

Minimum wage to be raised in Armenia



Armenia - Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, June 27, 2019.

The Armenian government announced on June 27 plans to increase the minimum wage in the country by more than 23 percent. A bill drafted by two members of Armenia's parliament and discussed by the government at a weekly meeting in Yerevan would raise it from 55,000 drams (\$115) to 63,000 drams per month.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's cabinet decided to go further and ask the National Assembly to set the minimum monthly wage at 68,000 drams (\$142).

The higher figure was proposed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Deputy Labor Minister Gemafin Gasparyan said it is based on recent research on the cost of living in the country which was commissioned by the ministry.

Gasparyan added that 35,000 people working in the public sector and 45,000 others employed by private firms are paid 55,000 drams per month at present. According to government data, the average monthly wage in Armenia stood at 179,000 drams as of April.

Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan said in this regard that the government should make sure that private employers are unable to illegally underpay their workers through "hourly wage manipulations." "I think that we need to add to this bill regulations that would limit such room for maneuver by defining the length of a working day," he said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan agreed. "Especially against the background of the existing level of social security ... we must do everything to preclude abuses in this sphere," he told government members.

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PM receives EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Toivo Klaar, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia.

Evoking the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the Prime Minister highlighted the need for continued development and expansion of EU-Armenia relations. Nikol Pashinyan assured of Armenia's strong commitment to developing democracy, implementing drastic reforms in the judicial system, and protecting human rights. In this context, he noted that the CEPA may well



bolster the reforms underway in the priority areas.

In turn, Toivo Klaar said the EU keen to ensure dynamic development of relation-

ships with Armenia. He assured of their willingness to back Armenia in its reform-targeted efforts.

The interlocutors referred to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement process. Prime Minister Pashinyan underscored that Armenia strives for an exclusively peaceful settlement of the conflict and is fully committed to the talks held in the OSCE Minsk Group format.

The Armenian Prime Minister and the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia exchanged views on regional issues and developments.

Nikol Pashinyan congratulates Marija Pejcinovic Buric on being elected CoE Secretary General



Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has sent a congratulatory message to newly elected Secretary General of the Council of Europe Marija Pejcinovic Buric. As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia, the message runs as follows,

“Honorable Mrs. Marija Pejci-

novic Buric,

I heartily congratulate you on being elected the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and express the support of the Government of the Republic of Armenia for successfully carrying out your high mission.

I am confident that you will use your great professional capacities and rich experience for the future improvement of the organization and overcoming the challenges, ensuring that our common value system will live everlasting.

We highly praise the role of the Council of Europe in the compre-

hensive reforms aimed at the continuous strengthening of the democratic institutions in Armenia.

Recently Armenia-Council of Europe Action Plan for 2019-2022 was launched in Yerevan. The Action Plan is one of the successful examples of our close cooperation, in the sidelines of which large-scale reforms in the judicial system of Armenia are planned by the consultative support of the CoE.

I reaffirm our resoluteness to continue the productive cooperation with the Council of Europe and expect to host you in Armenia in the near future”.

Armenian Ambassador to France meets with Mayor of Lyon

Armenian Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajyan on June 26 met with Mayor of Lyon Gérard Collomb, the Armenian foreign ministry told Noyan Tapan.

Reaffirming their dedication to the Armenian-French friendship which has deep historical roots, the sides highly valued the unique relations between Yerevan and Lyon established since the independence of Armenia.

Both highlighted the implementation of practical programs between Yerevan and Lyon, in particular in

the fields of healthcare, public transportation management and etc.

Issues relating to the preparation works of the 2020 Armenian-French decentralized cooperation forum were also discussed.

The Armenian Ambassador expressed gratitude to Gérard Collomb for his personal contribution to strengthening the Armenia-France unique relations and in the process of erecting an Armenian Genocide Memorial in the center of Lyon.

Ambassador Tolmajyan also introduced the Mayor of Lyon on the on-



going democratic developments in Armenia following the velvet revolution, as well as a number of international and regional issues that are important for Armenia.

Georgian Minister allays Armenian concerns over Russia border crossing



Georgia's sole border crossing with Russia heavily used by Armenian exporters is not at risk of closure following renewed tensions between Moscow and Tbilisi, Georgian Deputy Prime Minister Maya Tskitishvili insisted on June 27.

Moscow temporarily banned passenger flights between Russia and Georgia last week after violent protests in Tbilisi sparked by the visit of a Russian lawmaker. Some Russian pro-government politicians and commentators have called on the Kremlin to impose harsher sanctions on Georgia. A Russian government watchdog

issued on Monday what was widely construed as a veiled threat to ban imports of Georgian wine.

This raised fears in Armenia that Moscow could also shut down the Russian-Georgian border crossing at Upper Lars. Most of Armenia's trade with Russia, which reached nearly \$2 billion last year, is carried out through that mountainous route.

Tskitishvili, who is also Georgia's minister for regional development and infrastructure, said she does not expect any problems at Upper Lars because "there is no tension in economic relations" between her country

and Russia.

"I can't understand why such a question is raised in the first place," she told reporters during a visit to Yerevan. "There are certainly no problems for representatives of any country [using Upper Lars,] including Armenian businesspeople, because we are doing everything, we can to further economic ties between Georgia and Armenia."

