

Armenian President visits 'friendly' Germany

President Armen Sarkissian met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and called for closer ties between Armenia and Germany on Wednesday during an official visit to Berlin late.

"Armenia views Germany as an important political and economic partner and a friendly country," Sarkissian was reported to tell Merkel at the start of their talks. He said he is looking forward to their further "discussions regarding the expansion of German-Armenian relations."

Sarkissian made similar comments when he met with Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Tuesday. "Germany is a friend and a leading economic partner of Armenia and an active promoter of the Armenia-European Union agenda," he said, according to his office.

"Germany is of interest to us also as a country with a parliamentary



system of government, and German experience in parliamentary democracy can be very important and useful for us," added Sarkissian, who has largely ceremonial powers.

According to a statement by the office, Merkel spoke of her "fond memories" of her August 2018 visit to Yerevan during which she met with Sarkissian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Speaking after the talks with

Pashinyan, Merkel praised Armenia for deepening its relations with the EU while remaining allied to Russia. She also said Germany would welcome closer commercial and cultural ties with Armenia and pledged to help Yerevan implement a landmark agreement with the EU signed in November 2017.

Earlier on Tuesday, Sarkissian had a lunch meeting with a group of German diplomats, parliamen-

tarians and pundits. Photographs released by the presidential press service showed him sitting next to Cem Ozdemir, a prominent German politician of Turkish descent. Ozdemir was a key sponsor of a 2016 resolution by the German parliament that recognized the 1915 Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey.

While in Berlin, Sarkissian also met with senior executives of several large German companies. He urged them to invest in Armenia, arguing, among other things, that his country has tariff-free access to the vast Russian market.

Germany has long been Armenia's number one EU donor. It is also the South Caucasus nation's third largest trading partner. According to official Armenian statistics, German-Armenian trade soared by 40 percent, to \$325 million, in the first nine months of this year.

Armenia will never forget UK assistance during earthquake days: President Sarkissian hosts British firefighter-rescuer Paul Burns

Armenian President Armen Sarkissian hosted British firefighter-rescuer Paul Burns, the Presidential Office told Noyan Tapan.

The latter paid his first visit to Armenia about 30 years ago as a firefighter-rescuer to participate in the activities aimed at eliminating the consequences of the 1988 devastating earthquake and the search operations.

President Sarkissian remembered the assistance provided by the UK government and people to Armenia during that days, stating that the Great Britain broadly reacted to this tragic disaster.

"The United Kingdom provided great assistance by sending rescuers, firefighters and ambulance vehicles. School, called after Lord Byron, and a hospital were built by the donations of Aid Armenia

established there. Later the historical visit of UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Armenia took place. These are actions which Armenia will never forget", Armen Sarkissian said.

Paul Burns remembered the activities carried out with his colleagues during the days following the earthquake and shared his impressions from that difficult moments.

By using this occasion, the Armenian President thanked the British society and the whole people in the person of Paul Burns whom he knows personally. "I have met with Mrs. Thatcher for many times when she already left the public service and was engaged in the activities of her foundation. And every time we were talking about this or that thing, we always remembered her



visit to Armenia during any day or any discussion. The only thing we regretted was that she toured only the regions in Armenia which were affected by the earthquake", President Sarkissian said.

"What you have done for Armenia during that difficult days will never be forgotten", the President said and expressed gratitude to Paul Burns.

In memory of gratitude and that day, President Sarkissian handed over an Armenian memorial coin on Armenian carpet weaving to Paul Burns.

"This will also be a reminder that the Armenian perfect culture is immortal regardless of all our tragedies such as the Genocide and the earthquake", Armen Sarkissian said.

No wrinkles in Armenia-Iran relations – Nikol Pashinyan

The relations between Armenia and Iran have always been at a high level, and it is necessary to do everything for these relations to remain so, acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan said during the election campaign of My Step alliance in Kapantown, reports Armenpress.

“There are no wrinkles in the Iran-Armenia relations, but it is also understandable that there are also forces which want to create these wrinkles. And I want to express hope and confidence that the governments of Armenia and Iran will take measures and will ensure the normal development of the Armenia-Iran relations. And this is really a priority for our government, and we will do everything to reach this goal.

We know that the international situation around Iran is quite tense and are confident that any international issue must be solved through negotiations

without use of force or threat of force and compulsion. We hope these developments will move on this path”, Pashinyan said.

The acting PM said measures are being taken, also with the support of international partners, to develop Armenia’s relations with Iran. “The border checkpoint with Iran will soon be reconstructed by the funds of the EU, and we are going to have a modern border checkpoint”, he said.

Pashinyan also touched upon some difficulties faced by Iranian and Armenian drivers in connection with the activity conditions.

“I also know that there are some complaints among the Iranian drivers in connection with their activity conditions in Armenia, and the Armenian drivers face some difficulties in Iran over their working conditions. But I am confident that the governments of our countries will discuss all



these issues in an atmosphere of friendship and brotherhood and will solve them”, Pashinyan said.

He added that the inter-governmental level agreements reached between Iran and Armenia successfully continue, in particular in the energy sector. He expressed hope that the trade turnover of the two countries both in the energy and the re-

maining sectors will increase, as well as new economic ties will be established, new investments will be made.

“The Republic of Armenia is open also for the Iranian investments, and we hope that there will be new investments in Armenia, including by our compatriots who are citizens of Iran”, Pashinyan said.

Republicans to avoid ‘big’ campaign rallies

(Yerevan –RFE/RL) Former President Serzh Sargsyan’s Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) confirmed on December 26 that it will not try to hold major rallies during its parliamentary election campaign.

Armen Ashotyan, the HHK’s deputy chairman, said it will be relying on media coverage and “knocking on people’s doors” instead.

“We will be making use of all means of campaigning: the press, online media, house-to-house visits, events on the spot. There won’t be big rallies,” Ashotyan told reporters at the start of campaigning for the December 9 parliamentary elections.

