

Armenian, Azeri FM's meet in Georgia



Georgia - Foreign Ministers Ararat Mirzoyan (right) of Armenia and Jeyhun Bayramov meet in Tbilisi, July 16, 2022

The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijani reported no concrete agreements after meeting in Tbilisi on Saturday.

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan discussed with his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov “the fulfillment of previously undertaken commitments” and “possible further steps” in the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process.

A ministry statement cited Mirzoyan as telling Bayramov that a “political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict” is essential for achieving a lasting peace in the region. He stressed the importance of using the “mandate” and “experience” of the OSCE Minsk Group to that end.

Baku has repeatedly questioned the need for continued existence of the mediating group co-headed by the United States, France and Russia. It says that Azerbaijan’s victory in the 2020

war with Armenia put an end to the Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry also reported few details of the Tbilisi talks which lasted for about three hours.

It said Bayramov called for a full implementation of Armenian-Azerbaijani agreements brokered by Moscow during and after the war. He singled out “the withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory.”

The talks followed fresh recriminations traded by the two sides in recent weeks. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev again threatened military action against Armenia last month, saying that Yerevan remains reluctant to open a land corridor connecting Azerbaijan to its Nakhichevan exclave. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan claimed, for his part, that Baku is torpedoing peace talks and preparing the ground for another war.

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Armenia highly values the privileged friendship with France: Pashinyan congratulates Macron on Bastille Day

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory letter to French President Emmanuel Macron on the occasion of the National Day. The letter reads as follows,

“Honorable Mr. President, dear Emmanuel,

On behalf of the Armenian people and myself, I heartily congratulate you on the occasion of the National Day of France, conveying best wishes for peace, development and prosperity to friendly and brotherly France and the French people.

This day of national unity, July 14, best symbolizes the difficult path full of trials that was overcome by France and the French people for the victory of justice and universal values, for a dignified and bright future.

We highly value the privileged friendship with France, based on rich Armenian-French contacts with a history of a thousand years, as well as on a strong civilizational foundation and values. We are happy to record that, parallel to the high-level Armenian-French political dialogue, active steps are being taken to strengthen and develop economic ties between Armenia and France. In this context, we attach particular importance to the consistent implementation of the provisions of the 2021-2026 road map of Armenian-French economic cooperation signed in December of last year, as well as to ensuring the continuity of the success of the “Aspirations Armenia-France” conference organized at



your initiative.

Armenia highly appreciates the role of France as the Co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group and its involvement in the process of peaceful settlement and fair resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh issue.

In this regard, I reaffirm Armenia’s resolute commitment to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement of the issue.

Honorable Mr. President,

Taking the opportunity, I congratulate you on carrying out the French Presidency of the EU with honor and successfully completing it. I am sure that in the future France will continue to play an import-

ant role in overcoming all the challenges emerging in this difficult period full of geopolitical upheavals, in favor of international solidarity and universal welfare.

Once again congratulating France on this inmost holiday, I reaffirm my and Armenian people’s desire to host you in Armenia on a state visit in the near future.

The French National Day is the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789, a major event of the French Revolution, as well as the Fête de la Fédération that celebrated the unity of the French people on 14 July 1790.

Rwanda interested in cooperation with Armenia



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda Vincent Biruta and the delegation led by him.

The Prime Minister highly appreci-

ated the cooperation between Armenia and Rwanda within the framework of the International Organization of the Francophonie and expressed hope that it will also promote the development of bilateral relations. Nikol Pashinyan warmly recalled the contacts with Rwandan President Paul Kagame during the latter’s visit to Armenia, as well as within the framework of the Davos World Economic Forum and reaffirmed his willingness to deepen the partnership.

Vincent Biruta thanked for the hospitality and conveyed to Prime Minister Pashinyan the warm greetings and best wishes

of the President of Rwanda. He assessed the discussions with the Armenian Foreign Ministry partners as effective and noted that Rwanda is interested in cooperation with Armenia, both in bilateral and multi-lateral formats.

The interlocutors exchanged ideas on the agenda of partnership within the framework of the OIF, referred to the prospects of the development of bilateral trade and economic ties. In this context, the field of tourism was considered promising.

The Prime Minister asked to convey his greetings to the President of Rwanda Paul Kagame.

New Armenian Army Chief appointed

President Vahagn Khachaturyan on July 14 appointed a new chief of the Armenian army's General Staff handpicked by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, filling a position that has been vacant for nearly five months.

The appointment of Major-General Edward Asryan was announced just over a week after the Armenian parliament approved a government bill that made the country's top general directly subordinate to the defense minister.

The previous army chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Artak Davtyan, and six other senior generals were sacked in February through presidential decrees also initiated by Pashinyan.

The sackings came one year after Davtyan's predecessor, Onik Gasparyan,

and 40 other high-ranking officers issued a joint statement accusing Pashinyan's government of incompetence and misrule and demanding its resignation.

Incidentally, Asryan was among the signatories of the February 2021 statement welcomed by the Armenian opposition but condemned by Pashinyan as a coup attempt.

Some pro-government lawmakers have acknowledged that Pashinyan's administration hopes the bill passed by the National Assembly on July 7 will prevent the army top brass from challenging them in the future.

