

**PM attends “My Step for Tavush Marz” investment forum**



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The Armenian government is ready to support everyone’s individual efforts aimed at contributing to the country’s economic development, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in his remarks at the My Step For Tavush Province business forum in Dilijan town on June 22.

The Forum is attended by more than 300 delegates from a dozen countries.

“Why we are holding such forums? What is our main and key goal? Our main goal is to promote and encourage the individual effort by contributing to Armenia’s development. We are confident that the individual effort of the Armenian citizen is the turning point through which Armenia will raise to a new level”, the PM said.

He clarified what he means by saying an individual effort. He said by saying an individual effort he means Artak Chibukhchyan who in one day made a decision to come to Armenia from Russia to create a reality in the village of Yenokavan which must change both the village’s life and Armenia’s image. By saying an individual effort, the PM means the founders of the Karahunj winehouse who came from the Diaspora and created a new reality in Armenia.

“By saying an individual effort, I mean the Hayrapetyan Brothers CJSC which manages Lake Parz for many years by creating a new business culture. I mean a businessman from Ijevan Andranik Ghazaryan who reached success in Ukraine, returned to Armenia and soon thanks to him a new proposal will be made in Ijevan’s real estate market in the form of multi-apart-

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## Armenian FM meets US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs in Washington D.C.

Foreign minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan met with US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale in Washington D.C. on June 19, the Armenian foreign ministry told Noyan Tapan.

During their talk the officials highlighted the positive dynamic in the Armenian-American partnering and friendly relations. Both emphasized the establishment of an Armenian-American strategic dialogue platform which serves a firm base for constantly enriching and expanding the bilateral agenda, and strengthening the political dialogue.



The sides highly valued the comprehensive agenda of reforms conditioned by the democratic changes in Armenia and the mutual readiness to move forward the cooperation on this path.

The Armenian FM and the US Under Secretary of State also discussed a number of international and regional issues. In this context the minister presented the constant cooperation with global and regional partners aimed at strengthening Armenia's security agenda.

At the request of the US official, the Armenian FM introduced the current situation in the peace process over Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Armenia's principled position and approaches over the matter, as well as Armenia's priorities in the upcoming June 20 meeting agenda.

## PM: "Our will is unshakable and our hand will not flinch against those who try to revive the methods of violence in the Republic of Armenia"



On the occasion of the 27th anniversary of formation of the Police Force of the Republic of Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the General Directorate of the Police Troops

Congratulating the Police Force, the Prime Minister noted: "The question of what has changed in the Republic of Armenia over the past year has a very specific answer in the police forces. For about a year, the Armenian police troops are on duty at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, guarding the peace and security of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia, providing tangible and important assistance to the Armenian army.

On this festive day, I first of all want to thank those police officers who volunteered to defend the Motherland. I also want to thank those servicemen's military families who supported them in making this decision. The decision to involve the Police Force in protecting the borders of the Republic of Armenia reflects our view of both the external and internal security of the Republic of Armenia," the Prime Minister

said, adding that the citizens, the Armenian people should be united in the matter of maintaining the external security of the Republic of Armenia.

According to Nikol Pashinyan, the idea of the internal security of the Republic of Armenia is also connected with this, because the police forces are supposed to prevent



any manifestations of violence in the Republic of Armenia.

The Head of Government noted that by sending police troops to defend the Motherland, the Government expresses its vision of internal relations in the Republic of Armenia – we must have a society free from violence, where there are no intentions, any attempts and propaganda of resolving conflicts through violence.

"We are implementing this concept day by day, and we will implement it with consistent efforts. However, in this case, it seems that our desire to create an atmosphere of love and solidarity in the Republic of Armenia is sometimes interpreted as a

weakness.

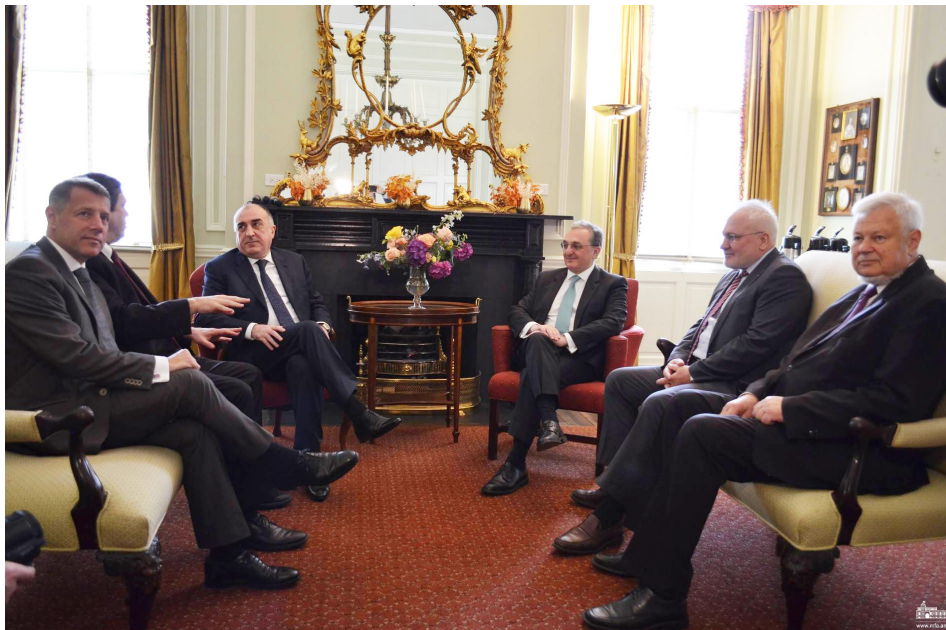
Today, I want to state clearly: let no one doubt that the Armenian government will ever show weakness or lack of will in the matter of protecting the constitutional order, the rights of citizens, sovereignty, freedom of citizens and democracy in the Republic of Armenia.

