

Armenian PM expects Türkiye border opening in near future



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has expressed hope that the positive dialogue between Armenia and Türkiye could lead to the border between the two countries opening in the near future.

He talked about the Armenia-Türkiye normalization during his speech at the 2025 Tbilisi Silk Road Forum.

“The positive dialogue between Armenia and Türkiye gives hope that the parties may open the borders in the near future. We are ready, not only politically but also technically, starting today, to ensure the transit of freight trucks through Armenian territory from Türkiye to Azerbaijan and from Azerbaijan to Türkiye. Both the roads and border infrastructure within Armenia are prepared for this along the Margara-Yeghvard-Sisian-Goris route.

Politically, we are also ready to ensure

similar transit through Armenian territory between the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the main part of Azerbaijan in both directions. However, technically, we are not yet ready due to the lack of infrastructure.

We are also politically prepared to enable railway transit between Türkiye and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, as well as between Türkiye and the main part of Azerbaijan, but these railway sections require renovation or reconstruction.

I am confident, and you can be assured, that these technical issues will be resolved within the next 2 to 3 years,” the Armenian PM said.

The Prime Minister also stated that in the near future, pipelines and power transmission lines will be constructed through Armenian territory from

Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan, as well as along Azerbaijan-Armenia-Turkey. Railway and road transport connections will also be established.

“All of this is under discussion within the framework of the TRIPP project, and we are also holding relevant talks with Türkiye and Azerbaijan,” the Prime Minister said.

The Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) is a connectivity project in Armenia envisaged under the U.S.-brokered Armenian-Azerbaijani joint declaration signed in Washington, D.C. The project is expected to unlock strategic economic opportunities, creating long-term benefits by promoting infrastructure investment and enhancing regional connectivity. TRIPP is part of the Crossroads of Peace project.

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Pashinyan, Kobakhidze hold meeting in Tbilisi

The Prime Ministers of Armenia and Georgia, Nikol Pashinyan and Irakli Kobakhidze, held a private meeting in Tbilisi, Pashinyan's office said in readout.

The Georgian Prime Minister thanked his Armenian counterpart for accepting the invitation to participate in the 5th Silk Road Forum.

The parties discussed the agenda of the strategic partnership between Armenia and Georgia.

They emphasized the active political dialogue between the two friendly countries and expressed confidence in its further development.

Issues pertaining to cooperation in the trade, economic and cultural spheres were also discussed.

The sides touched upon the establishment of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Prime Minister Kobakhidze once again congratulated on that occasion

and expressed confidence that it would give new impetus to regional cooperation and stability.

Prime Minister Pashinyan provided details on the implementation of the TRIPP and "Crossroads of Peace" projects aimed at unblocking regional communication routes.

An official dinner was hosted in honor of Prime Minister Pashinyan by Prime Minister Kobakhidze.

Armenian Prime Minister meets His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican

As part of his official visit to the Holy See, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan met with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican.

His Holiness welcomed Prime Minister Pashinyan's visit and his participation in the canonization ceremony of Archbishop Ignatius Maloyan and six other Blesseds. The Pope emphasized the close relations established between the Holy See and Armenia, particularly highlighting the role of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice in strengthening these ties.

Prime Minister Pashinyan congratulated His Holiness on his election as Pope, wishing him strength and success in fulfilling his sacred and responsible mission. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that under the leadership of Pope Leo XIV, the tradition of close dialogue between the Holy See and Armenia would continue, along with the Vatican's consistent attention to issues important to Armenia.

During the meeting, the sides also discussed regional developments, including



efforts to achieve peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. They touched upon humanitarian issues as well. His Holiness welcomed the progress made toward peace and expressed hope that lasting stability in the region would mark the beginning of a new phase of cooperation

and development.

Prime Minister Pashinyan reaffirmed the Armenian Government's commitment to the peace agenda for the benefit of Armenia and the prosperity and sustainable development of the region.

Armenian, Azerbaijani Parliament Speakers meet in Geneva



As part of the 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) taking

place in Geneva, a meeting was held between the Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia, Alen Simonyan, and the Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, Sahiba Gafarova.

During the discussion, the two speakers welcomed the agreements reached in Washington and the ongoing efforts toward normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Both sides underlined the importance of maintaining a constructive dialogue and expressed their readiness to contribute to confidence-building measures at the parliamentary level.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the IPU Assembly, which brings together parliamentary leaders from around the world to discuss pressing international and regional issues.

Pashinyan: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia must seize global focus to transform South Caucasus into key transit hub



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on Wednesday that the various South Caucasus transportation projects complement each other, rather than compete.

Speaking at the 2025 Tbilisi Silk Road Forum, Pashinyan disagreed with an opinion that various transportation projects are competing against one another in the region.

“Let me say that I completely disagree with that idea,” he said. “Because the transportation routes in our region complement each other, increasing the South Caucasus’ transit potential. Let me give an

example: as a result of implementing the third point of the Washington Declaration, the Persian Gulf-Black Sea railway will open, significantly increasing the transit potential not only of Armenia but also of Georgia and Azerbaijan.”

According to the Armenian leader, the most important condition for implementing all these agreements is peace, which has been established between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a result of the Washington summit.

“Now we are working to make the peace that has been established with Azerbaijan more institutionalized, aiming

to sign and ratify the agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was initialled in Washington. At the same time, all transportation routes will gradually be opened, bringing a historic change to our region,” he said.

According to Prime Minister Pashinyan, the Armenia-Türkiye dialogue, the peace established between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the TRIPP project, and the friendly relations between the countries of the region will make the South Caucasus the most attractive transit route, both in North-South and East-West directions. This means that the infrastructure of all the countries in the region will be overloaded, and it is even possible that they may not be sufficient to handle the growing flows, Pashinyan added.

“The immense international interest now focused on the South Caucasus is a capital that Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan must together use wisely to ensure the region’s development and stability. Ultimately, we have a historic opportunity to secure not only a peaceful but also a developed and prosperous South Caucasus,” the Prime Minister said.