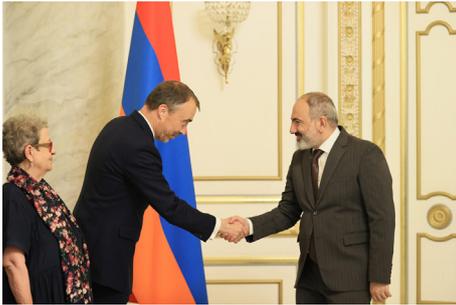
Under the bill criticized by the opposition, the chief of the General Staff will also hold the post of first deputy defense minister. But he will not perform ministerial duties if Defense Minister Suren Papikyan is absent from the country.



Pashinyan promised a major reform of the military shortly after Armenia's defeat in the 2020 war with Azerbaijan. He has replaced three defense ministers since a Russian-brokered ceasefire stopped the six-week hostilities in November 2020.

Opposition forces blame Pashinyan for the disastrous war that left at least 3,800 Armenian soldiers dead. They also say that his administration is doing little to rebuild the armed forces.

EU Rep. in Yerevan to follow up on 'Brussels Process'



The European Union's special representative to the Caucasus Toivo Kläär arrived in Yerevan on July 13 to follow up on what he called the "Brussels Process."

The diplomat was referencing the agreements reached between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan last month during a meeting in Brussels mediated by the Presi-

dent of the European Council Charles Michel.

"Back in a very hot Yerevan for a short visit. Looking forward to important meetings," Kläär tweeted upon his arrival in Yerevan.

During the meeting, Pashinyan and Aliyev agreed to accelerate the process of opening transport links between their countries and the delimitation and demarcation of their respective borders.

Kläär met with Armenia's National Security Chief Armen Grigoryan on Wednesday, when the two discussed implementation of the agreements and the so-called "Brussels Process" of normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

This, as well as recent movement of the Armenia-Turkey normalization were dis-

cussed when Kläär met with Pashinyan.

The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh was discussed with Pashinyan as the two leaders discussed the implementation of agreements emanating from the meeting with Aliyev.

"The consistent attention of the international community toward the protection of the Armenian cultural heritage in the territories that have passed under the control of Azerbaijan was highlighted, in particular, providing access of the UNESCO mission and international humanitarian organizations to the NK conflict zone, considering the steps that have already been taken toward the destruction of a number of Armenian monuments," said a statement from Pashinyan's press office.

Armenian, Kazakh officials discuss possibilities of importing oil products from Kazakhstan to Armenia

Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia Gnel Sanosyan had a meeting with Kazakh Energy Minister Bolat Akchulakov in Nur-Sultan during his working visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan. ARMENPRESS reports the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure informed that issues related to bilateral cooperation in the field of en-

ergy were discussed. In particular, the possibilities and conditions for the import of oil products from Kazakhstan to Armenia were discussed.

Issues regarding the exchange of successful experiences in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency were also discussed.



CIA Director Visits Armenia



(RFE/RL) - U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other Armenian officials during a surprise visit to Yerevan on July 15.

In a short statement, the Armenian government said Pashinyan and Burns discussed “international and regional security,” “processes taking place in the South Caucasus” and “the fight against terrorism.”

The statement gave no other details of the meeting which was also attended by Armen Abazyan, the head of Armenia’s National Security Service (NSS).

Burns also held separate talks with Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of Armenia’s Security Council.

The council’s press office reported that

Grigoryan briefed him on the Armenian government’s peace efforts and security challenges facing the region. It said the two men discussed Yerevan’s ongoing negotiations with Azerbaijan and Turkey “in this context.”

Burns had visited Armenia as well as Azerbaijan in 2011 in his capacity as U.S. deputy secretary of state. He urged at the time a greater “sense of urgency” for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, saying that “the status quo is not sustainable.”

His latest trip to Yerevan coincided with an official announcement that the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers will meet in Tbilisi on July 16.

The trip was first revealed by the Russian news agency Sputnik earlier in the day. It said the CIA chief arrived for unspecified “high-level meetings” and will spend only several hours in the country.

The Armenian authorities did not confirm or deny the report before issuing the

official press releases on Burns’s meetings. An NSS spokesman told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service that he has “no information” about his visit.

The U.S. Embassy likewise declined to comment. No CIA director has ever visited Armenia before.

Tigran Grigoryan, an independent political analyst, claimed that U.S. and Russian security officials arrived in Armenia in recent days for confidential talks focusing on the war in Ukraine.

“Based on the scarce information available, one can presume that Yerevan or Armenia was simply chosen as the venue for some secret negotiations with Russia,” Grigoryan said. “According to my information, Russian and American experts arrived in Yerevan for that purpose in recent days. So Burns’s visit could be put in that context.”

Burns, 66, is a former career diplomat who served as U.S. ambassador to Russia from 2005 to 2008.

Security Service wants stricter citizenship rules for Diaspora Armenians

The National Security Service (NSS) put forward on Wednesday a bill that sets more stringent requirements for ethnic Armenian foreign nationals seeking to become citizens of Armenia.

The legal amendment drafted by it would make them eligible for fast-track dual citizenship only if they have stayed in the country for at least 60 days over the past two years.

The NSS said this would minimize applications from individuals who want Armenian passports in order to more easily migrate to other parts of the world and/or simply “have nothing to do with Armenianness.”

Armenia allowed dual citizenship as a result of constitutional changes enacted in late 2005. This was supposed to strengthen the country’s links with several million Diaspora Armenians scattered around the world. Tens of thousands of them have received Armenian passports since then, taking advantage of a separate law on citizenship that sets no residency requirements for them.

In a written justification of the pro-

posed amendment posted on a government website, the NSS said the law contradicts an article of the constitution which stipulates that Diaspora Armenians can become dual citizens “from the moment they settle in the Republic of Armenia.”