Our will is unshakable and our hand will not flinch in relation to those who may try to revive the propaganda of violence and methods of violence in the Republic of Armenia. Our hand will not falter, our determination will be unshakable," the Prime Minister said.

Nikol Pashinyan stressed that the Government adheres to the same ideas in terms of protecting our external borders, protecting the security of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

"We stand for a lasting peace in our region. However, should there be forces attempting to interpret this aspiration as a manifestation of weakness, they will get a decisive counter-strike from our collective will, our collective strength, on the part of those police force representatives who are protecting the security and peace of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people. On the occasion of Police Troops Day, Nikol Pashinyan awarded a group of police officers with commemorative medals of the Prime Minister for conscientious performance of official duties.

## Armenia, Azerbaijan urged to observe ceasefire



(Yerevan – RFE/RL) - U.S., Russian and French diplomats urged the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to prevent further ceasefire violations when they mediated fresh talks between Armenia's and Azerbaijan's foreign ministers in Washington on June 20.

The three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group said the talks focused on recent armed incidents around Karabakh and "core issues of the settlement process." Neither they nor the conflicting parties reported major progress towards a long-awaited peace accord.

"Noting with regret recent casualties, the Co-Chairs urged the sides to take immediate measures to restore an atmosphere conducive to peace and favorable to substantive talks," the mediators said in a joint statement.

"They called on the sides to reaffirm their commitment to observe the ceasefire strictly and to refrain from any provocative action, including the use of snipers and engineering works along the line of contact and the international border," they added.

According to the statement, Foreign Ministers Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov agreed on the need to "reduce the risk of escalation" and pledged to meet again "in the near future."

The Armenian service of the Voice of America quoted Mammadyarov as saying after the meeting that the mediators presented the two ministers with "additional substantive proposals." He did not disclose them.

Mammadyarov also told reporters that the two sides continue to disagree on details of a peace formula which he said has been advanced by the United States, Russia and France for the last 15 years.

It calls for Armenian withdrawal from virtually all seven districts around the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast which were fully or partly occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces during the 1991-1994 war. In return, Karabakh's predominantly ethnic Armenian population would determine the disputed territory's internationally recognized status in a future referendum.

A statement by the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry also said that the co-chairs put forward "results-oriented proposals" at Washington but did not elaborate. It described the meeting as "positive."

For its part, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said the mediators "shared ideas aimed at pushing the peace process forward, including in the humanitarian sphere." Speaking to journalists in the U.S. capital,

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ment building", Nikol Pashinyan said.

The PM said the government is seeking to create opportunities for the people to reveal and use their talents. Pashinyan noted that for this education, business ecosystem of course is important, but stated that the aforementioned persons achieved their success not so easy, they also overcame certain difficulties.

PM Pashinyan informed that according to the data provided by the Central Bank, the amount of reserved dollar has reached 171 million. It increased by 40 million USD in three days. "This means that money is circulated in Armenia, the blood vessels of the economy have opened, therefore we need a victory of an individual effort. The key mission of the government is to encourage the people to believe in their talents and capacities. It was possible to reach impossible political changes in Armenia with word and idea. We believe in the citizens of Armenia and thank those persons who have put a stone on the stone in our country. They are the heroes of our time", Nikol Pashinyan added.

Mnatsakanyan stressed the importance of strengthening the ceasefire regime in the conflict zone and thus creating an "appropriate environment" for a peaceful settlement.

Truce violations along the Karabakh "line of contact" escalated in late May and early June after several months of unusual calm. They had decreased significantly since Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev first met in September. The two leaders also talked on four other occasions in the following months, raising some hopes for progress in the protracted peace process.

Mnatsakanyan and Mammadyarov have also negotiated on a regular basis. Ahead of their talks in Washington the two ministers met separately with U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton and senior U.S. State Department officials.

## New Judge stakes claim to Constitutional Court chairmanship



Vahe Grigoryan, a newly elected Constitutional Court judge, declared on June 20 that he can now also act as chairman of Armenia's highest court.

Grigoryan challenged the legitimacy of Hrayr Tovmasyan, the court chairman since March 2018, and six other members of the nine-strong body as he was sworn in during a session of the Armenian parliament, which elected him on June 18.

Addressing lawmakers, Grigoryan argued that under constitutional amendments which took effect last year the Constitutional Court now consists of “judges,” rather than “members,” as was the case until then. He said that only he and Arman Dilanyan, who was elected by the parliament last year, can therefore serve as judges and make decisions.

“The Constitutional Court comprises solely judges and only

judges take part in its decision making,” Grigoryan said, suggesting that the six other officials have no such authority.

Grigoryan added that since Dilanyan is absent from Armenia at the moment he is single-handedly “taking over the powers and duties of the Constitutional Court chairman.”

The statement clearly took many lawmakers by surprise. Vladimir Hakobyan, the chairman of the parliament committee on legal affairs, pointedly declined to comment on it.

But Nikolay Baghdasaryan, another pro-government parliamentarian, effectively backed Grigoryan's claims.

“My view is that after hearing Vahe Grigoryan's speech Hrayr Tovmasyan must not go to work tomorrow morning because he realized that he is no longer the chairman of the Constitutional Court,” said Baghdasaryan.

But Edmon Marukyan, the leader of the opposition Bright Armenia Party, disagreed with this interpretation of the amended constitution. He said the amendments cannot have a retroactive impact on Tovmasyan and the six other court members.

The latter did not immediately react to Grigoryan's declaration. The Constitutional Court's updated website on Thursday continued to refer to Tovmasyan as the chairman of the court.

Grigoryan's appointment to a vacant seat in the court was backed by 99 lawmakers and opposed by 22 others in secret ballot. Some opposition lawmakers questioned Grigoryan's impartiality, citing his warm relations with the country's current leadership. The nominee admitted having “friends” in the ruling My Step alliance but insisted that this fact will not influence his judicial activities.