Armenia offers two-way freight transit between Azerbaijan and Türkiye in reciprocal move

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reiterated that Armenia is ready to facilitate the transit of trucks from Türkiye to Azerbaijan and vice versa via the Margara-Yeghegnadzor-Sisian-Goris route, adding that this can begin immediately.

He made the comments during a parliamentary joint committee debate on the government’s 2026 budget bill.

“Let’s say a truck approaches the Margara checkpoint from Türkiye to transit to Azerbaijan — Armenia can facilitate it today. Our roads up to Goris and Kornidzor are in good condition. As you know, we also have certain infrastructure in

Kornidzor and can provide services in both directions. In other words, if an Azerbaijani truck approaches from the direction of Kornidzor to transit to Türkiye, we can facilitate it today,” Pashinyan said, describing the move as reciprocal toward Azerbaijan.

“Just as Azerbaijan has lifted the transit restrictions for us, we are lifting the transit restrictions as well,” he added.

Pashinyan also reaffirmed that following the initialing of the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington on August 8, peace between the two countries is an established fact.



Last week, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced that his country had lifted all restrictions on the transit of goods to Armenia. The first shipment under the new arrangement was a consignment of Kazakh wheat, a move welcomed by PM Pashinyan.

Azerbaijan's decision to lift transit restrictions key step in advancing peace agenda, Armenia's Deputy PM says

Armenia's Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan has welcomed the statement by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev regarding the removal of restrictions on the transit of goods to Armenia.

Responding to a question from *Armenpress*, Grigoryan praised the efforts of his Azerbaijani and Kazakh counterparts in facilitating this development.

"I am pleased and welcome the decision of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to lift the restrictions on cargo transportation toward Armenia. This step is of great importance for the opening of



regional communications, strengthening mutual trust, and advancing the peace agenda," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Grigoryan emphasized that such

measures can significantly contribute to establishing lasting peace and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

Earlier, Prime Minister's spokesperson Nazeli Baghdasaryan also welcomed the Azerbaijani President's announcement, describing it as "a key step toward the opening of regional communications, the strengthening of mutu-

al trust, and the institutionalization of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan," in line with the agreements reached in Washington.

Armenian, Turkish officials to discuss railway restoration in upcoming meeting

An Armenian official announced on October 21 that a new meeting with Turkish authorities will take place soon to address the restoration and relaunch of the Gyumri-Kars railway.

Vice Speaker of Parliament Ruben Rubinyan, who is the Armenian Special Representative for Normalization with Türkiye, made the announcement at a press briefing.

"An interdepartmental meeting on the



restoration and relaunch of the Gyumri-Kars railway will take place in the near future. Further details will be provided

afterward," he told reporters.

Earlier in September, Rubinyan met with his Turkish counterpart, Serdar Kılıç, in Yerevan. A readout issued after the meeting noted that they agreed that the relevant authorities of both countries would conduct the necessary technical studies for the "rehabilitation and operationalization of the Gyumri-Kars railway and electricity interconnector."

Gyumri Mayor Vardan Ghukasyan placed in two-month pretrial detention



The Anti-Corruption Court, presided over by Judge Vardges Sargsyan, has

ordered the two-month pretrial detention of Gyumri Mayor Vardan Ghukasyan.

The court granted the motion filed by the Anti-Corruption Committee (ACC) to apply detention as a preventive measure against the mayor.

Earlier, the Committee reported that as a result of extensive operational-intelligence measures and covert investigative actions carried out by its Operational

and Intelligence Department, factual data were obtained indicating that the Mayor of Gyumri and the city's Chief Architect, acting in prior agreement, had demanded and received bribes.

Within the framework of the initiated criminal proceedings, a total of eight individuals have been arrested.

The investigation is ongoing.

EUMA reaffirms commitment to peace and stability

The EU monitoring mission in Armenia (EUMA) reiterated commitment to peace and stability in the region.

EUMA announced on October 21 what it described as a “significant milestone”.

“EUMA proudly marks a significant milestone: 200 Mission Members from 25 EU Member States and Canada are working on the ground in Armenia. Every day and night, our dedicated teams patrol and

monitor along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We remain committed to peace and stability in the region,” EUMA said on X.

EUMA, a civilian mission, was launched in 2023 for a two-year term at the request of Armenia following Azeri incursions. The civilian mission observes and reports on the security situation along the Armenian side of the international border

with Azerbaijan. In January 2025, the EU extended the mandate of the EUMA for another two years. It’s stated mission is to “contribute to human security in conflict-affected areas in Armenia and contribute to build confidence between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

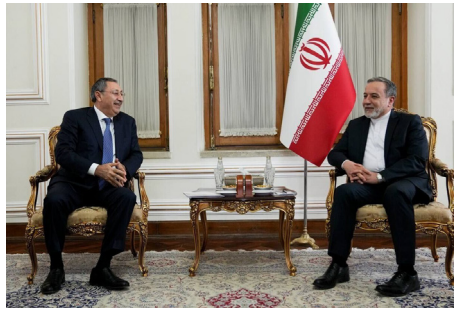
EUMA’s second mandate will involve up to 225 personnel, according to an earlier [press release](#) by the EU.

Iranian FM expresses hope for lasting security after Armenia-Azerbaijan peace agreement

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has expressed hope that the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan will lead to lasting security in the region.

The Iranian Foreign Minister made these comments during a meeting with Khalaf Khalafov, the Representative of the President of Azerbaijan for Special Assignments, the IRNA news agency reported.

Both sides emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral relations between the neighboring countries, according to



IRNA.

Expressing Iran’s commitment to developing cooperation with Azerbaijan, the Iranian Foreign Minister highlighted the strategic significance of peace and stability in the South Caucasus for both Iran and the broader region.

“Araghchi reiterated Iran’s principled stance on respecting territorial integrity and national sovereignty, advocating for diplomatic solutions to resolve disputes. He expressed hope that the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan will lead to lasting security in the region,” IRNA reported.