Citing its own “extensive research,” the NSS also argued that many of those applicants have never or rarely visited Armenia and not relocated to their ancestral homeland or bought real estate there after obtaining Armenian citizenship.

The security agency, which also deals with border control, singled out ethnic Armenians from Lebanon, Syria and other Middle Eastern countries. Some of them have used their Armenian passports “only for being able to travel to other states,” it said, presumably referring to their migration to the United States and European Union nations.

The NSS bill, which should be considered by the Armenian government after a two-week “public discussion,” follows a sharp rise in Armenian citizenship applications recorded by immigration authorities in Yerevan since the start of the war in



Ukraine.

According to the Armenian police, 9,917 foreigners applied for Armenian citizenship in the first half of this year, up from 3,448 such requests received in the year-earlier period. The bulk of those applications were filed by Diaspora Armenians.

Police officials have not named the countries whose nationals applied for Armenian citizenship after the Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24. Some Armenian media outlets reported recently that many members of Russia’s large Armenian community are now seeking Armenian passports because of the Western sanctions imposed on Moscow.

Armenia has attracted thousands of Russian migrants in the last few months. The vast majority of them have no Armenian roots.

Armenia planning to open diplomatic office in Cyprus next year – Ambassador



Armenia is planning to open a diplomatic office in Cyprus next year, Armenia's Ambassador to Greece and Cyprus Tigran Mkrtchyan said in an interview with the Public Television of Cyprus.

He voiced hope that Cyprus would also open a diplomatic representation in Armenia in the near future.

During his meeting with the Chair-

man of the Board of Directors of RIK TV Company Michalis Mikhail the Ambassador Mkrtchyan emphasized that there are long-term close relations between the two countries, expressing hope that in the near future it will be possible to open diplomatic missions on the principle of reciprocity in the capitals of both countries, Yerevan and Nicosia.

The Ambassador also referred to the Cyprus-Armenia-Greece cooperation in a trilateral format, noting that a number of meetings have taken place within the framework of this cooperation in various fields, such as military, political, diaspora affairs, expressing hope that the scope of

this cooperation will be further expanded.

Ambassador Mkrtchyan expressed his deep gratitude to the Republic of Cyprus for its support to Armenia.

In turn, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of RIK TV Company Michalis Mikhail noted that efforts will be made to further expand and deepen cooperation with Armenia, including cooperation in the field of news and information and added that RIK also broadcasts daily radio programs specifically for Armenian Cypriots.

Vartkes Mahdessian, state representative of the Armenian Cypriot community in the House of Representatives of Cyprus, was also present at the meeting.

Biden's nomination of new Ambassador to Armenia sent to Senate

The White House has sent a number of nominations and withdrawals to the Senate.

US President Joe Biden earlier nominated Kristina A. Kvien, of California to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Armenia.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor, Kvien serves as Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Kyiv. She was previously Chargé d'Affaires ad interim from 2020-2022. Prior to that, she served as Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France and as Economic Counselor at the U.S.

Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. In both Paris and Bangkok, she served more than one year as Acting Deputy Chief of Mission. She also served as Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in London.

Earlier in her career, Kvien was detailed to the National Security Council in Washington, D.C. as Director for EU, Ukraine and Belarus affairs. Other overseas assignments include the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia; the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels; and the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Republic of the Philippines. Domestic assignments include the Office of European and Regional Affairs, and the Office of Central European Affairs, both in



the Bureau of Europe and Eurasian Affairs.

Kvien, a native of California, holds a BA from Occidental College and an MS from the U.S. Army War College. She is a recipient of multiple State Department performance awards and speaks Russian and French.

US legislators honored with Armenian state awards

Lilit Makunts, Armenian Ambassador to the United States, met with Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA).

Ambassador Makunts presented Armenia's position on regional developments during the meeting with Senator Van Hollen.

She referred to the humanitarian issues caused by the 44-day war and emphasized the importance of the repatriation of Armenian prisoners of war and other civilians

detained in Azerbaijan.

Joint efforts aimed at further enhancement of Armenian-American relations were discussed with Congresswoman Lee.

Ambassador Makunts handed over Mkhitar Gosh State Awards to US legislators on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and the United States and for significant contribution to



the development of Armenian-American relations.

Starmus Festival an opportunity to boost development of scientific tourism in Armenia



Starmus VI Festival is a good opportunity to boost scientific tourism in Armenia, Co-founder of the Festival Garik Israelian said as he briefed Armenian travel agencies on the opportunities to be opened up by the Festival, *Armenpress* reports.

The meeting was also attended President of the Tourism Committee Sisian Boghossian.

“From sectoral debates to various concerts, Star Party, etc. All this could bring foreign tourists to Armenia,” Israelian said. He added that the main task of the festival is to ensure that science reaches people.

“Many young people and school children in Armenia are interested in technologies and science. And this Festival first of all aims to engage them. The second reason of holding the Festival in Armenia is to improve the country’s image. We want to do strategic things for the country,” Israelian added.

He said all prerequisites are there in Armenia – “the country once had very good science, technologies, but the world is not aware of this.” And now the goal is to bring not only scientists but also tourists to Armenia thanks to this Festival.

Israelian is sure that tourists arriving in

Armenia could be interested in this scientific Festival because many famous musicians, scientists, Nobel Prize winners will visit Armenia. A Star Party will take place in Garni. There will be telescopes after 22:00, a live music and cocktails till late night.

“Armenia is attracting tourists mainly with its monasteries, ancient sites and history. Let’s now try to attract people interested in this Festival,” he said.

