

Nikol Pashinyan Elected Armenian PM



The Armenian parliament voted to elect opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan prime minister on May 8 nearly one month after he launched sustained anti-government protests that led to resignation of Armenia's longtime leader, Serzh Sargsyan.

Pashinyan was backed by 59 of the 105 members of the National Assembly. They included 11 lawmakers representing Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). Forty-two other HHK deputies voted against him.

The HHK's parliamentary leader, Vahram Baghdasaryan, made clear just before the vote that his party still has serious

doubts about Pashinyan's ability to govern Armenia but will help him become prime minister in order to restore "political stability" in the country.

"I will serve the people of Armenia and the Republic of Armenia," Pashinyan declared immediately after the vote which sparked jubilant scenes in Yerevan's Republic Square where thousands of his supporters gathered to celebrate his widely anticipated rise to power.

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Armenia's foreign policy chief talks to US Assistant Secretary of State on phone

On April 30, at the initiative of the American side, a phone conversation between Edward Nalbandian, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Wess Mitchell, the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, was held.

The two touched upon the ongoing internal political developments in Armenia. The acting Foreign Minister and the Assistant Secretary shared the view that the resolution of the current situation should be undertaken within the framework of the Constitution of Armenia.

Edward Nalbandian and Wess Mitchell exchanged views on the situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. The sides reaffirmed the necessity to exclude the escalation of situation. In this regard they highlighted the importance of the recent statement of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

Joint efforts on the further deepening of friendly partnership between Armenia and the United States were touched upon during the phone conversation.

President Sarkissian: We have started creating new Armenia

Armenian President Armen Sarkissian has commended the people's movement led by Nikol Pashinyan, the political forces represented in the Parliament for their responsible stance.

The President said that statements issued by involved political forces after a day of substantial discussions on different levels are set to bring the democratic developments to a logical conclusion.

"I welcome the responsible stance of the people's movement led by Nikol Pashinyan, the Republican Party of Armenia, the Prosperous Armenia Party and Yelk bloc that meet the priority interests of Armenia and its people and open the gateway to national solidarity," President Sarkissian said.

"Our people thus showed once again that it is able to unite at fatal moments and make pro-national decisions," he added.



"On these days Armenia has been in the focus of world community. We are passing through trials, and I'm confident that May 8 will fix the achievements of the pan-national movement for the sake of reforms, in which everyone – from political forces to all sections of our society in Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora – have had a part in.

Armen Sarkissian said the developments will raise Armenia's standing in the

world.

The President specially emphasized the involvement of the youth in the process.

"I'm proud of our people – the proud citizens of Armenia, our unity and solidarity. I am convinced and I see that we have already started creating new Armenia, which will attract all sons of our people, will bring together and utilize their talent, entrepreneurship and zeal," the President concluded.

Armenia's President meets with Ambassadors of Arab countries, Iran



Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian received on May 4 the Ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Lebanon accredited to Armenia, as well as the Charge d'Affaires of Kuwait and Iraq.

Issues on the agenda of bilateral relations, namely the expansion of economic cooperation were discussed.

President Sarkissian expressed gratitude to the diplomats for the warm attitude towards Armenians in their countries, which allowed them to maintain the national identity, at the same time actively participating in the political and social-economic life in the respective countries.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the domestic situation in Armenia. The Diplomats voiced hope that the situation would be settled within the framework of the Constitution and laws, and commended the Armenian President's efforts in the process.

Jailed Oppositionist Freed



An Armenian opposition activist was released from custody on May 7 pending a verdict in his trial on charges of aiding gunmen that seized a police station in Yerevan in 2016 to demand then President Serzh Sargsyan's resignation.

The activist, Andrias Ghukasyan, was one of the organizers of demonstrations held in

support of the armed members of a fringe opposition group. The charges levelled against him stem from one of those rallies organized on July 29, 2016 in Yerevan's Sari Tagh neighborhood close to the besieged police base.

Riot police used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse the protesters after they refused

to march back to the city center. Several organizers of the protest were arrested and charged with provoking "mass disturbances." All of them except Ghukasyan were subsequently released from custody.

The 47-year-old also stands accused of planning to have the protesters break through a police cordon, join the gunmen and thus prolong their standoff with security forces, which left three police officers dead. He denies the accusations as politically motivated.

Ghukasyan offered to post bail shortly after he went on trial in August last year. The judge in the case turned down the request as "unfounded," prompting strong criticism from the defendant and his lawyer.

Ghukasyan was freed in the courtroom this time around in return for a written pledge not to leave Yerevan until the judge, Vartan Grigoryan, hands down a verdict in the case. A trial prosecutor objected to his release.

The court order followed a dramatic change of the political situation in Armenia. Opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan, who is widely expected to become Armenia's prime minister on Tuesday, has repeatedly described Ghukasyan as a political prisoner.

Nikol Pashinyan Elected Armenian PM



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Addressing the parliament before the vote, Pashinyan pledged to implement "very serious reforms" that would democratize Armenia, strengthen the rule of law and radically improve the domestic business environment. He again ruled out major changes in Armenian foreign policy. In particular, he reiterated that Armenia will remain part of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective

Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Pashinyan further reaffirmed his plans to push for fresh parliamentary elections. But he gave no possible dates for the conduct of such polls.