Khalafov reaffirmed Azerbaijan’s “serious intention to deepen cooperation with Iran across various sectors.”

Armenia and Azerbaijan initialed a peace treaty on August 8 during the U.S.-brokered summit in Washington.

EU welcomes practical developments in Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process



Magdalena Grono, the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, has welcomed the latest positive steps in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“Very much encouraged by the series of latest positive steps in the Azerbaijan-Armenia peace process, including the announcement by Azerbaijan on the lifting of restrictions on the transit of goods

for Armenia via Azerbaijan, yesterday’s meeting between Azerbaijani and Armenian Speakers in Geneva, and the planned roundtable discussions of Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society experts in Yerevan. The EU warmly welcomes these practical developments and is ready to support all such initiatives and additional confidence-building measures. We equally welcome the announced preparations for another Armenia-Türkiye meeting on restoration and relaunch of the Gyumri-Kars railway,” Grono said on X.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced on Tuesday that his country had lifted “all restrictions” on the transit of goods to Armenia. The first such shipment was a consignment of Kazakh wheat.

Shortly afterward, Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan said that the first transit shipment of goods through Azerbaijani territory is expected to reach Armenia soon. “Soon, the first batch of Kazakh wheat will enter Armenia via the Aktau-Baku route, followed by transit through Azerbaijani and Georgian railways. Peace has been established,” Papoyan said in a statement.

Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan welcomed Azerbaijan’s decision.

Speaker of Parliament of Armenia, Alen Simonyan, held a meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart, Sahiba Gafarova, during the 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva earlier that day.

Finance Minister unveils 3-year capital spending plan

The Armenian government's capital expenditures are projected at 704 billion drams in 2026, 719 billion drams in 2027, and 803 billion drams in 2028, Finance Minister Vahe Hovhannisyan told lawmakers at a joint parliamentary committee debate of the 2026 budget bill.

"Capital expenditures allocated to Armenia's economic and social sectors in 2026 will exceed the level set in the 2025 state budget by more than 22%. In 2026, these expenditures will amount to 3.4% of GDP, while in 2027 and 2028, they are projected at 3.2% and 3.6% of GDP, respectively," Hovhannisyan said.

He noted that the main increase in social spending is due to the rise in the number of registered employees in the



country, as state contributions to the funded pension system are also increasing.

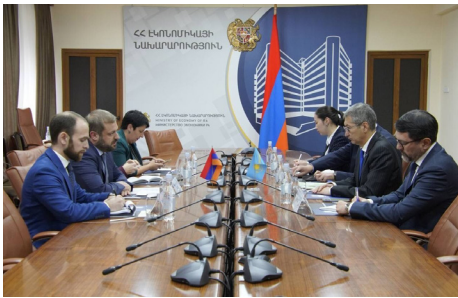
"The social protection expenditures in 2026 will amount to about 993 billion drams, and in 2027 and 2028, they will reach 1.062 trillion and 1.123 trillion drams, respectively," the minister said.

Due to the introduction of the health insurance system, healthcare expenditures

in 2026 will amount to approximately 211 billion drams, and in 2027 and 2028, they are projected to reach 240 billion and 249 billion drams, respectively. "The 2026 figure will exceed the healthcare expenditures set in the 2025 state budget by 26.6%," Vahe Hovhannisyan said.

In 2026, 43% of capital expenditures will be allocated to the defense sector. Spending on education will amount to 356.4 billion drams in 2026, and 298 billion and 321 billion drams in 2027 and 2028, respectively. Expenditures for sectors overseen by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure will reach 325 billion drams in 2026, and 334 billion and 365 billion drams in 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Economy Minister, Kazakh Ambassador discuss economic cooperation



Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan on Monday received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of

Kazakhstan to Armenia Bolat Imanbayev, the Ministry of Economy said.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the prospects for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation in the economic sphere, increasing trade turnover, diversifying exports and imports and developing new logistics routes.

They also touched upon opportunities for cooperation in the agro-industrial sector and ensuring food security.

Minister Papoyan emphasized the

importance of investments in various sectors of the Armenian economy, as well as the activities of companies with Kazakh capital.

The sides exchanged views on the 2024-2025 roadmap for trade and economic cooperation.

Minister Papoyan expressed the Armenian government's readiness to continue collaboration, fully supporting the implementation of joint programs and the promotion of new initiatives.

Armenia to receive €84.6 million financial assistance from Germany

Armenia will receive financial assistance of 84.6 million euros from Germany, part of which will be provided as a grant and the other part as a loan, Minister of Economy, Gevorg Papoyan, told lawmakers in parliament during debates of the bill on approving the agreement.

He mentioned that the process of the cooperation agreement between the governments of Armenia and Germany began back in 2023 during a joint meeting of the intergovernmental commission held in Yerevan.

According to Papoyan, the management of the loan funds will be carried out by the Central Bank of Armenia within the framework of an agreement signed with Germany's KfW. The Central Bank will allocate these funds through loan programs to commercial banks, which in turn will provide loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for the purposes of energy efficiency and industrial modernization.

Out of the €84.6 million, €18.6 million will be provided as a grant, while €66

million will be allocated as loan funds

Papoyan added that next week, the next session of the Armenia-Germany intergovernmental commission will take place in Berlin.



High-Tech Industry Deputy Minister meets with representatives of DTS Solution



First Deputy Minister of High-Tech Industry of the Republic of Armenia Gevorg Mantashyan on Friday received a

delegation led by Vahe Daghljan, co-founder and CEO of DTS Solution, a company specializing in cybersecurity.

According to the ministry, the meeting focused on cooperation opportunities in the field of cybersecurity, investment initiatives and ways to strengthen the protection of Armenia's digital environment.

Deputy Minister Mantashyan presented the strategic directions implemented by the ministry, noting that the development of cybersecurity, digital governance and innovative technologies are key components

of the digital sovereignty and technological security.