Many sites in Armenia, like the Observatory, Karahunj, etc, could attract tourists in this context.

The tour operators were briefed on the agenda of the Festival and the ticket prices. They called this Festival a very good opportunity, noting that this could bring tourists to Armenia especially from Georgia and Iran, but also from Russia, Kazakhstan and the European countries.

STARMUS is a global festival of science communication and art that brings together the most brilliant minds on the planet. Its aim is to inspire and educate the next generation of explorers and regenerate the spirit of discovery. STARMUS combines art, music and science to enhance the science communication. The Festival will be held in Armenia on September 5-10.

ESMT Berlin: Germany’s best business school to launch course in Armenia

ESMT Berlin, the #1 business school in Germany as assessed by the Financial Times, will deliver a joint program for the business leaders and managers in cooperation with the Armenia-based international school Matena.

The “ESMT Berlin-Matena” international program will be launched in the fall of this year, and those interested in management and leadership education will be able to participate, both from Armenia and

from other countries.

“By partnering with leading educational institutions, Matena makes world-class business education available in Armenia. Our country can and should become the best destination in the region for those interested in international high-quality education,” says Ruben Hayrapetyan, co-founder and CEO of “Matena” International School.

Matena already implements a number



of international educational programs in Armenia, continuously expanding the network of leading partners and experts.



European Union and WHO donate digital X-ray equipment to Armenia

The European Union (EU) and WHO recently donated X-ray equipment to the Ministry of Health of Armenia for use in the radiology rooms of 7 hospitals in the capital of Yerevan and the regions. The donation is part of a larger assistance package provided by the EU to help boost the country's COVID-19 response.

The new X-ray units will facilitate monitoring of patients' progress and improve clinical decision-making. They are invaluable to hospitals that see hundreds of COVID-19 patients daily. While traditional film X-rays continue to be effective in establishing a diagnosis, digital X-rays allow for images to be manipulated, providing better quality and definition. This allows for precise and fast diagnostics in hospitals.

Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia Ms. Andrea Wiktorin, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Health Dr Lena Nanushyan, and WHO National Professional Officer Dr Henrik Khachatryan gathered at Goris Medical Center to hand over the equip-

ment. "Support to health care in the regions is essential. The EU stands by Armenia to continue the fight against the virus and improve the life of Armenian citizens," said Ms Wiktorin.

Solidarity for health

The Goris Medical Center is one of several hospitals to receive equipment from WHO through the Solidarity for Health initiative funded by the EU. The Center also received 1 electrocardiogram machine and 3 oxygen concentrators, which have helped hundreds of patients recover from severe illness caused by COVID-19.

"I would like to thank our partners for their continued and invaluable support in the fight against COVID-19 for the past 2 years," expressed Dr Nanushyan. "Within the framework of the Solidarity for Health initiative, with EU funding and WHO support, an X-ray device has been donated to Goris Medical Center which will enable necessary examinations with a modern device, providing better medical care to our compatriots."

The guests also learned about the Vaccination is Care campaign and heard from health-care workers about their first-hand experience and the challenges of vaccine deployment.

Increasing access to vaccines in the regions

The Vaccination is Care campaign is being implemented within the joint EU–WHO action to support the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination in Armenia in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health. It aims to make COVID-19 vaccination more accessible for people over 65 living in the regions through mobile vaccination groups, visiting polyclinics, outpatient clinics and community centers located closer to their homes.

In addition to COVID-19 vaccination, vulnerable older people can access other essential health services, including screening for noncommunicable diseases such as anemia and diabetes.

"WHO is committed to assisting with strengthening the resilience of the health system in Armenia, focusing on the regions through the provision of training opportunities to local medical staff and supplying essential medical equipment to make services accessible," emphasized Dr Khachatryan. "The Vaccination is Care campaign enables the population in Syunik marz to receive COVID-19 vaccines in their local medical centers without travelling."

Armenian Government to provide aid to Yazidi refugees, displaced Kurds and Assyrians in Iraqi Kurdistan



The Government of Armenia will provide assistance to Yazidi refugees, internally displaced Kurds and Assyrians in camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, member of the

Armenian National Assembly Rustam Bakoyan informs on Facebook.

The Government decided on July 14 to allocate 80,000 USD to the Consulate Gen-

eral of Armenia in Erbil for the purpose of purchasing necessary goods and distributing aid in the amount of \$100 per person.

The remaining 30,000 USD of the total amount will be allocated for the purchase of heaters (fujika) and blankets for Yazidi and other minority refugees living in various camps.

"We all know the difficult condition in which the national minorities live and survive in the entire Kurdistan region," Bakoyan said, adding that "the need for humanitarian assistance is always there as long as a number of problems remain unresolved."

Modern system of truck scales to be introduced in Armenia



For the purpose of major repair of state highways, the Government has adopted a decision to allocate money to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. According to a report by Vache Terteryan, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, it is proposed to allocate 11,809,378,358 AMD from the reserve fund of the Government of Armenia to the Ministry, of which 2.6 billion AMD will be allocated for the major repair works of 2 interstate roads, 5.5 billion AMD to 6 republican roads, 3.7 billion AMD to 4 for regional roads.

The Prime Minister instructed to purchase high-quality truck scales so as to avoid the problem of drivers damaging or breaking them, and minimizing the human factor. "There is a modern system that is embedded on the road, the data is transferred electronically, and the issue is resolved," he said.

The Government made a decision to allocate 1.2 billion AMD to the Ministry of Emergency Situations for the purpose of repair and purchase of special equipment.

