

Armenia celebrates Republic Day



Armenia celebrates Republic Day on May 28, the day when the first Republic of Armenia was established in 1918.

President Serzh Sargsyan, accompanied by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and All

Armenians, the political leadership of the country, visited the Sardarapat Memorial to participate in events dedicated to the Republic Day.

The President laid a wreath at the memorial to the heroes of the Battle of Sardarapat.

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President Sargsyan hands in 2017 Presidential Awards

The 2017 Presidential Award ceremony took place at the Presidential Palace on May 26. Awards, which are bestowed for a considerable contribution to a number of areas, as well as the certificate and monetary prizes, were handed to the awardees by President Serzh Sargsyan and the representative of the Robert Boghossian and Sons Fund, benefactor from Diaspora Jean Boghossian. Presidential awards were bestowed based on the relevant Presidential decrees and proposals of the special commissions.

Serzh Sargsyan congratulated the awardees, wished them great creative vigor, and new achievements.

President Sargsyan's remarks at the award ceremony

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Awardees,

I cordially salute and congratulate you on the occasion of receiving the RA Presidential Award. I am happy that today we meet and interact on such a nice occasion and pay tribute to your work.

On this, we have been supported for years by the distinguished members of the Boghossian family. Taking this opportunity, at the very beginning of my statement, on behalf of us all I would like to once again express gratitude to them for carrying out this very important task.

Dear Jean, it's been many years now, that we together reveal creative potential of our country and our nation, encourage our scientists and art workers to continue their dedicated work. This is an important contribution to Armenia's prosperity and is certainly greatly appreciated.

Dear Friends,

It is believed that one of the greatest achievements of the creative mind and inspiration of our people – the Armenian alphabet, appeared to Saint Mesrop Mashtots as a revelation. Historians claim that many scientific inventions were made by chance, or appeared in dreams.

Such claims may hold some truth, but they reflect the truth only in part. Yes, revelation can appear in a split second, even subconsciously. However, such "accidents" take place only with the individuals who have been preparing for it for years.

Creative work demands years and years of concentrated and consistent aim-oriented work. Combination of information, knowledge, skill, and experience will never go fruitless. They constitute a solid base which allows a creative inspiration. Every story of an instantaneous revelation has behind it long years of hard work.

I am confident that each recipient of this award has his or her own unique story of years-long efforts, search for the truth, finding mistakes, and redressing them.



Let this award, first of all for the youngsters, become the first page of their success story, so that new awards and international recognition come with no delay.

Distinguished Awardees,

In conclusion, I congratulate you once again and wish you great creative vigor and new achievements for the glory of our nation, for the benefit of the humanity.

Thank you.

By the RA President's decrees, the 2016 award was bestowed on Bagrat Estukian (Turkey) for his considerable contribution to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide through raising the issue constantly at the Akos paper, Hans-Lukas Kieser (Switzerland) for his prominent work on the history of the Armenian Genocide.

By other decrees of the President, the RA Presidential awards 2016 were bestowed on:

In the area of technical sciences and information technologies to Gevorg Baghdassarian and Marine Mikilian for the monography on the Effects of Magnetoelastic Interaction in Conductive Plates and Shells (in English),

In the area of literature to Ghukas Sirunian for the "Open up, it's me" book of poetry,

RA Presidential Youth Award 2016 was bestowed on:

In the area of arts to Rima Nanian for the Uncertain Images graphical works, Levon Poghosian for the Old Gods sculpture series.

In the area of literature to Armen Sarkissian for the Instead of Books Unread book of poetry, Aram Mamikonian for the Heavy Water book of poetry. In the area of classical music, the RA Presidential Youth Award 2016 was bestowed on:

In vocal area, for the supreme art of performance to Sarkis Bazhbeuk-Meliakian and Marianna Martirosian,

For instrumental music performance to Roman Namalian (piano) and Arsen Zakarian (clarinet).

Since its creation (2011) RA Presidential Award has been awarded to 348 individuals and organizations, including 24 international.



EU Rep says Sargsyan “ready to sign ambitious agreement”

The European Union hopes that Armenia will sign a new EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, a senior European parliamentarian said following a meeting with President Serzh Sargsyan on May 25.

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament David McAllister, who led a delegation on a visit to Armenia as part of a regional tour, spoke at a press conference at the end of a two-day visit that included meetings with top officials and political representatives in Armenia.

McAllister said: “I am very thankful for the president giving us so much of his precious time. We know that he is, of course, a very busy man. But it also showed that President Sargsyan was very interested in hearing the views of the members of the European Parliament and answered our questions in a very detailed way.”



Armenia was on track to sign a far-reaching association agreement with the European Union in 2013, but in a surprise policy U-turn in September that year President Sargsyan announced that his country would join a Russian-led economic grouping, something that made the planned deal with the EU impossible due to its major economic component.

Since then Armenia and the EU have been negotiating a less ambitious accord that was inked in Yerevan in March and is due to be signed at the next Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels in November.

“Armenia is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union. What happened in 2013 happened. But now President Sargsyan is ready to sign an ambitious agreement with the European Union and this is important for us, as the European Union, because we make clear that our Eastern Partnership policy isn’t a zero sum game,” the representative of the European Parliament said.

“It’s not about competition with other regional actors like Russia. I strongly believe that each country of the Eastern Partnership needs a tailor-made relation with the European Union which covers, of course, not only our interest, but also the interest of the specific country.”

McAllister expressed a hope that “the complicated negotiations in detail can be concluded.” “Because this will be beneficial for the people in Armenia and for businesses,” he underscored.

Armenian Government to set up body on corruption prevention



Acting Justice Minister Artur Hovannisyan on May 25 introduced to the Government for approval a package of draft laws to make amendments in Armenia’s law on “Body On Corruption Prevention Issues” and related laws.

According to the press service of the Ministry of Justice, in presenting the package Hovannisyan said that on the basis of the Ethics Commission for High-Ranking Officials it is planned to create a corruption prevention body that will implement corruption prevention, as part of which it will deal with ethics, conflict of interests, incompatibility requirements, other restrictions applicable to high-ranking officials and civil servants, carry

out functions related to assets, income and interests systems, educational activities and raising public awareness.

“The body on corruption prevention will be endowed with the necessary set of tools and levers, and one of the major elements of this is the ability to impose sanctions. Besides, in case of breach of the declaration requirements the body will immediately impose sanctions,” the acting minister said.

In 2015, then Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan initiated the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Council, which was headed by the head of the government.

According to human rights activists, however, that Council, just like similar structures acting in Armenia before, was not purposeful in its activities and pursued more demonstrative goals. As proof of that argument, observers point out that that the Council did not inadequately respond to corruption cases reported by media.

Armenia condemns terrorist attack in UK

Armenia has joined in the global chorus of condemnation of the terrorist attack in the United Kingdom that claimed the lives of 22 people and injured dozens.

A suicide bomber struck at an American pop star’s concert in Manchester Arena attended by thousands of people, including teenagers. According to reports, there are also children among the victims.

President Serzh Sargsyan sent on May 23 a letter of condolences to UK Prime Minister Theresa May over the terrorist explosion at the Manchester Arena which killed over two dozen people, including children, and left many injured.

“At this grave moment of loss, I express my support to you, the friendly people of the United Kingdom and the families of the victims, wishing fortitude and resolve, and a speedy recovery to the wounded,”



the Armenian leader wrote, according to his press office.

“Armenia strongly condemns such inhumane acts and is determined to continue, through the joint efforts, to fight against violence and terror,” Sargsyan underscored.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian also expressed Armenia’s strong condemnation of the Manchester bombing as he held a joint press conference with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini after the latest session of the Armenia-EU Cooperation Council in Brussels.

Armenian Defense Ministry says border security enhancement process underway

Armenia's Ministry of Defense says that the process of installation of surveillance equipment at the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and at the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is underway after the fierce fighting in the conflict zone in April 2016, but "empty tin cans are still being applied" as part of the early warning system.

