

On 16 November Ralph C. Yirikian, VivaCell-MTS Founding GM, a role model citizen and manager marks semi-centennial jubilee



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Armenian-Moldovan high-level talks in Yerevan



The Presidents of Armenia and Moldova Serzh Sargsyan and Igor Dodon discussed a wide range of issues as they met in Yerevan on November 9.

The Presidents of the two countries paid special attention to the development of economic cooperation. "We cannot be satisfied with the level of cooperation despite the

33 percent growth of commodity turnover during the first nine months of the current year," President Sargsyan told reporters following the meeting. He stressed the need to support the business to ensure a steady growth and develop cooperation in high technologies and innovation along with traditional directions of cooperation.

President Sargsyan said "we welcome Moldova's aspiration to cooperate more closely with integration frameworks.

"During the meeting I reiterated Armenia's stance on exceptionally peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict based on the norms and principles of international law and the UN Charter, which refer, in part, to the non-use of force or the threat of force, territorial integrity and the right of peoples to self-determination," Armenia's President said.

Serzh Sargsyan said he emphasized the importance of implementation of the agreements reached at Vienna, St. Petersburg and Geneva summits, which will help prevent escalation of tension and take additional measures to intensify the negotiation process.

President Sargsyan receives Second All-Armenian Scientific Conference participants

President Serzh Sargsyan received a group of participants of the 2nd All-Armenian Scientific Conference held in Yerevan on November 5-8. The delegation consisted of prominent Armenian scientists and scholars from the United States, Russia, France, Ireland, Denmark and other countries.

Welcoming the scientists to Homeland, the President highlighted the holding of this already traditional conference in capital Yerevan.

"It is crucial for young people to have the opportunity of communicating with individuals who have already achieved great success in science and technology, but I believe that this forum is also important from another perspective: it is not only a chance for young people to get familiar with new scientific ideas, but it is also a good opportunity to see how successful people can be of service to our country. We have no other way but to build a knowledge-based economy," President Sargsyan emphasized, presenting Armenia's consistent policy of encouraging and promoting successful scientists and the individuals with great aspirations amid the



financial constraints faced in the country.

The scientists in attendance talked about their impressions of the President-supported All-Armenian Scientific Conference, dwelling on the achievements recorded since the first forum. They evoked those substantive discussions held with many young Armenian researchers that are supposed to combine the scientific potential of Armenia and

the Diaspora, exchange know-how, as well as to discuss issues relevant research and education and the ways of dealing with them in a bid to promote Armenia's development.

The guests exchanged ideas with the President of Armenia on further cooperation for the promotion of science and education in Armenia. During the meeting, President Sargsyan answered the scientists' questions.

Artsakh is the master of own destiny – Ara Babloyan

Yerevan is hosting 12th sitting of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission on Cooperation between the National Assemblies of Armenia and Artsakh.

“Artsakh is steadily moving along the path of determining its own future,” Speaker of the Armenian national Assembly Ara Babloyan said in his opening remarks.

“We have stated on many occasions that the Republic of Armenia is the guarantor of Artsakh’s security, but the people of Artsakh are the masters of their future. Our stance is clear: no decision that will be unacceptable to Artsakh or will threaten its security can ever be adopted by any structure,” Mr. Babloyan said.

He reiterated the position of the authorities of Armenia and Artsakh that there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement to the Karabakh issue. The right of the Artsakh people to determine its own future should be respected, and its security should be guaranteed,” the Speaker stated.

He stressed that Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan in any capacity. “The meeting of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan



in Geneva last month was an important step towards the intensification of the negotiation process,” Mr. Babloyan said. He added, however, that “for real progress in the talks, Azerbaijan should refuse from any idea of seeing Artsakh under its jurisdiction.

The Speaker noted that “the existence of two Armenian states is the wealth of our nation. “We are obliged to defend and develop it with joint effort and actions, through strengthening of the economic and security systems,” Ara Babloyan stated.

Armenia highly appreciates cooperation with Council of Europe – PM

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received Chairperson of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Mrs. Gudrun Mosler-Törnström.

The Head of Government noted the importance of Gudrun Mosler-Törnström’s visit and her participation in the event dedicated to the 20th anni-

versary of Armenia’s local authorities. The Prime Minister noted that Armenia highly appreciates the ongoing cooperation with the Council of Europe and is actively participating in the proceedings of all statutory and consultative bodies of the Council of Europe, including the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Mrs. Mosler-Törnström described Armenia’s cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe as quite effective, noting that Armenia is a reliable partner for them. She advised that she had held fruitful discussions with Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Development David Lokyan, and she was well aware of the ongoing reforms. Mrs. Mosler-Törnström expressed readiness to continue assisting our country in this process.