The Prime Minister emphasized the adoption of the decision and noted that the allocated money will be spent on the overhaul of the permanent locations of a number of fire-rescue teams and noted that in terms of updating the equipment, Armenia has received quite tangible support from the Japanese government, as well as from the Russian Federation.

The Head of the Government focused another important issue – fire danger due to high temperature and necessary preventive measures in that direction. "Since there are now warnings that there will be sharp increase of temperature, my instruction is to do everything to avoid forest fires and fires in general. The most important factor here is the approach of our dear and beloved citizens and their certain behavior towards nature. We have to ask to strictly follow the fire prevention rules. The next task is for the Ministry of Emergency Situations to carry out preventive work and to be ready to promptly respond to the incidents."

The Government made a decision to adopt the State Property Management reform strategy and approve the resulting action plan. Nikol Pashinyan emphasized the importance of the strategy in the context of monitoring investment obligations, increasing the attractiveness of privatization of state property and ensuring profitability of state property management.

The Government adopted a decision to

establish the "Police video-photo recording electronic systems management center" SNPO, which will assist in the detection of crimes and administrative offenses, in the implementation of preparatory works for the proceedings of administrative offenses in the field of road traffic safety. Fines levied for detected administrative offenses will be submitted to the state budget in accordance with the law.

Referring to the decision, the Prime Minister said, "To put it briefly, we make the following decision. the function performed by the private company "Security Dream" is taken over and implemented through a state non-profit organization. The last straw for making this decision was when we announced a tender and tried to protect the public interest as much as possible under the conditions of the tender and saw that the tender, the tender legislation was being used for certain manipulations, some schemes were being used and so on. We have decided to close this topic once and for all. The era of the "Security Dream" thus ends, and the function becomes fully state-owned."

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of the decision also in terms of crime detection. The Police Chief informed that SNPO will start performing its functions by January 1, 2023.

Ruling Civil Contract faction will not apply to Constitutional Court to strip opposition MPs of parliamentary mandates

The Civil Contract faction of the National Assembly will not take the case of stripping opposition MPs from parliamentary mandates to the Constitutional Court, *Armenpress* reports.

The issue was discussed today at the sitting of the National Assembly Board. Speaking to reporters after the sitting, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ruben Rubinyan cited several reasons for the decision.

First, he said, the issue can be considered solved after the removal of opposition MPs from their positions at the National Assembly.

Another reason, according to Rubinyan, is the respect for the people's votes. Furthermore, he said, the country needs



political stability and solidarity now.

Finally, he said, the opposition is wrong thinking that the ruling faction will turn to the Constitutional Court, thus providing them with a "lifeline" to escape.

At the same time, Ruben Rubinyan noted that the issue will emerge again if the opposition MPs fail to show up during the next session of the National Assembly.

The opposition MPs have not attended the sitting since launching series of protests against the incumbent government.

The ruling Civil Contract faction earlier removed Ishkhan Saghatelian from Armenia faction from the position of Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. Vahe Hakobyan was dismissed as Chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs. Armen Gevorgyan, in turn, resigned as head of the Standing Committee on Regional and Eurasian Integration.

Prominent diaspora leader says he was denied entry to Armenia

A leader of France's influential Armenian community critical of Armenia's government was reportedly detained at Yerevan airport and deported back to Paris on July 14.

"As soon as I arrived in Yerevan I was arrested, placed in a small room, then in a transit zone, and my passport was confiscated," Mourad Papazian said in a Facebook post on his return to the French capital.

"I knew that I was banned from Turkey and Azerbaijan. Today, I am banned from [Prime Minister Nikol] Pashinyan's Armenia," he wrote.

Papazian said immigration officers at the Zvartnots international airport gave no reason for his deportation. He claimed that it was ordered by Pashinyan.

Armenia's government and National Security Service (NSS), which is charge of border control, did not comment on what was a rare entry ban slapped on a prominent Armenian Diaspora figure.



Papazian is one of the two co-presidents of the CCAF, a coalition of leading French-Armenian organizations. He is also a member of the worldwide governing Bureau of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun), a pan-Armenian party in opposition to Pashinyan's government.

Dashnaksutyun's organization in Armenia has been at the forefront of regular street protests launched this spring by the country's main opposition groups trying to topple the prime minister. Papazian reportedly took part in one of those rallies during a recent trip to Yerevan.

In a statement, the Dashnaksutyun Bureau condemned his expulsion, linking it to recent arrests and prosecution of over a dozen party activists involved in the anti-government protests. It charged that Pashinyan is also trying to please Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The entry ban was also denounced by Ara Toranian, the other CCAF co-president and the publisher of the Paris-based magazine *Nouvelles d'Armenie*.

"Should this arbitrary measure be attributed to [Papazian's] political position?" Toranian wrote on its website. "If this were the case -- and one cannot imagine other reasons -- this expulsion would constitute a serious threat to the freedom of opinion of the Diaspora Armenians and an attack on democracy."

Writing on Facebook hours before boarding the flight to Yerevan, Papazian said he is leaving for Armenia to make a "big announcement for September." He did not elaborate.

Mirzoyan, Garibashvili discuss the issue of facilitating the process of transit cargo transportation through Georgia

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili expressed satisfaction with the high level of Armenian-Georgian relations based on centuries-old friendship between the two peoples, expressing confidence that the further activation of political dialogue and official mutual visits will contribute to the strengthening of multi-sectoral cooperation between the two countries, Noyan Tapan was informed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia.