In fact, head of the Ministry's Defense Policy Department Levon Ayvazyan says that the use of empty tin cans is considered quite efficient. "However primitive they may seem, I can say that they are effective. If it works, it may also be applied along with high technology. Tin cans are a necessity in some places," the official emphasized at a press conference in Yerevan on May 23.

On Monday, chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces Movses Hakobyan hosted consultations during which he instructed commanders to concentrate efforts on ensuring the security of servicemen on combat duty at border outposts.

According to Ayvazyan, surveillance equipment is currently installed in some parts of the border. But this process, he said, is not completed yet. Ayvazyan said that a huge amount of work has already been done, and similar devices are mainly installed at the line of contact between Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces. "It has increased our ability to track the movement of the enemy," the Defense Ministry official said.



Armenia's leading human rights activist Artur Sakunts, who heads the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly's Vanadzor office, a few months ago published a report on the April 2016 hostilities in Karabakh in which he pointed out numerous problems. According to the activist, it remains unclear to the public whether the Defense Ministry has analyzed the problems and found solutions to them.

In Sakunts' opinion, what caused problems in April 2016 was an "inefficient" policy in the defense sphere. He also deplored the explanation that using "empty tin cans" is efficient. "If it is efficient, let the security of the Defense Ministry building and the mansions of oligarchs be also ensured by empty tin cans," he commented poignantly.

Armenia's stance on Karabakh conflict settlement has changed, political scientist says



Political scientist Hrant Melik Shahnazaryan sees changes in Armenia's stance on Karabakh conflict settlement and has noticed a number of interesting emphases in President Serzh Sargsyan's address to the National Assembly.

"When Serzh Sargsyan was speaking about the logic of mutual concessions, he said 'under mutual concessions we understand the realization of the right of Artsakh to self-determination.' Actually, a new assessment has been given to the idea of mutual concessions. If before April 2016 Armenia meant concession of territories, as well, today it sees exceptionally Artsakh's right to self-determination, and this makes Azerbaijan nervous," Hrant Melik Shahnazaryan told a press conference on May 23. Actually, he said, there have been clear changes in the policies of the Armenian side, and Azerbaijan reacts aggressively to this. The political scientist also referred to President Sargsyan's remarks on the Madrid Principles.

"It was actually criticism of the Madrid Principles. He said the Madrid Principles arise a number of questions and it's good they have not been called to life. This is the first time official Yerevan condemns the docu-

ment, which means all documents that have been seriously considered, now at least arise questions for Armenia," he said.

Thus, according to him, the Armenian side is sending a message that it's now impossible to take the Madrid Principles as a ground, if negotiations resume.

Director of the Caucasus Institute, political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan, however, does not see anything new. "It's clear that the Madrid Principles are still on the table and there is no other document," he said.

According to Iskandaryan, the developments that have been taking place for a while are "conflict management" rather than settlement processes. "This is a strategy of living in a conflict rather than an attempt to solve it, and the Madrid Principles are just a tool," he said.

Hrant Melik Shahnazaryan called attention to the developments in Azerbaijan. Reports say the law-enforcers in the country are killing servicemen arrested on accusations of spying for Armenia.

"This points to serious problems in the Azerbaijani armed forces, to the moral and psychological condition in the army. It also allows to conclude that Azerbaijan is unable to resume war under these conditions at this point," Melik Shahnazaryan said.

According to Iskandaryan, what's happening in Azerbaijan is a result of competition between internal clans in the country, the outcome of which is hard to predict.

Hrant Melik Shahnazaryan said "it's impossible for Azerbaijan to achieve changes in the Karabakh issue on the diplomatic domain, but the country doesn't possess resources to do that in a military way, either."

Alexander Iskandaryan does not see any opportunities for solving the Karabakh issue at this point. "We are not in a stage, where we can speak seriously about it. There are no real chances for solving the conflict, as Azerbaijan's behavior leaves no room for considering the perspectives of cooperation," Iskandaryan concluded.

Steering Committee meeting of Armenia-Council of Europe 2015-2018 Action Plan held in Yerevan



On May 23, the Steering Committee Meeting of the Armenia-Council of Europe 2015-2018 Action Plan took place in Yerevan. Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia Garen Nazarian and Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes of the Council of Europe Verena Taylor co-chaired the meeting.

Permanent Representative of Armenia to the Council of Europe Paruyr Hovhannisyan, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ar-

menia Natalia Voutova, high-level representatives of the Armenian authorities, involved in the Action Plan projects, representatives of the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan participated in the discussions.

In his opening remarks Deputy Foreign Minister Garen Nazarian mentioned that since the adoption of the Action Plan dozens of projects and hundreds of events have taken place both on national and regional level. These actions have a special role in the capacity-building component of the relations with the Council of Europe, as well as in the implementation of the commitments Armenia entered into upon its accession to the Organisation.

Participants of the meeting were updated on the state of implementation of the projects in the areas of protecting and promoting human rights, ensuring justice, the rule of law and democratic governance. The Armenian side reiterated its readiness to continue the close cooperation towards executing the Action Plan.

The Council of Europe 2015-2018 Action Plan for Armenia was adopted in October, 2015 and officially launched in May, 2016. Within the framework of the Action Plan large-scale projects on improving human rights protection in the armed forces, support to the justice reforms, local democracy and others are being implemented. These projects are financed by the European Union, United Kingdom, Switzerland and other donor-countries and are realised by the Council of Europe Office in Armenia in cooperation with the relevant national stakeholders.

Tom Catena of Sudan named 2017 Aurora Prize winner



The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative honors esteemed Catholic Missionary physician in war-torn Sudan for rekindling faith in humanity.

The \$1 Million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity was awarded to Dr. Tom Catena, a Catholic missionary from Amsterdam, New York who has saved thousands of lives as the sole doctor permanently based in Sudan's war-ravaged Nuba Mountains where humanitarian aid is restricted. The Aurora Prize, granted by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, was announced at a ceremony in Yerevan, Armenia. He was selected as the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate from more than 550 nominations submitted from 66 countries.

George Clooney, Academy Award-winning actor, Co-Founder of both The Sentry and Not On Our Watch, and Co-Chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, commended Dr. Catena by stating, "As violence and war continue to threaten people's spirits and perseverance, it is important to recognize, empower and celebrate people like Dr. Catena who are selflessly helping others to not only survive, but thrive. Dr. Catena is a role model to us all, and yet another example of

people on the ground truly making a difference."

Dr. Catena will receive a \$100,000 grant and the opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by donating the accompanying \$1,000,000 award to organizations of his choice. Dr. Catena will donate the award to three organizations:

- African Mission Healthcare Foundation (AMHF), USA
- Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB), USA
- Aktion Canchanabury, Germany

For the last nine years, Dr. Catena – known by locals as "Dr. Tom" – has been on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the Mother of Mercy Catholic Hospital to care for the more than 750,000 citizens of Nuba amidst ongoing civil war between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement. Patients have been known to walk for up to seven days to receive treatment for injuries from bombing attacks and ailments varying from bone fractures to malnourishment and malaria. It is estimated that Dr. Catena treats 500 patients per day and performs more than one thousand operations each year.

On being named the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate, Dr. Catena said, "We all have an obligation to look after our brothers and sisters. It is possible that every single person can make a contribution, and to recognize that shared humanity can lead to a brighter future. With my faith as my guide, I am honored to continue to serve the world and make it a better place."

"Dr. Catena is an inspiration for to anyone who has ever doubted humanity. Despite tremendous injustice and sacrifice, he has dedicated his life to ensuring that the next generation has a brighter future," said Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, and Aurora Prize Selection Committee member. "His service to others is an inspiration, and it is our hope that the individuals he has saved will continue the cycle of gratitude by becoming saviors themselves."

