other judges, branded the upcoming vote "unconstitutional, anti-legal and undemocratic."

"The sole purpose of this adventure is to form a rubber-stamp Constitutional Court," read a statement released by the HHK leadership on Friday. It said the party will not join in the referendum campaign.

Alen Simonyan, a senior member of Pashinyan's bloc, shrugged off the HHK's decision, saying that Sarkisian's party is not a major political force anymore. He also claimed: "It's clear that some forces are trying and will try to sabotage the referendum process openly or in a covert way."

Speaking during a working visit to Germany on Thursday, Pashinyan defended his administration's efforts to replace the Constitutional Court judges. In a fresh jibe at Tovmasyan, he charged that Armenia's high court has been "occupied" and turned into a partisan structure. "We cannot tolerate this situation," he said.

"[Pashinyan's] statement has nothing to do with reality," countered LHK leader Edmon Marukyan. "I don't think that people in Germany are not aware of that."

Marukyan also dismissed Pashinyan's claim that the Constitutional Court is obstructing "institutional reforms" planned by his government. "Give me an example of a single reform that has been scuttled by the court," he told reporters. "There is no reform."

## Syrian Parliament recognizes the Armenian Genocide

The Syrian Parliament voted unanimously to adopt a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, [SANA](#) reports. The Parliament's Secretary Rami Saleh was earlier quoted by [Ahval News](#) as saying that "the history of the Ottoman Empire is full of massacres of various components of the Armenian, Syrian peoples and others."

The website quoted the head of the Council's Arab and Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Committee, MP Boutros Morjana as saying: "There is no doubt that the massacre certainly occurred and there was a genocide of the Armenian, Assyrian and Syriac peoples. It is time to recognize this genocide."

The resolution was presented by the Syria-Armenia parliamentary friendship group.



*The adoption of the resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide by the People's Council of Syria is a brilliant evidence of the centuries-old friendship between the Armenian and Syrian peoples. It's an important contribution to the restoration of historical justice and prevention of genocides, reads the statement issues by the Foreign Ministry of Armenia.*

*"We highly appreciate the adoption of the*

*resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire by the People's Council of the Syrian Arab Republic.*

*The genocide unleashed by the government of the Young Turks a major part of which was carried out in the territory of Syria that was under the Ottoman rule at that time, is a part of the shared memories of the Armenian and Syrian peoples.*

*The Syrian people, witnessing the calamity facing the Armenian people, were one of the 1<sup>st</sup> to extend a helping hand to the genocide survivors. Thousands of survivors re-found their new motherland in Syria, establishing one of the most flourishing Armenian communities and had their contribution to the development of Syria.*

## Unilateral actions will not help solve the Karabakh issue, Armenian PM says

Unilateral actions cannot help solve the Karabakh issue, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

“Even if we assume any Armenian authority can take unilateral action, it will not solve the problem, but will rather deepen it. Azerbaijan likes to talk about territories, but it is important to understand that we are talking about security,” the Prime Minister said.

“The buffer zone Azerbaijan is talking about has been created, because peaceful settlements are being bombarded by Azerbaijan, forcing civilians, children to live in basements for years,” he stated.

The Prime Minister noted that Azerbaijan is a country where a man is being glorified for killing an Armenian.

“In 2004, NATO invites officers from Armenia and Azerbaijan to Budapest under a peacekeeping program. In Budapest, they attend joint seminars, and an Azerbaijani officer kills a sleeping Armenian officer. The Budapest court sentences him to life in prison. Some time later the Hungarian government decided to extradite the officer to



Azerbaijan. Upon arrival, the President of Azerbaijan signs a decree on the release of the officer, who gets his entire salary paid, is given a flat, a military rank, and receives the encouragement of the mass media,” Pashinyan reminded.

“And when it comes to territory, we perceive it as security. And first of all, not the Republic of Armenia, but the Republic of Karabakh is not ready to compromise its own security, just as no country is ready to compromise its security. That is to say, the solution to this situation can only be linked to security guarantees that are not there. And they haven’t been. And their absence

has created the current situation,” he added.

Referring to his statement “Karabakh is Armenia, full stop,” the Prime Minister said it has a very clear and specific explanation.

“We have said that Azerbaijan’s attack on Karabakh will be seen as an attack on the Republic of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia is the guarantor of the security of Karabakh. And this says everything,” he explained.