The parties exchanged views on the ways of strengthening local democracy in Armenia. Karen Karapetyan presented the rationale behind the reforms initiated by the Government in the sphere of territorial management and local self-government, which seek to change the mindset and the thinking of municipal authorities, enhance their role and shape a stronger link in decision-making.

The Premier thanked the guest for the sustained support provided by the Congress, highlighting the roadmap to the post-monitoring dialogue between Armenia and the Council of Europe as signed in 2016.



US reiterates calls to establish OSCE investigative mechanism in Karabakh conflict zone

The United States reiterates strong support for the work of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and appreciates their unwavering engagement with the sides to advance a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

"The United States welcomes the joint statement by the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan following the October 16 summit organized by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group in Geneva," US Chargé d'Affaires Harry Kamian said in address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna.

"This summit was an important signal showing that the sides are ready to re-engage in negotiations in good faith. We are pleased that the presidents agreed to take urgently needed measures to reduce tensions along the Line of Contact, and we encourage the sides to build on this positive momentum and refrain from mutual accusations and recriminations," he said.

Harry Kamian reiterated calls for the sides to implement the measures agreed upon at the summits in Vienna and St. Petersburg in May and June 2016, respectively. "The sides agreed then to expand the monitoring by the Office of the Chairmanship's Personal Representative, which we hope can eventually be reflected in the 2018 OSCE budget. The United States also encourages the sides to work on the proposal to establish an OSCE investigative mechanism," he added.

He also appreciated Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk's assessment of the situation on the ground – that it is relatively stable, but tense, and that even a small ceasefire violation could spiral quickly out of control.

"We also support confidence-building measures and increased di-



alogue between Armenians and Azerbaijanis that can help stabilize the security situation and create a more constructive atmosphere for negotiations. Those participating in dialogue must be able to do so freely, without fear of harassment when they return home," Harry Kamian said.

In conclusion he stated: "We share the frustration of the sides that this conflict has indeed gone on far too long, and we believe the status quo is unacceptable. At the same time, we all agree that there can be no military solution to the conflict. As a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States remains deeply committed to working with the sides to find a lasting and peaceful resolution to the conflict, one based on the principles shared by participating States of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination, as embraced in the Helsinki Final Act."

CSTO ensures regional security, Russian Amb. says



The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is a credible regional structure, which ensures security and stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty for the participating countries, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said Wednesday, TASS reported.

On November 8, Antonov attended a reception in the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. on occasion of the 25th anniversary since signing the Collective Security Treaty and the 15th anniversary since establishing the CSTO on its basis. Among the guests were the Serbian ambassador and charges d'affaires of China and Laos in the US,

and dozens of other diplomats and defense ministry officials from different countries.

"It is important to know and it was stressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in April this year that our regional alliance was created neither during the Cold War nor during the power war competition, which rendered the attempts to rival the CSTO against another state or a group of countries as illegitimate," Antonov said.

"Our ultimate goal is to create a favorable and stable environment for comprehensive development of all member-states. We are open to cooperation with all countries for the sake of promoting peace, security and stability both at the regional and international level," he said. The CSTO Charter states that in order to achieve these goals the member-states should give priority to political means.

According to Antonov, all decisions of the CSTO are made by consensus and it has great experience of cooperating based on equal partnership, mutual respect and non-interference in domestic affairs. "We see in this a potential for future development of the organization."

The CSTO also created conditions for collective advancement of common interests on the international arena. "We are satisfied with an increased level of foreign policy coordination among the organization's member-states," Antonov said. The CSTO successfully cooperates with other international structures for regional security, most notably the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. "We expand cooperation on maintaining peace and security between the CSTO and the United Nations."

The Collective Security Treaty Organization includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

Arms trade is not trade of vegetables, Armenian Foreign Minister says in Israel

Armenia expects Israel to recognize the Armenian Genocide, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian said in an interview with the Public Broadcasting Corporation.

"The two nations have passed through the horrors of genocide. Many scholars, many politicians consider that in case of adequate condemnation of the Armenian Genocide it could be possible to prevent Shoah and other genocides. That is why of course, we are expecting that Israel will officially recognize the Armenian Genocide," Minister Nalbandian said.

"We feel that more and more people in Israel favor the recognition, including in the Parliament. I had a meeting with the Chairman of the Knesset. He again expressed his very clear position of the importance of the recognition by Knesset of the Armenian Genocide," the Foreign Minister said.

Speaking of Armenia's cooperation with Iran and the latter's role in the region, Armenia's top diplomat said: "We have good relations with neighboring Iran, we cooperate in different fields. Taking into consideration that we have closed borders with other two neighbors, with Turkey and Azerbaijan, you have to understand that Iran and Georgia are the two neighbors with whom we have not just normal relations, but good cooperation. And we are deploying efforts with the aim to develop our bilateral cooperation and partnership."