## Armenia's Prosecutor General surprised at \$18 million deposit increase in the bank accounts of Kocharyan's son

Prosecutor General of Armenia Artur Davtyan is surprised at the fact that the judge of the court of 1st instance Davit Grigoryan examining former President Robert Kocharyan's case did not try to clarify some facts connected with the case.

“How could a justice-oriented judge not find necessity to elucidate the fact that the bank accounts of the 26-year old son of the accused had money inflows of AMD and other currencies equivalent to \$18 million during 2 years starting from 2007 given the fact that the accused person held public positions during almost entire life which legally banned entrepreneurial activity”, ARMENPRESS reports Prosecutor General of Armenia Artur Davtyan said during the trial at the Court of Appeal examining the complaint against Robert Kocharyan and others.

He added that the crimes Robert Kocharyan is accused of are complicated and organized with clear division of roles, the actors of which served in the state apparatus at that time and had dependence on the accused.

“A significant part of the state apparatus was involved in the criminal activities”, he said, adding that 10 people were killed as a result of the crimes they are accused of.

The prosecution finds that the decision of the court of 1st instance should be changed and Kocharyan should be again detained.

2nd President of Armenia Robert Kocharyan, who ruled the country from 1998 to 2008, spent two weeks in jail in summer of 2018,

but was eventually freed. But on December 7, a higher court over-



ruled the release and ordered him to be remanded into custody pending trial again.

Nearly 5 months later, on May 18, 2019 he was again released from jail under personal guarantees of President of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan and former President of Artsakh Arkady Ghukasayn.

Kocharyan, along with several other former officials, is charged with “overthrowing Constitutional Order” during the 2008 March protests in Yerevan when 8 protesters and 2 security officers died. The former President is accused of unlawfully ordering the military to intervene. He is also charged with bribery.

He vehemently denies wrongdoing.

## PM introduces newly appointed Minister of Justice to the Ministry staff



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Ministry of Justice to introduce newly appointed Minister Rustam Badasyan to the ministry staff.

The Prime Minister said he knows Mr. Badasyan as an intellectual, a strong-willed and conscientious person with high professional qualities.

“Last year he worked as a deputy chairman of the State Revenue Committee and

during that time he showed himself from the best side, demonstrating high organizational skills. I consider it very important that at this decisive stage Mr. Badasyan will head the reforms in the justice system. It is no secret that in this respect we are at this very important and turning point, and the government, the political majority has the political will to build a truly independent judiciary in Armenia. In this regard, it seems to be crucial that the Minister of Justice had full control of the situation and effectively implemented the Government’s political messages,” the Prime Minister said. He thanked former Minister of Justice Artak Zeynalyan for the work done during his tenure in office.

Rustam Badasyan thanked the Prime Minister for his confidence and said: “I

feel that especially after the resignation of such a highly experienced professional as Mr. Zeynalyan, the ministry is expected to face quite a difficult job in terms of management. I am confident that together we will be able to meet your expectations.”

“I believe that at this stage all of the proposed strategic measures, including the anti-corruption program that is currently being circulated, should be designed in such a way that the public could have a clear idea about the timing of their implementation and the expected result. I am confident that from now on, we will develop our strategic documents in that very way. As the Prime Minister said, we are going to work in a positive atmosphere to fulfill our goals,” the newly appointed Minister of Justice noted.

## Government wants much higher pay for Armenian Judges



International donors have agreed to finance a sharp increase in the salaries of Armenia’s judges sought by the Armenian government, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on June 20.

Pashinyan said that a roughly fivefold pay rise is vital for reforming Armenian courts and making them independent and free from corruption.

He argued that judges are no longer able to take bribes or engage in business en masse and have to live off their current salaries ranging from 400,000 to 600,000 drams (\$830-\$1,250) per month. These

wages also discourage well-paid lawyers working for private firms from seeking to take the bench, he said.

“Our partners, international donors will support Armenia on this issue,” Pashinyan told the parliament. “For two or three years we will be able to keep these high salaries of the current judges and new judges at between 2.5 million and 3 million drams (\$5,200-\$6,200). That will have no direct impact on our state budget.”

“In the meantime, the opposition, government, civil society and the public will see that it’s good to have an independent

judicial system,” he said, adding that the favorable public opinion will then allow the government to finance the much higher wages from the state budget.

Pashinyan did not specify which international organizations or foreign governments are ready to allocate such funding for the 229 judges of various Armenian courts.

Both the European Union and the Council of Europe have expressed readiness to assist in sweeping judicial reforms planned by Pashinyan’s government. They have stressed that the reforms must conform to Armenia’s constitution and international commitments.

Pashinyan last month called for a mandatory vetting of all judges after a court in Yerevan released from prison his bitter foe and former President Robert Kocharyan, who is facing serious criminal charges. The premier insisted that he wants to make the judicial system “truly independent.” His critics claim he is on the contrary seeking to gain control over the courts.

## Armenia's Vayots Dzor to have a new solar power plant

In the frame of the EU funded “Enhancing SME Competitiveness through Promotion and Wider Use of Sustainable Innovative Technologies” project a ground-breaking ceremony of the solar power plant was held in Gladzor, Vayots Dzor region on June 18. The event is one of many EU initiatives on energy efficiency within EU Sustainable Energy Week in 2019 that will feature Sustainable Energy Days in Armenia through youth events, intellectual quests, painting competitions, seminars and lectures, inaugurations of solar photovoltaic power plants, biogas plant launch, sustainable greenhouse opening, and many more exciting events.

“This project is a vivid example of the EU commitment to bring energy efficiency reforms and renewable energy investment sources in Armenia to scale by actively collaborating with the Government and unblocking energy market oppor-



tunities”, mentioned the EU Ambassador Piotr Świtalski in his opening remarks for the ground-breaking ceremony.