Pashinyan declined to shed light on the composition of his cabinet when he spoke to reporters moments after being elected prime minister. He said his ministers will be chosen "as a result of discussions" with his allies and other political groups.

Nikol Pashinyan, received a hero's welcome when he headed to Republic Square, the main venue of the protests, later in the afternoon. "You won today," he told the jubilant crowd chanting "Nikol!" and "Victory!"

"The victory is not my being elected prime minister," he added. "The victory is the fact that it's you who have decided who must be prime minister of Armenia."

Born on June 1, 1975 in Ijevan, Pashinyan entered the Department of Journalism of the Yerevan State University in 1991, but was withdrawn in 1995 for his journalistic activity.

He worked as journalist for a number of papers including "Newspaper Day," "Newspaper," "Molorak" (Planet).

Between 1998 and 2012 he worked as editor-in-chief for two dailies – "Oragir" (1998 – 1999) and "Haykakan Zhamanak" (1999 – 2012).

In 2006 Nikol Pashinyan co-founded the social and political initiative "Alynttrank" (Alternative).

During the presidential elections on 2008 he joined Levon Ter-Petrosyan's campaign headquarters.

In 2015 Pashinyan founded the "Civil Treaty" Party. He has been Member of Parliament since 2012.

Russia hopes ties with Armenia will stay unchanged

Russia hopes that its close relationship with Armenia will remain unchanged after the grave political crisis in the South Caucasus state is resolved, a spokesman for President Vladimir Putin said on May 3.

"We still hope that all processes in Armenia will remain within the constitutional and legal frames," Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "We wish our Armenian friends a maximally quick settlement of the existing political situation."

"We also hope that in any case the allied, warm and constructive Russian-Armenian relations will remain a constant for both the foreign policy of our country and the foreign policy of Yerevan," he said, according to Russian news agencies.

Peskov implied that Moscow is prepared for any outcome of the upcoming election by the Armenian parliament of the country's new prime minister.

For its part, the Russian Foreign Ministry said that it is continuing to "closely follow" the dramatic developments in Armenia. In a statement, it expressed hope that the Armenian crisis will be resolved "as soon as possible" through a "constructive dialogue of the republic's political forces."

Both the ministry and the Kremlin thus remained careful not to publicly take sides in the three-week standoff that has led to the resig-



nation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan. Opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan, who has organized the massive anti-government protests across Armenia, is now expected to be chosen as prime minister on May 8.

Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that he will not pull Armenia out of Russian-led defense and trade blocs if he comes to power. He told visiting Russian parliamentarians on April 29 that Russian-Armenian ties will only deepen further as a result of regime change in Yerevan.

Pashinyan has previously harshly criticized

Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Lawmakers from Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) pointed to this fact during Tuesday's parliament debate on his bid to become prime minister. They repeatedly challenged him to explain why he is now making different statements on the subject.

"We now have new political realities and must reckon with them," responded Pashinyan. A "drastic" change in Armenia foreign policy would only hurt the country, he said.

OSCE PA President welcomes constructive efforts to resolve political impasse in Armenia



The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is closely following the situation in Armenia and welcomes the active dialogue among political forces, said PA President George Tsereteli (MP, Georgia) on May 4.

"I hope for a swift political agreement to the current impasse so that the government can focus on the many challenges facing Armenia," the President said. "I encourage political leaders to continue engaging in parliamentary dialogue, as well as working with civil society and the in-

ternational community, in finding a satisfactory outcome, which should be seen within the broader process of developing the country's political culture."

Public reports indicate that Armenian opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan was officially nominated for prime minister for a second time by his Yelk party and allied opposition parties in parliament on Thursday. In recent days, Pashinyan has met with the ambassadors of the European Union, Russia, the United States, and Georgia, to discuss negotiations taking place to resolve the political crisis.

President Tsereteli spoke by telephone on Thursday with the Speaker of Parliament, Ara Babloyan, to discuss the situation and offer the support of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in the process of dialogue. He also spoke with Hermine Naghdalyan, Head of Armenia's Delegation to the OSCE PA.

"My conversations with parliamentary colleagues in Armenia reinforced my confidence that leading political figures in Yerevan are committed to finding a constructive solution to the situation," President Tsereteli said. "I stressed that all sides must exercise due restraint and continue on the path of productive dialogue."

The current situation follows weeks of street protests in Yerevan and other cities. The President stressed that peaceful assembly is an important avenue for expressing opinions but said that he was encouraged that political dialogue is taking place within the parliamentary system.

EU reiterates support for Armenia's efforts to "build democratic society"

The European Union has issued a statement, encouraging all stakeholders in Armenia to engage in comprehensive dialogue.

The statement comes after a special session of the National Assembly did not result in the election of a new Prime Minister.

"The European Union reiterates its support to Armenia in its efforts to build a prosperous and democratic society. It remains crucial that all parties involved, including the law enforcement



agencies and those exercising their right of freedom of assembly and expression, avoid confrontation and show restraint and

responsibility, as has been the case in recent days," the EU said.