Edward Nalbandian said "it's not an obstacle to Armenia's bilateral relations with Israel, just like the Israel's relations with any neighboring country of Armenia are not an obstacle to our relations.

Armenia and Israel have not yet exchanged Ambassadors. "Our position was very clear: as soon as Israel will open an embassy in Armenia, we will reciprocate and open an Embassy in Israel," Edward Nalbandian said.

On Nagorno Karabakh, the Foreign Minister said: "We are never asking our friendly, partner countries to support Armenia against anybody, including Azer-



baijan. On Nagorno-Karabakh issue our expectation is to support and to be in line with the position of the international community. The international community gave a mandate to the three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group- the United States, Russia and France – to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement. This is the unique situation that the United States, Russia and France, on the level of the Presidents of those countries, adopted five statement on how the conflict could be resolved in a very detailed way with concrete principles and concrete elements elaborated as an integrated whole. And Armenia's position is in line with the position of the Co-Chair countries, so with the position of the international community."

The Armenian Foreign Minister stated that "the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh has to be decided by the free expression of will of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, which will have an internationally legally binding force, including for Azerbaijan. This is the position of the international community and we are expressing our support to this position, but Azerbaijan doesn't."

"Concerning the ceasefire violations, and by the way this is also the position of the three Co-Chair countries, so of the international community, including Armenia, that we have to respect the trilateral ceasefire agreements reached between Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1994-1995 without time limitations, three agreements

about the ceasefire and about the consolidation of the ceasefire. Azerbaijan is always trying not to respect ceasefire agreements, and even to put under the question that those agreements are in force," Edward Nalbandian stated.

"This is the difference between our position and the position of Azerbaijan. Even more, the international community through three co-chairs come up with the proposals to create investigation mechanism of violations of the ceasefire agreements. Armenia supports the proposal on the creation of mechanism of investigation of ceasefire violations which could serve as a mechanism of prevention. Azerbaijan is rejecting to creation of this mechanism, so the position of the three Co-Chair countries, of course they are mediators and could not always express their opinion about it openly and publicly. Nevertheless, they are always saying that the side, which is rejecting to create this mechanism of prevention takes the responsibility for all the violations of ceasefire," the Armenian Foreign Minister added.

Asked about Armenia's stance on Israel's military exports, the Minister said: "The trade of arms is not a trade of vegetables and such kind of trade always has its black side, which could have some negative consequences. What's important in Armenia's relations with Israel is that we have no taboo for discussing all the questions, even sensitive questions we are discussing openly and we are trying to find ways out."

EBRD forecasts 3.5 percent GDP growth in Armenia in 2017 and 2018

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has sharply raised growth forecasts on Tuesday for the 37 countries in which it operates, saying improving exports, a revival in investment and firmer commodity prices were supporting a broad upswing.

In Armenia, economic growth has regained momentum in the first half of 2017, after coming almost to a standstill in 2016. GDP expanded by 6.5 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2017 and by a further 5.5 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter, the bank said in a new report.

The rebound was supported by strong export performance and a recovery in money transfers to Armenia, which followed three years of contraction.

On the other hand, contraction in the agricultural output and construction continued in the first nine months of 2017. Consumer price inflation slowly increased to 0.6 per cent year-on-year in the first nine months of 2017 amid monetary policy relaxation and



recovering household consumption.

Ongoing fiscal consolidation aims to put public debt on a declining trajectory. The budget deficit is planned to go down from 5.6 per cent in 2016 to around 3.0 per cent of GDP in 2017, mainly through lower public investment.

The banking sector is well-positioned to expand lending to the economy following a successful recapitalization. Economic

recovery in the main trading partners is expected to bolster growth in Armenia, but the economy remains exposed to several risks, including volatility in the commodity markets.

“The conflict in the Nagorno Karabakh region presents a risk to the growth outlook. We forecast Armenia’s economy to grow by 3.5 per cent in both 2017 and 2018,” EBRD said.

Government discusses legislative amendments on gas filling stations

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan held a consultation to discuss a package of legislative amendments aimed at solving the problems arising from the operations of gas filling stations and gas cylinders and a procedure for conducting technical inspections of motor vehicles.

The package suggests licensing in Armenia the installation of gas tanks on motor vehicles operating on compressed natural, liquefied petroleum gas and the scheduled pressure testing of cylinders. This will first and foremost raise the level of citizens’ security. The amendment provides for other control measures.

The Premier considered it necessary to simplify the licensing mechanism. He also stressed the need for involving the Ministry of Emergency Situations in the process of licensing and security improvements.