Vache Terteryan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Trdat Sargsyan, Governor of Vayots Dzor region, Vardan Avagyan, Deputy Mayor of Yeghegnadzor, Armen Movsisyan, Mayor of Gladzor, representatives from national and local govern-

ment and the beneficiaries of the project were present at the event.

The project aims to foster employment by improving competitiveness of SMEs in tourism sector in Vayots Dzor region. This will be achieved through the promotion of environmentally and financially sustainable practices, particularly, eco-tourism combined with the adoption of renewable energy sources and efficient energy

practices.

Energy efficiency is one of the priority sectors of the European Union for Armenia. Many of the ongoing EU initiatives on energy sector, including a couple of Pilot Regional Development Programme EU-granted projects in Vayots Dzor/Syunik/Gegharkunik regions, and partner-supported initiatives have featured energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions throughout Armenia.

Energy efficiency is one of the most effective tools to support an economy, while contributing to the global fight for climate change. On a national scale, energy efficiency helps strengthening energy security, reducing energy expenditures and freeing up funds for expenditures in other sectors, slowing down energy demand growth. On a building scale, energy efficiency improves the utility affordability, extends building lifetime, and boosts indoor comfort.

## Agenda of World IT Congress in Yerevan discussed in Silicon Valley

Alexander Yesayan, President of the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises, was in the United States from June 11-16 to meet with representatives from start-up and successful IT companies, and members of the committee developing content for the 23rd World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT 2019) to discuss agenda topics and the list of speakers.



panies operating in New York and San Francisco, Alexander Yesayan presented the preparation process for the 23rd World Congress on Information Technology. He also invited them to Armenia in October to take part in WCIT 2019 to discuss the prospects and influence of the digital technology era on humanity with other leaders and innovators of the IT world and global political leaders.

“Silicon Valley is one of the most developed ecosystems in the world where startups and big companies achieve great success. Our main goal is to invite specialists to participate in WCIT 2019, get acquainted with the potential of Armenia’s IT sector and make investment plans in Armenia,” said Alexander Yesayan, president of UATE.

WCIT 2019 will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9, 2019. The Congress is hosted by Armenia with the support and under the high patronage of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA). Its main organizing body is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE).

During his meetings with heads of a number of American IT com-

## U.S. House approves additional \$40 million in aid for Armenia



Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Jackie Speier (D-CA) secured strong bipartisan support today for the adoption, by the full U.S. House, of her amendment appropriating \$40 million in democracy aid to Armenia, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). Her amendment, co-sponsored by fellow Armenian Caucus leaders, Reps. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Adam Schiff (D-CA), was adopted by a vote of 268 to 152. “The broad-based backing we saw today on the House floor for Representatives Speier’s amendment reflects a powerful bipartisan Congressional consensus in support of Armenia’s democratic aspirations and continued investments in the growth of the

U.S.-Armenia strategic partnership,” said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. “We thank Congresswoman Speier for her principled leadership and share our appreciation with all those who voted in favor of her amendment.”

“Congress’s approval of this measure sends a strong signal to Armenians that the United States recognizes their inspiring democratic progress, supports their quest to build a more accountable government, and will continue to work with them to build resilient, responsive institutions,” said Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. Last week, during House floor debate on her amendment, Rep. Speier spoke passionately about Armenia’s “Velvet Revolution” during House consideration of the Fiscal Year 2020 Foreign Aid Bill, noting that “it is very important at this point in time that we do everything in our power to support this new democracy.” Citing an earlier U.S. commitment of \$60 million to assist Armenia’s democratic transformation, Rep.

Speier argued more is needed. “Armenia has a rare and potentially fleeting window of opportunity to consolidate and build upon its democratic gains. [...] Armenia has earned a clear signal that the United States supports its democratic transformation and resources will be brought to them to carry out that transformation.” House Appropriations Committee Chair Nita Lowey (D-NY) concurred, stating that “the progress made in Armenia’s transition to democracy and the Velvet Revolution is a refreshing development at a time when so many other countries are headed in the opposite direction.” Chairwoman Lowey continued “I’m prepared to work to provide the necessary resources to encourage continued progress in Armenia.” Ranking Republican of the Appropriations Committee Hal Rogers (R-KY) opposed the measure, noting: “the funding directed in this amendment is a significant increase above current levels. It could result in funds being cut from important partners in Europe facing Russian aggression.” The House voted on Rep. Speier’s amendment as part of its consideration of the Fiscal Year 2020 foreign aid bill, H.R.2740.

## Construction of new Armenia-Georgia bridge to commence in August

The construction of the Friendship Bridge –linking Armenia and Georgia over the Debed River near the Sadakhlo-Bagratashen border checkpoint- will commence in August, according to Artavazd Baghumyan, the Armenia manager of Tunnel Sadd Ariana, an Iranian contractor which was awarded the contract to build the bridge.

Tunnel Sadd Ariana was selected from 7 bidders who participated in a tender announced by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

“The designing phase will be completed in around two months and if everything proceeds as expected the construction will

most probably start in August and will be finished within one year,” Baghumyan told Alik Media.

The bridge will be 200 meters long. Two separate bridges parallel to one another at one-meter distance will be built. It will be 18 meters high – 2 meters higher than the current bridge at the border. Each of the two parallel bridges will be 11,8 meters wide and will have 3 traffic lanes.

The EBRD has provided a 7,3-million-euro credit for the project, and the



funds will be repaid by Armenia and Georgia 50/50.

The old bridge will be renovated as experts say it can serve as an alternative in case of possible congestions.

## Hayastan All Armenian Fund Promises Transparency and Accountability

The Hayastan All Armenian Fund transforms its structure and adopts a new approach to meet current challenges and opportunities. At its annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 18, the fund presented its new vision and strategy, which has transparency and accountability at its core. The strategy envisions a more targeted and comprehensive approach, using tools aimed at unveiling and addressing the priority issues in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora.