“When we were in power, we were holding those big rallies and they [Nikol Pashinyan and his



allies] were engaged in house-to-house visits,” he said. “The situation has changed. They are now in power and they are the ones who hold big rallies today, while we do house-to-house campaigning. And we are not ashamed of that.”

Ashotyan insisted that the former ruling party is not afraid of “contacts with the public.” It simply believes that they must not take

the form of “meetings with the masses,” he said. “We must now stand alongside people and be much more attentive to the problems of concrete citizens, rather than use the collective presence of people for campaign videos,” added Ashotyan, who served as education minister and held a senior parliamentary position during Sargsyan’s decade-long rule.

Another senior HHK figure, Vahram Baghdasaryan, similarly told RFE/RL’s Armenian service last week that the Republicans will put the emphasis on television appearances and media interviews in the parliamentary race. He denied that they fear hostile public reactions or poor attendance of their rallies.

The HHK was for years accused by its political opponents and media of forcing public sector employees to attend his election campaign rallies led by Sarkisian.

Observers believe that the HHK, is now too unpopular to make a strong showing in the December 9 elections. Some of them have predicted that it will fail to win at least 5 percent of the vote needed for having seats in the new parliament.

Chief Prosecutor Insists on Kocharyan's renewed arrest



Armenia's courts must allow law-enforcement authorities to again arrest former President Robert Kocharyan in connection with the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan, Prosecutor-General Artur Davtyan insisted on November 28.

Kocharyan was arrested in July on charges stemming from the deadly breakup of opposition demonstrations during the final weeks of his 1998-2008 rule. He strongly denies the accusations, saying that the current Armenian government is waging a political

"vendetta" against him.

The Court of Appeals freed the 64-year-old in August, saying that the Armenian constitution gives him immunity from prosecution. Both state prosecutors and Kocharyan appealed against that ruling. The latter claimed that there were also other legal grounds for his release.

Earlier this month, the Court of Cassation, the country's highest body of criminal justice, ordered the Court of Appeals to examine the case anew. The latter began hearings on the matter on Tuesday.

Davtyan is personally attending the hearings along with several other prosecutors. "Our position is that [Kocharyan] must stay under arrest," he told reporters.

"We are making arguments substantiating the need for the second president's arrest at this stage of the investigation," added the chief prosecutor.

Kocharyan is specifically accused of illegally using the armed forces against opposition supporters who protested against alleged fraud in a disputed presidential election held in February 2008. Law-enforcement authorities say that amounted to an overthrow of the constitutional order.

Eight protesters and two police personnel were killed when security forces quelled those protests on March 1-2, 2008.

The Court of Appeals assigned the case to one of its judges, Ruben Mkhitarian, by a draw, prompting strong objections from Kocharyan's lawyers. They claimed that this is a violation of Armenian law and demanded Mkhitarian's re-

placement. The judge rejected the demand on Wednesday.

One of the defense lawyers, Hayk Alumyan, said they will file other court petitions on Thursday. In particular, he said, they will demand that Mkhitarian ask Armenia's Constitutional Court to rule on an article of the Criminal Code used against the ex-president. The lawyers believe that the article is unconstitutional, said Alumyan.

Kocharyan announced his return to active politics just days after his release from prison. He has repeatedly accused Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's government of endangering the country's national security, undermining its relations with Russia and lacking economic programs. Still, he decided not run in snap parliamentary elections slated for December 9.

Pashinyan, who played a key role in the 2008 protests and spent nearly two years in prison because of that, has strongly defended the criminal case against Kocharyan. "All murderers will go to prison," he declared on August 17.

Avinyan participates in Armenia: A Lighthouse for Sustainable Energy Scale-Up conference

Acting Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan on December 3 participated in the Armenia: A Lighthouse for Sustainable Energy Scale-Up conference.

Greeting the guests, Avinyan said that in the modern world sustainable development of the economy is a serious challenge for a country not having its own fossil fuels reserves. In this context Armenia is viewing the development of sustainable energy as one of the components of ensuring national security.

Avinyan said that the government is greatly valuing sustainable energy development, encouraging renewable energy capacities, energy efficiency in all branches of the economy, as well as integration with regional energy markets. For this reason the legislation is being continuously reformed, obstacles for liberalization are being eliminated, a transparent and predictable regulation arena and a favorable



investment climate is being created, and the policy of the branch is being relied on modern methods of in-depth expert studies and long-term planning.

According to Avinyan, the government is using its toolbox to contribute to the establishment of new energy capacities in the country. As a result of the gradual liberalization of the electricity-energy market, additional incentives will be created for all energy suppliers until 2021, and greater opportunities for the development of competitive environment and addi-

tional investment attraction will be in place.

Tigran Avinyan stressed that encouraging sustainable energy is viewed by the government not only as a prerequisite for building a safe, smart and competitive economy, but also as an effective method of raising the quality of life of people, creating access to modern energy services for the citizens of Armenia and solving environmental issues of the country and the world.

With this purpose the Armenian government is cooperation with various international structures and promising investment programs in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors are being realized – such as solar and wind power stations, energy efficiency projects for buildings, modernization of urban lightings, building power lines connecting to regional markets, that will in turn create export opportunities.

Pashinyan seeks clear mechanisms of checks and balances in government system

Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan argues that there is no need for fundamental amendments to the Constitution, however, several clauses of it are problematic. Pashinyan was speaking on December 2 at a campaigning rally of the My Step bloc, the political force led by him that is running for parliament.

He said that the bloc's campaigning message doesn't include amendments to the Constitution because changing it and changing the public administration system should be justified.

"Do you imagine changing the Constitution after each election? This Constitution has been adopted and is in force only for 7 months. Let's let it function a bit. If we see that the parliamentary system of governance requires to be changed and again return to the presidential system, certainly we aren't constrained in this matter. We will do it if the people will want it," he said.