Taking into consideration the proposals voiced during the discussion and the potential corruption risks, Karen Karapetyan instructed those responsible to finalize the pro-



posed package of legislative amendments before submitting it to the Government Staff.

The new technical inspection arrangements for motor vehicles provide that the technical inspection coupons shall be withdrawn from

circulation, and all motor vehicles should be subject to technical checks. This process will be monitored electronically by the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies and the Police.

Yerevan Home Care is the first and the only one company launched in 2011 in Yerevan. The company is providing a 24/7 qualified care service to older adults, disabled people, people suffering from chronic diseases or those who need postoperative care, as well as to people with dementia.

Creating the company we concider to support many families that live abroad and have their elderly family members staying in Armenia. We succeed in supporting these families to have not only a solution of the raised problem but to have a deep feeling of satisfaction that their relatives are in good hands.

The organization's greatest wealth is educated, professional, skilled, experienced staff and people with high values and psychological knowledge.

We treat each patient with a strong sense of responsibility and show an individual approach to the families, at the same time maintaining the accepted norms and using contemporary approaches.

Taking your relative's care on our shoulders, we bring harmony between the different generations.

Apart from the professional knowledge the company pays a great attention to the human-



This type of care includes personal care aides, home care aides, and home health aides. Home health aides might also provide limited assistance with things such as taking blood pressure or offering medication reminders.

Nursing care is more related for patients after surgery, traumas, different chronic diseases

Rehabilitation service is for people who need professional rehabilitation in their recovery periods after some types of diseases and surgery. Dementia /Alzheimer /special care is for people with dementia in all stages when you worried about their safety or a health problem.

Yerevan Home Care provides all type of medical equipment that will increase the quality of life of your loved ones. (rent of the equipment is acceptable)

Transportation is a key issue for older adults and for people with temporary or permanent disabilities especially in Armenia where the streets and buildings are not adjusted for disabled people. Yerevan Home Care is providing a transportation service for people that are in wheelchairs.

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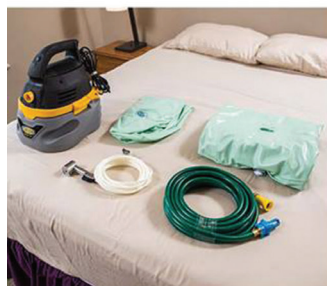
yerevanhomecare.am 010 546 546

itarian qualities of the serving staff, to their kindness, patience, attention and courteous manner.

We assure that we will be your irreplaceable assistant in helping and surrounding your relative with care and support.

We provide service to all type of patients who needs care assistance.

Personal care is for elderly people who are alone and need support in daily living, such as dressing, bathing, feeding, or meal preparation.



Անկողնային հիվանդների լոգանքի կազմակերպում իրենց իսկ անկողնում

Vahe Andonians: Moody's Grows More Interested in Armenia

Below The Highlights readers could find recent interview of Vahe Andonians, SCDM Founder with banks.am

- SCDM doesn't have an analogue in Armenia from the point of services it provides. What motivated you to found a company here? What challenges did you face in the beginning?

-In the beginning, SCDM was providing data management services for investors in Structured Credit products. That is, regarding market participants, such a niche market that it would be hard to find any location where you could find staff skilled in that area. I also think it does not matter at all, as we always, at least tried, to hire by character and not skills. We have always been looking for energetic and out-of-the-box thinking problem solvers. Traits that you can easily find in Armenia. The primary challenge was infrastructure, in particular, Internet connection. That is evidently much better now but still needs improvement.

- The company provides risk management service. What are the global trends in this area (and what are the risks you help companies to eliminate)? Is there a demand for that service among Armenian companies?

-We are not trying to eliminate risk at all. On the contrary, risk-taking is what our clients, and any company for that matter, is paid for. What we are trying to do, is to help understand the taken risk better and hence put our clients in the position to know if the earned reward is enough. Obviously, risk management services is a broad field; we have traditionally been in the Structured Credit market and entered the valuation of any financial instrument some years ago. Structured Credit is essentially not existing in Armenia and valuation of financial instruments is, at this stage of the economy, to some extent necessary but cannot be regarded as a real market. Our clients are mostly large multinational corporations such as BNP Paribas or HSBC as well as central banks such as the Deutsche Bundesbank.

- Moody's recently purchased a part of SCDM. Can you tell us about the deal? Which functions did Moody's take? Can

this deal promote Moody's entry to Armenian market as a rating company?