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Armenia, Iran discuss cooperation in agriculture

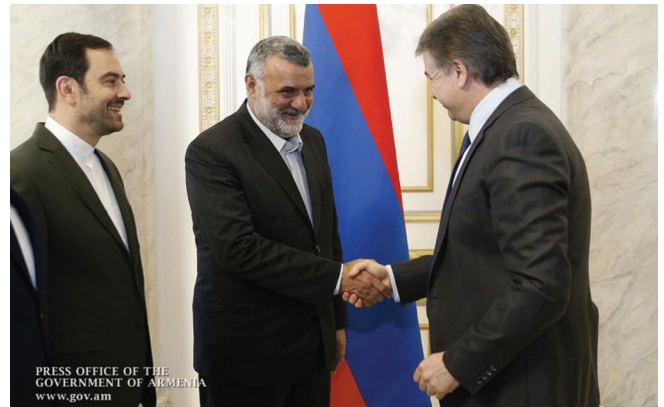
Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received today Iran's Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojjati.

The Prime Minister attached importance to the development of economic cooperation and added that the implementation of joint agricultural programs could boost the growth of commodity turnover between the two countries.

Karen Karapetyan added that the "presence of Iranian capital in the free economic zone being created in Meghri will serve as an additional impetus for the expansion and deepening of bilateral economic ties.

"The Armenian Government is ready to provide necessary assistance to Iranian businessmen for launching business in Armenia," he said. The Prime Minister said it would provide the Iranian side with favorable conditions for entering the market of the Eurasian Economic Union and the European market through GSP+ system.

Minister Hojjati, in turn, attached importance to the further development of economic cooperation and noted that the economic capacities of two friendly countries with a number of cultural



similarities should come to supplement each other.

Issues related to the establishment of Iranian product quality evaluation office in Armenia, establishment of an exporting-importing company, implementation of programs in fish-farming, as well as creation of a joint tomato manufacturing plant were discussed.

Russian-led trade bloc flaunts economic growth



For the first time since the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) was established in 2015 all of its member states have registered economic growth, Tigran Sargsyan, the president of the Eurasian Economic Commission's Board, said on Friday during a gathering of the prime ministers of the Russian-led trade bloc in Kazan.

Sargsyan, who represents Armenia's rotating presidency of the EEU, said that it was only in 2016-2017 that the member states agreed to eliminate 60 barriers in the internal market and reached major agreements in the electricity, oil, gas and transportation sectors.

The EEU, whose founding members are Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, also in-

clude Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Some opposition members in Yerevan have criticized the government's decision to join the EEU despite the fact that Armenia has no land border with the rest of the union's members. Besides, some critics also believe that Armenia, which has no fuel resources, does not fit into the customs union led by such major oil and gas producers as Russia and Kazakhstan.

They pointed to the poor economic performance of Armenia that followed its accession to the EEU. Armenia's government, on the contrary, has all along defended its decision regarding the EEU membership, arguing that otherwise the country would have fared much worse in conditions of global

economic turbulence.

Armenian Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan attended the May 26 gathering of the prime ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including EEU member states, in the capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev stated that trade among EEU member countries has increased almost threefold.

In Kazan, the heads of CIS member countries' governments signed a number of documents aimed at deepening cooperation in various fields, in particular in the fields of innovative cooperation and international transportation. The next meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government is scheduled to be held in November.

The Armenian governmental delegation led by Prime Minister Karapetyan also participated in the official reception given on behalf of the Russian prime minister to the delegations attending the gathering.

The only intrigue of the meeting was the absence of the Moldovan prime minister, who boycotted the event due to some disagreements between Russia and Moldova.

In Kazan, Karapetyan also held a bilateral meeting with Belarus Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov. According to a press release of the Armenian government, the prime ministers of the two countries discussed the agenda of Armenian-Belarusian economic relations and prospects of their further development.

USAID launches new water project in Armenia's Ararat Valley



More than anywhere in the country, Armenia's key agricultural hub and breadbasket, the Ararat Valley, is facing a severe depletion of groundwater reserves. But working with a number of Armenian partners, USAID Armenia is hoping to turn the situation around and ensure Armenia has enough water for years to come.

Studies show that Armenia's water loss is being caused by many issues, including the exponential growth of fish farming, the continued use of inefficient and outdated fish farming techniques, corruption permitting illegal wells, weak enforcement of water saving policies, and low levels of environmental awareness among the Ararat Valley's citizens. Today, more than 30 communities and 260,000 Armenians have limited access to drinking and irrigation water.

To help Armenia address this critical water

scarcity, USAID has launched the Participatory Utilization and Resources Efficiency of Water (PURE Water) project, which will promote responsible water management in the Ararat Valley through public awareness and increased civic participation. The three-year project will engage local residents, civil society organizations, local government leaders, state agencies, and policy makers to increase water productivity, efficiency, and quality. The program will also promote water stewardship as a way to help reduce groundwater abstraction in the Ararat Valley.

Recognizing the importance of involving individuals and civil society in addressing the issue of water loss, USAID aims to increase public awareness of the water issue and facilitate dialogue on needed regulatory changes among the many communities touched by the issue. Through the PURE Water pro-

gram USAID will also promote the design of small-scale water infrastructure projects to support the water needs of impacted communities.

The project will be implemented by the Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development in partnership with the Country Water Partnership NGO, and the Environmental Law Research Center at Yerevan State University.

PURE Water will complement USAID's ongoing activities aimed at curbing the rate of groundwater abstraction in the Ararat Valley. The USAID Advanced Science and Partnerships for Integrated Resource Development (ASPIRED) project helps introduce efficient water management systems and technologies to the Ararat Valley, support environmentally-friendly fish farming, and encourage investments in clean energy.

Efficient management of water resources is critical to a strong business climate, sustainable economic growth, and regional stability. USAID has been supporting Armenia's water sector for nearly two decades, helping the country to achieve measurable progress in the planning, management and monitoring of its precious water resources. Among many macro-level reforms, USAID achievements include the publication of the Water Resources Atlas for Armenia, the adoption of the Water Code of the Republic of Armenia, and the establishment of the Water Resources Management Agency.

Postage stamp dedicated to 2016 Aurora prize laureate Marguerite Barankitse put into circulation



On May 26th, 2017, "HayPost" CJSC has cancelled and put into circulation a postage stamp dedicated to the theme "Aurora humanitarian initiative. Laureates of "Aurora" prize Marguerite Barankitse".

The postage stamp with nominal value of 350 AMD is printed in "Lowe Martin Group" printing house in Canada. The author of the

stamp's design is Alla Mingyalova, a member of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative team.

"HayPost" CJSC has issued a donation coupon for 150 AMD attached to the postage stamp. "HayPost" CJSC will transfer 150 AMD donation value to the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative for the implementation of its projects.

The postage stamp depicts the first inaugural Aurora Prize laureate Marguerite Barankitse, who received the Aurora Prize for the exceptional impact of her actions on preserving lives during the years of civil war in Burundi. To date she has saved about 30 thousand children and offered them shelter and care.

The postage stamp was cancelled by 2016 Aurora prize laureate Marguerite Barankitse, the RA Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies Vahan Martirosyan, the RA Minister of Culture Armen Amiryan, Co-Founder of Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian, the Managing Director of "HayPost Trust Management" B.V. Juan Pablo Gechidjian, President of the Union of Philatelists of the RA Hovik Musayelyan.

EU, Armenia praise ongoing efforts on new accord



The European Union and Armenia reiterated their commitment to shared values and praised the current work over a new agreement to be signed later this year as their top diplomatic representatives met in Brussels on May 23.

At a joint press conference with Armenian Foreign Minister Edward after the 17th meeting of the Armenia-EU Cooperation Council, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said that the EU is “looking forward to Armenia’s active and constructive stance in preparation of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit” to be held in Brussels in November.

The new EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, negotiations over which were launched in late 2015, was initialed in Yerevan in March. Its signing is expected at the Brussels summit.