At the same time Pashinyan says several clauses in the Constitution must definitely be changed.

"For example, the Constitution says that only persons who have been solely citizens of Armenia in the past four years and who had permanent residency in Armenia can be Members of Parliament or Ministers. If in case of a Member of Parliament we consider this approach to be justified, in case of the executive power we think that this brings certain restrictions for involving the potential of the Diaspora in the government system of Armenia. We must think that even in case of a Member of Parliament we can consider to change it or not," he said.

He said that serious steps must also be taken for introducing clear mechanisms of checks and balances in the administration system, however, according to him, this must be done in a way so that the vertical pyramid of the system doesn't get breached and that it re-

mains clear who is the leader of the country.

"It's been said a lot, and I have said a lot that this Constitution is a super-prime ministerial Constitution, and we must certainly take very serious steps to have a clear mechanism of checks and balances in order for all [theoretical] possibilities of establishing dictatorships and authoritarianisms in our country get eliminated and restricted. But when going for this goal we must focus on another issue.

It is very important not to breach the vertical pyramid of power, because the country must be controllable. In a state there can't be a [scenario] where it is unclear who the leader of the country is. That is a potential crisis for the country and can always be the occasion for shocks. Indeed, this Constitution clearly says that the leader of the country is the prime minister, but I agree that there must be a checks and balances mechanism so that different branches of the government are able to supervise one another," Pashinyan said.

Armenia has candidate for CSTO Secretary General and is ready to continue fulfilling its commitments – Davit Tonoyan



On December 1 acting defense minister of Armenia Davit Tonoyan held a meeting and Q&A session with the representatives of several Russian leading media outlets, the ministry told Noyan Tapan.

Commenting on the current situation

over the position of the CSTO Secretary General, the acting minister said Armenia has its candidate for the Secretary General and is ready to continue fulfilling its commitments. Davit Tonoyan also touched upon the Armenian-Russian

allied relations, noting that Armenia attaches great importance to the military and military-technical cooperation with Russia.

As for the current situation in the Artsakh-Azerbaijan line of contact and the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border, the acting minister said in the recent period the number of ceasefire violations by the Azerbaijani forces has decreased. He also talked about the operative communication established between the sides, stating that before this Armenia's communication with Azerbaijan was operating within the frames of the International Committee of Red Cross and the OSCE, and this new communication can contribute to reducing the border tension and intensity of ceasefire violations.

At the request of reporters, Davit Tonoyan also talked about the humanitarian aid provided to Syria, emphasizing that Armenia will continue providing assistance to the settlements and the Syrian-Armenian community affected by the conflict.

'We must build citizens' future success starting from education' – Pashinyan says in Meghri town

Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, who heads My Step alliance, visited Syunik province on December 1 on the sidelines of the pre-election campaign.

During the meeting with the Meghri residents, acting minister of territorial administration and development Suren Papikyan stated that what has happened in Armenia this year in April must be enshrined on December 9. He said it should be signaled that we are free and we are the owners of our country.

"Syunik is one of the provinces with the largest consolidated communities. There are 8 consolidated communities here. Here most of the subsidy programs were used within the frames of which 213 million AMD has been provided.

As the most consolidated communities are in Syunik, the province will receive the largest subsidy from the budget in 2019. We must do everything for the locals to create and prosper the community", Suren Papikyan said.

Thereafter, acting PM Pashinyan delivered remarks introducing the programs

of the My Step alliance. He started his words by presenting a part of his talk with the National Instruments CEO and co-founder James Truchard.

"James Truchard is a billionaire. He started his activity together with a two friends by setting up a small company. During an official dinner in Yerevan I asked him what the US government did for him to success. I thought it might have granted tax privileges, non-interest loans and etc. But he told me the following: "perhaps the most important thing was providing conditions for my education. If there wasn't the school I studied in, I would stay in our farm". I understood that the process of our minds is on the right path. Yes, ensuring proper education for our children is very important. We should engage children into an education system from 4 age. We must build the future success of the citizens starting from education", the acting PM said. He informed that the renovation program of the Meghri kindergarten is funded by the My Step Foundation and through the donation of philanthropist.

"Unfortunately, today in most cases there is a formal attitude towards the education system. We pay more attention to grades, but we don't ask ourselves to what extent that grade is in accordance with the knowledge of our child. Our revolution has a key task to do in the education sector. We must not tolerate unqualified education, presence of unqualified specialists in the education system.

We must change our attitude to education, be able to ensure such an education for our kids so that we will have a chance to win in the future life", Nikol Pashinyan said, adding that it is necessary to pay attention to the salaries of the teachers, as well as professional qualities. According to him, the country's strategy must be based on two key factors – proper education and good health.

Pashinyan also talked about the economic policy of the My Step alliance during the meeting. He said during the 10 months of this year agricultural goods worth 80 million USD were exported from Armenia, whereas last year this figure was 49 million USD. He highlighted that in order to continue his programs he needs the people's vote. Pashinyan expressed hope that regardless of weather conditions the citizens will actively participate in the elections.

"You are the ones who will determine the fate of the future government. No ballot will be robbed. This is the most importance meaning of the revolution, that the citizen must feel himself/herself as an owner. During my whole political activity, I have tried to prove you that your one vote is the most decisive factor. Be confident, your vote will not be falsified. I want to assure you that we will never stay attached to the power and will not make any attempt to keep it. Remember, by these elections you are accepting the PM, ministers, MPs of work aimed at providing service to you. Over the past 27 years it has been an honor to serve you, if you give that mandate to me, it will be a double honor", Nikol Pashinyan said.



Dr. James Truchard: Armenia Has Real Chance to Be Excellent in the World ICT/High Tec

And... “The Dream Has Come True”: 2018 Armenian State Global IT Award Laureate Heapes Praise to Our Talented Youngsters and Others as Well...