Daghljan, in turn, presented the company's activities and experience, noting that it provides a number of internationally licensed services in the field of cybersecurity, including system vulnerability assessment.

Both sides emphasized the importance of exchanging experience and jointly utilizing professional potential and outlined possible areas of cooperation.

Interior minister approves design of new biometric ID card

Armenia's Minister of Internal Affairs Arpine Sargsyan has reviewed the ongoing work toward the issuance of new biometric passports and identification cards.

The discussion was attended by Deputy Minister Armen Ghazaryan, Head of the Migration and Citizenship Service Nelli Davtyan, as well as the working group of HayPass CJSC — established by the French consortium IDEMIA Identity Security France and A.C.I. Technology S.à.r.l. — led by Executive Director Régis Bauchiere, the ministry said in a press release.

Sargsyan has approved the final design of the new identification card, including its background artwork, security features, and data fields. All the work has been carried out in accordance with ICAO standards.

Specialists from PicsArt, who are providing consultancy in the passport design process, presented several conceptual approaches to the visuals of the visa pages.



HayPass presented both the ongoing and already completed work, in particular discussing the progress of developing of the new headquarters of the Migration and Citizenship Service. The same building will also house the staff of the private partner company, the data center, as well as facilities for personalization and printing activities.

The discussion also addressed the geographic network of regional offices and their modernization programs. According to the plan, two large offices will

be established in Yerevan in accessible and busy areas, equipped with modern technology, including "all-in-one" self-service devices for collecting biometric data, furnished waiting areas, and other office facilities meeting international standards. An additional 21–22 offices will be opened in other towns and cities across the country, featuring similar equipment and upgraded infrastructure.

The proposed solutions will also be implemented in the regional offices of the Migration and Citizenship Service. In addition, security and technological measures for the documents were presented, with an emphasis on the urgency of implementing relevant changes in the legal and regulatory framework.

The measures are aimed at providing modern, secure, and higher-quality services to citizens in the field of biometric document issuance.

Armenia to introduce universal cashback system for cashless payments

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced on Monday that a universal cashback system for cashless transactions will be introduced in Armenia. He made the remarks during a joint parliamentary committee hearing on the government's 2026 budget bill.

"Next year, we will implement a universal cashback system. All citizens will

receive 2% cashback on cashless purchases," Pashinyan said.

The Prime Minister also noted that the existing cashback system for pensioners will continue and be further developed: Under the government's proposed bill, the cashback rate for cashless payments will increase from the current 12% to

20%, and the maximum cashback amount will rise from 6,000 to 10,000 Armenian drams.

As a result of these changes, pensioners who receive their pensions and make purchases via cashless methods can expect their pensions to increase by 3,000–4,000 drams.

Armenia seeks to evolve from landlocked to land-linked nation – FM

On October 20 in Luxembourg, within the framework of the Ministerial Meeting on the topic of Cross-regional Security and Connectivity, organized by the European Union, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan also participated in the discussion on Advancing a cross-regional Connectivity Agenda.

This discussion, held in this format for the first time, brought together EU member states, as well as countries from the wider Black Sea region and Central Asia.

During the two discussions held in Luxembourg, the participating states and EU officials welcomed in their speeches the establishment of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, emphasizing its importance for the expansion of connectivity and the promotion of cross-regional cooperation, including through the implementation of the TRIPP route.

In his remarks, Minister Mirzoyan noted:

I am glad to continue our discussions in this extended format, with the involvement of our partners from Central Asia. We believe that the **development of resilient and diversified connectivity** links between the EU, Türkiye, South Caucasus, and Central Asia is the key to unlocking the region's economic potential and ensuring long-term prosperity.

Dear colleagues, only a glance at the map explains why Armenia is strongly interested in the promotion of wider connectivity across trade, transport, digital, and energy sectors. It is a strategic priority for my country. We view regional connectivity not only as an engine of economic growth but also as a vital instrument for strengthening resilience, promoting social development, and ensuring lasting peace



and stability in our region.

We firmly believe that inclusive and equitable connectivity, built on the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national jurisdiction, is indispensable for regional cooperation and sustainable development. In this light, we continue to advance the **“Crossroads of Peace”** initiative, which can contribute to regional and global trade by providing new opportunities for the movement of cargo, goods, and, of course, people.

Encouragingly, this vision is beginning to take shape. The historic meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, hosted by the President of the United States in Washington, DC, has opened a genuine window of opportunity to unblock regional communications. The full implementation of the **Joint Declaration** and the TRIPP connectivity project, TRIPP route, could transform the South Caucasus into an efficient and secure transit and logistics hub. In this context, I would like to express my appreciation as during our last session, last discussion, most of you attached huge importance and expressed hope for further strengthening and institutionalization of the peace established between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In this context, the unblocking of the infrastructure between Armenia and

Türkiye is a key component, as well. The reopening of the Gyumri-Kars railway between Armenia and Türkiye doesn't need major investments, and within a short period of time, we will have an operable railway, which, together with the Armenia-Azerbaijan rail link, can become a component of the Middle Corridor project. Moreover, it will

immediately create a joint railway network between the Persian Gulf, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

Connectivity does not end with transport. We are equally committed to building the digital and energy links of the future.

Armenia attaches great importance to digitalization as a key enabler of trade, governance, and innovation. Strengthening digital trade corridors, improving cross-border data flows, and enhancing interoperability between digital systems are essential for building resilient supply chains and ensuring smoother logistics.”

Integrating sustainability into connectivity planning is aimed at contributing to a greener, safer, and more inclusive future. Therefore, infrastructure projects improving regional communication links must go hand in hand with the efforts to decarbonize energy systems and promote renewable sources. Armenia commends joint efforts to promote clean energy transition, enhance energy efficiency and develop climate-resilient infrastructure.

Concluding, Armenia is determined to evolve from a land-locked into a land-linked nation – a true crossroads of peace, connectivity, and prosperity. And in this regard, we will be happy to be useful for our partners, neighbors.