“The European Union is willing to expand and deepen cooperation with Armenia. We are already the first trading partner for the country, the first international donor and the strongest supporter of reforms.

We are ready to continue supporting Armenia’s reform process across a range of issues, including economic development, the business environment, the judiciary, human rights, the fight against corruption – issues that are very concrete and relevant for the citizens of Armenia,” Mogherini said.

“We have discussed today our shared values, including our commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, which underpin the new agreement and our future cooperation. We were discussing how far we have come in the

recent years and months. We launched negotiations in December 2015, the two of us here in Brussels, and we come now with good results that are the result of the hard, good work of our respective teams, who I would like also to thank for the good work we have managed to do.”

The EU official said that the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was also discussed during her meeting with Armenia’s representative. “The European Union believes the status quo is unsustainable and that the conflict needs an early political settlement in accordance with international law. The European Union continues to fully support the mediation efforts and proposals of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

“We also exchanged on regional issues: we discussed the situation around the conflict in Syria; the broader regional issues. The EU has also reiterated its commitment to support the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey and our encouragement to both sides to engage in this process without preconditions,” Mogherini said.

For his part, Minister Nalbandian said that “Armenia remains committed to the goals of the Eastern Partnership and continues to make its own contribution to the joint efforts in this multilateral framework.”

He, in particular, referred to the April 2 parliamentary elections in Armenia that he said were marked by an unprecedented high number of international observers, “who stated that the elections were well administered, fundamental freedoms were respected, and the results reflected the will of the population.” At

the same time, he thanked the European Union for “significant financial and technical assistance in support of the organization of free and transparent voting process.”

Nalbandian said that during the discussions with Mogherini the parties addressed a number of major regional and international issues, notably the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, as well as the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

“The large-scale military offensive of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016 was the most dangerous escalation of the conflict since 1994 when ceasefire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. The Azerbaijani aggression was accompanied by gross violations of the international humanitarian law in an apparent attempt to terrorize the people of Nagorno-Karabakh,” the top Armenian diplomat stressed that the press conference.

“Two Summits were convened after the April aggression of Azerbaijan, where agreements were reached aimed at creating appropriate conditions for advancement of the peace process. Baku refuses to implement these agreements although their importance has been highlighted on numerous occasions, including during the April 28 meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Moreover, Baku continues the gross violations of the trilateral cease-fire agreements in defiance of the consistent calls of the Co-Chair countries and the international community.

“In this context we highly value the European Union’s principled position on the exclusively peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its continuous support to the activities of the Minsk Group Co-chairmanship,” Nalbandian said, as quoted by his press office.

Nalbandian concluded his remarks by saying that “Armenia looks forward to continue the fruitful cooperation with the EU.”

Both Mogherini and Nalbandian started the press conference by voicing their strong condemnation of the terrorist act in the United Kingdom where at least 22 people were killed and 59 injured in a suicide bombing attack during a concert in Manchester.

Erdogan's Guards Beating Protesters Reinforces 'Terrible Turk' Image



*Harut
Sassounian*

Armenians and non-Armenians alike were saddened and outraged seeing videos of the attack on 11 protesters who were injured after being hit, kicked and choked by President Erdogan's security guards in front of the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., on May 16. Regrettably, several thousand Turks shamelessly sent tweets expressing their joy that Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds, Greeks and Yezidis were bloodied by Turkish thugs!

This vicious brawl has done more damage to the image of Turkey in the United States and around the world than any other brutality recently committed by Turkish soldiers, police or security guards inside Turkey. Turkish denialists constantly complain that Armenian 'propaganda' on the Armenian Genocide has stained the reputation of Turks worldwide, ignoring the fact that Turks have tarnished their own image by committing a mass heinous mass crime.

In fact, the May 16 nasty attack by Turkish goons on peaceful protesters has done more to reinforce the 'Terrible Turk' image than anything Armenians or others could have done. The Turkish government spends millions of dollars each year to pay public relations firms to present Turkey in the best possible light. However, the latest incident, which was condemned by many Members of Congress and covered widely by the mass media, has blackened the reputation of Turkey and its autocratic President Erdogan to such an extent that even \$100 million spent on public relations cannot undo the damage inflicted on their image.

Here are some of the critical comments made by Members of Congress:

Sen. John McCain (Rep.-AZ), Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee, told ABC Nightly News and MSNBC: "We should throw [Turkey's] Ambassador the hell out of the United States of America!"

In addition, Sen. McCain and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (Dem.-CA), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, sent a joint letter to Erdogan asking for an apology.

Four Republican Senators: Marco Rubio (FL), Tom Cotton (AR), Mike Lee (UT), and Ted Cruz (TX) issued a joint statement demanding an immediate apology from the Turkish government.

Condemnatory statements were also issued by: Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer (Dem.-NY), Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (Dem.-RI), Sen. Jack Reed (Dem.-RI),

Sen. Ben Cardin (Dem.-MD), Sen. Patrick Leahy (Dem.-VT), and Sen. Ben Sasse (Rep.-NEB).

House Foreign Relations Committee chairman Ed Royce sent a letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Attorney General Jeff Sessions stating: "Agents of foreign governments should never be immune from prosecution for felonious behavior."

Several other House members also issued statements condemning the Turkish attack: Don Breyer (Dem.-VA), Devin Nunes (Rep.-CA), Adam Schiff (Dem.-CA), Steny Hoyer (Dem.-MD), Frank Pallone (Dem.-NJ), Dave Loefer (Rep.-MI), David Valadao (Rep.-CA), Brad Sherman (Dem.-CA), James McGovern (Dem.-MA), Jim Costa (Dem.-CA), Zoe Lofgren (Dem.-CA), Ron DeSantis (Rep.-FL), Tulsi Gabbard (Dem.-HI), Ted Deutch (Dem.-FL), and District of Columbia Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, tweeted: "Clearly Erdogan's guards feel complete impunity, drawing on tools of repression they use at home and knowing he has their back, no matter what."

In addition, both the Mayor and Police Chief of Washington, D.C., condemned the brutal attack in the nation's Capital, shortly after Erdogan met with President Trump in the White House.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told FOX news that the Turkish attack is "simply unacceptable" and is under investigation. Turkey's Ambassador to Washington, Serdar Kilic, was summoned to the State Department by Under Secretary of State Thomas Shannon. The State Department issued a statement condemning the Turkish government "in the strongest possible terms." The Wall Street Journal reported that the State Department "is exploring ways to block members of Erdogan's security detail from re-entering the United States." This is the least the U.S. government should do! Amazingly, Amb. Kilic was quoted as telling a police officer who was trying to break up the fight, "you cannot touch us," referring to the possible diplomatic immunity granted to some of the Turkish guards. Incredibly, the Turkish Foreign Ministry summoned the U.S. Ambassador in Ankara to complain about the behavior of Washington, D.C., police.

The most serious aspect of this attack was the fact that Erdogan was video-taped by Voice of America (Turkish news service) directing his security detail to attack the protesters, according to the Washington Post. Regrettably, this is not the first time Erdogan's bodyguards have gotten involved in beating or threatening individuals during his overseas trips.

In 2009, then-Prime Minister Erdogan's security members were involved in a brawl with President Obama's Secret Service agents.

In 2011, Erdogan's bodyguards broke the

ribs of a United Nations security guard, during an attack at the U.N. headquarters in New York City.

In 2014, Turkish security in New York threatened and pushed around journalists working for a newspaper unfriendly to Erdogan.

In 2015, during a visit to Brussels, Erdogan's security guard attacked a Belgian government bodyguard.

In February 2016, Erdogan's bodyguards assaulted three women who were protesting his speech at the National Institute of Higher Studies in Quito, Uruguay. The Turkish security members also broke the nose of an Ecuadorian Parliament member who was trying to intervene. Erdogan arrogantly justified the attack: "Appropriate responses will always be taken to handle these disrespectful people." Rosana Alvarado, deputy speaker of Ecuador's Parliament, responded: "We don't want to see Erdogan in our country again!"