The new strategy redefines the role of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund. It intends to become a leading all-Armenian network that unites Armenian communities around the idea of the sustainable development of Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora by utilizing its extensive connectivity. The strategy will ensure transparency and accountability for the network members and worldwide Armenian communities. This implies a collaborative network between Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora, assessing the needs of, and developing, communities where Armenians live and create.

The annual Board of Trustees meeting covered the main directions of 2019 programs and the telethon, the pilot projects planned in a new format and those brought to life in 2018. The fund also presented its new website which provides visitors with insights into its transparent activity, as well as an opportunity to become part of the multi-faceted development programs in Armenia and Artsakh.

“I trust that our joint efforts, close collaboration, and new principles will make our cooperation more targeted and coordinated. By transforming into an all-Armenian network, the Fund will ensure the balanced and sustainable development of Armenian communities around the world, Armenia and Artsakh,” Executive Director of Hayastan All Armenian Fund Haykac Arshamyan stated in his opening remarks.

In 2018 the Fund implemented close to 100 multi-sectoral programs, at the core of which are the unity, cooperation and development of Armenian communities from different parts of the world. The programs range from construction of community centers to development of the health sector and renewable energy.

The fund is currently assessing the efficiency of the implemented programs, which will define their continuity and future directions. Major programs implemented in Armenia and Artsakh include installation of solar water heaters, construction of 4 kindergartens, 4



schools, and 1 photovoltaic power station. 9 houses and 10 community centers were built in Artsakh, more than 10 houses were reconstructed. 14 communities of Artsakh now have permanent water due to Hayastan All Armenian Fund’s donors.

To support the health sector, 419 surgeries and 2,600 medical check-ups were performed. The fund also brought to life dozens of social, educational, scientific and cultural programs, as well as those

in road construction and other sectors.

Compared with 2017, the 2018 telethon saw 20% increase in donor participation—who made investments in the development of their homeland. This proves that trust in Hayastan All Armenian Fund has grown, and reaffirms the fund’s mission of contributing to the all-Armenian spirit of dedication and cooperation around the world.

For more information, contact +37410521505

*About Hayastan All Armenian Fund: The Hayastan All Armenian Fund was founded in 1992 by the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia. Currently the network of the Fund operates in 19 countries of the world: the USA, France, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Lebanon, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Greece, Cyprus, Uruguay, Romania, Iran, the Netherlands and Italy. The network aims to expand to all communities where Armenians live and create.*

*The mission of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund is to create an All-Armenian network with the sole purpose of ensuring the pro-*



*portional and sustainable development of worldwide Armenian communities, Armenia and Artsakh based on a common identity.*



## IAEA mission says Armenia has strengthened its regulatory framework amid ongoing challenges

### Court Ruling



An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts said Armenia has made progress in strengthening its regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety but still faces challenges, including a shortage of qualified and experienced staff at the regulatory body.

The Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) team on 17 June concluded a seven-day follow-up mission to review Armenia's implementation of recommendations and suggestions made during an initial IRRS mission in 2015. The follow-up mission was conducted at the request of the Government of Armenia and hosted by the Armenia Nuclear Regulatory Authority (ANRA).

IRRS missions are designed to strengthen the effectiveness of the national nuclear and radiation safety regulatory infrastructure, based on IAEA safety standards and international good practices, while recognizing the responsibility of each country to ensure nuclear and radiation safety.

The Armenian Nuclear Power Plant (ANPP) in Metsamor provides 40% of the country's electricity. ANPP's Unit 1 was permanently shut down in 1989, while the operating license for Unit 2 has been extended until 2021 subject to yearly safety demonstrations, with preparations under

way for requesting an additional extension until 2026. Armenia also has a dry spent fuel storage facility, a radioactive waste storage facility, and uses radioactive sources in medicine, industry and research.

"Armenia has made substantial progress in developing a policy and a strategy for safety," said IRRS team leader Hans Wanner, who is Director General of the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate. "However, the regulator faces a critical situation related to human resources. ANRA and its technical and support organization, the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Centre (NRSC), are not financially competitive compared with the industry and ANPP. There is an urgent need to address this issue."

The team found that Armenia since 2015 has taken key steps forward by adopting a strategy for spent fuel and radioactive waste management, and by intensifying inspections related to emergency preparedness and response. Armenia is still addressing some other recommendations and suggestions from the 2015 mission, in part because the country is undertaking a comprehensive legislative review process, including on a new Atomic Law.

The team acknowledged that ANRA faces many challenges in regulating nuclear safety, including implementation of find-

ings related to a European Union initiative on conducting nuclear power plant stress tests. The initiative, which Armenia has joined, stems from lessons learned from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi accident in Japan.

The team provided a new recommendation and suggestion for further enhancing the national legal and regulatory framework for safety, including that ANRA should upgrade its management system in line with IAEA safety standards.

"The findings of the IRRS follow-up mission help ANRA to make decisions towards further improvement of the national regulatory framework for safety, in line with IAEA safety standards," said Ashot Martirosyan, ANRA chairman. "To cope with this task ANRA should first resolve the staffing problem as confirmed by the IRRS team. Measures are already under way to resolve this issue, which is also in the focus of Armenia's leadership."

"In light of ongoing challenges associated with the long-term operation of the Armenia Nuclear Power Plant, the findings made by the IRRS mission to improve regulatory infrastructure for safety are very timely," said Greg Rzentkowski, Director of the IAEA's Division of Nuclear Installation Safety. "Recommended improvements, once implemented, will help place appropriate focus on safety, including continued safe and reliable operation of the plant."

The 12-member IRRS team comprised senior regulatory experts from Argentina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Romania, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States of America as well as three IAEA staff members.

The final mission report will be provided to the Government in about three months. The Government plans to make the report public.

## FM Mnatsakanyan gives interview over his meeting with Azerbaijani FM

Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan gave a briefing following his meeting with Azerbaijani FM on June 21.