"The European Union continues to encourage all stakeholders, including civil society, to engage in a comprehensive dialogue, in view of the democratic formation of a new government in accordance with the Constitution and in the interest of all Armenians," the statement reads.

The Constitution provides for another session of the National Assembly to elect a new Prime Minister in seven days.

Georgia will remain important to Armenia whoever comes to power, experts say



Georgia will remain an important country for Armenia whoever comes to power, says Ramaz Koyava, expert at Georgian Public TV.

"Georgia is an important to Armenia, first

of all as a transit country, which connects it to the outer world, most Armenian cargoes go through Georgia. However, Armenia is also an important country to Georgia," the expert said.

Ramaz Koyava is confident that Armenia will keep pressing for important issues such as reopening of the Abkhazian railway, but "Georgia will continue to take into account the interests of Azerbaijan."

International Crisis Group expert Olesya Vardanyan believes the solution of issues existing in Armenian-Russian relations and implementation of projects will depend on what the Georgian side will offer Nikol Pashinyan.

"On the other hand, Georgia is deepening strategic partnership with Azerbaijan and Turkey and cannot find itself between two fires," she said.

"Georgia will have to get convinced that the deepening of ties with Armenia will not harm its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. In this context many will focus on developments in the Karabakh conflict settlement process," the expert added.

According to her, many expect Armenia's new leader to think of ways out of the impasse in the conflict settlement process.

Experts are trying to compare events in Armenia to the Georgian revolution. The most important similarity is that in both cases citizens, mostly youth, took to the streets for the sake of change.

Olesya Vardanyan says that "while in 2003 the US and Western countries were actively involved in events in the South Caucasus, they have now left the region."

President: Armenia "needs the Russian military base" on its territory

Armenia is interested in preserving the Russian base on its territory, President Armen Sarkissian said in an interview with Echo of Moscow radio station.

"I can say very simply that Armenia needs this Russian military base on our territory," Sarkissian was quoted as saying on Monday, May 7.

"I'm not sure whether Russia needs it or not - it's up to the Russian president and government to decide - but Armenia does need it. And I believe it is necessary for Russian-Armenian relations."

Sarkissian explained that the Russian base is necessary to protect the borders between Ar-



menia and Turkey.

"Knowing where this base is located, how

close it is to our border with Turkey, I will always struggle to ensure that these friendly, fraternal and military-political relations remain strong," he said.

Sargsyan added that Russia is "Armenia's strategic and military-political partner."

The Russian 102nd Military Base is situated in Gyumri, Armenia. It was formerly the base of the 127th Motor Rifle Division of the Soviet Seventh Guards Army. The base is about 120 kilometers north of the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Besides, the Erebuni airport in Yerevan is home to the Russian 3624th Air Base and hosts a squadron of MiG-29s and Mi-24 attack helicopters.

Central Bank controls situation in Armenia's financial system

The Central Bank of Armenia controls the situation and has sufficient tools to ensure stability in the country's financial system, the CB said in a statement amid massive protests demanding the resignation of authorities across the republic.

According to the statement, the Central Bank, in accordance with the Constitution and the Law on the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia, is an independent, apolitical professional body that has two overarching objectives - price stability and financial stability.

"Some media outlets and social media users today expressed concern about the exchange rate and the premature termination of deposit agreements by depositors," the Bank said.

"The financial system of Armenia is an efficient system, banks have high liquidity, there are no



problems with cash in the system, and reserves are at the highest level."

The campaign against the Armenian authorities is in full swing across Yerevan and the rest of the republic on Wednesday, May 2 after the parliament failed to elect opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan as the country's new prime

minister.

All the streets, as well as the metro, the road to the airport and the country's railroad are currently blocked by groups of demonstrators.

Pashinyan, who has been leading the protests for several weeks now, needed more than half of all the votes - the support of 53

lawmakers - to secure the prime minister's spot, but got only 45.

A second vote will be held a week later, and the candidate needs to collect at least one third of the votes to win.

The founder and head of Civil Contract party and lawmaker from the Yelk bloc, Pashinyan leads a street campaign against the ruling authorities, which has seen thousands of Armenians taking to the streets in massive protests.

Former prime minister Serzh Sargsyan was forced to resign on April 23, and Pashinyan is now seeking the appointment as prime minister by the National Assembly of what he calls "the people's candidate", - i.e. himself - the formation of an interim government and snap parliamentary elections.

Pashinyan has promised to rid Armenia of corruption and poverty.

Chinese-American firm opens region's largest biotechnology in Armenia

Chinese-American Company FMD K&L Europe has opened the region's largest biotechnology in Armenia, Business Armenia reports.

That has been operating in Armenia for 3 years and has already invested about \$4 million during this period.

The company, which has been operating in Armenia for 3 years and has invested about \$4 million so far, is planning on investing another \$3 million and increase the number of employees from 170 to 250 and then up to 500 in 2018. Within the scope of the biotechnology park, the company will cooperate with the largest pharmaceutical companies.

"Armenia has important advantages compared to other countries. First, it has well-educated specialists and medical schools. Second, investing in Armenia is beneficial in terms of costs. This increases the level of competitiveness. And finally, the favorable geographical location of the country will guarantee the entry into other CIS countries," stated Mr. Dan Zhang, the Chairman of Board of Trustees of the FMD K&L global company.