PM Pashinyan made it clear that “we have not seen any constructive step by Azerbaijan in the negotiation process over the past one and a half year.”

“On the other hand, I would like to appreciate the fact with Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev we have managed to reach an unprecedented low level of tension since our first meeting in September 2018.

“And I hope that, as a result of constructive discussions, we will not only be able to maintain this relatively stable and calm situation, but also move forward with de jure settlement,” the Prime Minister concluded.

## Pashinyan discusses Constitutional Referendum with Foreign Envoys PM says

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with Yerevan-based foreign diplomats on February 12 to discuss his administration’s controversial decision to hold a referendum on replacing most members of Armenia’s Constitutional Court.

The diplomats invited to the meeting included the ambassadors of Russia, the United States and European Union member states as well as the head of the EU Delegation in Armenia.

“During the meeting, the prime minister addressed in detail the existing situation around the Constitutional Court, the forthcoming referendum on constitutional changes and the circumstances of holding it,” Pashinyan’s press office said in a statement.

He then answered questions from the diplomats, the statement said. It gave no other details.

Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, a key Pashinyan ally, met with the ambas-



sadors the night before the Armenian parliament decided on February 6 to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments drafted by its pro-government majority.

The amendments call for ending the powers of seven of the nine Constitutional Court judges accused by Pashinyan of being linked to Armenia’s “corrupt former regime.” Opposition lawmakers reject them as unconstitutional. They say that the authorities should have consulted with legal experts from the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission before putting the proposed changes on the referendum sched-

uled for April 5.

Two representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) likewise urged the authorities last week to submit the draft amendments to the Venice Commission for examination “as soon as possible.” A senior Armenian lawmaker countered that Yerevan is under no legal obligation to seek such judgment.

Russia, the U.S. and other Western powers have made no public statements on the Armenian referendum so far. “On the other hand, I would like to appreciate the fact with Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliyev we have managed to reach an unprecedented low level of tension since our first meeting in September 2018.

“And I hope that, as a result of constructive discussions, we will not only be able to maintain this relatively stable and calm situation, but also move forward with de jure settlement,” the Prime Minister concluded.

## Armath Engineering Laboratories expand their geography, will soon operate in India



Three Armath Engineering Laboratories will be opened in Gujarat, India. The Laboratories are expected to have up to 400 children. The Armenian teachers will visit India on March 15 to conduct training for the teachers of Indian laboratory for six months, as well as will install the equipment and the software.

Karen Vardanyan, Executive Director of the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises, and Dr. Vijay Shah, a physician, business and social activist representing BattleLab India Pvt LTD, on February 13 thoroughly introduced the initiative to the reporters.

“In order to export “Armath” we have conducted negotiations with a number of countries. The geography was interesting as it started from the Dominican Re-

public up to Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, etc. In several countries we succeeded. We signed a memorandum of cooperation with Ethiopia and Afghanistan. There are also agreements with India, Bangladesh and Mongolia. Preliminary negotiations exist with the army of Bangladesh, two major schools and university network. The issue of introducing “Armath” in the Armenian Army is also under discussion for already two years, but there are no concrete agreements yet, whereas this is a vital issue now”, Vardanyan said.

Dr. Vijay Shah, talking about the installation of “Armath” laboratories in India, stated that it can help the Indian children in selecting a right profession because in India especially 10-16-year-old teenagers have creative skills, but they are not fully revealed, but the “Armath” methodology and education model will help at best to discover that.

“India has a large population, and we are ought to strengthen our future specialists, train them and arm with new knowledge and skills so that they can be maximally competitive in the developing world”, Dr. Vijay Shah said.

He said the laboratories in India will focus

on the following five directions – programming, 3D modeling, robotics, artificial intelligence and UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicle). “All these will give a complex knowledge to the children who will be able to use them in the contemporary world”, he said.

*The Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE) has launched and implements the Armath Engineering Laboratories educational program. UATE started the process of exporting the Armenian model of technology education all over the world.*

*Currently, 575 engineering laboratories operate on the territory of Armenia, Artsakh and Georgia. Around 15000 students are involved in our programs.*

*At Armath Engineering Laboratories kids aged 10-18 are introduced to science, technology, engineering, and math education through interactive after-school classes, exciting competitions, innovative camps and more.*

*The young engineers are given the opportunity to design, build, test, and improve their own creations in a safe and fun environment, while making new friends and creating startups.*

## Armenian Parliament approves gradual ban on indoor smoking

Armenia’s parliament voted on February 11 to accept a government proposal to gradually ban smoking in cafes, restaurants and all other indoor public places in the country.