In March 2016, Erdogan's security attacked journalists and protesters outside the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., where the Turkish leader was invited to give a speech.

After listing some of the aforementioned attacks, National Review Online columnist Tom Rogan concluded: "As Erdogan centralizes power and attacks his opponents, the TPPD [Turkish Presidential Protection Department] has morphed from law enforcement into suited thuggery."

It will take a long time for Turkey to recover the flood of negative publicity in hundreds of U.S. newspapers, TV stations, and websites, including a devastating editorial in the Washington Post. Anders Corr writing in Forbes magazine suggested that "next time Turkey comes to town, mobilize the riot police to corral Erdogan's thuggish security if they get out of hand." In an editorial, The New York Times aptly described the May 16 attack: "The enduring image of Mr. Erdogan's visit will not be the pomp at the White House but that of his security guards and other supporters beating up protesters outside the Turkish ambassador's residence."

Erdogan's security exhibited their typical criminal behavior in front of the whole world. They behaved in the United States the way they behave routinely in Turkey!

Two Turkish journalists, writing in the independent Al-Monitor website, correctly characterized the recent ugly incidents with Erdogan's bodyguards: "The Washington visit ended with scenes making a mockery of Turkey's image," wrote Fehim Tastekin. Pinar Tremblay added: "Erdogan's security personnel are notorious for attacking protesters all around the globe, thus presenting a brutal face of Turkey that no anti-Turkey lobby could accomplish in one day."

City Spa, one of the founders of Aesthetic medicine in Armenia, that was established 14 years ago, is still following the main principles that were implemented since the launch: to use only clinically and scientifically approved, highly effective and safe with FDA approval products and equipments imported mainly from UK and Europe.

Depilation: Last year City Spa launched a very safe, painless and fast acting new machine for permanent hair removal. It is the “Primelase” produced by Cocoon Medical. The machine has an innovative



international leading brands such as ZO Skin health (Beverly Hills US), GLO therapeutics (ColoradoUS). Skin Ceuticals (US) etc.

And that's not the all: pedicure, manicure and massage will make your day.

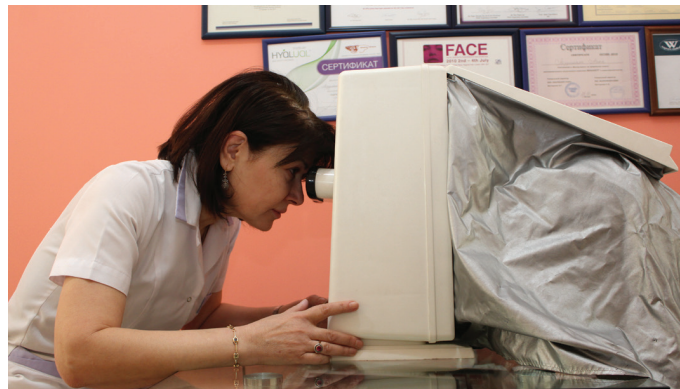
You are welcome to City Spa. The aesthetic doctor's consultations and skin diagnostics with Skin Scanner is fee. The atmosphere in City spa is full of love and peace. The pricing strategy is very flexible and discounts for good long term clients are available during whole year as well as different Gift Cards.

method (dynamic mode) which allows to treat very large areas of the body within few minutes.

Localized fat removal: In Armenia the first cryolipolysis method was implemented by City Spa in 2016. Cooltech is an innovative machine that acts as a none surgical liposuction, with a new method of cryolipolysis for permanent localized fat removal and body reconturing. It is safe, painless and very effective. City Spa is equipped also with the Wellashape machine for anti-cellulite treatment.



Anti aging Facial treatments and Care: City Spa offers the latest scientifically approved anti aging treatments and products for care. The doctors are regularly improving their qualifications in London and Paris, bringing the new inventions to Armenia. The products used in City Spa are only



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Armenia resolute to join international efforts in fighting crimes against civilization

Armenia resolute to join international efforts in eliminating ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East, Armenia's Acting Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said, addressing the conference on "Victims of Ethnic and Religious Violence in the Middle East."

The Minister's full speech is provided below:

I would like to thank Spanish hosts along with Jordan for their efforts to follow up the discussions on this challenging issue. Armenia continues to actively contribute to international efforts in this regard.

For centuries the Armenian nation has constituted a part of the multicultural and multi-religious mosaic of the region. This diversity of the Middle East – deeply rooted in the traditions of coexistence and tolerance – was once a remarkable asset not just in civilizational terms but also security wise. The mass exodus from this region of the most vulnerable groups, representing different ethnic and religious communities is largely an outcome of inhumane ideology and atrocities perpetrated by terrorist organizations.

Thus, safeguarding the remnants of diversity and tolerance in the Middle East is important for restoration of regional safety and security. It may contribute to the prevention of the spillover effect that threatens the neighboring regions and far beyond. The terrorist acts in Europe are illustrative in this regard. The phenomenon of the terrorists returning from the Middle East battlefields threatens not just the security of the countries of their origin, but may become a destabilizing factor in other regions, stimulating crisis situations and regional conflicts. The Daesh style beheadings and other despicable atrocities are already not limited just to the Middle East.

It should be made clear once and

again that religion has nothing to do with the violence. What we are counter-ing here are crimes against civilization perpetrated by Daesh and other terrorist groups. Barbarism has declared a war against the civilized world. Indeed, the threat that the ethnic and religious communities of the Middle East face, is not merely a physical, but also a civilizational challenge. To what extent the international community is able to unite and jointly fight against this evil would demonstrate to what extent it is ready to protect its own civilizational values.

It is in this spirit that Armenia expressed its resolve to join the international efforts in eliminating this scourge.

I share the opinion of my Jordanian colleague, that from one side there is a terrorist minority, and from other side the whole civilized world. I would like to underline that the efforts of civilized majority should be first and foremost directed at countering the breeding ground and root causes of terrorism.

Dear Colleagues,

It is not a coincidence that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a leading role in countering ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East. During the Armenian Genocide the Emir of Hashemite dynasty of Mecca Hussein Bin Ali issued a decree calling to protect Armenians, as they protect themselves and their children. The values of compassion and care are not outdated. They are well grounded in the century long traditions of the Middle East and should serve as an example for the current protection efforts.

The Syrian crisis has deepened divisions in the Middle East and beyond. We may hold different views on its underlying causes, dynamic or the ways of the settlement but we should stand on the same footage on the humanitarian issues. Any efforts to protect and rehabilitate victimized communities should

be supported irrespective of the political and religious differences.

Next year we will mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Genocide Convention. The actions of terrorists against ethnic and religious groups indicate the relevance of the Convention which clearly establishes the punishable actions, including the complicity. Any support to the terrorist entities involved in identity based crimes should be viewed under this Convention.

The violence has not bypassed Syrian Armenians, many of whom lost their lives in terrorist attacks. The Armenian settlements, churches, schools and cultural institutions were destroyed. One hundred years ago Armenian refugees found shelter in many Arab countries after the Armenian Genocide. Today thousands of Armenians, together with other people of the Middle East, again are forced to abandon their places of residence.

Armenia has received more than twenty two thousand refugees only from Syria, making our country the third largest recipient of Syrian refugees in Europe on per capita basis. We have also tried to reach out to the people who need assistance in Syria by continuous provision of humanitarian aid.

Throughout the recent Constitutional and Legislative Reforms Armenia enabled its four main minorities to ensure an assigned seat in the Parliament. Three out of these groups – namely Yazidis, Assyrians and Kurds have been subjected to the identity based violence in Syria and Iraq. We have a long shared history with these people. Today Armenia contributes to the international efforts for the protection of the Armenian and other vulnerable communities in the Middle East.