"When I first came to Armenia I investigated the environment and found that the country has highly qualified doctors and biologists. Armenia may become the perfect platform for our company to enter Europe," noted Mr. Kirit Velani, the Executive Direc-

tor of FMD K&L Europe.

In the technology park, the Shtigen Company has installed a hybrid solar power plant, which, aside from saving and protecting the environment, ensures uninterrupted operations even in case of power failure.

Tourists to be offered helicopter trips across Armenia and beyond

The “Armenia Helicopters” company will soon start offering helicopter tours across the country and beyond its borders, the General Department of Civil Aviation of Armenia informs.

The flights will be carried out with the American Robinson R66 and European AIRBUS EC130T2 helicopters.

The company is planning to invest about \$10 million in the coming three years and create new jobs.

The successful implementation of the project will contribute to the development of tourism and create new opportunities in the field of transportation services.



EDB issues \$30 million to Ameriabank for SME financing

Eurasian Development Bank and Ameriabank CJSC have signed \$30 million credit line agreement for 4 years to develop small and medium-sized business sector in Armenia, the bank said in a statement.

This project will contribute to the expansion of the banking sector and business lending as well as to the development of the real sector of economy.

Small and medium business plays a strategic role for Armenia. It ensures economic stability of the country. EDB loan facility will help SMEs to solve the problem of long-term financing required for capital investments.

Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) is an international financial institution established by the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan in January 2006 to promote economic growth in its member states and extend trade and economic ties among them. The bank's charter capital totals USD 7 billion. Member states are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kirgizstan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan.

Ameriabank is first investment bank in Armenia, which has been providing a large package of innovative banking services since 2007. Now Ameriabank CJSC is a universal bank offering corporate, investment and retail banking services in a comprehensive package of banking solutions.



The Independent: Armenian President says 'ready to stand between police and protesters'

As one of the scientists behind the Tetris computer game, Armenian president Armen Sarkissian says he often reverts to logic models for political guidance. But there was little in his country's dramatic revolution – or “democratic change” as he puts it – that he could have predicted with mathematics, *The Independent* writes.

“Humans are not machines. They are much more complex,” Mr. Sarkissian told *The Independence* in an interview.

According to the paper President Sarkissian was thrust onto centre stage, becoming an important mediator between Armenia's long-time President Serzh Sargsyan and protest leader Nikol Pashinyan.

“It was quite hard work bringing the sides together,” says Mr Sarkissian. “I did things that are not usually expected of a president, such as going into the crowds. But you couldn't do your job by simply sitting in an office.”

The president's 21 April visit to a protest rally in Republic Square was a turning point in the protests. Mr Sarkissian says he enjoyed a “fantastic” experience on the square and describes his relations with the protest leader as “constructive”.

As the two men shouted into each other's ears, the president promised to arrange a meeting with Mr Sargsyan for the very next day.

“The one thing I emphasised was that this must be decided by dialogue



and within the constitution,” he says.

On 22 April, Mr Sargsyan and Mr Pashinyan met, but they failed to reach an agreement. Later that day, the situation threatened to get out of control when the protest leader, two fellow MPs and 200 supporters were plucked from an evening rally by police.

President Sarkissian says this was not a development he welcomed. The next day, he convened a meeting with Mr Sargsyan and his leading officials in his modest residence in central Yerevan. There, it seems, Mr Sargsyan's future was decided.

“Confidential meetings will remain confidential, but you can make your judgments from the results,” says Mr Sarkissian.

“Straight from the meeting, the deputy prime minister went with a warrant to release the parliamentarians. And a couple of hours later, Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan resigned.”

Armen Sarkissian says he intends to stay on in his role for the foreseeable future, casting himself as the father of a young nation of “survivors”.

“We are all learning, and I'm ready to get involved again if things go wrong,” he says. “I'm ready to stand between police and protesters if I have to.”



U.S. Rock Star Hails “Beautiful Revolution” In Armenia

Serj Tankian, a prominent Armenian-American rock musician, received a hero's welcome on May 7 after arriving in Armenia to show support for the protest movement led by Nikol Pashinyan.

Tankian saluted the “beautiful revolution” as he addressed thousands of mostly young people in Yerevan's central Republic Square, the main venue of massive anti-government protests led by Pashinyan. He said the movement has not only paved the way for democratic change in the country but also enhanced the international standing of the Armenian people.

“The world is watching you as a positive example,” Tankian said in a short speech. “You have achieved your goal by singing,



dancing and smiling.”

“Just like you, I dreamed of this day for many years and am now proud of standing alongside you,” added the lead singer of the U.S. rock band System Of A Down (SOAD).

Pashinyan, who greeted Tankian at the Zvartnots international airport and personally escorted

him to Republic Square, also addressed the crowd, paying tribute to “our glorious compatriot.”

Tankian has been very supportive of his campaign that forced Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan to resign on April 23.

“I am elated, I am ... excited,” Tankian told reporters at Zvartnots. “I'm so happy to be here.”

Sargsyan's resignation came exactly three years after SOAD's first-ever concert in Armenia which took place at Republic Square and drew tens of thousands of spectators. Tankian, 50, used that show to call on the Armenian government to end “institutional injustice” in the country.