The briefing is presented below.

Question: What did you discuss today, what are the main priorities?

Answer: Well you know, I think we sustain the dynamics of our meetings. One very important aspect we have to deal with is that we sustain the very important environment, which allows us to move on with all the issues, the progress of the peaceful resolution of this conflict. And you know alternative to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. I think there are some developments in these past weeks, past month, that have been influencing the process and I think we have to look at it in a careful way and see the ways in which we can be faithful to the agreements and understandings that we have been working on over the previous months, and this has been a very important part of our talks today. And the political will to move on with the progress and the sustainability of the environment which provides the right background in which the peace process is taking place, are very important priorities. And of course we have been focusing on this with the Co-Chairs and my colleague, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan.

Question: Mr. Minister they said that some documents have been circulated...

Answer: There are documents that exist, that existed, but the documents are not the issue. Here the issue is in what principles we are approaching, because in principle, today it is necessary to focus primarily on the environment that ensures the progress of the process. As for our principled approaches, they are known to everyone, they have been expressed by Armenia on different occasions. And it is in that context, that we, in all cases, consider all the different options to see to which extent our priorities, our primary interests are being expressed. Of course, we had quite a long discussion and we need time to, so to say, study, analyze, evaluate this phase. We plan to continue this discussion process. It will be announced when we will have an agreement on what we are doing in the next phase, when this happens. The Co-Chairs also have work to do on their part.

In this regard, now we need to carefully analyze how we can maintain that dynamics, which enables to have political will and



to move towards a peaceful settlement.

Question: The question is that since 25 years after the conflict, what has changed in terms of the negotiations process. I am talking like since 1994 until 2019. In terms of substantial conversations what has changed?

Answer: You are asking me a question that would require a very long analytical research. And given that we have spent a few hours with my colleague and the Co-Chairs on some very important talks, engaging in such analytical research is not exactly what I am up to at the moment. But I think it is very important to understand the absolute priorities for Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. The absolute priority of the security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh from which stems the question of status very much defines the way in which we look at this question. Of course, one has to understand that the whole peaceful resolution means compromise and compromise means a two-way street. So I think I have to be very sensitive about the way in which we perceive our absolute security concerns. And also, we have to consider the concerns of the other side. So, within this careful approach and political will, I think we are prepared and want to move on.

Question: Mr. Minister negotiation have been going during the escalation of the conflict...

Answer: That is what I was saying all this time. Of course, this has had a very bad effect, because negotiating in a condition when there are elements of escalation and risks to disrupt this process, they have very bad effect of course, you cannot avoid them.

But here for the Foreign Ministers with the Co-Chairs it is also very important today to find a way in which we can work towards sustaining the environment that has been a result of the conversation, of the agreement, understandings, reached at

the level of our leaders. I think it is a very important challenge to sustain those agreements, those understandings that set environment within which the peace process is taking place.

Question: Are there any concrete agreements about future...?

Answer: We have some agreements. We have agreements that need to be implemented and I think we have been reaffirming this concerning journalists, concerning the detainees, concerning the strengthening of the ceasefire regime, sustainability of the ceasefire regime, sustainability of an environment that reduces the risks of escalation. These have various specific steps to take and I think we need to work and bring this to fruition.

Question: Is there any change in the position of Armenia, about including Nagorno Karabakh ..

Answer: Well, look, there is no change, there could not be any change and I have to be understood very clearly, the Armenian position is based on a very practical side, very practical approach, that Nagorno-Karabakh is a stakeholder, is a subject of all this, and they have to have the respective sense of ownership, if we are very serious about delivering a progress in the negotiating process. So in that I think we have been very clear in our approaches we are trying to underline that this is specifically a practical question of a political will to provide practical progress in the negotiations. The subject to these negotiations, Nagorno-Karabakh, the stakeholder in these negotiations, Nagorno-Karabakh, has to have a direct sense of ownership. So that has been part of the conversation, of course, we have to bear that in mind. But as I am saying the very important thing is that all these issues are interrelated and we have to treat it carefully in a way that we move forward.

Question: You're very optimistic about negotiations today?

Answer: Well, I am very careful about all those judgements, about optimism and pessimism, but I think it's a responsibility, you know, because these talks have very direct implications on lives of people. And when you think in these terms you have to understand that whatever you do has to serve the purpose of peace. It is good for our region, it is good for Azerbaijan, it is good for Ar-

## “Armenia Engineering Week” to gather 500 representatives of the field from Europe, US and Africa

Armenia Engineering Week series of events, which will take place in Yerevan and Vanadzor town from June 24 to 28, will allow to present the Armenian technological potential and production to the world, Deputy minister of High Technological industry Gegham Vardanyan told reporters on June 22.

Highlighting the importance of such a large-scale event, the deputy minister said it is completely an Armenian event because most of the speakers are Armenians who will propose and present their solutions.

“Within the frames of the Engineering Week Armenia will host representatives of various organizations from Europe, the United States and Africa. Among the major companies are Nvidia, Nokia and etc. They will see the great opportunities existing in Armenia and will find cooperation directions. We hope the field will have new growth opportunities, maybe new projects will be implemented in Armenia as a result

of which new jobs will be created”, the deputy minister noted.

Director of the Enterprise Incubator Foundation Bagrat Yengibaryan says the Armenia Engineering Week series of events will become a unique international platform which will unite the technological entrepreneurs of different countries, engineers, scientists, leading experts, students, government and business representatives. According to him such events are important because they position Armenia as a country proposing complex and complete engineering solutions to the world.

Chairman of the Engineering Association Aram Salatyán said the events have been selected with three targeted approach – to show the leading applied engineering solutions which are developed in Armenia, to make the world heard that Armenia becomes a center of finding solutions to the engineering issues and to show to the youth

how engineering is developing in Armenia.