Tskitishvili argued that Moscow and Tbilisi, which fought a brief war in 2008, restored bilateral commercial ties in 2012 despite having no diplomatic relations. "We seek to develop transport corridors," she went on. "It is therefore not desirable to have any tension that could affect economic ties."

Speaking at a cabinet meeting held earlier in the day, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan thanked the Russian and Georgian governments for ensuring "the normal functioning of Armenia's export routes."

Tskitishvili spoke after a two-day session of a Georgian-Armenian intergovernmental commission economic cooperation which discussed ways of expanding trade and investments between the two neighboring states.

According to official Armenian statistics, Georgian-Armenia trade rose by 14 percent but still stood at a modest \$43.4 million in the first four months of this year.

New Judge Barred from Constitutional Court Hearings on Kocharyan



(Yerevan – RFE/RL) - Armenia's Constitutional Court on June 27 excluded Vahe Grigoryan, its newest judge appointed by the parliament last week, from its upcoming hearings on appeals lodged by former President Robert Kocharyan and retired army General Yuri Khachaturov.

In a "working decision" signed by its chairman, Hrayr Tovmasyan, the court said Grigoryan cannot participate in the

consideration of the appeals because of his "biased attitude" towards the two men prosecuted in connection with the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan. It also argued that Grigoryan has represented relatives of protesters killed in March 2008 in other courts.

Kocharyan has challenged the legality of his arrest and coup charges brought against him last year. Khachaturov filed a similar appeal in the Constitutional Court earlier this year.

The court agreed on June 21 to hold hearings and rule on the two appeals. It scheduled the first hearing for August.

The decision came three days after the National Assembly approved Grigoryan's appointment to a vacant seat in the coun-

try's highest court. Two days later Grigoryan effectively declared Tovmasyan and six other members of the court illegitimate.

Grigoryan said that under constitutional amendments which took effect last year the Constitutional Court now consists of "judges," rather than "members," as was the case until April 2018. He said that only he and Arman Dilanyan, who was elected by the parliament last year, can be considered judges and make decisions. What is more, Grigoryan declared that because of Dilanyan's absence from the country he will take over as acting chairman of the Constitutional Court on June 21.

Tovmasyan and the six other court members have continued to meet and make decisions since then.

Language of threat is not working in negotiation process – Armenian FM



Armenia attaches great importance to the environment contributing to peace in the settlement process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said during a joint press conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta Carmelo Abela in Yerevan, commenting on the details of the recent meeting with the Azerbaijani foreign minister in Washington D.C.

“We have discussed a wide range of issues; they are built on the whole dialogue that has taken place before the Washington meeting. It’s worth noting that the meeting was taking place when we had certain increase in tension in the line of contact, and of course, this also had its impact on the meeting. Of course, we paid a great

attention to this reality and discussed all issues which are necessary for reducing the tension and avoiding any additional development which will further escalate the situation”, the Armenian FM said.

He informed that several initiatives have been proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs which will contribute to the peace process.

“An environment contributing to peace is one of the priority issues for us. This environment contains two important components, one of which relates to the human interactions, reduction of rhetoric and an environment where the atmosphere of hatred will not develop further, quite the

contrary. The next component of this is that we should continue working on the reduction of escalation risks. This system contains various functions. We had a situation which was maintained based on the Dushanbe agreements and this remains a priority issue for us”, the Armenian FM said.

He stated that the language of threat is not working in the negotiation process. There couldn’t be a situation when negotiations can be held under the light of threat and danger.

“The next component, which is also important, relates to Nagorno Karabakh’s participation because Nagorno Karabakh must have and strengthen the ownership feeling in the negotiation process. This is also an agenda issue”, he said.

Armenia, Azerbaijan Free Captives

In a prisoner swap facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Armenia and Azerbaijan freed on Friday two civilian citizens of each other’s country.

The freed Armenian, Zaven Karapetyan, crossed into Azerbaijan from Armenia’s northern Tavush region in unclear circumstances two years ago. The 45-year-old man was detained and paraded on Azerbaijani television, with the Azerbaijani military claiming to have captured him while thwarting an Armenian incursion.

The Armenian government strongly denied that, saying that Karapetyan is a civilian resident of Vanadzor, a city around 130 kilometers from a section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border crossed by him.

For its part, Armenia repatriated Elvin Ibrahimov, a 33-year-old villager from Azerbaijan’s western Gazakh district bordering Tavush. He crossed the Armenian border in March this year.

Armenian soldiers shot and wounded Ibrahimov before detaining him. He spent several weeks in Armenian hospitals.

The prisoner exchange was most probably the result of confi-

dence-building understandings reached during high-level negotiations held by Armenia and Azerbaijan in the last several months. The foreign ministers of the two countries met in Washington as recently as on June 20.

At least one Armenian national remains in Azerbaijani captivity. Karen Ghazaryan, a 34-year-old resident of the Tavush village of Berdavan, was detained in Azerbaijan in July 2018. Like Karapetyan, he was accused of being a member of an Armenian commando unit.

In February, an Azerbaijani court sentenced Ghazaryan to 20 years in prison on charges of plotting “terrorist attacks” and “sabotage” in Azerbaijan. His trial was reportedly held in closed session.

Yerevan condemned the ruling and demanded Ghazaryan’s immediate release. It said he has a history of mental disease and never served in the Armenian army because of that.