Change in atmosphere, fewer disagreements: Armenian representatives reflect on Armenian-Azerbaijani roundtable discussion

On October 21-22, 2025, a bilateral roundtable discussion was held in Yerevan at the initiative of representatives of the expert communities of Armenia and Azerbaijan, with the support of official structures of both countries. The initiative aimed to promote the peace agenda in line with the Joint Declaration adopted in Washington on August 8, 2025. It was the first



meeting of representatives of civil society from Armenia and Azerbaijan held in this format.

Armenpress spoke with the Armenian participants of the Yerevan meeting.

According to Areg Kochinyan, President of the Research Center on Security Policy, the initiative to organize the event came from representatives of civil society and the expert communities of both countries and it was made possible with the support of state institutions in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"This is, in fact, the first event of its kind when experts and civil society representatives from the two countries meet in one of their capitals without intermediaries. That is what makes it significant. Until now, such meetings were held for years in third countries through mediators. This was the first of its kind," he said.

Kochinyan noted that the meeting was productive, with a wide range of issues discussed.

"We can note a significant change in the atmosphere and a considerable reduction in disagreements on a number of key issues," he emphasized, adding that the initiative will be ongoing.

Boris Navasardyan, President of the Yerevan Press Club, also participated in

the meeting. According to him, the initiative could help expand the settlement process so that it continues not only at the official and diplomatic levels but also at the public level.

"To achieve this, the non-governmental sector must present its ideas about the peace process to decision-makers in Yerevan and Baku. In my view, the October 21-22 meeting fulfilled this communication function," Navasardyan said.

He added that the meeting's agenda covered the full spectrum of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, including the involvement of new experts and organizations working in various fields.

Political scientist Narek Minasyan described the discussions as effective.

"We touched upon numerous issues—the settlement process, unblocking of communications, establishing effective dialogue and building mutual trust. We particularly emphasized the issue of the return of our compatriots held in Baku, highlighting its sensitivity and importance in the context of the peace process and continued dialogue," he said.

Minasyan noted that in recent months, especially after the Washington meeting, a change in the political atmosphere has been observed in Azerbaijan, which could

enhance the effectiveness of dialogue with representatives of its civil sector.

Political scientist Samvel Meliksetyan emphasized both the symbolic importance of the meeting, being the first of its kind, and its timing, coinciding with the announcement on opening railway transit through Azerbaijan to Armenia.

"The meeting can be described as a discussion on how civil society representatives from both countries can cooperate in the future, in what formats they can work and how such contacts can influence or contribute to resolving long-standing issues and adopting political decisions," he said.

Meliksetyan also noted that one advantage of civil society is the opportunity for open discussions and addressing topics that, for various reasons, are not discussed in official settings. He added that both Armenian and Azerbaijani sides are ready to accelerate cooperation.

According to Naira Sultanyan, Director of the Democracy Development Foundation, the Yerevan meeting became possible after years of dialogue between the civil societies of the two countries.

"We are grateful to our partners whose support has made possible continuous mediated contacts between Armenian and Azerbaijani civil societies. Without this support, direct dialogue would have been difficult to imagine," Sultanyan said.

She added that direct dialogue implies greater responsibility and accountability to both societies to address issues that truly matter to people and find viable, realistic solutions.

Iranian expert lauds Armenian-Azerbaijani accords for regional peace



An Iranian expert on South Caucasus affairs, Ehsan Movahedian, has described the initialing of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty as a positive development for Iran, as it helps establish peace in the Caucasus region and brings new prospects for economic cooperation.

In an interview with Armenpress, Movahedian, who holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from ATU University in Tehran, argued, however, that the process could have been “more effective” if Iran or any of Armenia’s other neighbors had

served as mediator, since Iran borders both countries and is “truly” interested in regional peace.

He made the remarks when asked about the significance of the U.S.-brokered Armenian-Azerbaijani peace agreement, initialed on August 8 in Washington, D.C.

“There are suspicions about the intentions of the United States. This country is mainly seeking to reduce the influence of Russia and Iran in the region. [U.S. President] Donald Trump signed the peace document as a witness, not as a party to the agreement,” the Iranian expert said.

Movahedian noted positively that the Washington accords emphasize Armenia’s territorial integrity and its preservation.

According to the expert, some Iranian analysts are concerned that the presence of American enterprises near Iran’s borders could lead to a U.S. security presence and disrupt the movement of Iranian

citizens and goods.

The Armenian government has numerous said that it maintains good neighborly relations with Iran and has rejected the claims about negative consequences in relation to TRIPP.

Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a U.S.-brokered joint declaration and initialed a peace agreement on August 8, 2025, in Washington, D.C.

The agreement envisions the development of the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) — a connectivity project in Armenia expected to unlock strategic economic opportunities, promote infrastructure investment, and enhance regional connectivity. TRIPP is part of the Crossroads of Peace initiative.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said that his administration is working with the United States on the detailed development of the TRIPP project.

Armenian environment minister, Czech Ambassador discuss cooperation

Minister of Environment Hambardzum Matevosyan held a meeting with Czech Ambassador to Armenia Petr Pirunčík to discuss a number of environmental matters.

“We discussed the two-year EU-funded Twinning project Enhanced Biodiversity Protection and Sustainable Use in Armenia in Line with European Standards implemented under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment of Armenia, jointly implemented by Czech Republic and the Republic of Finland. I noted that the program makes a significant contribution to improving Armenia’s environmental governance system, particularly in the areas of biodiversity conservation and effective management of specially protected natural areas. The new legislative approaches and management mechanisms developed within the framework of this program will contribute to the effective implementation of the commitments undertaken by Armenia



under the EU–Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA),” Matevosyan said on social media.

During the meeting, the parties also discussed opportunities for ensuring the continuity of the program and for deepening future cooperation. In this context, they touched upon issues related to collaboration and joint initiatives within the framework of the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Armenia

next year.