The Armenia Engineering Week will gather around 500 participants from state, scientific-research, educational organizations of various countries, new and already developed engineering companies.

Professional seminars, presentations, experience exchanging events in high-tech related areas are envisaged to take place for three days in the scope of the Week. The “Armenia Engineering Week” will conclude on 28 June, 2019, at Vanadzor Technology Center where discussion on results of the Week with participation of experts and representatives of public and private sector, as well as engineering solutions expo and best start-up showcase will be held.

The event will be held at the initiative of the Armenian Government, the Enterprise Incubator Foundation and the Engineering Association.

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menia, it is good for Nagorno-Karabakh, it is good for the entire region.

But it has to be in a way that each of the parties feels that there is a parity of commitment, there is a solution which each of the parties, on the basis of compromise, feels that it serves the national interests, the national concern, the concern of each side, that it delivers on those concerns, that it finds a way in which this parity of commitments provides that necessary balance. That’s the essence of compromise.

Question: Mammadyarov said that the next meeting will not be late...

Answer: Yes, I can confirm that at least we had an agreement that we need to work in that direction, and we will finalize the agreement about the next meeting. We have just finished the meeting and you realize that even today’s conversation is the first, so-called reflection of how we see the outcome of these negotiations. We are, obviously, ready to continue, and we are ready to announce the next point when we have an agreement on that, but we will also reaffirm that it will not wait long. But at the same time it is essential that we can reaffirm the commitments related to the relevant environment and the strengthening of the ceasefire, and to the relevant mechanisms that are part of such an environment.

Question: My question is, you mentioned about Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh, how about Azerbaijani IDPs at seven surrounding districts? Was that a part of ...?

Answer: I have been talking about the priorities for Armenia. And, obviously, the issues that are priorities for the other party are there, and as I’m saying there is a ...

Question: So what is the position?...

Answer: The solution is a commitment. You don’t expect me to go on to elaborate discussion and analyses of all these issues right now right after these talks, this was not exactly what we are dealing with now. But as I am saying we have our priorities and we talk about our priorities, but you also remember when the Prime Minister was talking about the way in which to build peace is the way in which to find solutions to the various issues that concern all the parties. And I would want to remind also that the PM of Armenia has said this before, and we have reiterated this, that whatever the solution will be achieved, it has to be acceptable to the people of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

For the moment as I am saying the very concerning developments, the ceasefire violations which claim lives are important challenges that we have to deal with, we have to address them, and we have to reduce those risks of escalation in that we can

sustain a conducive environment for peace.

So we had this conversation today and there we have a good report with the co-chairs, with my colleague within that spirit.

Question: Last question about the meeting with the National Security Advisor Bolton, any comments.

Answer: Well, we had a very intensive, very engaging, very productive dialogue with Ambassador Bolton. And we had the opportunity to cover a wide range of issues of which of course the regional security and the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were very important part of our conversation. The US is, after all, one of the three co-chairs and a very important stakeholder in this, as a Co-Chair, together with Russia and France. We have very important issues of regional stability and the dynamics, of course, we need this dialogue, this conversation to carry on. The US is a very important partner for Armenia. We have a very rich bilateral agenda. And we have been taking stock of this bilateral agenda. So, in every way, this was a very important conversation with Armenia’s important partner, the United States, on a wide range of issues. And I was saying it was a very productive, very engaging dialogue, conversation, discussion with Ambassador Bolton.

## Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator Solving Decades Old Problem in the Border Town of Gomq



Located about 7 km from Nakhichevan's border, Gomq village is now provided with outdoor lighting. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has always been a problem of infrastructure here. Now, Gomq is added to the list of the villages, which



have an energy-efficient street lighting system. Partner organizations, VivaCell-MTS and the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), had their serious input in the realization of this project. Like in other remote, border villages of Armenia, the program was implemented here, too, on phased basis. At first the main, then the secondary streets were lighted.

Still in 2015, within the framework of the "Alternative Energy" Project, the partner organizations installed an outdoor illumination system equipped with 37 LED lamps. By the second phase of the project, the number of the lamps is increased by another 34.

In general, 2,650 meters long area is il-

luminated in Gomq, 1,300 meters of them – upon the works started since last summer.

VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**, the founder of FPWC **Ruben Khachatryan**, the head of Zaritap Community **Simon Babayan**, the Head of the Gomq Village Administration **Mkhitar Hovhannisyan** and community members participated in the launching ceremony of the energy-saving system.

*"The world lives in times when every single day offers solutions to make human life and routine easier. And in an era of those*



*opportunities, it seems impossible to have a problem like the outdoor illumination unsolved. And yet this problem perseveres and oftentimes in borderland villages. Starting from 2014, now for 5 years in a row, we implement this joint project hand in hand with our partner, as we believe that having illuminated streets cannot be prerogative of urban settlements. Step by step we reduce the number of streets lost in darkness and*



*return hope for a better future in borderland villages with every illuminated street. This project has a social underpinning, too: and that is equally important. I am glad to note that consistently we have managed to implement a program that provides modern solutions and spending efficiency in this village as well,"* VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian said.

The launching of the outdoor lighting system will promote the activation of the community's life. Gomq is a convenient place for developing the eco-tourism. Active measures are being taken, in this direction, too.

Unlike other lamps, the LED lamps are more efficient and durable, and can be used



longer, consuming 80% less electric energy.

The streets of Gomq will be illuminated in the summer from 21:00 to 01:00, and in the winter from 18:00 to 23:00. On holidays the street lighting will be provided, all night long.



## Saint Petersburg hosts Armenian Culture Days



The official site of Yerevan Municipality | www.yerevan.am

The delegation headed by Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyán which is in the northern capital of the Russian Federation, met Saint Petersburg acting Governor Alexander Beglov, the Yerevan Municipality told Noyan Tapan.

The issues related to the cooperation between the two cities were discussed during the meeting. In particular, the importance of development of trade-economic and humanitarian cooperation was emphasized.