Three residents of other Tavush villages strayed into Azerbaijan in 2014. Two of them were branded Armenian “saboteurs” by Baku and died shortly afterwards.

Spain ready to develop relations with Armenia - Ambassador Karmirshalyan meets with President of Spain's Senate

Ambassador of Armenia to Spain Vladimir Karmirshalyan met on June 24 with President of the Spanish Senate Manuel Cruz Rodríguez.

As the press service of the MFA Armenia informs, at the beginning of the meeting Ambassador Karmirshalyan conveyed the congratulations of President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan and the invitation to visit Armenia, underlining that high level mutual visits between the parliaments of the two countries can give new impetus to bilateral relations.

Manuel Cruz Rodríguez congratulated Ambassador Karmirshalyan on assuming the position of Armenia's Ambassador to Spain and assured that Spain is ready to develop relations with Armenia in all the spheres of mutual interest.

Vladimir Karmirshalyan also informed that a friendship group with Spain has been established in the Armenian parliament and the Armenian parliamentarians have a great desire to establish an effective cooperation with their Spanish colleagues.

The President of the Spanish Senate in-



quired about Armenia's relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well as Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process. Ambassador Karmirshalyan noted that recently the Armenian and Azerbaijani FMs met in Washington, and despite Azerbaijan's militaristic rhetoric, Armenia is ready to continue the negotiations for reaching a

peaceful settlement. Referring to bilateral relations with Turkey, Vladimir Karmirshalyan noted that the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide remains on the foreign policy agenda of Armenia, but the Armenian side never presented that issue as a precondition for reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey.

'Constitutional Court works and will work in its normal course' – statement



The Constitutional Court of Armenia issued a statement on the recent developments over the Court.

Noyan Tapan presents the statement:

“Dear compatriots,

Given the recent developments and discussions around the Constitutional Court, we consider it necessary to state the following:

1. Most of the opinions expressed over the Constitutional Court these days are political, therefore we do not react to them, taking into account the duty of the judge of the Constitu-

tional Court to show political restraint and neutrality in public speeches and ant other circumstances.

2. As for the legal questions, we want to note that the private opinions, the unique interpretations of the Constitution, of course, cannot create any legal consequence for the Constitutional Court.
3. It's the exclusive power of the Constitutional Court to give a final interpretation of the Constitutional norms, moreover, this can be done only within the framework of a concrete case.
4. Given that these legal questions can become a subject of examination of the Court according to the Constitution and the constitutional law on Constitutional Court, we refrain from making public statement on these questions.
5. The Constitutional Court works and will work in its normal course, subjected to the Constitution only and ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution.

The statement has been signed by CC President Hrayr Tovmasyan and judges of the Court A. Gyulumyan, A. Dilanyan, F. Tokhyan, A. Tunyan, A. Khachatryan, H. Nazaryan and A. Petrosyan”

Russian Airlines plan extra flights to Armenia



Russia's leading airlines will reportedly help Russian tourists travel to Georgia via neighboring Armenia after all passenger flights between Russia and Georgia are suspended next month.

According to the Armenian Civil Aviation Committee, they are planning to launch additional flights to and from Armenia for that purpose.

President Vladimir Putin last week temporarily banned Russian airlines from flying to Georgia following an outbreak

of unrest in Tbilisi triggered by the visit of a Russian lawmaker. The Russian Transport Ministry imposed at the weekend a similar ban on Georgian airlines carrying out flights to Moscow and other Russian cities.

The punitive measures, effective from July 8, will hit the Georgian tourism industry. More than one million Russian tourists visited Georgia last year.

Senior officials from the Civil Aviation Committee met with Russian airline executives in

Yerevan to discuss the situation on June 26. A statement by the Armenian government agency said a representative of Aeroflot reported at the meeting that the Russian flagship carrier will increase the frequency of its daily flights between Moscow and Yerevan.

Two other carriers, Ural Airlines and S7 Airlines, also announced such plans, according to the statement. Ural was reported to be considering transporting its passengers from Yerevan's Zvartnots airport to Tbilisi and Batumi by bus.

Ural also flies to Yerevan from Saint Petersburg. It is planning to launch next month regular flights to Gyumri as well, said the Civil Aviation Committee.

A budget airline, Pobeda, has until now been the sole Russian carrier flying to Armenia's second largest city. According to

the committee statement, a Pobeda representative said at the meeting that the company wants to enable Russian tourists to proceed to Georgia from Gyumri by rail and will negotiate with Armenia's Russian-managed railway network for that purpose.

Senior executives of a Yerevan-based airline, Armenia Air Company, also attended the meeting. They announced that starting from July 8 the company will fly to Tbilisi and Moscow twice a day.

The Armenpress news agency quoted Armenia's deputy director, Gevorg Khachatryan, as saying that the Yerevan-Tbilisi flights will be carried out jointly with its sister airline, Georgian Airways. The Georgian carrier's founder, Tamaz Gaiashvili, holds a major stake in Armenia Air Company.

Vice PM Tskitishvili encourages joint Armenia-Georgia businesses



The Government of Georgia is interested in both direct foreign investments growth, as well as the creation of opportunities between Georgian and Armenian businessmen for doing joint business and opening joint enterprises, Georgian Deputy PM and Minister of Territorial Development and Infrastructures Maya

Tskitishvili said during the Armenia-Georgia Business Forum in Dilijan.