-Well, Moody's Analytics did an Asset Purchase Agreement with SCDM and took over our Intellectual Property in our Structured Credit related products as well as our clients in that field. At the same time, they liked our capabilities in data management and hence entered into a contract to purchase this service from us. To my knowledge, they are traditionally outsourcing such services to India. Although I have only rudimentary knowledge about India and the outsourcing market there, I am confident that SCDM, and Armenia in general, have an excellent value proposition for companies such as Moody's Analytics. The relationship with Moody's is since February 2017, when we closed the transaction, growing and we are exploring other areas to cooperate. One of them is Artificial Intelligence. In that field, we have built already a successful proof of concept and are now working on a minimum viable product. This cooperation will soon be put into a more formal and also a closer relationship - about which I cannot talk now. Moody's Investor Services, the company that is providing ratings, is very well aware of the transaction with Moody's Analytics and SCDM. I am sure that given a continuing successful relationship with Moody's Analytics, there will be interest from Moody's Investor Services as well.

- Financial technologies are taking over the world. What are the global trends in this area? To what extent does Armenian financial market keep up with the world?

-At least in my professional life, it has never been so easy to answer this question on a very high level - Blockchain and AI. Both are, of course, not limited to the financial sector but will most certainly revolutionize the way we organize our lives in future. The application of AI, currently in particular machine learning, in the financial industry will lead to a much more efficient industry overall. I think that is necessary. After all, the financial sector is, a bit oversimplified, just reallocating money from money holders to money seekers. A service that cannot



be worth over 10% of the GDP, which is the average in industrialized countries. Artificial Intelligence can help in many areas, starting from processing documents up to robot-advise. Blockchain, on the other hand, has at the very least, the potential to revolutionize the financial industry from its core. Cryptocurrencies successfully show that we do not need a centralized trust system for money to work and, consequently, dominantly raise the question - should a country have its currency? Personally, I think, Bitcoin is more money than 30 fiat currencies I know. A distributed system for money could not only remove the single point of failure - in case of money the central banks - but also introduce a better system of seigniorage. A system where the money would not need to be redistributed from the too wealthy to the poor through taxes; but could originate at the bottom and go up through economic activity. Especially countries like Armenia that have difficulties in redistribution and the creation of a healthy middle class could explore these new possibilities. Besides money, blockchain offers through distributed trust many other applications within the financial sector that are not such revolutionizing in nature. All larger banks are exploring blockchain technology to streamline the settlement of financial transactions for example.

- Let's talk about SCDM as an employer. What are your criteria for selecting the staff? Do you consider the knowledge of Armenian universities' graduates to be sufficient?

How competitive are the wages you pay as compared to other companies? If you look at employees as a long-term asset rather than necessary cost, skills get less significant in contrast to the character of people. Mostly, because whatever one's current skills are, they are outdated in a couple of years, whereas one's character will hardly change within the same time-frame. Hence, we try to hire by character and think the role of the university cannot be limited to provide skills but rather to create an environment where students are encouraged to study something at depth and fundamentally. Not the content is relevant, but the process. Unfortunately,

universities worldwide are more and more school-like, removing the individual responsibility of the student by forcing attendance and a strict curriculum. Additionally, universities are encouraging to think in terms of right and wrong rather than promoting creative thought and challenging current beliefs. After all, there is no authority for knowledge other than human reason, which is limited, fallible, and conjectural. We propose theories; we test them; some stand, some fall; and all are eventually replaced by better, more explanatory theories. How are we expecting that process to happen in future if all our students think only in categories of right and wrong? This is of course not only an Armenian problem, but I do believe that thinking in categories is more dominant here than in many other countries. Regarding wages, I cannot be the judge of how our salaries compare to other company's, nor do I think it is important as long as employees earn enough for their basic needs. - You invested in Armenia by founding SCDM. How attractive is Armenia's financial services sector to foreign investors? Which issues and opportunities would you point out?

I am lucky to be part of a team of people that put their soul into what they create on a daily basis for many years now. As a result, we have not only survived the biggest financial crises in history but grown through building trusting relationships with our clients. Hence, for me, Armenia was an excellent choice, and I would assume same holds true for other

investors. There are of course difficulties too; infrastructure is not at a level where it should ultimately be, and same is true for logistics and travel within the country as well as outside.

- SCDM provides services to foreign organizations. How likely is it that you start providing services to Armenian companies? Why don't they have a demand for your services yet? What do you think could lead to development of that demand?

- Demand is not there because the financial market is in an entirely different stage compared to Europe/US. It is even questionable if it will go through the same evolution as the European/US market. After all, being behind is not always a disadvantage. Armenia could, and frankly should leapfrog, jumping over several steps. As a consequence, our current products might be unnecessary for Armenia not only temporarily but in general. I would wish for Armenia to be bolder in its path and embrace new technologies and structures such as distributed trust in a fundamental way. For example, Estonia is, admittedly based on publicly available information, pushing much harder on cryptocurrencies compared to Armenia. Even though, their position, being part of the Eurozone, is much harder. Also, in the space of regulation, Armenia could, based on its independence and size, much easier embrace new technologies and strategies compared to other countries.