The world-famous musician likewise called for rule of law and a fight against corruption in Armenia during his previous trip to his ancestral homeland in 2011. He also deplored serious fraud that was reported during an Armenian presidential election held in 2013.

Together with several other prominent Diaspora Armenians, Tankian monitored last year's parliamentary elections that were won by Sargsyan's Republican Party.

Dashnak leader ousted from party for not backing Pashinyan



The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) has expelled one of its longtime leaders, Aghvan Vartanyan, from its ranks because of his refusal to back opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan's bid to become prime minister.

Dashnaktsutyun voiced support for Pashinyan's opposition movement after pulling out of Armenia's governing coalition

following the April 23 resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan. Accordingly, it decided that the seven members of the Armenian parliament affiliated with must vote for Pashinyan's becoming the country's new premier at a May 1 session of the National Assembly.

During that session, Vartanyan unexpectedly announced that he will not vote

for the outspoken oppositionist who has led massive anti-government protests that have rocked Armenia. While acknowledging the sincerity of Pashinyan's pro-democracy agenda, he said that the protests could be exploited by unspecified foreign powers and result in "irreversible bitter consequences" for the country. He did not elaborate.

Dashnaktsutyun's governing body in Armenia was quick to accuse Vartanyan of violating the century-old party's strict internal discipline and demand his resignation from the parliament. Vartanyan tendered his resignation on Thursday. He will be replaced by another Dashnaktsutyun member.

The Dashnaktsutyun leadership announced on Friday that it has discussed the "disciplinary issue" and decided to also expel Vartanyan from the party.

A former newspaper editor, Vartanyan has been one of Dashnaktsutyun's most prominent figures since 1990. The 59-year-old has held various leadership positions in the pan-Armenian party. He served as Armenia's minister for labor and social affairs from 2003-2008.

PACE urged to act against lawmakers tied to bribery

Two weeks after an investigation found strong evidence that members of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly had accepted bribes in return for silencing discussion of human rights violations in Azerbaijan, European governments are demanding sanctions against the lawmakers, The New York Times reports.

In a letter sent on Friday to Michele Nicoletti, the assembly's president, Anders Samuelsen, the Danish foreign minister and chairman of the council's Committee of Ministers, described the corruption case as "deeply worrying" and called for the assembly to act "promptly and strongly."

The lawmakers — including Pedro Agramunt, a former president of the assembly and a senator in Spain's conservative governing party — have been accused of accepting money, jewelry, prostitutes and paid hotel stays in oil-rich



Azerbaijan.

According to The New York Times, on his letter Mr. Samuelsen questioned if the council's parliamentary assembly was dragging its feet on punishing the officials named in the report.

"There is reason for concern if there are continued efforts

on behalf of a small number of parliamentarians to divert or dilute the follow-up of the report," Mr. Samuelsen wrote. He warned that if the assembly failed to act promptly, European ministers would instead "consider appropriate steps."

The scandal is threatening

to become one of the biggest credibility tests of the European institution; concerns over how Azerbaijan was using its membership have been rife for years.

Last year, after receiving complaints that lawmakers had helped silence criticism of the country's record on human rights and the rule of law, the assembly ordered an investigation into its members' activities in Azerbaijan.

Three former European judges led the 10-month inquiry, and their findings, released two weeks ago, highlighted cases of conflicts of interest and corruption involving about a dozen former and current lawmakers. The investigation concluded that the officials had benefited from helping Azerbaijan dodge criticism from the European assembly in its reports on countries and some of its votes.

EMS Conference

Emil Artin International Conference

Dedicated to the 120th Anniversary of Emil Artin (03.07.1898-20.12.1962)

Yerevan, the Republic of Armenia, May 27-June 2, 2018.

The conference is organized by:

- Armenian Mathematical Union
- Yerevan State University
- American University of Armenia
- Committee of Emil Artin Junior Prize in Mathematics
- Institute of Mathematics of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia
- University of Bergen

Academically supported by the Steklov Mathematical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The aim of the conference is to provide a forum where specialists will meet to share ideas of latest research in Algebraic Structures, Mathematical Logic, Number Theory, Pure and Applied Mathematics, Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science.

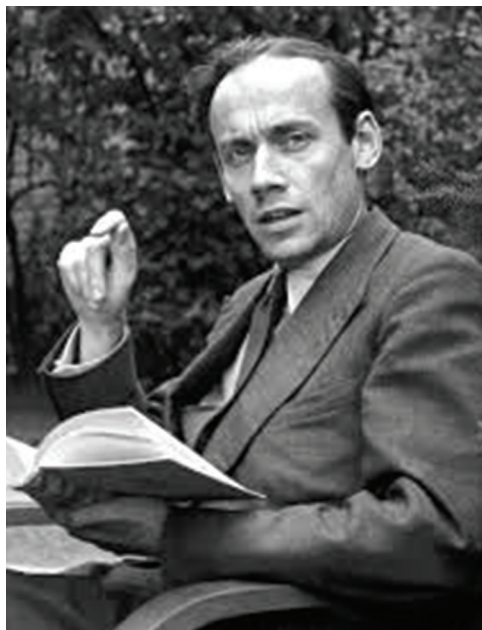
The conference will be held at the Yerevan State University and American University of Armenia.