Ambassador Pirunčík reaffirmed the Czech Republic’s readiness to continue supporting Armenia’s environmental reforms, particularly in implementing EU standards and promoting the principles of sustainable development.

The meeting also addressed formats for engaging NGOs and the private sector, with the aim of ensuring effective implementation of environmental policy, raising public awareness, and strengthening participatory governance mechanisms.

“I am confident that our bilateral cooperation will contribute to the institutional development of Armenia’s environmental sector, the exchange of international best practices, and the implementation of new initiatives — all in support of environmental protection and the advancement of sustainable development goals,” the minister said.

Ruling party lawmakers perplexed by opposition's criticism of freight transit via Azerbaijan



Parliament majority MP Babken Tunyan called out the opposition on Wednesday for their disapproval of importing Kazakh wheat via Azerbaijani territory — a move that marked the first cargo transit through Azerbaijan into Armenia after Baku lifted restrictions.

Tunyan, representing the ruling Civil Contract party, said he was surprised by the opposition's stance.

"Now, I want to ask those in your faction who have held government positions in the past — including in the fields of economics and international relations — Mr. Minasyan, Mr. Khachatryan, Mr. Avetisyan, Mr. Rustamyan, Mr. Gegharyan: please stand up and clearly,

without evasion, say whether what has happened is a positive development for Armenia or not," Tunyan said, addressing opposition lawmakers during a plenary session.

Vice Speaker Ruben Rubinyan added that after the initialing of the peace agreement in Washington on August 8, the opposition had claimed it would benefit Azerbaijan but not Armenia. However, Rubinyan underscored that the wheat import via Azerbaijani territory is, in fact, advantageous to Armenia.

"Yesterday, the President of Azerbaijan stated that lifting the restriction is further proof that peace is not only on paper, but also a reality. So why don't you take turns coming up here? I know you like quoting Aliyev — go ahead, take turns and quote him," Rubinyan said.

MP Artur Khachatryan, representing the opposition Hayastan faction, stated that the unblocking of all transport routes in the region should occur simultaneously rather than partially.

He clarified that the opposition has never disapproved the unblocking.

"Our demand is the unblocking of all roads in the region. This includes the unblocking of the Armenia-to-Armenia route through Nakhchivan, which is impossible until the Sadarak-Yeraskh railway or crossing is constructed. It also includes the unblocking of the Ijevan-Gazakh road. We have never spoken out against unblocking," he said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced on Tuesday that his country had lifted "all restrictions" on the transit of goods to Armenia. The first such shipment was a consignment of Kazakh wheat, Aliyev said during a meeting with the President of Kazakhstan.

Shortly afterward, Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan said that the first transit shipment of goods through Azerbaijani territory is expected to reach Armenia soon. "Soon, the first batch of Kazakh wheat will enter Armenia via the Aktau-Baku route, followed by transit through Azerbaijani and Georgian railways. Peace has been established," Papoyan said in a statement.

Armenia, Iran negotiate simplified 'customs corridor'

Armenia and Iran are negotiating an agreement on a simplified "customs corridor," State Revenue Committee Chairman Eduard Hakobyan said on October 24.

"Negotiations on signing a simplified customs corridor agreement between Armenia and Iran are in progress and are expected to conclude soon," Hakobyan said at a press conference.

The SRC Chairman also provided



updates on cooperation with Georgia.

"We are discussing a joint checkpoint

and have formed a working group to provide combined services at the Gogavan-Guguti section," he said.

Hakobyan added that cooperation with the United States has also resumed with significant momentum, focusing on capacity development, the procurement of customs system equipment, and the implementation of certain smart monitoring systems.

Armenia plans to shorten mandatory military service sooner than originally planned

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced on October 21 that the proposed reduction in mandatory military service for men will take effect starting January 1, instead of the summer of 2026.

The Minister of Defense, Suren Papikyan, had earlier introduced legislation to

parliament to reduce the duration of mandatory military service from the current two years to 1.5 years. It was originally meant to take effect starting in the summer of 2026.

"But today I had a discussion with the Defense Minister, and previously with

parliamentarians as well, and we decided that this law should take effect sooner, on January 1, 2026. This means that, starting with the winter draft, mandatory military service in Armenia will be 1.5 years instead of two years. To all our troops, thank you for your service," Pashinyan said on Facebook.

Armenian TV Channel Linked To Church Faces Closure



(RFE/RL)- Amid Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's continuing attempts to depose Catholicos Garegin II, the Armenian parliament approved on Wednesday government-backed legislation allowing authorities to halt broadcasts of a TV channel controlled by the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Armenia's leading press freedom groups criticized the move, strongly condemned by the opposition, as politically motivated.

The church has co-financed the Shoghakat channel together with the government ever since founding it about two decades ago. The TV station has mostly aired cultural, religious and educational programs and not reported on political developments in the country, including Pashinyan's escalating standoff with the

top clergy.

Pashinyan's political allies first called for an end to the government funding and Shoghakat's broadcasts last year during massive anti-government protests led by Archbishop Bagrat Galstanian. They renewed those calls after Pashinyan began pressuring Garegin and other senior clerics in June to resign.

Legal amendments passed by the National Assembly in the first reading abolished Shoghakat's status of a "public broadcaster" that guaranteed it a slot in the national digital package accessible to TV viewers across the country. This means that the broadcaster will almost certainly be pulled off the air soon.

Two parliament deputies from the ruling Civil Contract party who drafted the amendments have claimed that Shoghakat has small viewership, criticized the quality of its programs and accused the channel of inefficiently using government funding. The channel's executive director, Many Ghazaryan, dismissed these claims last week, saying that they are not backed up by any research or other objective data.

An opposition lawmaker, Lilit Galstyan,

demanded such evidence from the authors of the bill during a parliament debate on Tuesday.

"If I thought that any justification would convince you to vote in favor [of the amendments,] I would certainly provide it," replied one of them, Taguhi Ghazaryan.