Ararat Mirzoyan noted that further development of relations with Georgia is of strategic importance for Armenia.

The importance of taking appropriate steps to strengthen economic cooperation was emphasized and the work of the Armenian-Georgian intergovernmental commission was highlighted. Issues related to the facilitation of the process of transit cargo transportation through the territory

of Georgia and the expansion of transit opportunities were discussed.

During the meeting, the interlocutors discussed a number of issues of regional security and stability.

Ararat Mirzoyan expressed gratitude to the Georgian side for hosting the meeting

of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and for Georgia's willingness to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

The sides exchanges ideas on the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.



Biden Meets Jerusalem's Armenian Patriarch During Israel Visit



President Joe Biden, who was visiting Israel, toured the Armenian Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, where he met with Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop

Nourhan Manougian.

During the meeting, Archbishop Manougian made a presentation about Armenian culture and religion and also discussed the difficulties and conflicts that exist in the Christian community, Koryun Baghdasaryan, a Patriarchate spokesperson News.am.

President Biden received these handmade pottery pieces as a gift from Patriarch “Biden was with us for about 40 minutes, and the meeting was held in a very good atmosphere,” Baghdasaryan told News.am.

The Patriarch also thanked Biden for recognizing the Armenian Genocide, after which he presented the president the rights of the church, which is located in the temple of Nativity.

According to Baghdasaryan, Biden expressed his desire to meet with all spiritual leader and listen to their concerns.

At the conclusion of the visits, Archbishop Manougian presented Biden with mementoes—a clay pottery plate and one depicting a pomegranate.

US lawmakers adopt amendment restricting sale or transfer of F-16s and modernization kits to Turkey

With a vote of 244-179, the U.S. House adopted an ANCA-backed amendment spearheaded by Congressional Armenian Caucus Co Chair Frank Pallone Jr., Congressman Chris Pappas (D-NH), and Congressman Gus Bilirakis, restricting the sale or transfer of F-16s or F-16 modernization kits to Turkey.

Rep. Pallone rallied Congressional support for the amendment during floor debate last night. “The sale of American advanced fighter jets to Turkey will not incentivize Erdogan to suddenly transform into a good ally. More likely these weapons will lead to further death and destruction in the region. For far too long the United States has allowed Erdogan to dictate his terms and hide behind Turkey’s status as a NATO



ally. He has avoided facing real-life consequences greater than a slap on the wrist for his flagrant violations of international law at home and abroad and it’s time we finally say enough is enough. This amendment will do just that and help take the leveraging power out of Erdogan’s dangerous autocratic hands,” argued Pallone.

Former Congressional Turkey Cau-

cus Co-Chair Pete Sessions’ arguments – calling Erdogan a “reliable ally,” citing Committee jurisdictional issues, and questioning whether Turkey really violates Greek airspace – fell flat.

Joining Representatives Pappas, Bilirakis, and Pallone as co-sponsors of the bipartisan measure are Representatives David Cicilline (D-RI), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), James Langevin (D-RI), Andy Levin (D-MI), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Nicole Malliotakis (R-NY), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Grace Meng (D-NY), John Sarbanes (D-MD), Brad Schneider (D-IL), Brad Sherman (D-CA), Jackie Speier (D-CA), Dina Titus (D-NV).

US House adopts amendment requiring report on military aid to Azerbaijan

U.S. House adopted an amendment introduced by Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Jackie Speier (D-CA), directing the U.S. Department of State in coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to:

1) Document the State Department’s consideration of all waiver requirements of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act

2) Report on whether U.S. security assistance to the government of Azerbaijan undermines efforts toward a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan; and

3) Provide an assessment of Azerbai-

jan’s use of offensive force against Armenia or violations of Armenian sovereign territory from November 11, 2020, to the date of the enactment of this Act.

The amendment (#337) was adopted as part of “en bloc 3” – a larger grouping of amendments to the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R.7900) – by a vote of 362 to 64.

Joining Rep. Speier as congressional cosponsors of the bi-partisan measure include Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), James Langevin (D-RI), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Zoe

Lofgren (D-CA), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), Dina Titus (D-NV), Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), and David Valadao (R-CA).



More extreme and more entertaining: ANIF and Apaga Projects developing the capacities of Yell Park



A new hotel complex has already been put into operation within the framework of the joint investment project of the State Interest Fund of Armenia – ANIF and the Apaga Projects company, construction works on the territory of Yell Extreme Park and Apaga Resort are nearing completion, and all new services will be available to the public soon, ANIF informs.

Entrepreneur + State Investment Manager CJSC, a subsidiary of ANIF, invested \$1.6 million in Apaga Projects CJSC.

Director of Apaga Projects company

Tigran Chibukhchyan says: “This is an example of effective cooperation between the public and private sectors, which, along with the business vision, has great social significance. It is aimed at the development of the rural community and the improvement of community life. All our initiatives stand out for courage and innovation, and we will continue that way.”

According to Bella Manukyan, director of the Entrepreneur + State fund, one of the most effective ways of investing state funds is to invest in successful and profitable business projects. “We are sure that our investments in Apaga Projects will not only contribute to the development of this already established brand, not only create new jobs, but will also play a significant role in the direction of more global targets, the modernization and development of the tourism sector. Promotion of such

programs is one of the goals of the fund,” she said.

Apaga Projects coordinates two projects in Yenokavan community in Tavush region: Apaga Resort hotel complex and Yell Extreme Park. The company’s two projects are a successful example of developing tourism infrastructure and creating new economic opportunities in rural communities.