Under a government bill passed in the second and final reading by 76 votes to 16 with 7 abstentions, Armenians will also not be allowed to smoke while driving cars or buses. In addition, the bill imposes a blanket ban on any form of tobacco advertising.

Indoor smoking will be punishable by up fines ranging from 50,000 drams (\$105) to 200,000 drams.

The bill was drafted by the Ministry of Health and submitted to the Armenian government for approval one year ago. It underwent some changes before being approved by the National Assembly in the first reading in December. In particular, it was decided that the ban on smoking in cafes and restaurants will come into force

in March 2022.

Deputies representing the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK) voted against



the final version of the bill, saying that it will hurt many businesses. One of them, Gevorg Gorgisyan, argued that Armenia’s leading cigarette manufacturer, the Grand

Tobacco company, is now the country’s number one corporate taxpayer.

“Let’s develop other sectors of the economy before starting to hit this one,” Gorgisyan said during a parliament debate that preceded the vote.

Deputy Health Minister Lena Nanushyan, who presented the bill to lawmakers, dismissed such arguments. “Ten percent of annual deaths [in Armenia] result from smoking,” said Nanushyan. “This 10 percent is a serious figure, my dear deputies: every year 3,000 people die as a result of smoking.”

Armenia is a nation of heavy smokers with few restrictions on tobacco sales and use enforced to date. According to Ministry of Health estimates, 52 percent of Armenian men are regular smokers. Medics blame this for a high incidence of lung cancer among them. The smoking rate among women is much lower.

## Armenian wines showcased at Wine Paris Expo 2020



A selection of nearly 40 wines (red, white, rose, natural and organic wines) from 11 Armenian estates is showcased at the Wine Paris Expo 2020, the Armenian Embassy in France informs.

Wine Paris is a major expo on the wine professionals' calendar. The trade fair serves as a presentation platform for more

than 2,000 wine growers and produces from a wide range of regions.



## Plans revealed for upcoming EU TUMO Convergence Center for Engineering in Yerevan

At a public lecture at the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, Winy Maas, the principal architect of MVRDV, briefed the crowd about the firm's approach to architecture, their projects around the world and plans for the upcoming EU TUMO Convergence Center for Engineering and Applied Science in Yerevan.

The EU TUMO Convergence Center for Engineering and Applied Science will be a mixed-use campus that brings higher education and industry together, linking students, researchers, and professionals to each other and with their global peers while fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

The center will include a set of mutually reinforcing components that combine teaching and training facilities, business incubators and accelerators, public retail outlets, and conference centers.



MVRDV was founded in 1993 by Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Vries. Based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, the company has a global scope, providing solutions to contemporary architectural and urban issues in all regions of the world.

Current projects include a public art depot in Rotterdam, the transformation of a mixed-use building in central Paris, mixed-use high-rises in New York and Shenzhen, and a variety of housing projects in the Netherlands, France,

China, India, and other countries.

MVRDV is also working on large-scale urban masterplans in Bordeaux and Caen, France and the masterplan for an eco-city in Logroño, Spain. Larger scale visions for the future of greater Paris, greater Oslo, and the doubling in size of the Dutch new town Almere are also in development.

## Armenia's economic dynamism remains strong – WB

According to the World Bank, Armenia's economic dynamism remains strong, with growth driven by services and recovery of mining, Noyan Tapan was informed from the WB monthly economic update of Armenia.

The WB notes that the growth of economic activity index reached 10.7% in December 2019, compared to the same period of 2018.

The Bank also notes that in December 2019 Armenia preserved low inflation rate (0.7% against 2018 December), while it



slowed even down in January 2020. The inflation of December was driven by 4.6% rise of cigarette prices and 2.3% rise of transpiration expenses. The average annual

inflation of 2019 was 1.4% (in 2018 it was 2.5%). The latest data shows that in January there was almost no change of prices and the inflation in January was 0.2% against the same period of 2019.

The monthly update of the WB notes that Armenia recorded 52% growth of imports in December 2019 against 13% growth of exports, but at the same time Armenia received by 14.7% more tourists in 2019 against 2017, reaching the number of tourists to 1.9 million.