By
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Chief
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sive crowd of the Armenian engineers, others yet in the airport right at his arrival) several times when meeting our hi-tech/ICT specialists, especially the young, journalists and the last but not the least, - the leaders of the Armenian State.

In Mr Truchard's case it was not mere a courtesy traditional for such (solemn) occasions 'cause National Instruments he

co-founded yet in 1976 has been having its branch, among some fifty other countries, in Armenia since 2007, and this was not the very first visit of legendary “Dr. T” to our country: he was here already in 2011.

Below The Highlights readers could find chronology of the 2018 GIT Award Laureate's short but saturated stay in Armenia.

...These words were repeated by “Dr. T” (who was warmly greeted by an impres-

2018 Laureate of the RA State Global IT Award James Truchard Hosted at VivaCell-MTS Headquarters

Before his presentation entitled *Redefining Test and Measurement with Virtual Instrumentation*, Dr. Truchard gave a joint press conference with the RA Acting Minister of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies Hakob Arshakyan, VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian, Coordinator of the RA State Global IT Award Committee Hovik Musayelyan as well as the President of the Engineering Association Council Aram Salatian.

plemented in Armenia is more than an effort to solidify Armenia's place on world map of ICT or to increase the country's prestige. It is critical that the Award brings to Armenia true innovators whose breakthrough inventions have defined the path of global development, and that these people lecture for the Armenia ICT community and younger generation. The Laureates of the Award, just like the geniuses in all times, have never mimicked their predecessors, have never chosen a roads treaded before, and have never tried to fit into the existing rules of the game. Armenia has the intellectual potential which will not only foster its ICT development as the country's competitive advantage but will also help to create a new quality in the in-



Minister **Arshakyan** welcomed the guest and extended his gratitude prioritizing the immense contribution James Truchard had in the breakthrough development of engineering, in fact, repeating his own words said at the new conference held at the Ministry a few days ago. (See The Highlights previous issue):

“Awards like this are very important for our country especially as the government has a vision to make Armenia a country of high technologies, with industrial, and scientific and technical opportunities. By visiting Armenia, people who have major contribution in IT, and whose efforts have brought qualitative changes in the world, bring with them their valuable experience and higher recognition to Armenia.”

As Armenia's leading telecom operator Founding GM **Ralph C. Yirikian** said, “The Global IT Award as a project continuously im-



dusty to stand as equal by the side of the ICT giants, in the long run”.

“Armenia's competitive advantages are closely connected to IT. And there is no coincidence Armenia has an award for global contribution. Those are contributions which have been breakthroughs for humanity. We are proud that world legends visit Armenia every year reestablishing our country's repu-

*tation and renown,” stressed Dr. **Hovik Musayelyan**, Coordinator of the Award Committee, Director of Synopsys Armenia.*

“This year the awarding committee has named Dr. James Truchard, the co-founder of the National Instruments, as the awardee of 2018. Dr. Truchard is the co-author of the LabView, structured dataflow programming language which synchronizes with scientists' and engineers' thinking at measurements. National Instruments leads in the direction and approaches which scientists and engineers use to solve

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global problems like accessibility of alternative sources of energy, natural resources, development and digitalization of pharmaceutical and healthcare systems," President of the Engineering Association Council **Aram Salatian** (who was GM of the NI Armenia branch in 2007-2018) said.

Dr. **Truchard** said in particular: *"I am honored and humble for this Award, and I thank the Award Committee for the Award...I've always been recognizing the importance of the awards because science and engineering are the key players in the industry...Again, it is great honor to me, and thank you for hospitality in Armenia, and Armenia for me has been a very important part of the world where National Instruments has been working, I recognize the strong level of Armenian talent in this sphere, and one of my goals over the years has been to help Armenian engineers contribute and participate in the global IT economy"*.

"It is an exciting time for technology development and I believe Armenia is well-positioned to participate in this new exciting time of internet of things, autonomous vehicles, etc. Scientists and engineers in Armenia are well equipped and had passed personal learning and technical trainings, and I hope National Instruments can help provide access for them to global technology opportunities as well", Dr. Truchard added.

In response to your correspondent question what "Dr.T" did know about Armenia before opening Natl Instruments branch here, the 2018 GIT Award Laureate said Aram Salatian introduced him the country and the people in detail, and as to what did he feel when knew about his nomination, James Truchard repeated that it was "the great honor" to him, and he is "humble".

Asked by yours truly "how many years you are going to sponsor the Award?", VivaCell-MTS Founding GM Ralph Yirikian said: *"As I already said recently, next year we have a jubilee, - the 10th awarding, but we'll have another jubilees - the 15th jubilee, the 20th...So we want to be well pre-*

pared for the next year jubilee as within ten years we've believed in its idea, and has been consolidated around it as we love our country, and this Award is to be honored Armenia in the world..."

Minister Arshakyan added that the GIT Award was Armenia's "innovation", and "we took the leadership in this area". He once more thanked the Award partners such as its General Partner, Armenia's leading telecom operator company VivaCell-MTS and its GM Ralph Yirikian.

And Hovik Musayelyan replied to The Highlights' correspondent question about

receiving the Award, he raised it and said he considered it as the Nobel Prize in ICT sphere..."

In his presentation entitled "Redefining Test and Measurement with Virtual Instrumentation" and delivered at the meeting with the reps of ICT community, Dr. Truchard touched upon a number of spheres where National Instruments works. The co-founder of the National Instruments said: *"I wanted to create system software for test and measurement that did what the spreadsheet had done for financial analysis"*.

Special attention was paid to the *LabView*, a revolutionary technology worked out at the Natl Instruments by "Dr.T" that really changed human life in various spheres.

When asked about the prerequisites of success as an engineer and business leader, Dr. Truchard answered that his personal growth was in line with the growth of the Company and the challenges it has faced. He told that besides on-job-training, he has been reading a lot, including books on marketing and sales.