"We are interested in the growth of direct foreign investments to our country, and it would also be commendable if opportunities for making joint enterprises and business will be created between Georgian and Armenian businessmen. In this perspective forums in this format are certainly irreplaceable," she said.

According to Tskitishvili the representation of Armenian and Georgian businessmen at the event proves that they see opportunities in each other's countries.

The Georgian Deputy PM said the businessmen will meet tete-a-tete also, which will enable to elevate the economic relations to another level.

"We are sure that we have lots to offer in Georgia to Armenian businessmen, and Armenia too has such opportunities. We can offer to Armenia's businessmen our unique friendly environment and simplicity to do business," she said.

Tskitishvili then briefed the forum on Georgia's favorable economic and business climate.

Armenia buys new assault armaments, re-equips Air Force



During the Army 2019 International Exhibition in Moscow, the Armenian military has signed agreements on purchasing new assault weaponry, new generation armaments and other means, Minister of De-

fense Davit Tonoyan told First Channel.

He said the Armenian Air Force is currently getting re-equipped and he is having relevant meetings with executives of a number of companies during the exhibition.

“These agreements are very important for ensuring the continuity of the development of our military,” Tonoyan said.

He said the new weapons will be supplied to Armenia either by yearend 2019 or in the beginning of 2020. Tonoyan said they continue negotiations on buying new armaments.

Tonoyan also commented on the Azerbaijani Defense Minister’s recent remarks when the latter underestimated the Armenian Air Force’s capabilities in the Caucasus. “If they were to pay greater attention, they would notice that the same multi-functional military aviation is also used in the Himalayas, in higher altitudes,” Davit Tonoyan said.

Armenia is participating at the Army 2019 military expo in Moscow, Russia.

Around 100 foreign delegations are participating.

Siemens to supply equipment for Armenian power plant

Siemens will supply a complete power island for the new Yerevan 2 combined cycle power plant at the existing plant site in the Armenian capital. The company will also operate and maintain the plant for a period of 20 years. Siemens Financial Services (SFS) – Siemens’ financing arm – holds a 40 percent share in the special-purpose project company ArmPower founded specifically for this project. Yerevan 2 is the largest single order that Siemens has ever received from Armenia.

The Italian engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) firm Renco S.p.A. is responsible for building the entire plant, and together with the Italian equity company Simest S.p.A., it holds a 60 percent share in ArmPower. “Key in making this project a reality is the perfect fit for Renco’s and Siemens’ capabilities. Both companies complement each other perfectly,” said Giovanni Rubini, CEO of Renco. “Renco is well-established in Armenia and is active in the real estate business and the civil and private construction business and will act as an investor and EPC contractor – whereas Siemens is contributing as the technology provider under the EPC contract and as the service provider to the project company ArmPower.”

The new combined cycle power plant will have an electrical capacity of 250 mega-



watts and is expected to go into operation by mid-2021. Siemens’ scope of supply includes the power island, which consists of an SGT5-2000E gas turbine, an SST-600 steam turbine, two SGen-100A generators, and the heat recovery steam generator. It also covers the SPPA-T3000 control system. In addition to the entire operation of the power plant and maintenance for a period of 20 years, the operating and maintenance agreement also includes power diagnostic services, support from the Remote Expert Center, and remote operation support.

“Yerevan 2 will be the first project-financed fossil power plant project in Armenia to produce environmentally friendly electricity at ultra-low cost,” said Olaf

Kreyenberg, head of Power Generation Europe and CIS at Siemens Gas and Power. “Lower energy costs will help spur growth in Armenia. Under the 20-year service agreement, Siemens will ensure that the plant continues to produce electricity economically and reliably over the long term.”

“The financial participation of SFS in the project company ArmPower was crucial to realizing this project and to ensuring a successful financial close. The fact that Siemens can provide the technology, service, and financial expertise as a co-investor in the project is a win-win for greenfield power in Armenia,” said Steffen Grosse, CEO of Equity Finance at SFS.

UN Sends a Stunning Letter Questioning Turkey on the Armenian Genocide Court Ruling

By Harut Sassounian

Twenty-nine years ago, the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a report acknowledging the Armenian Genocide as a case of genocide. Until recently, there has been no other activity at the UN on this issue. Unexpectedly, on March 25, a surprising letter was sent to Ambassador Sadik Arslan, Turkey's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The letter was sent by three UN entities: Bernard Duhaime, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; and Fabian Salvioli, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.

The joint UN letter asked the Turkish Ambassador to provide answers within 60 days to the following seven questions:

1. Please provide any information and/or comment(s) you may have on the allegations: ...violations attributable to Turkey in relation to the tragic events that affected the Armenian minority from 1915 to 1923, and their consequences for the population concerned.
2. What policies have been put in place by your Excellency's Government to respond to these allegations?
3. What measures has Turkey taken to establish the facts, including the fate or whereabouts of Armenians who were subjected to forced internal displacement, detention, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances during the period of 1915 – 1923?
4. What measures have been taken to ensure the right of victims and of society as a whole to know the truth about these events, and to ensure the right of victims to justice and reparations for the damage suffered?
5. What measures have been taken to locate, insofar as possible, the bodies of Armenians who died as a result of these events?
6. Please provide information about the reasons for the adoption of the 2017 legislation preventing lawmakers from making certain expressions. Please explain how this is compatible with international

human rights law, in particular with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

7. Please provide detailed information about the cases in which Article 301 of the Criminal Code has been applied to punish individuals for statements made alleging crimes against Armenians.