## King of Jordan says proud to be responsible for holy sites of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem



On an official visit to Armenia, His Royal Majesty Abdullah II Al Hussein All Hashimi sent his message of “Religion and Tolerance.”

Speaking at the Presidential Palace, the King said “being one of the world’s oldest cities, Yerevan is the capital of a young a vibrant country. It reminds me very much of my beloved Jordan. Our two countries and peoples have carved a niche for themselves in the contemporary world.”

“Jordan, much like Armenia has made its human capital the main driving force in its journey towards development. Our countries have much to gain from cooperating, to capitalize on this promising potential,” he added.

“Although this is our first official visit to your beautiful country, we feel like we are a family, and, in fact, we are a family. These bonds are dating back hundreds of years. My grand grandfather, as you mentioned, Mr. President, commanded to love God and love our neighbor and gave refuge to the Armenian Christian families. My grand grandfather, my grandfather, my father and me, helping those, who are desperately in need understood that it is the only option. It is a duty that Jordan continues to live by. Thousands of Jordanian trace their roots back to Armenia. They are an honor to both our countries

and play a vital role in the arts, education, public service, business and much, much more. And they form the solid bedrock on which our friendship continues,” he added.

King Abdullah said that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was preparing to celebrate its first centennial, “We look back fondly and proudly on the role that the Jordanians of the Armenian descent and all Jordanians have played working for progress and prosperity of our homeland,” he said.

“But our joint history extends far beyond that. Armenians in the Middle East are part of the oldest Christian community of the world. They are an inextricable part of our past, and we look forward to working with you to make sure they continue to play such a role in shaping the present and the future,” King Abdullah said.

According to him, Saint Karapet Armenian Apostolic Church in Jordan that stands at the christening site of Jesus Christ on the banks of Jordan River is a testament to the enduring Armenian history in the country.

“The Armenian quarter in Jerusalem has been part of the city for centuries, and the Armenian Patriarchate along with other churches

has been under Omar’s protection. A tradition of Christian and Muslim coexistence dates back over thirteen hundred years. This heritage continues today at the Islamic and Christian holy sites. This is a duty I am carrying proudly. And I am especially proud to be responsible for the holy sites of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem,” he stated.

“Jerusalem holds great historic significance not only to me and my family; the city is holy to the three monotheistic faiths, and they all have a stake in safeguarding the spiritual, peace and co-existence that it symbolizes. We cannot let the Holy City turning into a city for violence and division. So preserving the city’s identity, its legal status as well as historic status quo in relations to holy sites, Islamic and Christian alike, is of critical importance. We look to Christian leaders and friends like you all over the world in safeguard-



ing Jerusalem as a unifying city of peace. I have spoken today of our old friendship which has rich history,” the King continued.

He added that for the past 100 years Jordanians of Armenian descent have been creating an exemplary story of friendship and proved that friendship and, certainly, brotherhood always win.

“So, I hope that days and months ahead we can write a new chapter together, a chapter that builds upon friendship that began so long ago, new partnership and promise for all our people,” King Abdullah concluded.



## Armenia attaches great importance to reinforcing nuclear security – FM

Armenia attaches great importance to reinforcing nuclear security both at national and international levels, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an address to the International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and Strengthening Efforts.

“As a strong supporter of the non-proliferation policies, Armenia reiterates its full compliance with the non-proliferation treaty and other relevant treaties, as well as IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocol,” he stated.

“Recognizing that the responsibility for nuclear security within the Member state rests entirely with that State, we have always strongly supported the essential and leading role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the international nuclear security framework and non-proliferation regime. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is of vital importance for my Government in terms of economic development and energy security,” the Foreign Minister added.

He noted that Armenia attaches great importance to reinforcing nuclear security both at national and international levels through the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments as well as the establishment of robust national legislation related to physical protection and security of Armenian NPP and nuclear materials and rules on physical protection of nuclear installations and nuclear materials.

“Armenia closely cooperates on a regular basis with the international partners with regard to all nuclear energy issues. Armenia is undertaking necessary measures to enhance and maintain nuclear and radiation safety. We greatly value the role of the IAEA and ongoing support to Armenia in ensuring the highest standards Security of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant,” Mnatsakanyan stated.



In particular, he said, numerous IAEA’s on-site inspections and assessment missions have reaffirmed Armenia’s commitment in implementing its international obligations and the highest level of openness and transparency. “No any non-compliance or deviation from the requirements of international treaties has ever been recorded,” he noted.