In response to a question about the potential of the Armenian youth, Dr. Truchard told, in particular that Armenian youth can compete very well on the global scale and that here National Instruments can be a **role model**. Armenians can start companies and keep working here in Armenia, where they are, and not have to go somewhere else.

In an overseas phone conversation with your author **Arsen Ghazaryan**, President of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA) said that this awarding promoted significantly global integration of our country, as regional hi-tec/ICT center, attracted new investments, and, most importantly, has been inspiring the Armenian gifted youth.

In Matenadaran

"It was really very interesting and exciting to see the depth of the history, all these old



possible becoming the GIT Award "a kind of the Nobel Prize in the ICT" by the following:

"Yes, we can say we are the leaders in this field as there is no such award in the world... Since the very establishment of the Award we've been following the right policy that was the Laureate's coming in Armenia...As to your question, I want to remind the words of Steve Wozniak, the second Laureate: when

manuscripts, illustrations with their wonderful colors... This is a very important history", said "Dr.T" to The Highlights correspondent.

Meeting with the Yerevan Mayor: Hayk Marutyan Welcomes James Truchard

Greeting the GIT Award 2018 Laureate, the Mayor stressed that he highly appreciated the role of "National Instruments" in the world, particularly, its great contribution to the development of engineering technologies in Armenia. Hayk Marutyan informed that the Committee for "Yerevan-Smart City" concept was established in Yerevan Municipality to work out the concept and strategy, installation of smart solutions in the City and coordination of the activities. Mr. Mayor particularly outlined the importance of using modern technologies in settlement of the main

public of Armenia for the Global Contribution in Humanity through Information Technology.

During the meeting, Hovik Musaelyan, Director of Synopsys Armenia, presented the guest to His Holiness, also conveying information on the programs implemented by Mr. Truchard in Armenia.

Congratulating James Truchard on the occasion of being awarded the RA State Award, the Catholicos of All Armenians wished him new achievements and productive activities for the sake of creating a prosperous and secure life of humanity.

His Holiness expressed his personal appreciation to the President of the National Instruments for the initiatives aimed at the development of the IT sector in Armenia which give young people new opportunities.

During the meeting, they reflected on the mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the life of the Armenian people, particularly they spoke about the activities of Secondary schools and



problems rooted in the City, especially in the improvement of transport and waste management.

Hayk Marutyan added he expected support and active cooperation from Natl Instruments in working our smart concept and implementation of further programs.

James Truchard, in turn, stressed the importance of innovation technologies in development of modern cities.

At the the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin

According to infoservice of the Mother See, "On November 29, in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; received Dr. James Truchard, Co-founder and President of the "National Instruments" Company who was awarded the 2018 State Award of the Re-

Youth Centers acting under the auspices of Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin today, as well as about the new educational programs."

The 9th GIT Award Laureate is the Polytechnic University Honorary Doctor

Next day, on 30 November traditional GIT Award Laureate's National Polytechnic University of Armenia Honorary Doctor awarding was held.

"It's a great honor for me to visit this university where I feel recognized and appreciated since appreciation and recognition are one of the key factors encouraging the person. I think Armenia has all necessary preconditions and features to become a leading country in the IT field, and I wish you good luck on this process", the just-awarded NPUA Hon. Dr. James Truchard said.

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In the University Rector Prof. **Vostanik Marukhyan**'s words, Dr. Truchard is a close friend of the NPUA as the Armenian branch of the National Instruments has been closely cooperating with the University.

According to Prof. Marukhyan, *"The cutting-edge engineering laboratories operate in the University, and the Armenian branch of the National Instruments played a major role for their creation. Of course, all tools and opportunities have been created within the frames of the cooperation with this structure which exist in the NPUA, and,*

help from NI) where he met the Armenian youngsters who proudly shown him their "little discoveries", - from an antenn having narrow direction and high efficiency to airport luggage carrier robot and a bionic arm for the disabled as well as several others. Aram Salatian recollected how years ago the NPUA Rector V. Marukhyan and he were choosing building for the labs and noted that the ANEL is a unique one in terms that a number of different labs concentrated in the same building.

When asked by your author (an alumnus of

At Synopsys Armenia

The visit Agenda included a tour at SAED (Synopsys Armenia Educational Dept), then a tour in Synopsys Armenia main building followed by a fireside talk with Synopsys Armenia President Dr. **Yervant Zorian** and Dr. James Truchard at the main Lobby.

During the fireside talk "Dr. T" talked about his career path, shared his 3 "rules" for success (continuous learning, perseverance, working as a team).

He shared his thoughts about Armenia as



importantly, they serve not only our University students, but also the students of other educational institutions. The ANEL (Armenian National Engineering Laboratories) Center is open for all students of the Armenian universities with a creative thinking," Vostanik Marukhyan said.

For a big audience of both University professors and students James Truchard made his "Redefining Test and Measurement with Virtual Instrumentation" presentation that attracted active questions.

Then "Dr.T" toured at the ANEL Center (that (to remind) was created with the major



the Polytechnic) about his impressions, Dr. Truchard's answer was, as usual, brief but all-encompassing: *"The Dream came true!"*

a growing destination of high-tech and on how it can become a Center of Excellence. He said: *"Armenia has all necessary attributes and resources to become a world class center of excellence:*

- Education excellence (he explicitly talked about Synopsys Business-Academia cooperation model that provides industry-ready graduates who are productive from the day one. Talking about educational model that Synopsys implements

with partner universities, he noted that this is an example to follow...)

- State of the Art labs (he talked about ANEL that provides students and research-

ers with hands-on experience. He said that it is a World class environment where students can do a real prototyping and other “industrial” projects)

- *Long traditions in microelectronics and high-tech coming from the Soviet period*

- *Keen focus and desire to become a world player in High tech.*”

James Truchard shared his vision on where and how Armenia can be positioned in the World. He believes that “Autonomous Vehicles” is what Armenia should focus on and move forward.