Conference Topics:

- Classical and non-classical Algebraic Structures,
- Algebra and Logics, Number Theory,
- Geometry and Topology, Analysis and Equations,
- Boolean and De Morgan functions, Cryptography and Discrete Mathematics, Applied Mathematics,
- Universal Algebra, Computer Science and IT,
- Artin L-functions, Dynamical Systems,
- Quantum information theory, Quantum Logic and Quantum Computation, Quantum Groups and Quantum Quasigroups.

Invited speakers that confirmed their participation:

- Sergey Adian (Steklov Mathematical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences)
- Ara Basmajian (City University of New York, Hunter College, USA)
- Lilya Budaghyan (Bergen University, Norway)
- Tullio Ceccherini-Silberstein (Universita' del Sannio, Italy)
- Rostislav Grigorchuk (Texas A&M University, USA)
- Alexander Guterman (Moscow State University, Russia)
- Vadim Kaimanovich (University of Ottawa, Canada)
- Jörg Koppitz (Potsdam University, Germany)
- Aleksandar Krapež (Mathematical Institute SASA, Belgrade, Serbia)
- Hayk Melikyan (North Carolina Central University, USA)
- Daniele Mundici (University of Florence, Italy)
- Alexander Olshanskii (Vanderbilt University,



USA)

- Alexey Parshin (Steklov Mathematical Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences)
- Evgeny Plotkin (Bar Ilan University, Israel)
- Victor Pambuccian (Arizona State University, USA)
- Nikolay Romanovskiy (Sobolev Institute of Mathematics, Russia)
- Anna Romanowska (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland)
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- Victor Shcherbacov (Institute of Informatics and Mathematics Moldova Academy of Sciences)
- Ivan Shestakov (São Paulo University, Brazil)
- Jonathan Smith (Iowa State University, USA)
- Katrin Tent (University of Münster, Germany)
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- Vladimir Sahakyan

Registration fee for the conference is \$200 for participants and covers the conference materials and coffee breaks. **Banquet:** \$50. All fees are due upon arrival, at the registration desk.

Important dates:

The deadline for conformation of participation and submission of abstracts is April 1, 2018 by E-mail address: amu@ysu.am. Please submit one-page abstract in LaTeX and PDF formats (in English) to amu@ysu.am.

Working days: May 28, 2018 (Registration, 9:30; Opening ceremony, 10.00) – June 1, 2018.

Arrival: May 27, 2018; departure: June 2, 2018.

Additional information can be requested by e-mail: amu@ysu.am

The conference website: <http://math.sci.am/conference/artin120>

We are looking forward to welcome you in Yerevan, Armenia for the Emil Artin International Conference.

Sincerely,

Prof. Yu. Movsisyan

President of the Armenian Mathematical Union

The Economist: Armenia's revolution continues, as its opposition leader nears power *Russia seems sensibly wary of interfering*

IT LOOKS more like a carnival than a revolution. Instead of burning tyres and mounting barricades, young people wrap themselves in Armenian flags, dance in the streets and block the roads by playing volleyball or simply sitting on carpets. On the morning of a general strike, a five-year-old boy drove a toy car with an Armenian flag through an empty street. In the evening, vast construction trucks loaded with students drove and hooted through Yerevan.

But behind the street theatre lies a velvet revolution led by a young generation of Armenians against an old guard who have controlled the country since its independence in 1991. Their victory is not yet complete, but their anticipation of success seems likely to be self-fulfilling. On May 1st, in an attempt to hold out, the ruling party blocked the election as prime minister by parliament of Nikol Pashinyan, the leader of a three-week-old protest that has galvanized the entire former Soviet republic of some 3m people. A dozen pro-government MPs desperately tried to discredit him as a dangerous anti-Russia candidate, unacceptable to the Kremlin, which has a tight economic and military grip over Armenia. But Moscow was silent, confident of its strategic hold on Armenia and unwilling to back the losing side.

That evening Mr Pashinyan addressed tens of thousands of people who filled in the main Republic square. "Beloved nation, proud citizens of Armenia. People in parliament have lost the sense of reality. They don't understand that 250,000 people who came onto the streets in Armenia have already won. Power in Armenia belongs to you—and not to them." His words sparked jubilation. To prove his point and his strength, Mr Pashinyan called a general strike paralysing the city and the country.

A few hours later, on May 2nd, the ruling party appeared to cave in, implying it would back him in next week's parliamentary session. It may still spring a nasty surprise, but is unlikely to regain control over the country—at least not for now. Mr Pashinyan has led a textbook velvet revolution, made possible by textbook mistakes by the government, which tried to hang onto power after losing its legitimacy.

Mr Pashinyan managed to personify Armenians' resentment against a corrupt elite. Donning Che Guevara-style fatigues, he went around the country on foot, preaching



non-violent protest. By doing so, he decentralized the revolution, making it virtually impossible for the authorities to quash. In the capital he appealed to students and young people with no memories of the Soviet past, but a strong sense of dignity and justice. Mr Pashinyan's brief detention doubled the size of the crowds in the streets, leading the prime minister to resign last week and perhaps making Mr Pashinyan unstoppable.