“Armenia fully implements its international obligations under the UN Security Council Resolution 1540. The National Action Plan of Armenia for 2015-2020 outlines series of concrete steps ranging from reviewing already implemented national measures to the coordination of ongoing and anticipated activities,” Minister Mnatsakanyan added.

According to him, the Government of Armenia is continuously working with its international partners at bilateral and multilateral levels to further enhance its national capabilities in countering nuclear smuggling.

“We follow with deep concern the developments in our region, and, in particular, the situation with the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions on Iran’s nuclear program). The conclusion of JCPOA

– a real achievement of multilateral diplomacy – provided world with a critical tool in reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation and we call upon all partners to honor their obligations under the JCPOA, to avoid taking steps that could lead to escalating tensions and do the utmost to preserve the agreement. Armenia welcomes all diplomatic and multilateral efforts to re-start the inclusive and open dialogue on the matter,” the Foreign Minister stated.

Responding to a speaker from Azerbaijan, Minister Mnatsakanyan said “flimsy and unjustified charges were made against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.”

“The territory of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh is under full and legitimate control of the Nagorno Karabakh authorities and nothing indicates to the contrary. NK authorities are open for international cooperation and at any time the Azeri allegations can be easily verified and proven as non-existent,” he stated.

The Foreign Minister reiterated Armenia’s strong commitment to our shared goals of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy and wish every success to the conference.



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India  
Yerevan

### JOB VACANCY

Embassy of India in Yerevan, Armenia invites application from the interested candidates for filing up the post of “LOCAL CHAUFFEUR”.

#### Eligibility

**Minimum Education:** Intermediate (equivalent to 12<sup>th</sup> Standard) with fluent knowledge of English and local languages-Armenian, Georgian and Russian. Candidates knowing all these languages will be given higher preference.

**Documents:** (a) Valid Driving License of the Republic of Armenia and Georgia or International Driving License (b) Medical Fitness Certificate (c) Birth Certificate (d) Educational Certificates.

**Age:** 25-35 Years

**Work Experience:** 4 Years of driving experience with a reputed company or international organization (certificates from previous and present organization are required). Preference will be given to applicant with “No Accident Record” and he must be aware of routes in Yerevan, Tbilisi and other important cities in Armenia and Georgia.

**Responsibilities:** The person will be responsible for driving the diplomatic car of Embassy of India, Yerevan. He can be asked for staying back after office hours.

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By e-mail their resumes to the following emails:

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Last Date for acceptance of application: March 06, 2020

## EU-Armenia Investment Forum to be held in Luxembourg; Nikol Pashinyan meets with Johannes Hahn

On the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with EU Commissioner for Budget and Management Johannes Hahn.

Stressing the importance of the meeting, the Prime Minister noted that the European Union has become a key partner in implementing Armenia’s reform agenda. “I am pleased that we were able to develop a hectic agenda of cooperation in the areas of judicial reform and anticorruption strategy. We are in the process of implementing an anticorruption strategy. I consider this reform package to be the final part of the first stage of our reforms. Cooperation with the EU is very important on this path. Here, I would like to emphasize that we would appreciate being provided advisory, financial and political support. I am grateful for today’s opportunity to discuss plans for our future cooperation,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

Johannes Hahn noted that the possibility of holding an EU-Armenia Investment Forum in Luxembourg was discussed during his visit to



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Armenia. “The forum is a good opportunity to introduce your country. We have extensive experience in organizing such investment forums, and I think that this time, too, we will get a good response. As you noted, reforms are being implemented in Armenia, which can in some sense provide a guarantee that your country can become an excellent partner for potential investors,” Johannes Hahn said.

The interlocutors discussed the ongoing preparations for the investment forum, EU-Armenia cooperation agenda, and other issues of topical interest. Prime Minister Pashinyan referred to Armenia’s economic development trends in tourism, infrastructure, energy and in other sectors.

## European Court ruling in Saribekyan and Balayan vs Azerbaijan case “unprecedented” – Armenian MFA

*The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has described the European Court in the case of Saribekyan and Balayan vs Azerbaijan as “unprecedented.”*

On January 30 the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the case of Saribekyan and Balayan vs Azerbaijan. It is related to the death circumstances of Armenian national Manvel Saribekyan at the Military Police Department of the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan.