Seven Armenian media associations issued, meanwhile, a joint statement dismissing as "not convincing" and "misleading" the official rationale for stripping Shoghakat of its air frequency.

"In reality, the initiative is based not on the stated financial, managerial, qualitative or operational issues but rather on the obviously political context: the steadily escalating confrontation between the authorities and the Armenian Apostolic Church," they said.

Ara Shirinyan, the head of Armenia's Public Broadcasting Council, earlier spoke out against ending the government funding for Shoghakat which totaled just 185 million drams (\$480,000) last year. He argued that Armenian state television would need much more money to produce the kind of content that is aired by Shoghakat.

Armenia allocates 55 billion AMD in 2026 budget for relief programs of Karabakh's displaced persons

The Armenian government will allocate 55 billion drams next year to meet the needs of the forcibly displaced persons from Karabakh, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on October 27.

"55 billion drams will be allocated to address the housing and other needs of our brothers and sisters from Karabakh,"

Pashinyan said at a joint parliamentary committee hearing on the 2026 budget bill.

Nearly 120,000 Karabakh Armenians fled to Armenia during the 2023 Azerbaijani offensive. Armenia granted them the status of forcibly displaced persons and has been implementing various relief

programs since.



Ambassador donates books on Armenian history and culture to Metropolitan School in Athens

Armenia's Ambassador to Greece, Tigran Mkrtchyan, visited the International Metropolitan School (IMS) in Athens at the invitation of the school's administration.

Ambassador Mkrtchyan was welcomed by the head of the school and member of its Board of Directors, Konstantina Valsamidou, and the school librarian, Ioanna Xenaki. Accompanied by them, the Ambassador toured the new secondary school building in the Alkimos district, which



was inaugurated in 2022.

During the visit, Ambassador Mkrtchyan familiarized himself with the school's educational environment and infrastructure, and interacted with teachers and students.

As a gesture of cultural exchange, the Ambassador presented the school with a collection of books on Armenian history and culture, published in English, Greek, and Armenian.

Education leaders from Armenia and beyond convene in Yerevan to drive innovation and collaboration

The two-day conference **Academic City: International Knowledge Forum 2025** has kicked off in Yerevan, bringing together education and science professionals and officials from Armenia and several other countries.

During the first high-level panel discussion, Georgia's Minister of Education, Science, and Youth, Givi Mikanadze, said in his remarks that through dialogue and joint efforts it is possible to create a more competitive and global educational environment.

"We are living in a time of unprecedented change, where markets, technologies, and knowledge are interconnected. Therefore, our education systems must not only transmit knowledge but also demonstrate flexibility in responding to challenges. This vision guides Georgia's ongoing higher education reforms, which are being implemented under the leadership of [Georgian] Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. Our government has developed a comprehensive program for educational reform, addressing current challenges that must be overcome through effective policymaking," Mikanadze said.

According to Minister Mikanadze, the guiding principles of Georgia's higher education reforms are internationalization, digital transformation, and close partnership and collaboration with leading foreign universities and research centers.

"For neighboring countries with strategic relations, it is very important to develop cooperation, exchange necessary information and experience in the field of education. Today, we have the opportunity to jointly face challenges and solve common issues through unified efforts. We are interested in learning from our Armenian partners about the progress of educational reforms in Armenia to understand what can be implemented in Georgia as well. Together, we can strengthen each other by demonstrating the successes achieved in our countries and the obstacles overcome during the reform process. This is certainly beneficial for both sides," the Georgian minister said.



Gulzat Kobanova, Vice Minister of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan, said in her speech that the theme of the ongoing conference in Armenia resonates deeply with the Kazakh side.

"If we look at Armenia's state program for science and education through 2030, it becomes clear that it includes development priorities that are also of paramount importance in Kazakhstan's adopted state program. Each country has its own development path, but the goals set—especially in the field of higher education—have many similarities. These are challenging times, and the difficulties are particularly significant when it comes to the application of artificial intelligence. Therefore, a key priority should be the active involvement of youth in the process of solving important issues. The role of the state and its responsibility to support young people and provide quality education are extremely important," the Kazakh official said.

Janko Samardzic, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation and European Integration of Serbia, said in his speech that the Yerevan conference provides a unique opportunity to address the challenges facing the international community in the fields of education and science; therefore, the perspectives and responses expressed on these vital issues are extremely important.

"Education is not merely a fundamental human right; it provides the opportunity to realize one's potential. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen society together through education. In this regard, the reform process is continuous, taking into

account the challenges in the field and technological changes. It is the responsibility of states to anticipate these changes and implement reforms within a broad social context, turning them into concrete actions and measures. Only then will the set goals be achieved. To overcome challenges, governments and universities reform curricula while establishing strong partnerships with partners. Education must become more inclusive and align with current demands as well as national development goals," Mr. Samardzic said.

Dr. Mohammed bin Saud bin Abdulaziz Al-Moqbel, Director-General of Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, noted that his organization includes seven Arab countries, with branches in Riyadh and Doha, while the education research center is located in Kuwait. The organization has a specialized educational strategy that helps develop and modernize educational programs, particularly the teaching of Arabic in the Gulf countries.

He expressed hope that the Yerevan conference will inspire new ideas related to educational system reforms and sectoral cooperation.

"Our universities offer a variety of specializations and benefit from a new educational strategy that provides the younger generation with relevant knowledge and sufficient skills. Today, technologies are evolving rapidly, so it is important to approach them correctly. At the same time, we must consider professional ethics, especially when using technologies like artificial intelligence. Currently, the Gulf countries offer great opportunities for international students, who can come and study at prestigious and high-quality universities in the region. In other words, this creates opportunities for knowledge exchange. We are also preparing to open research centers for international lecturers and to develop joint programs with them that will support specialists and policymakers," Dr. Mohammed bin Saud bin Abdulaziz Al-Moqbel said.