Crucially, the challenger avoided any subject such as ideology or geopolitics that could divide the country and antagonize Russia. Unlike the revolutions in Georgia in 2003 and in Ukraine in 2004 and again in 2014, which were fought under the slogans of joining Europe and NATO, Mr Pashinyan talked strictly about internal matters like corruption and justice, which everyone can agree on. He made populist promises and pledged that Armenia will remain with Russia's security arrangements. Not a single European flag was waved in Yerevan and no slogan pronounced Armenia's European destiny. But the fear of mentioning Russia-related subjects only highlighted Russia's importance.

While Moscow clearly distrusts revolutionaries, it has so far decided not to interfere in Armenia, hoping that inflated expectations and lack of money will do their own damage. "It has been the smartest Kremlin policy I've seen for years," says Alexander Iskandaryan, the head of the Caucasus Institute, a think-tank. Armen Grigoryan, one of the revolution's leaders says, "All the stars were aligned, and even Saturn moved into the same position it was in 1988." That was when protests in Armenia provided the first rumblings of the storm that was to bring down the Soviet empire three years later.

Putin congratulates Pashinyan on taking office as Armenia's PM



Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a congratulatory message to Nikol Pashinyan for being elected as Armenia's Prime Minister.

"I hope your activity as the head of government will contribute to the further reinforcement of friendly and allied relations between the two countries and our partnership within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization," the message reads.

EU looking forward to working with Armenia's new PM



Joint statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on the election of Nikol Pashinyan as the Prime Minister of Armenia:

The Armenian Parliament has elected Nikol Pashinyan as the new Prime Minister of Armenia in accordance with the Constitution.

The European Union looks forward to working with him and his government on the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement signed last November, with a view to further consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect of human rights, and to creating a prosperous and resilient country for the benefit of all citizens of Armenia.

To achieve these important goals, a comprehensive dialogue among all political stakeholders in Armenia, including civil society, remains crucial.

António Guterres: Free press is essential for peace, justice and human rights

UN Secretary General António Guterres has issued a statement on World Press Freedom Day:

A free press is essential for peace, justice and human rights for all.

It is crucial to building transparent and democratic societies and keeping those in power accountable.

It is vital for sustainable development.

Journalists and media workers shine a light on local and global challenges and tell the stories that need to be told.



Their service to the public is invaluable.

Laws that protect independent journalism, freedom of expression and the right to information need to be adopted, implemented and enforced.

Crimes against journalists must be prosecuted.

On World Press Freedom Day 2018, I call on governments to strengthen press freedom, and to protect journalists.

Promoting a free press is standing up for our right to truth.

Thank you.

Armenia's Central Bank warns of cryptocurrency risks

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) has issued a statement warning of cryptocurrency risks and urging the society, including legal entities to refrain from exchanging, trading and/or investing in cryptocurrencies.

Meanwhile, the Bank said the warning does not apply to cryptocurrency mining, which it said is outside its oversight and is seen as an IT industry.

The Bank said it closely follows the developments in the sphere and cited several factors that pose risks. It noted that cryptocurrencies are not backed by anything and are therefore extremely volatile.

The regulator added that the cryptocurrency deals may often be part of money laundering and terrorism financing schemes, as they allow for anonymous cross-border

transactions, which are irreversible.

Besides, it said in cases of fraud and information security violations there are no legal mechanisms that would protect customer rights and refund the loss.

The CBA noted that international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other financial regulators have also issued warnings, describing cryptocurrencies as crypto assets, as they lack the features that would allow them to be considered a currency and be used as a means of payment.

Furthermore, the CBA noted, that many respectable international organizations have compared some cryptocurrency investments to Ponzi schemes, in which the rights of investors are not secured



and they risk losing the whole investment.

The Central Bank called attention to the statement adopted during a recent G20 summit in Buenos Aires, in which the participants welcomed the technological innovation, but cited a number of cryptocurrency-related risks and

urged organizations developing international standards to continue monitoring the cryptocurrencies and related risks.

The Armenian Central Bank said it remains committed to its stance on cryptocurrencies, which coincides with that of the above-mentioned international organizations.

Three Armenians elected to Lebanese parliament

Three out of the four Armenian candidates running in the recently held parliamentary election in Lebanon have won seats in the country's top legislative body.

All the four were nominees of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaksutyun (ARF-D) according to Azdag, a Beirut-based Armenian publication. Hakob Bagratuni, Alexander Matosyan and Hakob Terzian garnered enough votes to be represented in parliament. Serj Chukhatarian failed to cross the required threshold.



After the initial vote count late on Sunday, Bagratuni said the party

was content with the result.

The publication reports that the

election was all in all held in a peaceful atmosphere with the exception of only several districts breaches of security rules were reported.

Several political forces earlier proposed prolonging the voting for two more hours but the plan wasn't reportedly possible to realize.

According to the Beirut-based Armenian publication, the election was tainted by fraud and vote-buying.

A total of 976 candidates had filed bids for the 128-seat parliament.