On September 11, 2010, Manvel Saribekyan due to bad weather conditions lost his way in the borderline of Tavush region of Armenia and found himself on the Azerbaijani side. A month later Saribekyan’s body was returned to the Armenian side. Azerbaijan claimed the Armenian shepherd had committed suicide.

The Azerbaijani side had initiated criminal proceedings against Manvel Saribekyan on obviously false charges and forced him to appear on the Azerbaijani TV by means



of torture.

The European Court of Human Rights has concluded that the fundamental human rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (hereinafter: the Convention) of the citizen of the Republic of Armenia were breached, particularly substantive and procedural aspects of the Right to Life (Article 2 of the Convention), as well as breach of Article 3 of the Convention prohibiting torture, as the European Court of Human Rights undoubtedly ruled that Saribekyan was subjected to very serious and cruel suffering and that it was

carried out intentionally on a detained person under the exclusive control of the Azerbaijani authorities.

“The ruling is unprecedented: for the first time the European Court of Human Rights has found Azerbaijan responsible for depriving an Armenian national of life and established that the citizen of the Republic of Armenia died as a result of violent actions of others, notably personnel at the Military Police

Department of Azerbaijan,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“This ruling once again demonstrates that Azerbaijan is overtly violating its international human rights obligations. It also indicates that every Armenian who would fall under the control of the Azerbaijani authorities, regardless of his or her status, is subjected to a life threat,” the statement reads.

The Ministry said the Republic of Armenia will continue its consistent efforts to ensure security of the citizens of Armenia and the Armenian people and achieve justice.

## People of Artsakh never participated in Azerbaijani elections – Armenian MFA

The people of Artsakh have never participated in the elections of Azerbaijan either now, or throughout the entire history of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Spokesperson for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan has stated.

“The people of Artsakh will exercise their right to vote in the upcoming nationwide elections to be held in their Homeland on March 31, in which the people of Artsakh will elect their representatives – the President and the members of the National Assembly through free expression of will,” she added.

The comments come after the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry issued a statement, claiming that voters from Nagorno-Karabakh



participated in the recent parliamentary elections highly criticized by international observers.

Naghdalyan reiterated Armenia’s stance that “establishment and enhancement of democratic societies in the region are in the interests of regional stability, development and prosperity.”

“We are aware of the assessment of those elections by the international observers. As it was assessed by the preliminary report of the international observation mission and the heads of the observation mission, the elections were marred by systematic and gross violations,” she stated.

“Once again Azerbaijan is trying to use the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a cover up of its failure in democracy and extremely low level of legitimacy of the elections. The false and empty claims of Azerbaijan claiming that representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh have been elected in those elections vividly illustrate Azerbaijan’s distorted perception of democracy,” the Spokesperson stated.

## Pensioners in Armenia will get free tickets to visit cultural events and museums

From now on, pensioners have the opportunity to visit cultural events and museums functioning under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport for free.

Minister of Education and Science Arayik Harutyunyan and Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Zaruhi Batoyan signed a memorandum on February 10, according to which all persons receiving any type of pension will get free tickets to visit cultural events.

Arayik Harutyunyan emphasized the importance of the program, stressing that



the best has been done to involve as many groups as possible in the program.

“Until now we have implemented similar programs at the expense of budget funds, but now our cultural centers have expressed readiness to host retirees,” said Arayik Harutyunyan, noting that each theater organi-

zation decides on the number of free tickets available for each event, which may fluctuate between 2.5 and 5%.

Zaruhi Batoyan said pensioners can visit any theater of their choice three times a year, and any museum twice a month.

“We have simplified the procedures. From now on, to get tickets, pensioners will not need to go to a social service, instead, they must simply go to a culture center with a passport and a document certifying the fact of being a pensioner, and get a free ticket,” the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs said.

## Five Armenian entrepreneurs to study at Draper University in Silicon Valley



Five entrepreneurs from Armenia will study at the Draper University under a scholarship provided by the Government.

The first-ever exclusive educational pro-

gram has been initiated by the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, which will cover all expenses related to the education of selected Armenian entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley.

The 7-week course will be offered at the Draper University, also known as Draper University of Heroes. Elon Musk (Tesla, Inc.) Tim Westergren (Pandora Media Inc.), AirBnB leaders and YouTube founders will be sharing their experience and success formula with the youth.