“Dr. T” also shared his insights on how to combine the technical and managerial tal-

how drugs affect them. He has a special interest in researching and solving problems related to the Alzheimer’s disease.

As the Woodrow Wilson Award for Corporate Citizenship for his community involvement, Dr. T continues making a difference through several projects that have significant impact on human’s lives.

At the Genocide Memorial

A couple of hours later Dr. Truchard accompanied by the NI team leading way specialists, GIT Award Committee reps visited Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

tion: *“This tragedy should be remembered so it will never happen again. We should eliminate man’s inhumanity to man”*. In his brief interview with the Armenian TV cameras James Truchard said he has heard much about the Armenian Genocide, but after visiting the Memorial in Yerevan he realized the horrible essence of this tragedy.

According to him, he often had to work with the Armenians, and from time to time he heard from them about the Genocide. Moreover, he knew a man whose grandfather had been forced to escape to the United States during the Genocide.

“I saw with my own eyes all the evidence,



ents, how motivate the team, how help them to grow and learn more...

He told the story how NI and LabView got started. He was working as a full-time Managing Director of the Acoustical Measurements Division at the NT Applied Research Laboratories and it occurred to him that the problem of the lack of technical devices might be solved via virtual instruments. And that worked out! So this brought him to the point that this approach could be applied to any domain.

The fireside talk was followed by a Q/A session. One of the questions was about his current works and interests. “Dr. T” said that currently he works on gene mutations and

(AGMI) where he was greeted by the AGMI Director Dr.Sc **Harutyun Marutyan** who introduced the history of construction of the Memorial and its symbolism. James Truchard and people accompanied him laid flowers in memory of the 1915-23 Armenian Genocide innocent St. Martyrs to the Eternal Flame.

And then, as it befits, he has got familiarized the Museum exposition where the Genocide Museum-Institute Deputy Director **Lusineh Abrahamyan** gave him exciting and detailed explanations on what was demonstrated.

In the Honored Guests’ Memorial Book James Truchard left the following inscrip-

the horror of what happened, but it should not have happened. We need to make sure that this will never happen again,” he said.

And a traditional fir-tree planting was held there.

The Culmination: The Awarding

Just a few hours later Acting Prime Minister **Nikol Pashinyan** received Dr. James Truchard.

Welcoming the guest, Nikol Pashinyan noted: *“I have decided to give you the Award for Global Contribution in the Field of Information Technologies which well above*

Dr. James Truchard: Armenia Has Real Chance to Be Excellent in the World ICT/High Tec

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being an appreciation of your achievements is important in terms of how we can change the world with our individual achievements. We hope that we will be able to induce the citizens of Armenia to believe in their abilities and try to change the world. In this regard, you are setting a good example, and we wish to present it to Armenian

information technologies in our country.

Nikol Pashinyan said his government has developed an ambitious agenda for the development of the IT sphere, and that an economic revolution should follow the political revolution in Armenia. In this context, the Acting Prime Minister outlined the Government's policy and vi-

nia for Global Contribution in the Humanity through IT. Hovik Musayelyan presented history of the Award, its Laureates, how works its Selection Panel and Committee.

As to the Armenia's ICT industry prospects, in Dr. Musayelyan's opinion, if we keep the current annual growth (20-25%) of the sector, our country will have

We have talented youth endowed with freedom of expression, and with the unwavering commitment of being their country's masters, and through them we will achieve the goals we have set", Dr Musayelyan said.

In his words, *"there are many big players in the world of information technology, but there are people who have made excep-*



youth."

James Truchard thanked Nikol Pashinyan for high appreciation of his activities and went on to stress that he could see a great future for Armenia's high-tech sector. He attached great importance to education and the training of highly qualified personnel in the field of engineering. James Truchard assured of his company's willingness to deepen cooperation with Armenian partners and thereby contribute to the further advancement of

sion for improving the business environment, attracting foreign investment, developing information technologies and other sectors of the economy. As usual for such cases, ceremony of cancellation of stamps was held after the meeting, dedicated to the State Award of the Republic of Armenia for Global Contribution to Humanity through Information Technologies.

After that a solemn ceremony was held to hand the State Award of the Republic of Arme-

there some 40,000 employees, which, in turn, will lead to having about 150,000 extra-jobs in the service area.

According to the speaker, to achieve this goal we need a dynamic system of higher professional education. A system that will allow us to train qualified personnel who will be immediately demanded by the private sector after graduating from the university.

"And this is the main vision of our country's progress.

tional contribution to changing the course of human life, and we want to firstly praise such individuals and then host them in Armenia and communicate with these giants as we have a lot to learn from them". This is also an exceptional opportunity for our youth to have direct contacts with world legends, the Award Committee Coordinator stressed and thanked "all those who have made this Award reality". Among them he emphasized VivaCell-MTS, General Partner of

the Award since its establishment.

“Undoubtedly, this is a great investment for the future of our country and our people”, pointed out Hovik Musayelyan.

Then Aram Salatian introduced Dr. Truchard the gathered.

The Acting Prime Minister of Armenia handed the Award to National Instruments Co-Founder and President James Truchard. Nikol Pashinyan delivered a speech at the reception held in the Laureate's honor.

*“Dear Mr. Truchard,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Today, the State Prize of the Republic of Armenia for Global Contribution in the Field of Information Technologies is being awarded to Co-founder and President of National Instruments James Truchard - a man who with his innovations has played a crucial role in the development and dissemination*

believe that one of our new government's priorities is to convert Armenia from an agrarian, mining country into a technological country. Meanwhile, I do not mean that we need not develop agriculture and mining. On the contrary, we need to develop and use information technologies, innovative approaches in order to upgrade agriculture and mining industry to a new level. We must make a better use of innovative solutions as we wish to ease the burden of our working citizens and improve product quality and efficiency.