The joint UN letter described in detail the atrocities committed against Armenians "from 1915 to 1923."

The Ottoman Empire and its succeeding Turkish Republic [which] implemented a policy of mass relocation of the Armenian minority living in the eastern part of the country. Hundreds of thousands (estimates range between 600,000 and 1,500,000) of persons belonging to that minority were subject to that policy, which resulted in widespread violence against that population. Their forced deportation reportedly started in March 1915 mainly in Anatolia but also in other parts of the country. Armenians were expelled from their ancestral lands. On the night of 24th April 1915, hundreds of political and intellectual leaders were arrested in Constantinople and then transferred to other places. As a result, Armenian elites disappeared almost completely. This was followed by a systematic policy targeting the entire Armenian population in each province and in each Vilayet, the official objective of which was to displace by force the Armenian population from the eastern provinces of Anatolia to Aleppo and camps in the Syrian Desert. Armenians were subjected to forced marches. Most of them allegedly died progressively from exhaustion, starvation, diseases or from massacres, and in most cases their remains were abandoned. Upon arrival, the few surviving people were detained in camps in conditions which may have amounted to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; most of them were subsequently killed. The process persisted through 1923. It is alleged that these actions could constitute enforced disappearances to the extent that:

(i) Armenians in Turkey were subjected to arrests, detentions, or abductions or were otherwise deprived of their liberty;

(ii) These acts are reportedly attributable to officials or different branches or levels of government;

(iii) The Government has not disclosed so far the fate or whereabouts of the persons

concerned.

The UN letter also criticized Turkey's denial:

It is also reported that Turkey not only refuses to acknowledge these events, but also intentionally engages in denial and obstruction of the truth about the fate or whereabouts of the victims... While we do not wish to prejudice the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to express our concern at the reported denial, and ensuing lack of progress in establishing the truth and ensuring justice for the forcible deportation of Armenians between 1915 and 1923, which resulted in massive suffering, ill-treatment and deaths. The lack of progress in establishing and acknowledging the relevant facts, not only affects the dignity of victims and their descendants, but can also hinder the possibility of initiating measures aimed at preserving the memory and establishing the truth.

On May 17, within 60 days of the UN request, the Turkish Ambassador responded with a three-page letter stating that the UN letter "will be left unanswered by the Government of Turkey." Ambassador Arslan further stated, "My authorities were rather baffled by the communication," which he described as "ill-intended and politically motivated."

Other than denying the statements contained in the UN letter, Arslan also quoted the UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon and his spokesman Farhan Haq, claiming that the UN had never taken a position on events that took place before the UN was established. Both the Secretary General and his spokesman are wrong, because the UN had set a special day to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust which had occurred before the UN was founded in 1945. Furthermore, I interviewed Haq and asked him about the 1985 UN Sub-Commission's Genocide Report, which had acknowledged several genocides, including the Armenian Genocide, all of which had taken place before the UN was established. Haq told me that he was aware of the UN Sub-Commission's Genocide Report, but he was referring to the lack of acknowledgment by the UN General Assembly.

In addition, the UN authors attached to their letter an annex quoting from the International Humanitarian Law, which stated that:



Armenia sees good opportunities for cooperation with Georgia in energy, transport and agriculture – deputy PM

Armenia and Georgia have passed together through various challenges of history, the civilizational heritage uniting the two peoples is significant, Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Avinyan said during the Armenian-Georgian business forum in Dilijan on June 28.

“Our peoples have been famous for their business talent for centuries. Today the task of governments is to create an environment which will create a victorious situation for the Armenian and Georgian businessmen and will enable to enrich our common history with joint initiatives. After summing up the results of the session of the Armenian-Georgian Inter-Governmental Commission, we are launching the works of the Armenian-Georgian business forum in a



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Principle 2 of the updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity establishes the inalienable right of all persons to know the truth about past events concerning the perpetration of heinous crimes and about the circumstances and reasons that led to them. Full and effective exercise of the right to the truth provides a vital safeguard against the recurrence of violations. Principle 4 stipulates that victims and their families have the imprescriptible right to know the truth about the circumstances in which violations took place and about the victims' fate.

Finally, Arslan repeated the same untruth about Armenia not responding to a letter from Turkey in 2005 proposing “to establish a joint commission consisting of historians and other experts to study the events of 1915.” This is a lie. Armenia did respond, suggesting that the proposed commission review all outstanding issues between the two countries, not just the Armenian Genocide. Turkey was the one that never responded.

As a next step, now that the Armenian Genocide issue has been raised at the UN once again, it is incumbent on the Republic of Armenia to formally place the UN letter and the Turkish denialist response on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council and pursue compensation and justice for the million and a half victims of the Armenian Genocide.

warm atmosphere. We attach great importance to the effective holding of the forum, being convinced that the cooperation results between the business circles will be visible in a short period of time and will contribute to the growth of welfare of the two peoples”, the Armenian deputy PM said.

He stated that the two countries are holding quite an active dialogue at various levels. “We deeply believe that our economic cooperation has a huge potential, and our task is to contribute to completely utilizing this potential. It’s obvious that this business forum is one of its best forums. The mutual relations between the business communities play a principled role in forming and developing the inter-state economic ties”, Avinyan stated.