The cooperation between ANIF and Apaga Projects was aimed at the construction of a new zipline of about 2.5 km in length at Yell Extreme Park and the introduction of a new sports entertainment platform, as well as the infrastructure of the Apaga Resort hotel complex. As a result of the project, Yell will be able to increase capacity and nearly double the number of permanent jobs it provides.

60 Armenians from 20 countries apply for Diaspora Youth Ambassador Program



Application deadline for the 2022 Diaspora Youth Ambassador program of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has passed.

Sixty young Diaspora leaders from 20 countries have applied to join the 2022 Diaspora Youth Ambassador program of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. Applications have been submitted from France, Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain,

the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Germany, USA, Serbia, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and more.

Applicants are 22-35 years old, have lived in the Diaspora for at least 5 years, are active and representative members of Armenian communities, speak the Armenian language, want to contribute to strengthening Armenia-Diaspora relations by acquiring new knowledge and skills to make their work in the community more effective.

The Diaspora Armenian youth will be interviewed online and the 20 selected participants will travel to Armenia from September 25 to October 8 for an intensive training course to broaden their understanding and knowledge of different spheres in Armenia and Artsakh.



After returning to their home countries, the Diaspora Youth Ambassadors will spend a year hosting community meetings, inter-community experience exchange activities, publications and informative activities related to the Office and other Armenian programs on social platforms and media.

The program that has been held for the second year running, is funded by the Government of the Republic of Armenia and supported by the “Jinishian” Memorial Foundation.

Armenian people are grateful to France for always pursuing the protection of the vital interests of Armenia – Deputy PM



Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan participated in the event organized at the French Embassy on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of France. As Noyan Tapan was informed by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia, Mher Grigoryan gave a speech in which he particularly said,

“Your Excellency, Madam Ambassador,

Distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps,

Dear colleagues, attendees,

On behalf of the Armenian Government and myself, let me to warmly congratulate you on the occasion of the National Day of France.

More than two centuries ago, the French people opened a new path to the future based on human rights and democracy, and since then, the high universal values of



the French Revolution have become an exemplary guide for many countries.

Armenian-French friendship has a his-

tory of centuries. Armenians and French people have been together in many important and turning points of their history. We will never forget that at the beginning of the 20th century, France extended a fraternal hand to tens of thousands of Armenians who survived the genocide and found their



second homeland.

The friendship between our two countries became an important foundation for establishing a high-level political dialogue, as well as effective and close cooperation in all key areas.

Honorable Ambassador,

The Armenian people are grateful to France for always paying attention to and pursuing the protection of the vital interests of Armenia and the fundamental rights of the Armenian people.

Armenia attaches great importance to the involvement of France in the process of the final and fair settlement of the Na-

gorno Karabakh conflict in the format of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs.

for the humanitarian support provided by friendly France during and after the 44-day Artsakh war.

I would like to mention that in parallel with the high-level Armenian-French political dialogue, we are now making efforts to develop our economic cooperation, which is also fostered by the Armenian-French economic cooperation road map for 2021-2026 signed last year.

I cannot but emphasize the special role of cooperation in the field of culture, science and education in Armenian-French relations.

We highly value cooperation in the field of education, in particular, the French University operating in Armenia deserves special attention. The presence of Tumo center in Paris and in Lyon that opened recently are also encouraging for us.

I also attach importance to the close decentralized cooperation between Armenia and France, to which the cooperation between more than 30 local governments of the two countries has a significant contribution.

As a participant of the European Union's Eastern Partnership initiative, we appreciate France's support in expanding cooperation with the European Union.

Summarizing my speech, I would like to once again congratulate you, Madam Ambassador, the staff of the embassy, the Government and the friendly people of France on this holiday, wishing prosperity and welfare.

Taking this opportunity, I am also happy to record that this year we are marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Armenian-French diplomatic relations, in connection with which I wish longevity to the Armenian-French friendship.



Long live the Armenian-French friendship!

Long live France!

Long live Armenia!”

Public campaign for reconstruction of the old stage of Gyumri Friendship Park kicks off

The public awareness raising campaign for reconstruction of the old stage of the Friendship Park has today kicked off in Gyumri. The campaign is aimed at raising funds to preserve the historical state of the outdoor stage through public engagement and revive its former cultural significance.

The 20 meters long stage located in the backside of the park has been in an emergency condition since the 1988 earthquake, and it is urgent to fix it to avoid complete destruction. The fundraising campaign will allow preventing its destruction to start reconstruction.

The campaign will last around 3 months, until late September and the end goal is to raise USD 100 000. Everyone from Armenia, Diaspora and the whole world can join it to contribute to reconstruction of the old stage.

The campaign has been initiated by Tourism and Urbanism Charitable Foundation (TUF) on the reArmenia collaboration platform.

“Being a cultural capital, Gyumri still does not have an outdoor stage, which is why we decided to preserve this one as Gyumri people associate the best years spent in the Park with this stage in the first place. They have numerous memories from the concerts, cultural events and performances conducted on this stage”, says TUF’s Gyumri Development Projects Manager Yelena Muradyan.

“The public fundraisers aimed at addressing important issues are important in Armenia not only to raise the funds but also to shape a caring community around the issue: be it building of a technology school in a remote village in Artsakh or reconstruction of a historical stage in the cultural capital of Armenia, Gyumri. These initiatives create effective cooperation models applicable in various spheres”, said Operations Director of reArmenia collaboration platform Artak Grigoryan.