Ralph Yirikian: Serving the Nation...

On 16 November **Ralph Cesar Yirikian**, Founding General Manager of VivaCell-MTS marks his semi-centennial jubilee.

...Maybe years later, after all, an all-encompassing volume will be published on all the GOOD DEEDS/REAL CHARITY Mr Yirikian has done for many and many – the list seems an endless one...

This kind of the REAL, i.e. “PR-LESS” CHARITY indeed has been something new we’ve seen and enjoyed.

And also Ralph – in this way the people call him, and this has no even a piece of disrespect – vice versa, in Mr Yirikian’s case

it means THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE consider him to be ONE OF THEM, - has brought to the Motherland Armenia UNPRECEDENTED CULTURE of management and business.

And the ENDLESS PATRIOTISM indeed...

The above mentioned can be called LESSONS of Ralph Yirikian, - ROLE MODEL CITIZEN and LEADER that (the lessons) should be learned and taught, no doubt.

So WE ALL congratulate cordially Mr Yirikian for his (first, but not the last) semi-centennial JUBILEE and say the only phrase: THANK YOU FOR YOUR BEING !



Istanbul Armenian Community's Dilemma In Trying to Elect a New Patriarch



**Harut
Sassounian**

A major controversy has been brewing in Istanbul for several years among members of the Armenian community over plans to elect a new Armenian Patriarch.

The controversy has long historic roots and more recent complications which started with the terminal illness of Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan who is unable to carry out his duties because of dementia.

When some members of the Istanbul Armenian community tried to elect a new Patriarch to replace the incapacitated Mesrob Patriarch, the Turkish government officially announced that as long as the existing Patriarch is alive, no new Patriarch can be elected. Even the request to elect a Coadjutor Patriarch was rejected by the Governor of Istanbul.

The Turkish government used the excuse that the Armenian community's constitution of 1863 contained no such office as Coadjutor Patriarch. The problem was that the Turkish government had declared the constitution to be invalid several decades earlier. If the government was basing its decision on a defunct constitution, it meant that it was recognizing its validity. If the constitution is valid, then the community has the right to elect delegates who in turn could elect a new Patriarch. Regrettably, the Armenian community did not think of bringing this contradiction to the attention of the Turkish government!

We remember that Mesrob Patriarch also faced opposition from the Turkish government prior to his election in 1998. Eventually, he went to Ankara and "made a deal" with Turkish officials behind closed doors, which allowed him to be elected Patriarch. Soon after, he started promoting various Turkish causes, including going throughout Western Europe to advocate for Turkey's mem-

bership in the European Union and several visits to the United States to make public appearances at the Turkish government's request!

Earlier this year, some members of the Istanbul Armenian community decided to make another attempt to elect a new Patriarch motivated by their dislike of Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, Vicar General ("pokhanort") of the Patriarchate, and their desire to have a full-fledged Patriarch. The problem was Abp. Ateshyan would not resign from his post, blocking the door for new elections.... After much pressure from Armenians locally and around the world, particularly by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All-Armenians in Etchmiadzin, Armenia, an agreement was reached for Abp. Ateshyan to resign and for the Primate of the Armenian Church in Germany, Abp. Karekin Bekjian to be elected as Locum Tenens ("deghabah") to organize new Patriarchal elections.

Soon after this agreement, a group of prominent Istanbul Armenians formed a committee to initiate the Patriarchal elections, even though everyone in the community knew that the Turkish government was against such an election. As a matter of fact, while Abp. Bekjian was being elected as Locum Tenens, Abp. Ateshyan received a letter from the Governor of Istanbul informing him that the Turkish government does not recognize Abp. Bekjian's election and continued to consider Abp. Ateshyan as the legitimate Vicar General. Unfortunately, Abp. Ateshyan presented the letter to the Initiating Committee only after they had elected Abp. Bekjian to his post. This episode increased the antagonism of those opposing Abp. Ateshyan and continued their support for Abp. Bekjian.

To resolve this dilemma, Abp. Bekjian wrote a letter to the Governor of Istanbul asking for a meeting. After waiting for 60 days for a reply, Abp. Bekjian flew to Germany to meet with Catholicos Karekin II during his visit there.

While Abp. Bekjian was out of Turkey, the Governor of Istanbul invited Abp. Ateshyan, Bishop Sahag Mashalian and the head of the Initiating Committee for a meeting. The timing was no coincidence. It was clear that the Governor did not want to meet with Abp. Bekjian,

someone whose election he did not recognize!