According to him, this forum will enable the Armenian and Georgian businessmen to more thoroughly get acquainted with the economic climate, investment opportunities of the two states, and of course, will contribute to the establishment of business ties with the representatives of various sectors. “This is a very positive phenomenon and, of course, we expect to see very tangible results in the future. While observing the current level of the Armenian-Georgian economic relations, it becomes obvious that the practical cooperation has not yet reached the desirable level, and there is a

need to expand it. In this sense we see good opportunities for the cooperation in energy, transportation and agriculture fields. There are also opportunities for joint cooperation in tourism field, in particular, through the development of joint tour packages between the tour agencies of the two states. We believe that the effective partnership between the Armenian and Georgian businessmen can positively affect the development of tourism in Armenia and Georgia”, the deputy PM said.

He noted that today the Armenian government is initiating a number of reforms aimed at improving the business climate and creating favorable conditions for foreign investments. “We want to create an innovative and inclusive economic system which will maximally use the creative potential of our people. We have already recorded some achievements in this regard, and if I mention only some of them, taking into account all the political processes held last year, 5.2% GDP growth has been registered in Armenia. In the first quarter of this year the GDP growth comprised 7.1%, the economic activity index in April was 9.2% and 7.3% in May”, he said.

Tigran Avinyan said Armenia’s membership to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) opens new prospects for foreign investments, enabling to enter into the EAEU market via Armenia.

Armenian MP delivers remarks at PACE on report “Stop violence and exploitation of migrant children”



Member of the Armenian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Tatev Hayrapetyan delivered remarks on the report titled “Stop violence and exploitation of migrant children”.

The full remarks of the Armenian MP.

“Dear reporter, ladies and gentleman,

First of all, I want to acknowledge the enormous work done by Baroness Doreen

Massey. While travelling from Yerevan to Strasbourg I was reading an autobiography of Waris Dirie, “The desert flower”. I am sure this book will be known to many of you. Why I say this, because sometimes we think that the problems which don’t directly affect us are so far from us. However, the more we read and explore the world the more we understand that our contribution is crucial. With this resolution we can bring a

small contribution to a big issue.

As you see I am quite a young rep of Armenian newly elected Parliament. I was a small child when the war in Karabakh broke up. I was far from fight zone but because of isolation and closed borders I was raised in a situation when having a warm water or electro energy was a big pleasure and I will keep silent about the absence of normal food. But it’s nothing if I compare the situation with my compatriots who were in the conflict zone and were raised under the bombs and in the shelters. We truly have gone through the hell, but I think our aim should be not to only speak about problems but also come up with proper solutions, so sincerely I realize the importance of this report.

Violence against children is unacceptable. But unfortunately, still even in 21st century we still face those terrible cases which we may watch in news or read in books but we need to take strong measures. We need not only ratify important conventions regarding the topic but also follow their implementation. So we need to vote for this resolution and do our best for its implementation. Thank you!”

Malta welcomes speedy launch of Armenia-EU visa liberalization dialogue



Armenia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Malta’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion Carmelo Abela discussed numerous agenda issues in Yerevan concerning technologies, agriculture, increasing trade turnover, organization of air communication and other

issues.

During a joint news conference after the meeting, Mnatsakanyan said that Armenia intends to further deepen bilateral political dialogue with Malta.

“Malta is a European Union member and certainly the EU agenda has a rather big space in the agenda of our two countries. We are grateful that Malta was one of the first countries to ratify the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. On this occasion we also spoke about accelerating the launch of the dialogue over visa liberalization. I am grateful for Malta’s very positive approach in this matter,” Mnatsakanyan said.

According to Mnatsakanyan, despite low trade turnover the two countries have pointed out various sectors where mutual interest exists for cooperation.

“This relates to Armenia’s priority development agenda and the sectors where we can use bilateral cooperation. Malta has a very important and interesting experience concerning development agenda. Certainly, the examples of high technologies, innovative development and the experience that we have is a very good foundation to work with Malta,” Mnatsakanyan said.

The sides have also discussed working in the modern agriculture and product sector.

Armenia a leader in the number of online shoppers



Armenia is a leader in the number of online shoppers if considered by the ratio of number-population in CIS, according to a new [study by Start Up Business News](#).

As the triumph of online shopping is moving forward at a fast pace, Armenia is bearing dramatic positive changes in the field, the report says.

When considering e-commerce, one of the most rapidly developing fields of business nowadays, Start Up Business News found out that the number of online shoppers in the region of Eurasia and Caucasus clearly differed as opposed to America and Europe (eight-in-ten Americans are now online shoppers, app. 87% of U.K. consumers have bought at least one product online in the last 12 months).

The research revealed that the main reason was the fact that the most online shops

do not deliver goods to the region.

The variety of items was limited, branded and authentic goods were either unavailable or up to 10 times expensive, sales, deals and best offers were seldom real.

In these terms, Armenia, the name of which was lately in the headlines of nearly every political article, came up with new ideas and solutions.

“Recently, Armenia, the homeland of Charles Aznavour, Kim Kardashian, Cher, Serj Tankian, has experienced a dramatic political turnaround. The nonviolent people’s power of Armenians forced the Former Prime Minister to resign and gave its vote to the leader of the revolution Nikol Pashinyan. This was not the only change for Armenia,” the report says.