The team of architects of the park has designed the reconstruction project



of the stage aiming to make it modern and unique. The reconstructed stage will allow Gyumri and whole Armenia’s music, dance, and theatrical groups to perform on the new public outdoor stage of the city.

“As a result of the reconstruction, an independently operating grid “curtain” will be set around the stage which sliding from the roof will stress the fragility of the half-destroyed construction. The thin grid will be illuminated at night to protect the visitors from the falling debris as the stage will preserve its historical look after the reconstruction. Special lighting will allow illuminating either the stage or the grid depending on the goal.

33rd International Biology Olympiad opens in Armenia



You are all winners, Riochi Matsuda, President of the International Biology Olympiad Association, said in an address to the participants of the 22rd International Biology Olympiad that opened in Armenia on July 10.

“We are proud to see so many partic-

ipants from all over the world,” he said, congratulating the participants on being recognized as winners of the Biology Olympiad in their countries.

“Your outstanding achievements in the field of biology will be recognized and re-

warded today and throughout this week, as a result of your participation in this event,” Riochi Matsuda said.

“On behalf of the association, he expressed gratitude to the Government of Armenia, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and Yerevan State Uni-

versity for providing support in organizing the International Biology Olympiad (KMO 2022).

Armenia hosts the 33rd International Biology Olympiad on July 10-18. Student teams from 64 countries have arrived in Armenia, with 4 participants in each team. The Olympiad is attended by 3 observer countries, more than 240 members of the international jury, and a total of 500 foreign delegates.



Artbox incubator to provide strategic support to creative projects and businesses in Armenia

Creative Armenia officially launched and opened applications for the creative incubator Artbox, which is funded by the European Union in Armenia and launched in partnership with AGBU Armenia within the framework of the KATAPULT Creative Accelerator Program.

Through a 12-week incubation process in the Fall of 2022 — taking place digitally through a cutting-edge online platform — selected projects across all creative fields will be given an unprecedented opportunity to work with prominent business leaders and renowned cultural figures to develop a comprehensive package around their projects, including a business plan, marketing strategy, video pitch, and financing plan. Once this package is ready, the artists will have the exclusive opportunity to present their projects for financial support, including grants provided by KATAPULT and possible investments by high-profile cultural investors.

To learn more about the incubator and to apply by the August 12, 2022, deadline, please visit the [website](#).

“The idea of Artbox had its spark at Creative Armenia years ago – rising from our mission to provide artists a comprehensive and vital strategic support for their creative but, more importantly, economic success,” said Creative Armenia Director of Programs Anush Ter-Khachatryan. “Today we are thrilled to see that spark becoming an enlightenment and bringing a paradigm shift in our cultural landscape.”

The application is open for creators from across the world with projects to be realized within the Republic of Armenia. Preference is given to projects that seek investment and have potential to reach commercial success.

“Artbox is a unique opportunity that empowers artists and creative teams by investing in their entrepreneurship skills and their ideas,” — said Anna K. Gargarian, the lead of KATAPULT Creative Accelerator Program. “As KATAPULT works to catalyze the creative economy, Artbox’s focus on human capital and tailored learning modules for professionalizing the sector are essential for building an industry.”



Inspired by innovative models in business and tech, Artbox is a reinvention of the incubator and accelerator model for the art world — a dynamic entrepreneurial system that provides strategic support, guidance, and access to funding to creative projects in theater, music, design, and across the arts, helping to develop them into commercially viable and investable creative products.

Creative Armenia is a global arts foundation for the Armenian people that discovers, develops, and champions innovative talent across the arts. Artbox is developed by Creative Armenia, funded by the European Union in Armenia and launched in partnership with AGBU Armenia in the framework of the KATAPULT Creative Accelerator Program.

COAF and Starmus sign MoU to bring International Science & Art Festival to COAF SMART Center in Lori, Armenia



On July 11th, COAF Managing Director Korioun Khatchadourian and Starmus Founding Director Prof. Garik Israelian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at COAF Headquarters in Yerevan. The main purpose of this MoU is to host a STARMUS Day at the COAF SMART Center in Lori Province on September 10th, in order to expand the reach of the 6th Starmus science and art festival, to be held in Yerevan,

Armenia, to the countryside of Lori.

Starmus is an international festival founded in 2011 by Spanish-Armenian astrophysicist Garik Israelian and the legendary guitarist of Queen Brian May. Over the years, the annual festival has become a platform that unites world-renowned scientists and artists—among which the most prestigious Stephen Hawking—to inspire new generations of youth to explore the world of science. The sixth edition of Starmus, titled “STARMUS VI: 50 Years on Mars,” will be held in Yerevan, Armenia, from September 5-10, 2022.

“The decision to bring Starmus to the COAF SMART Center in Lori is a global message that Starmus is not just in one place; Starmus is everywhere. Therefore, if there is an opportunity to bring the mission of Starmus to the villages of Armenia,

then we should do it. And this is what we are doing now; we are bringing Starmus to Lori,” states Garik Israelian.

The MoU between COAF and Starmus highlights the shared commitment of the two parties to stimulate rural children’s interest in, and knowledge of, science and culture.

COAF will host a “STARMUS Day at SMART,” inviting local and international guests to a wide offering of musical performances, panel discussions, stargazing, a planetarium, and an agricultural fair. The event will also feature a compelling line-up of artists, scientists, and Nobel laureates.

The “STARMUS Day at SMART” is powered by Starmus and organized within the “Lori, Your Next Destination” project, implemented jointly by the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and COAF.

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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.

- Ensure the security and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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