Draper University of Heroes is a residential and online school based in San Mateo, California, to help extraordinary people accomplish their life missions.

School alumni have gone on to build 350 companies including crypto leaders, QTUM, Spacecash, DataWallet, and Credo.

Since 2014, the university has been offering a free course on Bitcoin. Draper University was the first educational institution to accept Bitcoin as a form of tuition.

## Turkey working to take over Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem’s Old City – Jewish Press

Turkey has been conducting extensive activity within Jerusalem’s Old City and has specifically been targeting the Armenian and Christian Quarters, the Jewish Press reports.

Residents have told about efforts of Turkish officials in recent years to persuade them to deny the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Turks a century ago and other actions to acquired property owned by local Christians.

According to the source, Turkish persuasion attempts include financial grant proposals to Armenians. Property owners in the Quarter say that Turkish government

representatives have recently offered several \$3000 grants for various needs, but their proposals have been rejected entirely by Armenian residents, who say “these are silencing grants” designed to ensure that the Turkish government will not be sued for the 1915 – 1917 massacres.

Turkish pressures are also manifest in its activity to acquire Armenian assets.

The Jewish Press also reports that a few months ago, the residents of the Armenian Quarter were shocked to find that one of their homes was sold to a Muslim, in three times its real value. An inquiry revealed that funding for the purchase of the Arme-



nian property came from Turkey.

Following the incident, some of the community leaders met to review the chain of events and took action to prevent the leakage of the community’s assets to the Turks.

## Oscars slammed for leaving Armenian screenwriter Mardik Martin out of “In Memoriam” list

The Armenian Film Society has slammed the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the failure to include the Armenian-American screenwriter Mardik Martin in the *In-Memoriam* segment during this year’s Oscars broadcast.

The Academy has updated their website with a “full list” and he is once again not included.

The Armenian Film Society has contacted the Academy directly in hopes that they may rectify this.

Mardik Martin was not included in the In-Memoriam segment during this year’s Oscars broadcast. The Academy has updated their website with a “full list” and he is once again not included. We have contacted the Academy directly in hopes that they may rectify this.

Canadian Armenian filmmaker Atom Egoyan said earlier that as a member of the Academy, he was disappointed not to see the passing of Mardik Martin mentioned during “In Memoriam” section of the Oscars.

“Mr. Martin was an essential collaborator on Martin Scorsese’s early work, and wrote several drafts of the masterpiece *Raging Bull*. In addition to continuing to write for the screen, Mr. Martin taught at USC for



many years, helping to inspire and educate a new generation of writers,” Egoyan said.

Meanwhile, the Academy has responded to complaints about the exclusion of some entertainment figures from its annual In Memoriam segment on Sunday’s Oscar telecast.

“The Academy receives hundreds of requests to include loved ones and industry colleagues in the Oscars *In Memoriam* segment,” the organization said in a statement.

“An executive committee representing every branch considers the list and makes selections for the telecast based on limited available time. All of the submissions are included on Oscar.com and will remain on the site throughout the year,” it added.

Kobe Bryant led off the Oscar telecast’s In Memoriam segment and Kirk Douglas was the last film personality it honored.

Mardik Martin, the co-screenwriter be-

hind Martin Scorsese’s *Mean Streets*, *New York, New York* and *Raging Bull*, died in September 2019 at 84.

Of Armenian descent, Martin was born in Iran on Sept. 16, 1934, but raised in Iraq. He left for America at age 18 and studied at NYU in the early 1960s, when he met fellow student Scorsese.

After several projects made in college, including a documentary about Scorsese’s parents called *Italian American*, the duo’s first feature was the gritty drama *Mean Streets*, with Martin co-writing the screenplay based on a story by Scorsese.

Released in 1971 to critical acclaim, *Mean Streets* signaled Scorsese’s arrival as a filmmaking talent and launched the acting careers of stars Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel.

In 2008, a documentary on Martin’s life titled *Mardik: Baghdad to Hollywood* was released and featured contributions from Scorsese, George Lucas, Amy Heckerling and Irwin Winkler as well as author Peter Biskind.

Martin’s final film work was co-writing the screenplay to Turkish-German director Fatih Akin’s 2014 film *The Cut*, which explored the legacy of the Armenian Genocide, a subject close to his heart.