From relatively new countries, entering the field of online shopping, Armenia

stands out for being the leader in the number of online shoppers if considered by the ratio of number-population in CIS.

The idea to bring mail forwarding to Armenia was such a success, that Globbing, a company founded jointly in Armenia and the US became a big success in postal industry, and also one of the fastest and the most successful startup in its.

The company now applies innovative approaches and automated systems and solves problems that online shoppers face. Recently the company delivered its 1,000,000th parcel which is the highest registered result of delivered parcels and a fairly high index if the country population ratio is taken into consideration.

Recently, the company also opened its branch in Kazakhstan and is soon going to become even more geographically widespread.

“Though the United States and China, the world’s biggest economic superpowers, are home to the highest number of successful startups this example shows that smaller countries also have things to offer to the world. Wait for our next research which will be in another country of the region,” the report reads.

Armenian President meets with GLF delegation in Geneva



President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian, who is in Switzerland on a working visit, met in Geneva with the delegation of the Global Leadership Foundation (GLF) in the

person of former president of Switzerland Micheline Calmy-Rey, Thomas Pickering, former US Permanent Representative to the United Nations and etc., the Presidential Office told Noyan Tapan.

The GLF representatives said their recent visit to Armenia was useful and important during which they had a chance

to know in which sectors and how they can bring their support to Armenia’s progress through various meetings, discussions and exchange of views.

Highlighting the strengthening of democratic institutions and values in the country’s development process, the Armenian President stated that the GLF’s consulting support in this regard can be useful and valuable.

The Global Leadership Foundation is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization comprising a network of former heads of state or government and other distinguished leaders who seek to assist developing countries improve governance, bolster democratic institutions and resolve conflicts.

Armen Sarkissian has served as member of the GLF Board from 2006 to 2013.

Ara Guler's exhibition to open in Japan during G20 summit

Deep Purple's lead vocalist, Ian Gillan, and Black Sabbath's guitarist, Tony Iommi, are in Yerevan to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Rock Aid Armenia. Previously known as Live Aid Armenia, Rock Aid Armenia is a humanitarian effort facilitated by the British music industry to raise money for individuals affected by the 1988 Armenian earthquake—Spitak.

International charity campaigner Jon Dee, who initiated Rock Aid Armenia, is also visiting Yerevan for the anniversary event.

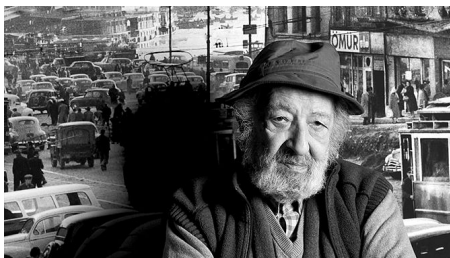
Speaking at a news conference in Yerevan, Ian Gillan expressed the importance of Rock Aid Armenia, explaining how special the event is to him.

"Here we are again. This project is a very



personal experience for me because, I believe it was in June 1990 when I was performing at the sports arena when I became aware of the tragic events of the previous year, and I took a trip to Spitak and I saw the devastation.

There are many vivid images, the main one I remember is of an old lady holding a picture of her 28 family members, and she



was the only one left alive.

I spoke with the Mayor of Spitak and he told me that all music had stopped in the city: on the radio, in the church, even the birds had stopped singing.

So, we thought that time itself might be a healer and music would, symbolically, be one way for restarting. We got involved with the music school in Gyumri, which I think is absolutely perfect for symbolizing new life," Gillan said.

Rock Aid Armenia founder Jon Dee thanked Ian Gillan and Tony Iommi and noted that the two legends have continually supported the program throughout the last 30 years, and have also personally visited Armenia to see how they can help further.

"On the occasion of Rock Aid Armenia's 30th anniversary, an event will take place in the evening to which all tickets are sold out. This shows how important this project is. Next month we will launch a new website that will feature recordings and music videos that haven't been published until now. *Smoke on the Water* will be re-released across the world and all proceeds

will be directed to Gyumri to supplement the school with musical instruments. We will also release a new album, which won't contain rock music, but Armenian music," Dee said.

He discussed the release of an album featuring 5th century Armenian spiritual music, created by Vahan Artsruni and Hasmik Baghdasaryan. The album will be titled *Mashtots*, with proceeds going directly to the music school in Gyumri.

Dee said they heard the music for the first time in 2013 during a visit to Yerevan's Matenadaran. He called on all Armenians worldwide to acquire the CD, because all proceeds will go to the school's funds.



"I am impatiently waiting to see this school with my own eyes. We will continue this project for as long as we are able to," added Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi, who joined the project 10 years ago.

"*Smoke on the Water*," a famous Deep Purple song from the 70s, was already once re-recorded for Rock Aid Armenia.

Armenia issues stamp on Yerevan State University centennial

On June 27th, 2019, a postage stamp dedicated to the theme "100th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan State University" was cancelled and put into circulation by "HayPost" CJSC in the premises of Yerevan State University.

The postage stamp with nominal value of 220 AMD is printed in "Cartor" printing house in France with a print-run of 30 000 pcs. The author of the stamp's design is the lecturer of Ijevan branch of Yerevan State University Levon Lachikyan.