Armenian Gospels on display at Museum of Bible in Washington



The newly opened Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, located just blocks from the US Capitol features a number of artifacts of early Armenian Christian art, the Armenian Embassy in the US informs.

The Armenian artifacts include a 12th-15th century illuminated Armenian Gospel Book, which belonged to the

Armenian kings of Cilicia, and a 17th century hand-copied Gospel Book from Constantinople. The Bible Translations section of the museum tells the story of the creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots in the 5th century for the sole purpose of translating the Bible from Greek and Latin into Armenian.

The museum focuses on the narrative and history of the Bible, as well as its impact on societies and culture around the world. It showcases more than 600 ancient biblical artifacts and early hand-copied and printed examples of the Holy Book.

Among the museum's relics are first editions of the King James Bible, fragments of the Dead Sea Scroll, a 16th

century Bible signed and inscribed by Martin Luther, the first Bible to travel to the moon, the largest collection of Torah scrolls and Bibles that belonged to celebrities, including US Presidents' inauguration Bibles.

Visitors also immerse in Biblical stories through modern digital technology and special effects and a walk-through recreation of Nazareth.



A fruit garden meant for agricultural purposes is on sale in an administrative district of Yerevan.

The garden covers an area of 40 hectares.

The total number of trees is 1150 of which 500 apricot trees, 350 black plums, 200 Greek nuts and other.

The area is supplied with water both for drinking and irrigation it also has gas and electricity.

Moreover the road leading to the garden is covered with asphalt and there is a farm house and a greenhouse nearby.

**For further information phone
099 10 54 53**

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

Income fluctuates wildly with Uranus in Taurus. Or it may begin to come from more than one source. Those with this position are more willing to take financial risks in order to gain increased rewards—and sometimes it works! It is not uncommon for this position to bring windfalls, but don't count on it.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

This month the planet Uranus enters your sign and will be there for a seven year stint. Are you restless? Wishing for a break from the routine of your life? You may or may not recognize it, but Uranus will help you break free of fears that have chained you to the old grind. Taurus is the least likely to initiate change, preferring the known devil to the unknown potential. Your self-image, along with your hair color and style of dress may alter as well.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

Disclosure of old family secrets that alter your perception of self may occur during the next 7.5 years. You develop much greater awareness of the unconscious and your interest in alternate forms of healing intensifies. Episodes of intuition or psychic awareness are likely to increase. Be aware of your tendency to sabotage yourself with needlessly eccentric behavior.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

During Uranus' transit of Taurus (7 years) you are likely to be exposed to a new social life and broaden your sense of community and friendship. You will attract unusual people into your life that will serve to expand your sense of

humanitarianism. Your overall goals and life choices will be shifting.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

Uranus' tour of Taurus symbolizes important changes and probable expansion of your career arena. Your boredom with old routines drives you to explore the untried. You have a need to rebel, which may cause difficulty with authority figures. You'll be very attracted to the unusual in occupation—the more eccentric, the better.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

While Uranus moves through Taurus, you will be experiencing a rapidly expanding world view. This may come about through travel, higher education or attraction to people who hail from an altogether different environment. You may feel the need to explore alternative religions and/or philosophies.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

During the next 7 years of Uranus in Taurus you'll be introduced to a much greater perspective on the world of finance. You are also likely to grow through exposure to those who can teach you more deeply about yourself, psychologically, sexually and spiritually. Issues around birth, death, and transformation play an important role.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

New and unique experiences will likely be brought to you through changes in situation made by your partner (business and/or personal). Those with clientele will see major shifts in whom they attract. Scorpio tends to resist change, but this is a message to relax and follow the new currents.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

You will probably enter a long period of changes related to employment. A new situation might present you with a job that brings something new and different every day. Another arena of new interest is likely to develop in the area of personal health. You may be attracted to alternative healing methods.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

Uranus' transit of Taurus is likely to present unique or avant-garde opportunities to develop your personal creativity. Those open to romance will attract unusual people who broaden your life, but don't look for the security of commitment. Unexpected pregnancy may be part of the changing scenario.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Your probability of making one or more moves of home and hearth is strong while Uranus is in Taurus. It might be easier to put your belongings in storage than to try to drag them around with you. Property may begin to feel like tons of luggage. Your perspective on your personal definition of "security" will change over the next 7.5 years.



Pisces (February 18–March 19) Uranus in Taurus will free you to explore new and untried territory through travel or via high tech gadgetry. Your habitual attitudes and your normal patterns of communication may alter considerably over the next 7-8 yrs. Unusual situations develop involving your neighborhood, siblings, and roommates. A sexy new car sounds appealing.

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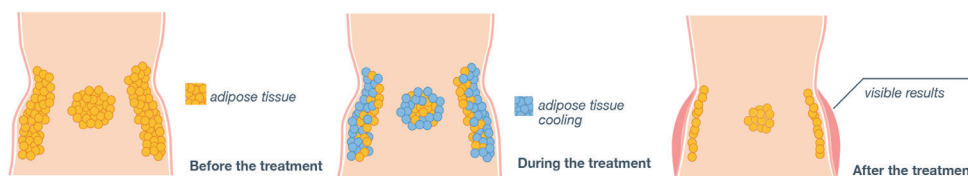
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