The quest of preserving, protecting and promoting ethnic and religious plurality and diversity of the Middle East is of high importance for civilizational, humanitarian and security reasons that make it one of the most challenging issues of the modern times.

The Ambassador of Lebanon and the Council of the Lebanese Community have honored 4 Lebanese students in Yerevan

Ambassador of Lebanon Dr. Jean Makaron and the Council of the Lebanese Community have honored 4 Lebanese students who participated in an essay contest held for 40 Lebanese students studying at universities in Armenia.

The 4 Lebanese students were invited to the Embassy and they received their prizes as follows:

Mr. Hagop Keuchkarian received a round trip airline ticket-Yerevan-Beirut-Yerevan donated by Sidon Travel-Middle East airlines represented by Mr. Sam Samuelian.

Miss. Grace Hossepian got the second prize -cash prize money- donated by Lebanese businessman in Armenia Mr. Nicolas Abou Faysal-Gardenia Farms.

While the 2 students Miss Nayri Kechichian and Mr. Seto Kouyoumjian received 2 valuable gifts from Mr. Ralph Yirikian General Director of VivaCell-MTS.

The essays treated by the students revolve about the following topics:



- As a holder of two nationalities –Lebanese and Armenian- if applicable, how can you commix and combine between them positively, in a way that serves and advances both communities and countries.

- Send a letter to your friend living abroad in order to invite him to return to his homeland.

- Highlight the prominent and historic role of the Lebanese-Armenians in helping to shape and advance civilization in Lebanon and the prominent and historic role of the Lebanese and Lebanese Armenians to shape and advance civilization in Armenia.

- Lebanon: Switzerland of the Middle-East.

This cultural activity serves to highlight the role of the Lebanese students in Armenia and to encourage them to work hard, to do the right thing in order to make their dreams come true.

Tom Catena of Sudan named 2017 Aurora Prize winner

from page 5

Leading international humanitarian figures and Aurora Prize Selection Committee members, including Gareth Evans, Hina Jilani, Leymah Gbowee, Shirin Ebadi, Ernesto Zedillo and Vartan Gregorian, were in attendance to celebrate the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate.

Dr. Catena was congratulated by Marguerite Barankitse, who was awarded the inaugural Aurora Prize in 2016 for her tireless commitment to restoring children's dignity and hope as the founder of Maison Shalom and the REMA Hospital in Burundi. She said, "The Aurora Prize is so important to keeping hope alive for people around the world, and I am proud to be joined by such a humble and true role model as Dr. Catena. I applaud his selfless efforts in delivering love to all and congratulate him on this esteemed award."

Guests of the Aurora Prize Ceremony also honored the exceptional contributions of the other four 2017 Aurora Prize finalists:

Ms. Fartuun Adan and Ms. Ilwad Elman, the Founders of the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia; Ms. Jamila Afghani, the Chairperson of the Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization in Afghanistan; Mr. Muhammad Darwish, a medical doctor at the Madaya Field Hospital in Syria; and Dr. Denis Mukwege, a gynecological surgeon and Founder of the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Dr. Catena embodies the spirit of the Aurora Prize, and we extend our deepest gratitude to him and the people and organizations around the world that support and inspire him to continue his noble work despite immensely challenging conditions," said Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and United World College at Dilijan. "We are honored to share his story with the world to shed light on the goodwill that exists in the world so that helping others becomes part of our global culture."

The naming of the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate follows the release of the Aurora Humanitarian Index, the second annual global public opinion survey that gauges attitudes towards humanitarian responsibility, the effectiveness of humanitarian intervention and individuals' motivations to intervene on behalf of others. The Index found that support for humanitarian action is on a steep decline, and that a rise in populism around the world is affecting the public's perception of efforts made to aid refugees around the world.

"We hope the findings from this year's Aurora Humanitarian Index serve as motivation for individuals around the world to not only understand their capacity for meaningful impact, but be inspired to act upon it," said Noubar Afeyan, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. "Through the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, we encourage those touched by Dr. Catena's selfless work to make their own mark on the world by expanding the circle of saviors, and most importantly survivors. It is possible for us all to play a role in renewing hope in humanity."

Trump Administration recommends 67 percent cut in aid to Armenia

The Administration released its budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) to Congress on May 24 with substantial budget cuts, the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) reports.

The proposed budget for FY18, called “A New Foundation for American Greatness,” recommended a 29 percent cut overall and a 60 percent reduction in assistance to Europe and Eurasia.

“The Assembly will continue to advance key priorities for the benefit of the Armenian people and the strengthening of U.S.-Armenia relations,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “As the current Administration reduces foreign aid across the board, we must ensure that Armenia has the resources to address the compelling humanitarian needs as a result of the current refugee crisis and Turkey’s blockade, as well as Azerbaijan’s ongoing and deadly ceasefire violations,” Ardouny added.

Under the Administration’s budget, aid to Armenia would be reduced by 67 percent, dropping from \$20.4 million in FY16 to \$6.8 million proposed for FY18. Compared to other post-Soviet nations in the region, Georgia and Ukraine are slated for a 58 percent decrease and a 70 percent decrease in aid, respectively. Assistance to Azerbaijan is cut by 90 percent with a total of \$1 million envisioned.

The budget request for Armenia includes \$4 million in Economic Support and Development Fund, \$1.5 million for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, and \$700,000 for Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs. The President’s budget maintains military

parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan, at \$600,000 for International Military Education and Training (IMET), but does not recommend Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to either country.

In addition, the budget also restated Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and the six customary exemptions for humanitarian and other assistance programs. Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act was enacted in 1992 and required the Government of Azerbaijan to take “demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force” against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. The Administration’s budget also maintains Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which restricts assistance to Azerbaijan until it ceases its hostile actions against Armenia.

According to the budget proposal, \$2.75 billion would be allocated to Migration and Refugee Assistance. The Assembly will continue advocating for a portion of those funds to go to Armenia, which has accepted an influx of refugees as a result of the crisis in Syria.

In the Assembly testimony submitted last month, Ardouny requested \$40 million to support Armenia’s efforts to serve as a regional safe haven for refugees. Additionally, the Assembly’s testimony called for: \$40 million in U.S. economic assistance to Armenia; \$20 million to implement the Royce-Engel initiative to advance peace; \$11 million in U.S. military assistance to Armenia; \$8 million to Artsakh; assistance to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia; regional energy security; and reaffirmation of the U.S. record on the Armenian Genocide, among other issues.

California Senate committee approves \$3 million for Armenian American Museum

Asbarez — The California State Senate Budget committee approved an additional \$3 million request to be allocated for the Armenian American Museum on May 23. Senator Anthony J. Portantino, with the support of Senate Pro Tem Kevin de León and Budget Subcommittee Chair Richard Roth, arranged a presentation from Armenian Museum Executive Board Member Zaven Kazazian where \$4 million request was made. The State Senate Budget committee followed up on the request and approved the proposal.

Portantino invited representatives of the Armenian American Museum in Glendale to Sacramento to make the case for additional state funding to support the project. The museum project is proposed for the City of Glendale and includes Genocide education and multicultural exhibits. Plans for its creation are underway with broad support from within the Armenian community, including its ten largest organizations.

“There is a long history of California supporting laudable museum projects around the state and I wanted to make sure that the Armenian Museum garners equal and fair support. Zaven did an excellent job of making the case for the museum and the committee was quite impressed. It’s a big step forward to have the State Senate Budget Committee insert an additional \$3 million into the State Budget for this project,” commented Portantino.

Last year, Governor Brown agreed to fund a \$1 million request for the museum. Portantino requested increasing the State’s commitment to the museum to an additional \$3 million over the next three years.

“I couldn’t be happier to see the Senate respond so well to our request. Senate staff, leadership, and members were very receptive and supportive of the museum,” concluded Portantino.