The postage stamp depicts the central building of Yerevan State University as well as the monument of "Sahak Partev

and Mesrop Mashtots" situated in front of it. The postage stamp is fully designed in the graphic style. The logo dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Yerevan State University is at the bottom right corner of the postage stamp.

The postage stamp was cancelled by the Minister of High-Technological Industry of the Republic of Armenia Arshak Hakobyan, the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia Arayik Harutyunyan, Acting Rector of Yerevan State University Gegham Gevorgyan, Chief Executive Officer of "HayPost" CJSC Haik Avagyan, the President of

the Union of Philatelists of the RA Hovik Musayelyan.

Yerevan University was founded by the decision of the Council of Ministers of the first Republic of Armenia adopted on May 16th, 1919. The solemn opening ceremony of the University was on January 31st, 1920 in Alexandrapol (now Gyumri). The university was moved to Yerevan in 1920. Up to now Yerevan State University has had around 130 thousand graduates and currently around 16.200 students' study at Yerevan State University 19 faculties, 4 institutes and the Ijevan Branch.

PM attends opening of Francophonie Park, Family Sports Complex in Masis



vancement) charity organization.

The Premier toured the premises and congratulated the residents of Masis on the opening of a modern park and sports complex in their city. The Family Sports Complex complies with international standards. It features a mini-football hall, two basketball courts, a children’s playground and an area equipped with sports equipment for



yard workouts.

The Prime Minister signed the ball with which the first futsal tournament, the final of the Francophony Cup, was being played at the local stadium. “Masis College” and “Marmarashen” teams challenged the Cup final.

The Masis Development Fund and AFFA are implementing long-term and large-scale projects, such as the introduction of an in-depth French language teaching program at Masis schools, the establishment of a youth center aimed at developing the skills of self-government authorities and the initiative of young people, as well as the project of a Tumo creative technology center.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on June 25 attended the opening of the Francophonie Park and the Family Sports Complex in Masis, Ararat Marz. The park and the sports complex were built with the support of Masis Development Fund and AFFA (Adibekyan Family Foundation for Ad-



Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

The eclipse will focus a certain amount of intensity in the arenas of career (work in the world) and also home, hearth and family and security. You will stretch your worldly boundaries in the next 18 months to serve a new group of people. Family relationships will include one loss and one gain. This includes pets.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

The new series of eclipses emphasize your need to create order, both internally and externally. The development of your projects will call upon you to develop faith in your deepest self. Bringing order out of chaos is done on both the inner and outer levels simultaneously, so while you organized files you will be also organizing your mind.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

This new eclipse pattern will emphasize issues of sexuality, intimacy, and material accumulation. Reorganization of debt, investments and your estate may be in progress. You may become more conscious than usual about existential matters related to life, death, and what is on “the other side” of normal, waking consciousness.



Taurus (April 20 -- May 20)

Please read the lead paragraph. Planetary energies in your sign are intense. Your “devotion” may have to be to yourself at this time. Maybe the static is so loud that you feel the need to back away, take a break, or relieve the pressure with R&R. Perhaps you have spent far too much energy taking care of others.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

The new eclipse season will be opening your mind and heart to accept a larger circle of friends. You may become a leader or a strong supporter of a community network that has shared ideals. Certainly you will continue to have the friendships you have built in the past. However, your attention may be focused on goals greater than your personal interests.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

The eclipses of this new 18 month series will draw your attention to your partnerships. Patterns from your childhood history needed to be uncovered, repaired or removed in order to allow your growth into a more mature relationship. Psychotherapy may be truly helpful. You may experience a crisis of consciousness at this time.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

During this new 18-month series of eclipses you will be learning to value yourself in new ways. Alongside of that comes education in the management of money and other resources, such as time and energy. There will be less assistance from others in these arenas, but you are creating these resources for yourself.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Matters concerning your career, family and property will be accented for the next 18 months. Old problems in relationships, even with the deceased, will surface for cleansing and healing. A new family member may enter the scene, or you may begin to spend more time with family in general.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

This new series of eclipses will pressure you to concentrate on improvement of work-related relationships and health maintenance. Diet, exercise and improvement of physical regimen are imperative. Honing your management systems in personal and work arenas is necessary to create order in your daily work routine.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

Your sense of personal identity becomes the subject under consideration. Who are you becoming and who do you need to be? How do you wish to define yourself before the world? You will be learning what is required for you to hold onto your identity while simultaneously maintaining a personally rewarding relationship.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Legal, ethical or educational issues will be emphasized by the new 18 month series of eclipses. Travel will be punctuated, whether it via body, mind, or spirit. Exposure to those of different backgrounds or cultures opens your heart and expands your philosophy.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

The eclipse pattern emphasizes your progeny or other personally creative births. Romantic ventures will be intensely emotional and self-revealing. You will also learn a few lessons in discernment concerning friendships and associations that no longer serve you well.

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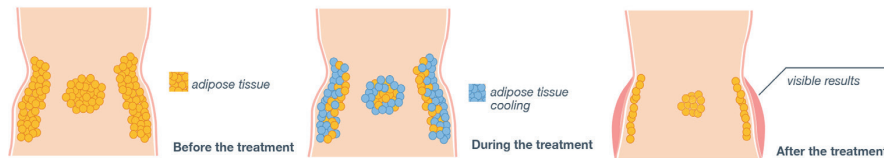
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