## Armenian FM, OSCE Chairman-in-Office discuss Karabakh peace process

On February 14, on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan met with Thomas Greminger, the OSCE Secretary General.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia noted that Armenia attaches great importance to strengthening and expanding effective partnership established with the OSCE executive structures through new targeted programs and initiatives. In this regard, the sides discussed collaboration in the framework of the OSCE Cooperation with Armenia program and ways to enhance its efficiency.



Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Secretary General of the OSCE Thomas Greminger touched upon the process of the peaceful settlement

of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the recent meetings held within its framework

Minister Mnatsakanyan underscored the importance of direct engagement of Artsakh authorities in the peace process, especially on the issues related to the security and status of Artsakh.

The interlocutors highlighted the importance of consistent steps aimed at strengthening the environment conducive to peace and preparing the peoples for peace, as well as the importance of OSCE’s role within that framework.

## Armenian chef Karen Torosyan awarded a Michelin Star

Armenian chef of the Belgian Bozar restaurant has been awarded the fourth Michelin Star.

“When we love we don’t count,” he captioned a photo on Instagram.

Bozar Restaurant located in the heart of Brussels in Belgium is the place where Karen Torosyan shares his vision on gastronomy with the world.

Chef Karen Torosyan is one of the most remarkable chefs in Belgium – if not Europe. Karen originally hails from Armenia and arrived in Belgium at the age of 18.

He finished his hospitality studies at INFOBO and gained experience in various types of restaurants such as Michelin starred Bruneau and Chalet de la Forêt.



It was at these restaurants that Karen discovered the real French cooking and the need of structure and hard work in the kitchen. At the famous La Paix restaurant of Chef David Martin, Karen also learnt the business aspects of running a restaurant.

It was under the wings of Chef David Martin that Karen got the opportunity to go his own way with the start of Bozar Bras-

serie. After a few years he became fully independent and quickly gained name and fame in the culinary world.

Michelin Guides are a series of guide books published by the French tyre company Michelin for more than a century. The term normally refers to the annually published Michelin Red Guide, the oldest European hotel and restaurant reference guide,

which awards up to three Michelin stars for excellence to a select few establishments.

The acquisition or loss of a star can have dramatic effects on the success of a restaurant. Michelin also publishes a series of general guides to cities, regions, and countries, the Green Guides.

## Armenians supporting China in its fight against the coronavirus

The Armenian community of Hong Kong and China has released a touching video to show its support for China in its battle against the Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia (NCP).

The video showcases Armenian community members, including numerous children, living in various cities in China sending their encouragements to the Chinese people and authorities, who have taken unprecedented steps to stop the virus. The video, produced in Armenia, also features Armenian students studying Chinese at the Confucius Institute in Yerevan.

Henri Arslanian, President of the Armenian Community of Hong Kong and China said: “We want to show to our Chinese



friends that the Armenian nation is always here to support them, not only in good times but in more challenging times as well.”

The video titled will be shared across Chinese and Western social media with the hashtags #ArmeniansWithChina and #WeAreChina

The Armenian community has been

helping China in various ways since the start of the NCP outbreak. For example, a group of volunteers, including students at the Confucius Institute in Yerevan, collected and donated over 10,000 face masks and gloves to China that were sent from Yerevan last week.

The Armenian Community of China, also known as ChinaHay, has been growing tremendously in recent years. Its

members mainly live in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Anyone interested in learning more about the community can do so by visiting the community’s Facebook page.

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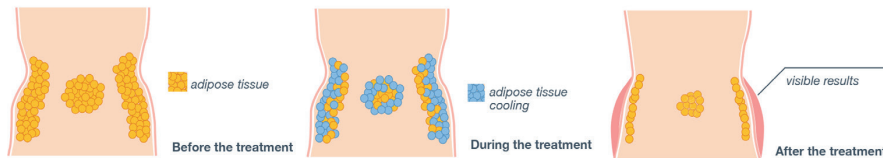
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The publisher: NT Holding LTD  
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝  
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2,25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500  
Circulation: 1500 print copies and  
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:  
**TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN**  
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:  
**GAYANEH ARAKELYAN**  
Director of the weekly:  
**MARINA HARUTYUNYAN**  
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**  
Computer Design: **Ashot Khalapyan**  
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ. Հարությունյան

**ISSN 1829-0604**  
Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝  
03Ա898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.  
Registration certificate and the date:  
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: [contact@nt.am](mailto:contact@nt.am)  
URL: [www.nt.am](http://www.nt.am)

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