Senator Portantino represents nearly 930,000 people in the 25th Senate District, which includes Altadena, Atwater Village, Bradbury, Burbank, Claremont, Duarte, Glendale, Glendora, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, La Verne, Lake View Terrace, Los Feliz, Monrovia, Montrose, Pasadena, San Dimas, San Marino, Shadow Hills, Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, Sunland-Tujunga, and Upland.



Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator News

“Bike to Work Day” in Armenia

Going to work by Bike: a group of VivaCell-MTS employees joined the Bike to Work international initiative

The growing number of bicyclists on the Yerevan streets is not only a new trend but also an important step for building sustainable and healthy society. The number of these vehicles starts to increase in Armenia. However, still smaller percent of people rides bikes to the workplace. In different countries of the world, May is officially celebrated as the “Bike to Work” month and many people

arrive to their workplace on bicycles. Biking has its benefits both for an individual and the society, as well as for the environment and communities. Indeed, biking can become the new breakthrough in solving important health and environmental issues in Armenia.

The increase in cyclists' number can have its direct positive impact on the environmental protection. Along with the reduction in the number of automobiles, the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions to the environment will be also reduced. This is an advantage also for urban areas and cities, particularly, for residents of Yerevan. Bike riding is the most convenient way to avoid the ev-

eryday traffic jams, especially in the hot summer season. Biking is also beneficial in terms of saving time and money. It is a good option for a morning workout, which promotes a healthy lifestyle for office workers during the day.

A group of VivaCell-MTS employees joined the international “Bike to Work” day and started their morning routine with cycling. They arrived to their workplace, VivaCell-MTS Headquarters on their own bikes. The Company highly values this kind of approach towards the environmental protection.

“Every good initiative is worth implemen-



tation, and therefore, it needs all the support and encouragement. We value the responsible approach of our employees toward the environment and own health. The availability of parking spaces for bicycles next to the headquarters, is a necessary precondition to promote bike-to-work idea among our employees and to be a role model for the society", VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian** said.

On the same day, VivaCell-MTS employees, who were eager to learn driving a bicycle, were transported to Victory Park, where special masterclass lessons were provided to them by their colleagues.

VivaCell-MTS hosted another group of students of "Aregnazan" School

Practical knowledge and in-depth understanding are highly important for career orientation and development. VivaCell-MTS always shares its experience with young people interested in telecommunication sphere and Company's management culture, who want to develop understanding of various professions related to the sphere of telecommunications.

Another group of students of "Aregnazan" School in Yerevan

visited VivaCell-MTS headquarters. In the scope of the lecture and Q&A session led by VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian, the students gained a better understanding of the fields of their interest. Ralph Yirikian presented to the participants of the Open Door the Company's history, as well as its achievements in the telecommunications industry in Armenia. The guests also had a tour in VivaCell-MTS headquarters to the main operational centers. Through interactive communication, the students of "Aregnazan" school received answers to their questions and got acquainted with the daily business operations and Corporate Social Responsibility strategy of VivaCell-MTS.

"Professional orientation is as important as gaining knowledge in a particular sphere, especially, from a young age. Open Doors at VivaCell-MTS are aimed at enabling students to identify their preferences in a practical and interactive way in order to build a successful career path," said VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

"Aregnazan" School, founded in 1994, is the first and only Waldorf School in Armenia. Waldorf pedagogy is based on a holistic approach to education.



Hayastan All-Armenian Fund begins project-site visits in Artsakh and Armenia



Within the framework of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Board of Trustees' annual meeting in Yerevan, a delegation led by Executive Director Ara Vardanyan began a string of project-site visits and unveilings of newly completed projects in Artsakh and Armenia. The delegation comprises close to 45 trustees, representatives of affiliates worldwide, colleagues, and benefactors.

The events kicked off on May 20, as the delegation traveled to Artsakh via the Vardenis-Martakert Highway, the construction of which will be completed in autumn. The first event was the official opening of the newly built community center of Kochoghot (Martakert Region), a village near the Vardenis-Martakert Highway. The construction and furnishing of the multifunctional community center were made possible by the financial support of the fund's French affiliate, with additional support from the government of Artsakh. The Kochoghot community center houses the village mayor's office, a medical clinic, a library, a game room, and a large hall equipped with a kitchen. In recent years, French-Armenian support has enabled the fund to build similar community centers in 12 villages throughout Artsakh, helping vastly improve the daily lives of close to 7,700 residents.

On May 21, the delegation held opening ceremonies for two more community centers, in the villages of Kyuratagh (Hadrut Region) and Sargsashen (Martuni Region). The construction of both community centers — which, as with all such structures built by the fund, feature a full complement of modern amenities — was likewise sponsored by French-Armenians, with additional assistance from the government of Artsakh. Giv-

en its ongoing and instrumental role in the realization of major development projects across Artsakh, the French-Armenian community is held in high regard by the grateful citizens of the republic.

Today, on May 22, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund delegation visited Stepanakert's School No. 9, which is undergoing a large-scale renovation sponsored by the fund's US Western Region affiliate, with a generous donation from benefactor Gerald Turpanjian. With 395 students, the school is unique in that it complements primary and secondary education with inclusive education for special-needs children, as well as specialized classes for hearing-impaired children. The School No. 9 is the latest of several Stepanakert educational institutions that have been rebuilt and modernized by the fund.

Subsequently the delegation will visit the newly built Stepanakert Oncology Center, which opened its doors in April. The state-of-the-art medical center was made possible

through the sponsorship of French-Armenian benefactor Richard Ohanessian, with additional support from the government of Artsakh.

Later today, the delegation will attend the opening ceremony of the second wing of the Shushi Cultural and Youth Center comprising a large auditorium. The extensive renovation of the building was sponsored by the government of Artsakh and supervised by the fund. The newly renovated second wing, which comprises a hall with a seating capacity of 368, will now become the permanent home of the Mkrtich Khandamiryan State Theater. The building designed for theatrical performances and other events, dressing rooms, administrative offices, and a storage room. The main building of the center, which was reconstructed in 2012 with the financial support of the Hayastan Foundation Toronto affiliate, is home to a youth choir; classrooms for painting, ballet, instrumental folk music, and embroidery; and a puppet theater named after Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Atom Egoyan.

Following the opening ceremony, the delegation will visit the Harutyunyan family, in the village of Krasni (Askeran Region). The Harutyunyans are one of the beneficiary families of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's latest housing program, through which private homes are built and donated to low-income Artsakh families with five or more children. Since the launch of the program three years ago, 16 families have been provided with brand-new homes, and currently 15 more homes are under construction. All of these houses are distinguished by the fact that they come fully furnished and feature all necessary home appliances.



Charles Aznavour is 93



Charles Aznavour celebrates his 93rd birthday on May 22. The legendary French Armenian singer, who wrote more than 800 songs, recorded more than 1,000 of them in French, English, German and Spanish and sold over 100 million records in all, was born Chahnour Vaghinag Aznavourian on May 22, 1924, in Paris, the younger of two children born to Armenian immigrants who fled to France. His mother was a seamstress as well as an actress and his father was a baritone who sang in restaurants. Both Charles and his sister waited on tables where he performed. He delivered his first poetic recital while just a toddler. Within a few years later he had developed such a passion for singing/dancing, that he sold newspapers to earn money for lessons.

He took his first theatrical bow in the play "Emil and the Detectives" at age 9 and within a few years was working as a movie extra. He eventually quit school and toured France and Belgium as a boy singer/dancer with a traveling theatrical troupe while living the bohemian lifestyle. A popular performer at the Paris' Club de la Chanson, it was there that he was introduced in 1941 to the songwriter Pierre Roche. Together they developed names for themselves as a singing/writing cabaret and concert duo ("Roche and Aznamour"). A Parisian favorite, they became developed successful tours outside of France, including Canada. In the post WWII years Charles began appearing in films again, one of them as a singing croupier in *Goodbye Darling* (1946).