Greeting the members of Yerevan delegation, acting Governor of Saint Petersburg Alexander Beglov stressed the existence of the potential for further development and expansion of the relations between the two parties.



The official site of Yerevan Municipality | www.yerevan.am

According to Alexander Beglov, the cooperation in the fields of healthcare and pharmacy can become one of the perspective directions. The acting Governor also affirmed the intention of the city to increase the import of agricultural products from Armenia and their

distribution to the trade chains of Saint Petersburg.



The official site of Yerevan Municipality | www.yerevan.am

Stressing the importance of the willingness of Saint Petersburg Government to expand and strengthen the partnership, Yerevan Mayor expressed confidence that the Yerevan Days in Saint Petersburg event will convey a new impulse to bilateral relation-



The official site of Yerevan Municipality | www.yerevan.am

ship. Hayk Marutyán also outlined the directions of mutual interest. The capital of Armenia plans to adopt the experience of Saint Petersburg in development of public transport and com-

munal field including waste removal.

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The members of the delegation headed by Yerevan Mayor visited the Hermitage. The importance of cooperation establishment in the issues of museums development was stressed during the meeting with the director of the State Hermitage Mikhail Piotrovski.

Mayor Hayk Marutyán informed during the conversation that serious steps are taken currently to clean up the area of the ancient settlement of “Karmir Blur” (“Red Hill”) from litter and to turn it into a touristic centre. Yerevan Mayor turned to Saint Petersburg colleagues for support in the issue of preservation and proper presentation of the historical and cultural area.

The members of Yerevan delegation walked about the exhibition halls of the Hermitage. The rich collection of the museum containing more than 3 million samples also has exhibits of the Urartian period. Exclusive samples are on display in the hall of culture and history of Armenia.

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Yerevan and Saint Petersburg are going to cooperate on the level of legislative bodies as well. The members of the “Prosperous Armenia”, “My step” and “Luys” factions of the Council of Elders of Yerevan had a meeting with the delegates of the Legislative Assembly of Saint Petersburg. The parties outlined the directions in which they can effectively cooperate. They made an agreement to discuss possible formats of bilateral cooperation. At the end of the day, within the frames of Yerevan Days in Saint Petersburg held on June 20 and 21, the gala-concert of the youth rock group “TmbaTa” of the “Tumo” Centre for Creative Technologies was held in Saint Petersburg State Academic Capella.

## Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

The Powers that Be in your career life are definitely in charge. Progress can be made only through persuasion and even that may not help. Don't succumb to anger or you will have lost your case entirely. You could be tempted to displace your anger onto others. You know that is not fair or productive. Peel yourself off the wall and wait for a better moment.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

It is normal to feel somewhat lethargic and maybe even mildly depressed during the month just prior to one's birthday. At this time the sun is figuratively at its darkest and we experience a natural low in our annual cycle. Don't take the dip too seriously. Generally fresh inspiration arrives on the heels of the new birthday.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

This period may be difficult for those on a diet or other self-improvement program. You are prone to self-indulgence right now. Perhaps the best thing to do is accept that is so and find a new solution that is satisfying without sabotaging your good intentions.



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 "rules" and the world's expectations have you tied up like a pretzel right now. The harder you struggle, the tighter those binds seem to become. It's like a Chinese puzzle. Sometimes if you relax on the control issues, the solution comes through. Give it some space.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

You are tempted to grind those who disagree with you into a fine powder. You don't have to do this. You have nothing to prove. Let people have their say and don't take it so seriously. Others may argue, but you are the one with the power and can focus attention to where you need.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

You are in a high energy zone this week! You want to go everywhere and do everything at once. You feel generous to others and they to you. If money is an issue, then you would be better off to leave credit cards at home. Activities that involve physical self-expression are favored.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Warning to those on diet and exercise programs: this week it is just too easy to break training. If you mean what you've promised to yourself, don't go anywhere in which you would be in harm's way. It is a time in which you feel more outgoing and extroverted. Social life may be over the top, even more than you prefer.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

This time in your life may be fraught with various responsibilities and concerns about other people's needs. Try to evaluate carefully where you really want to use your energy. Some "needs" are worthwhile and other's just use your time. Listen for the truth of those requests.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

A simmering brew could be evolving into a boil in your partnership(s). Step aside from verbal attacks or defenses long enough to access objective information. You need a 3rd party who can mediate or you need more facts. Remaining in war mode will not help the situation at all.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

You could become embroiled in a battle of wills over who is right. In order to steer clear of a war, remain aware that the subject matter is merely what you think, not who you are. You have the controlling word in any battle. Use it ethically and don't blow away your opponent. Drive Carefully.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

You may attract those who would take advantage if you let them. Remember that not all shiny objects are gold. Be aware that you are in a sensitive frame of mind and may misinterpret that which is said to you. You may be the one who hears what you want to hear.

# ARMENIA

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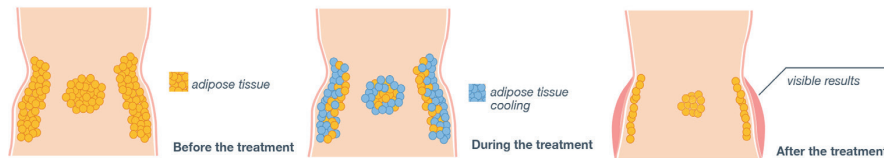
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The publisher: NT Holding LTD  
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝  
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

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

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

President of the NT Media Holding:  
**TIGRAN HARUTYUNYAN**  
Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:  
**GAYANEH ARAKELYAN**  
Director of the weekly:  
**MARINA HARUTYUNYAN**  
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**  
Proofreader: **SUSANNA MKRTCHIAN**

Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ. Հարությունյան

**ISSN 1829-0604**

Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝  
03Ա898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.  
Registration certificate and the date:  
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

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

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