The argument in the local Armenian community intensified between those who considered themselves to be realistic, acknowledging the Turkish government's role in the Patriarchal elections, and those who rejected any interference by the Turkish government. The supporters of Abp. Ateshyan pointed out the uselessness of going against the wishes of the powerful Turkish government that had jailed thousands of opposition members and even defied major countries such as Germany and the United States. Furthermore, Abp. Ateshyan's proponents indicated that if Catholicos Karekin II could intervene in the elections of the Istanbul Patriarchate, an autonomous branch of the Armenian Church, then it would be understandable, no matter how undesirable, that the President of Turkey would have the right to interfere in elections held in his own country.

To make matters worse, before Abp. Bekjian returned from Germany, five members of the Initiating Committee had resigned after meeting with the Governor of Istanbul. The rest of the committee members wanted to wait until Abp. Bekjian's return before making a decision.

Following Abp. Bekjian's arrival in Istanbul, after consulting with the Initiating Committee, he announced that he would write a letter to the Turkish Minister of Interior, asking for a one-on-one meeting. Defying Istanbul Governor's clear instructions, Abp. Bekjian continued to remain in his post.

Abp. Bekjian's intent to meet privately with the Minister of Interior is fraught with pitfalls. As was the case with Patriarch Mesrob, Abp. Bekjian could make a private deal with the Minister, pledging to carry out the Turkish Government's instructions henceforth. During his tenure as Primate of Germany, Abp. Bekjian had spoken out periodically about the Armenian Genocide.

Abp. Bekjian's other option would be to resign from his post, opening the door for Abp. Ateshyan to be elected Patriarch, which would be against the wishes of the majority of the local Armenian community, but complying with the preference of the Turkish government!

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.

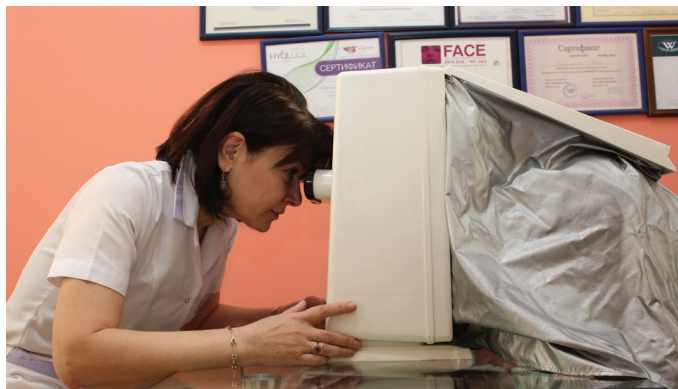
You are welcome to City Spa. The aesthetic doctor's consultations and skin diagnostics with Skin Scanner is fee. The atmosphere in City spa is full of love and peace. The pricing strategy is very flexible and discounts for good long term clients are available during whole year as well as different Gift 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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David Nebel touched the Armenian audience with the wonderful performance of Krunk by Komitas

On November 9 the 5th Khachaturian International Festival hosted famous Swiss violinist David Nebel. The musician and the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia performed Violin Concerto by Ludwig van Beethoven, one of the best compositions of European classical music. Nebel also surprised the Armenian audience presenting Krunk (The Craine) by Komitas. “When I realized that I will be visiting Armenia I was searching for something to present. I heard this composition by Komitas and wanted to perform it. This is a unique piece!”, -Nebel noted.

David Nebel was impressed by the cooperation with the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia. “Amazing audience! I was very excited to perform. I had good time in Armenia with amazing musicians and fantastic conductor. Sergey Smbatyan is fantastic conductor. Nowadays it’s hard to find someone like him. He is unique; it was pleasure and honor to perform with him. And the orchestra was absolutely fantastic! I would like to perform with them again!”, -Nebel noted. The musician added that he had known about the Khachaturian Festival before coming here, as many of his friends performed within the framework of the festival. He also added that Khachaturian is very famous in Switzerland, Europe and he had performed Violin Concerto by Khachaturian.

The SYOA, headed by conductor Sergey Smbatyan also presented Symphony No.6 “Pathetique” by Pyotr Tchaikovsky during the evening.

This is Tchaikovsky’s last symphony. The symphony is entitled “Pathetique”, and it states that the deep and universal themes of life and death are controversial in this composition. The premiere of this symphony took place in 1893, in Saint Petersburg, headed by Tchaikovsky, 9 days before the composer’s death. After finishing Symphony No.5, Tchaikovsky wrote that he wanted to compose a symphony which will sum up all his creative life. Symphony No.6 became the peak of Tchaikovsky’s compositions. It is a complete fusion of dramatic collisions.