Eventually Aznavour earned a sturdy

reputation composing street-styled songs for other established musicians and singers, notably Édith Piaf, for whom he wrote the French version of the American hit "Jezebel". Heavily encouraged by her, he toured with her as both an opening act and lighting man. He lived with Piaf out of need for a time not as one of her many paramours. His mentor eventually persuaded him to perform solo (sans Roche) and he made several successful tours while scoring breakaway hits with the somber chanson songs "Sur ma vie" and "Parce que" and the notable and controversial "Après l'amour." In 1950, he gave the bittersweet song "Je Hais Les Dimanches" ["I Hate Sundays"] to chanteuse Juliette Gréco, which became a huge hit for her.

In the late 50s, Aznavour began to infiltrate films with more relish. Short and stubby in stature and excessively brash and brooding in nature, he was hardly leading man material but embraced his shortcomings nevertheless. Unwilling to let these faults deter him, he made a strong impressions with the comedy *Une gosse sensass* (1957) and with *Paris Music Hall* (1957). He was also deeply affecting as the benevolent but despondent and ill-fated mental patient Heurtevent in *Head Against the Wall* (1959). A year later, Aznavour starred as piano player Charlie Kohler/Edouard Saroyan in 'Francois Truffaut's adaptation of the David Goodis' novel *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960) [*Shoot the Piano Player*], which earned box-office kudos both in France and the United States. This sudden notoriety sparked an extensive tour

abroad in the 1960s. Dubbed the "Frank Sinatra of France" and singing in many languages (French, English, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, Armenian, Portuguese), his touring would include sold-out performances at Carnegie Hall (1964) and London's Albert Hall (1967).

Aznavour served as actor and composer/music arranger for many films, including *Gosse de Paris* (1961), which he also co-wrote with director Marcel Martin, and the dramas *Three Fables of Love* (1962) [*Three Fables of Love*] and *Dear Caroline* (1968) [*Dear Caroline*]. The actor also embraced the title role in the TV series "Les Fables de la Fontaine" (1964), then starred in the popular musical "Monsieur Carnaval" (1965), in which he performed his hit song "La bohème."

His continental star continued to shine and Aznavour acted in films outside of France with more dubious results. While the sexy satire *Candy* (1968), with an international cast that included Marlon Brando, Richard Burton and Ringo Starr, and epic adventure *The Adventurers* (1969) were considered huge misfires upon release, it still showed Aznavour off as a world-wide attraction. Later films included *Yiddish Connection* (1986), which he co-wrote and provided music, and *Il maestro* (1990) with Malcolm McDowell; more recently he received kudos for his participation in the Canadian-French production *Ararat* (2002).

Films aside, his chart-busting single "She" (1972-1974) went platinum in Britain. He also received thirty-seven gold albums in all. His most popular song in America, "Yesterday When I Was Young" has had renditions covered by everyone from Shirley Bassey to Julio Iglesias. In 1997, Aznavour received an honorary César Award. He has written three books, the memoirs "Aznavour By Aznavour" (1972), the song lyrics collection "Des mots à l'affiche" (1991) and a second memoir "Le temps des avants" (2003). A "Farewell Tour" was instigated in 2006 at age 82 and, health permitting, could last to 2010.

In 2009 Aznavour was appointed Armenia's Ambassador to Switzerland.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

The pressure of pending change is making itself known in your work arena. A situation that may no longer be tolerable for you personally is the fulcrum. Perhaps this is an issue

in which you cannot find any method to create peace enough for efficient operation. Speak up, but not in public, lest you regret it. Drive and handle tools very carefully.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Changes may be occurring in your primary relationship. One or the other of you is probably trying to hang onto what is familiar. Changes and growth must be allowed to happen or the relationship will become stale. Let things flow naturally.

Don't jump to conclusions or make problems bigger than they are.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

You are disturbed by a situation that you would rather not broadcast at this time. Don't lash out at people. It will not serve you well later. If you must speak, tone down your anger a notch or two and say your

piece. Then let it go.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You are in a reasonably good place with yourself now. Your heart and mind are flowing together. You have no conflict between your feelings and your thoughts about those feelings. This is a time for reflection

on important subjects. You can make good decisions now, especially those that are financial.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

The beginning of the week is busy, as you finish projects. On the weekend your mind shifts attention to communications. You probably feel the need to pay closer attention to your neighborhood, roommates, siblings and the casual relationships in

your life. Get out and about, breathe some fresh air, take some walks.



Virgo

(August 22–September 22)

You are prone to worry about outcomes that may never happen. Think carefully. Will worrying make the situation any better in the long run? Your ego is most likely the culprit. It wants the shallow satisfac-

tion of knowing you were right in worrying. Consider how pointless that is and let go of the worry. Relax.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

You are harboring a secret attitude about a loved one. You may think it is not visible, but it erodes the core of the relationship. The probability is high that it is critical of yourself or

the Other. Maybe a change does need to happen, but it is not useful to pressure its creation with blame.

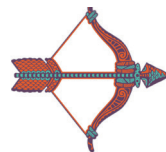


Scorpio

(October 23–November 21)

Make no impulsive moves this week and keep a sharp curb on your tongue. There may be a minor skirmish with a partner or roommate over the sharing of resources. This

is not the ultimate deal breaker and the moments of discomfort pass quickly if your relationship is basically sound. Don't turn the issue into a disaster.



Sagittarius

(November 22–December 20)

Jupiter, your ruling planet is in a truly challenging place. You may feel mistreated by someone, even attacked. But you know intuitively

that if you fight it, things will go against you. It is hard for you to back off from a fight, but you must do so now. Wait until well beyond the end of this month to revisit the situation.



Capricorn

(December 21–January 19)

You have a desire to make changes to home and/or other property, but you hit a brick wall that tells you "no." Maybe this is a person who disagrees or possibly it is some type

of inalterable rule. Step back two paces and allow your mind to open a crack to a fresh and do-able idea.



Aquarius

(January 20–February 17)

You accomplished a major task in the last couple of weeks. You were in the right place with the right skills to see it through. Don't bother with

re-thinking what you "could-a, would-a, should" have done. You did your part in the best way you could. Let yourself have the privilege of recognizing that and be done with it.



Pisces

(February 18–March 19)

Your imagination and storytelling ability is at a high point. Tell or write beautiful prose from scratch. Don't try to correct it as you go. There will be time for editing later. Your dreams

are meaningful and your intuition strong.

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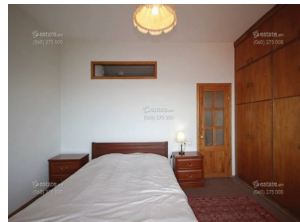
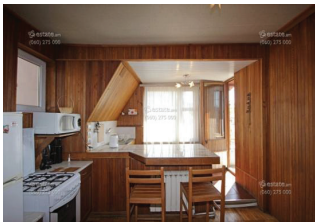
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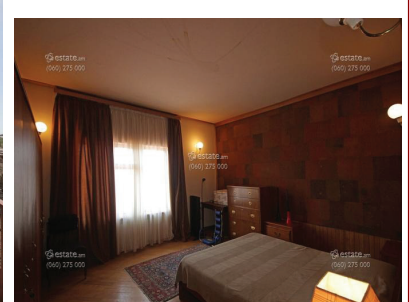
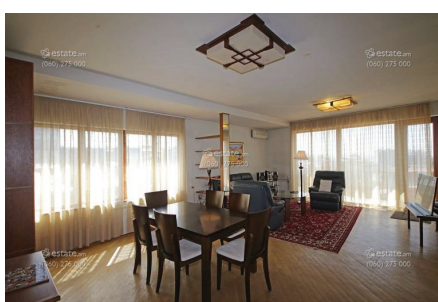
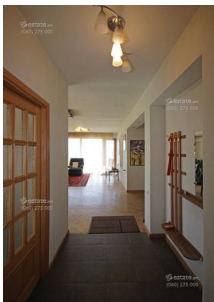
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