Green Rock Recognized for Best Sustainable Tourism Project at World Tourism Awards 2025



Green Rock has been selected as the winner in the category Best Sustainable Tourism Project at the [World Tourism Awards 2025](#), presented during the Global Tourism Forum Annual Meeting at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels.

The World Tourism Awards celebrate outstanding travel, hospitality, and tourism initiatives from across more than 40 countries worldwide. Projects are selected for their innovation, impact, and contribution to sustainable development in the sector. This year's ceremony in Brussels gathered heads of state, ministers, CEOs of leading hospitality and aviation companies, and sustainability experts to recognize the initiatives shaping the future of global tourism.

The Awarded Project: Multifunctional Complex in Dilijan

Green Rock's winning initiative is the Multifunctional Complex in Dilijan – an ecosystem designed as a city-within-a-city. The development integrates hospitality, culture, gastronomy, retail, and public spaces, becoming a hub for both residents and visitors.

At its core, the project features a 210-room hotel and a 600-seat music hall, alongside cafés, park facilities, cinemas, a coworking space, and wellness and retail areas. The project is designed to diversify tourism beyond seasonal travel, create long-term employment, and strengthen Dilijan's position as a cultural and tourism destination in Armenia and the wider region.

Katerina Danekina, CEO of Green Rock: "This award is an important recognition of our mission to build a modern, sustainable tourism ecosystem in Dilijan while respecting the environment and empowering local communities. From the very beginning, we have focused on long-term resilience — advancing sustainable practices across our operations and adhering to global standards such as EDGE certification. At the same time, the project becomes a catalyst for Dilijan's development — creating more than 800 new jobs, raising the bar for quality and sustainability standards, and supporting the city's broader economic and social growth."

Ekaterina Bredikhina, CEO of Green

Rock Foundation: "Green Rock Foundation supports the development of the Multifunctional Complex in Dilijan, creating opportunities for the local community, fostering culture, and opening new career paths. One of our key initiatives is the partnership with Apicius International School of Hospitality (Florence, Italy) to open Apicius Armenia — the first hospitality school of its kind in the region. Green Rock have provided 10 full scholarships for local students, making it possible for young people from Dilijan to gain world-class education and move directly into careers within our growing ecosystem — hotels, restaurants, and cultural venues."

About the Global Tourism Forum & Awards

The Global Tourism Forum is an international platform uniting decision-makers, innovators, and key players in the travel and hospitality industries. Its annual meeting is one of the most significant gatherings in the sector, combining forward-looking discussions with the World Tourism Awards – Best 100, which highlight transformative tourism projects selected from across the globe.

About Green Rock

Green Rock is a development company focused on shaping Dilijan, Armenia, into a dynamic hub for culture, tourism, and sustainable growth. Through projects that combine hospitality, education, arts, and green technologies, the company contributes to local economic development and creates meaningful opportunities for the community and visitors alike.

Green Rock Foundation is the social impact platform of Green Rock. It leads non-profit projects in education, culture, and ecology — ensuring long-term value for communities and helping strategic initiatives grow in inclusive and sustainable ways.

Yerevan and Naples sign Friendship and Cooperation Agreement



An agreement on friendship and cooperation has been signed between the Armenian capital, Yerevan, and the Italian

city of Naples, Yerevan Mayor Tigran Avinyan announced on October 22.

"Naples is a city that feels much closer to us Armenians than it might seem at first glance. In the historic center of the city, there is a street named San Gregorio Armeno, dedicated to Saint Gregory the Illuminator, whose relics are kept in the eponymous church. This is a beautiful symbol of the deep, centuries-old connection between our peoples," Mayor Avinyan said in a statement on social media.

"In 2023, during discussions with my

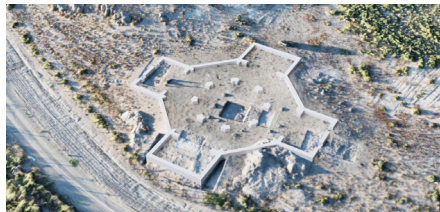
counterpart, Mayor Gaetano Manfredi of Naples, we spoke about establishing a direct flight between our cities and later continued this conversation in Yerevan. Today, I'm happy to share that this idea has become a reality. As of October, a direct flight between Yerevan and Naples has been launched, bringing our cities even closer together. With the agreement we've signed, we will embark on new initiatives with our partners in Naples," Avinyan added.

Archaeologists discover foundation of earliest documented church in Armenia

Archaeologists from the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia (NAS) and Münster University in Germany have discovered the foundations of the oldest known church in Armenia, [found last year](#) during their expedition in the Ararat Province, the NAS said in a press release.

It is the first octagonal church discovered in Armenia, covering an area of nearly 1,000 square meters.

The church was located in the area that was once the ancient city of Artashat



(Artaxata), which served as the capital of the Kingdom of Armenia. Its ruins lie on the left bank of the Araks River, near the Khor Virap Monastery, in present-day Ararat Province.

The discovery consists of an octagonal

building with cruciform extensions.

"According to radiocarbon dating results, the structure dates back to the first half of the 4th century and is, in fact, the earliest archaeologically documented church in Armenia," said Mkrtich Zardaryan, head of the expedition, Head of the Department of Ancient Armenian Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences, and Candidate of Historical Sciences.

U.S. Vice President Thanks Armenian, Greek, Catholic priests caring for Church of the Holy Sepulchre

U.S. Vice President JD Vance has expressed gratitude to the Armenian, Greek and Catholic priests for caring for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

JD Vance and U.S. Second Lady Usha Vance [visited](#) the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on October 23 during their visit to Israel.

"What an amazing blessing to have visited the site of Christ's death and resurrection. I am immensely grateful to the Greek, Armenian, and Catholic priests who care for this most sacred of places. May the Prince of Peace have mercy on us, and bless our efforts for peace," the U.S. Vice President said on X.

Vance arrived in Israel on October 21, joining Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, to help calm tensions after violence flared in Gaza over the



weekend. Vice President JD Vance and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

met Wednesday morning in Jerusalem, The Washington Post reported.



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