Within the framework of the Khachaturian Festival the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia conveyed the life philosophy of the great Russian composer with great professionalism. And it should be mentioned that his whole philosophy is summed up in the Symphony No.6!

The 5th Khachaturian International Festival is held under the high patronage of the President of RA Serzh Sargsyan. It is imple-



mented thanks to the joint efforts of the State Youth Orchestra of Armenia (General Partner of the Orchestra – VivaCell-MTS), with

the support of the Ministry of Culture of RA, the “Khachaturian” Foundation, European Foundation for Support of Culture.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

Either you or others in your life are behaving erratically. It is difficult to make firm plans or sustain a solid conversation. This sometimes generates a rift between you and another

because one of you needs to be alone. Don't fight it. Just let it be. It is temporary. Take it with a spoonful of generosity and humor.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Venus, your ruling planet, has entered the 7th house of relationships and will be there until the end of this month. She brings improvements in clientele, social life, and partnerships. This is a good time to ask for a professional consultation if you need

it. You are especially able to balance with others during this period to create win-win solutions.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

You may feel as though you came from another planet this week. Communications may be misunderstood, snarled, or lost altogether. Compensate for this problem by concentrating on speaking the truth

as you know it, and listening very carefully to what the other tells you. Then ask for confirmation that you received it accurately.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You may feel out of sorts this week. Your feelings are in conflict with your ideal self and your values. You want to put your best foot forward, but circumstances do not feel quite right. If the conflict is deep, it is

usually best to wait and not yield to whatever pressure is around you. You will soon sort it all out.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

Aspects particularly favor your work and daily routine. You are in an effective position. Others agree with your guidance and leadership. A project begun in July–August is beginning to blossom now. At the very least you can see that it is on

track to turn out as you hope.



Virgo

(August 22–September 22)

A misunderstanding could develop between you and a close friend or family member. The blame game is useless. Do your best to unwind the thread to the point that it began and start fresh. It is possible that you will

have a minor case of laryngitis. Pipes, whether in your body or your house may need clearing.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

This is a week in which your physical cycle is "off". Don't press your body beyond what it wants to do, just because it could do the same thing last week. Pay special atten-

tion to your temporary boundaries right now and by next week things will return to your personal normal.

Meanwhile there is upbeat news about your finances.



Scorpio

(October 23–November 21)

This is not a time to be aggressive or attempt to press your way forward. You can only take small steps in the direction of your choice. It is as though there is some invisible ele-

ment that keeps you spinning your wheels. Go with that which flows easily and take things slowly for a couple of weeks.



Sagittarius

(November 22–December 20)

You have a crew of guardian angels watching over you through November. If you seek help it will come. Watch for "signs" and listen

to people who enter your sphere of travel. Spend some time focusing on your spiritual beliefs. You might be called upon to assist another toward a healing path. It is an opportunity to "pay it forward". Don't turn away.



Capricorn

(December 21–January 19)

This is a favorable time for you. Upgrades and changes that you have made this year to your home and property are completed and the results are more than satisfactory.

Friends and acquaintances want to support your projects.



Aquarius

(January 20–February 17)

In the big picture, you are coming to a successful closure of a project from the past two to three years. It is not yet final, but soon will be. You

can pat yourself on the back for a job well done. This week your mind may be restless. You need to see new territory or get away from your daily routine for a day or two.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Take every precaution not to abuse your body during this period. Drugs or alcohol could have peculiar side effects that you don't understand. You are in a low physical cycle and will be unable to push yourself as

hard as normal on any physical task. If you are affected emotionally, try not to worry about it. This is short.

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NY Times: 'Intent to Destroy' shows that the Armenian past is not over



"Intent to Destroy" is a call to remember the Armenian genocide victims, both for their sake and for our own, Ken Jaworowski writes in an article published by The New York Times.

Joe Berlinger, the director, uses old footage of survivors and insights from historians to provide an overview of the crimes. He also embeds himself with the cast and crew of "The Promise," a recent fictional film set around 1915 that explores the fighting and mass killings.

"Mr. Berlinger's plan is smart as well as symbolic — evidence shows that the Turkish government has often pressured studios into shelving movies about the genocide," Ken Jaworowski writes.

According to the author, discussions on the film set are intertwined with historical analysis, and there are explorations of crowd psychology, revisionism and German cooperation with the Ottoman Turks; it's no stretch to see how the massacre of Armenians helped lay ground-

work for the Holocaust.

"At its core, "Intent to Destroy" is a call to remember the victims, both for their sake and for our own," Jaworowski says.

"If you want to understand Yugoslavia, if you want to understand Rwanda, if you want to understand any other mass atrocity [that] is happening today, you should really look into the Armenian genocide," one scholar says near the end of the documentary. "History is not in the past."

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