What has been done and is being done in the field of information technology in the modern world cannot be called anything other than a revolution. We are revolutionaries, and we understand revolution as abrupt progress, non-standard solutions, innovations, as well as the rejuvenation of life and work style.



of information technology worldwide.

New technologies are what I would call a historical chance for us to take since we are heading for an economic revolution in Armenia. It is also a challenge for all those who want to keep up with the progress of humanity.

This sphere is of strategic importance for Armenia and the Armenian people. First of all, given the fact that we live in a complicated geopolitical area, information technology seems to be a virtual connection that ensures our uninterrupted communication with the outside world, as well as economic growth and development.

The IT industry is a type of activity that can be developed without any ports, access to the sea and rich subsoil. Human capital is all we need to that effect, and this is just the resource Armenia has always had.

We are not only pleased with this new opportunity, but we should do everything possible to get the most out of it. This is why I do

Dear Mr. Truchard,

I cordially congratulate you on being awarded this State Prize. Our joint efforts have more than ten years of history. During this time, you were able to make a valuable contribution to the development of the sphere in our country through the Armenia office of National Instruments and gave young professionals the opportunity to get involved in the international market.

We consider you to be our ally in the common cause of making the world smarter, stronger and more innovative. With this award, we also want to show young people what an individual should be like in the modern world and what ideals should be followed.

With this award, we also want to appreciate your contribution and laud your deeds. Even if you don't need it, we need it. We are a society that appreciates the work and contribution of a person, especially the great contribution of a great man.

Mr. Truchard,

It is an honor for us to welcome you to our country and enjoy your presence. Once again, I congratulate you on being awarded this Prize and wish you every success in your valuable efforts. I know that this is not your first ever visit to Armenia, and let me express the hope that it will not be the last one.

Thank you! ”

Thanking Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan for high appreciation and kind remarks, James Truchard noted that it was a great honor for him to get the State Award of the Republic of Armenia for Global Contribution in Humanity through Information Technologies. He introduced his company's activities, highlighting National Instruments' operations and joint projects in Armenia.

James Truchard stressed that several large IT companies are currently working in Ar-



menia, and expressed conviction that they would gradually increase in number considering the steps taken by the Government in the field of industrial development. In his speech, he touched on the role of education in the development of information and high technologies, emphasizing its importance and the need for doing consistent work specifically as regards the training of highly qualified engineers.

Engineering City: Groundbreaking Ceremony

Construction of Engineering City aimed at developing the field of high technologies in Armenia will be completed in 1-1.5 years, **Bagrat Yengibaryan**, Director of the Enterprise Incubator Foundation told reporters before the groundbreaking ceremony of the City in Yerevan on 1 December.

The Project was initiated by the National Instruments, and this company created a

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consortium consisting of both Armenian and foreign companies in which NI has been playing leading role.

There are already an engineering center, library, museums of universe, science and technologies in the other side of the area there.

It is expected that in this city 32 organizations will be deployed with their separate buildings as well as a major engineering incubator with 38 newly-established companies.

Yengibaryan said the construction of the Engineering City aims at testing a new unprecedented model in the region. *"This model will prepare engineering specialists in one place, the companies will be able to use the joint equipment, observe and later produce jointly"*, he noted.

The Engineering City is created within the frames of the public-private partnership. According to the program, 1500 highly-qualified

Acting First Deputy Prime Minister *Ararat Mirzoyan* is confident that Armenia will be able to keep the development pace in the high technologies sector.

Meeting with the RA President

President Sarkissian congratulated James Truchard and said that Armenia attaches great importance to the development of information technologies and might become a resourceful partner.

"Armenia is among the leading countries of the world - we are able to develop new ideas, new technologies and become part of the global development in the 21st century," President Sarkissian noted.

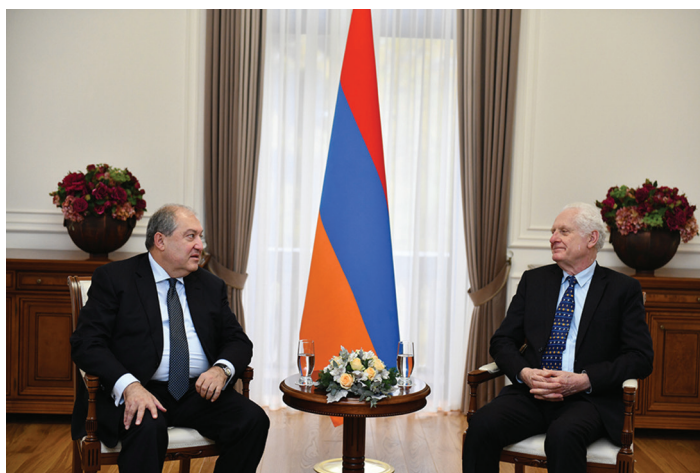
He said that today even major companies are approaching new start-ups where freedom is given to the young people's innovative



specialists of the field will be prepared and trained, 2000 jobs will be created, start-ups will be established, as well as the companies' activity efficiency will raise and export volumes will grow.

Accordingly, the preliminary investments comprise 30 million USD, 10 million of which will be invested by the state.

Reportedly, National Instruments Co-founder and CEO James Truchard said Armenia has a very strong technological base which has been built for decades. *"Armenia has the latest infrastructures, engineering laboratories and similar other platforms, and the young people have an opportunity to become leading specialists in this field. I think the automated vehicles are a very attractive direction to develop in Armenia since Armenia has all components to make it reality both in educational and engineering terms. Armenia has a good position in the field of high technologies"*. Dr. Truchard said.



potential, new and bold ideas, using a new model of development and providing them with the opportunity to work in parallel and introduce innovations.

James Truchard expressed gratitude for the Award and appreciation showed to him by Armenia. He noted that Armenia has great potential in the area of high technologies which could allow actual export opportunities.

...So thank you dear "Dr.T" for your visit to Armenia, and we are waiting for you in our country again!

*With acknowledgements to
Lusine Tangyan and
Dr. Gayane Markosyan*

Should Armenia Grant Citizenship to Foreign Investors?



By
**Harut
Sassounian**

The Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has made attracting overseas investors the priority of his new government.

So far, it is too early to determine if foreign investors are interested in doing business in Armenia. The common explanation for the lack of new investors is that they are waiting for the results of Parliamentary elections scheduled for December 9, 2018. It is expected that the Acting Prime Minister's political party will win the majority of the Parliamentary seats. Government officials believe that this will encourage foreigners to start investing in Armenia.

However, there is an additional way that Armenia can attract new foreign investors relatively quickly by offering them citizenship. Many countries around the world have offered such citizenship opportunities to foreigners, including the United States, Europe and third world countries.

Earlier this year, the hetq.am investigative website published an article on Arton Capital, a company that specializes in "citizenship by investment" programs around the world. A delegation from the company visited Armenia last year at the invitation of the International Center for Migration Policy Development. Arton Capital's website stated after the visit: "the concept of citizenship by investment was embraced by [Armenia's] high level officials at the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Administration, the Central Bank, the Police, the State Migration Service and the Center for Strategic Initiatives."

Armand Arton, a Bulgarian-Armenian, is the President of Arton Capital, and Emil Shahmooradian is the company's Vice President of Business Development. Arton Capital has offices in a dozen countries. On his

company's website, Armand Arton stated: "as a proud Armenian, I am honored to offer my years of professional experience and acute know-how to help the country meet its foreign direct investment goals. In support of its philanthropic commitment, Arton Capital has pledged to donate the consulting fees awarded by the contract to help refugees in Armenia. More than 20,000 Syrians, many of whom are ethnically Armenian, have found refuge in Armenia since the Syrian war began in 2011."

Countries offering such a program require from foreigners' different levels of investment to qualify for citizenship. Arton Capital recommends that Armenia require the small amount of \$50,000 as a minimum investment for a foreigner to become a citizen. Other countries demand much more from foreign investors with the most attractive countries asking as much as \$10 million of investment for citizenship. The Company estimates that Armenia would receive \$138 million of additional revenue in the next six years, if it implements the suggested investment for the citizenship program.

According to hetq.am, Arton Capital recommended that "Armenia offer potential investors two options: a \$50,000 direct contribution to a state-owned fund or a \$100,000 investment in a fund run by an asset management company chosen by the government, which would offer the possibility of some return. It further suggests that Armenia sets two types of fees. The first would be a non-refundable processing fee of up to \$10,000; the second fee, the amount of which is not specified, would cover background checks into applicants' records and sources of income."

Arton Capital's trip report on Armenia "highlights the country's positives, such as its strong ties to global economic hubs and its geographic and cultural proximity to strategic markets. Armenia offers investors access to Russia and almost all the post-Soviet states, which means around 250 million potential consumers, including in Central Asia – plus almost 82 million more in neighboring Iran, with which the coun-

try has friendly relations. And if the country achieves visa-free access to the Schengen zone, which it might in five to seven years, it could justly claim to have recreated its historic role as a stop on the Silk Road linking east and west. As a whole, investors looking for long-term value can be sold on the advantages of Armenia. With [visa-free access] to 60+ countries and its special relationship with Russia together with its geographical proximity with Iran, obtaining an Armenian citizenship will be seen not only as a means to secure one's future and security, but also as a strategic move for one's business development and positioning."

Significantly, hetq.am cautioned in its article that some foreigners interested in investing in other countries for the sake of acquiring citizenship can bring with them all sorts of illegal activities, such as tax evasion, money laundering, corruption and organized crime.

Armenian government officials have to balance the benefits of the investment for citizenship program with its drawbacks. Foreign applicants have to be thoroughly vetted before being granted Armenian citizenship in return for their investments.

Update on Armenian-American Candidates in US Elections

In addition to the list of Armenian-American candidates in the U.S. midterm elections that I reported in an earlier article, we should add:

— Dick Harpootlian (Democrat) was elected to the South Carolina State Senate on November 6, 2018. He won 52.3% of the votes against his Republican rival Benjamin Dunn's 47.6%.

— Anthony Brindisi (Democrat) was elected a Member of Congress from upstate New York on Nov. 6, 2018, according to the final count of the vote. Brindisi's great grandparents were born in Mardin, southeastern Turkey and fled during the Armenian Genocide to Aleppo, Syria, where his grandfather was born. As of January 2019, there will be three Armenian-Americans in the U.S. House of Representatives: Brindisi, Eshoo, and Speier.

Armenia's water operator avoids price rise



A French company managing Armenia's water distribution network has agreed not to raise the price of drinking water in the country for the next few years in return for financial concessions made by the Armenian government.

The Veolia Djur operator moved in August to raise the price from over 191 drams (40 U.S. cents) to 205 drams per cubic meter starting next January. It said it needs additional revenue to upgrade the aging network. It also argued that annual price hikes are envisaged

by its 15-year management contract with the government signed in November 2016.

The government's State Committee on Water Resources strongly objected to Veolia Djur's plans, criticizing the company's track record.

Later in August, the Armenian police launched a criminal investigation into what they called corrupt practices by state utility regulators and the water operator.

A police statement said that in late 2017 the then chairman of the Public Services Regulatory

Commission (PSRC), Robert Nazarian, and seven other senior officials from the regulatory body travelled to France on a visit fully funded by Veolia Djur. The statement charged that this amounted to a bribe paid by Veolia Djur's director general, Christian Lefaix, and another senior executive paid for securing the PSRC's subsequent decision to allow the company to raise the water price.

The police also claimed to have found financial irregularities in Veolia's contracts with Armenian suppliers worth 3.7 billion drams.

The company, which is part of France's Veolia utility giant, angrily denied the accusations. The PSRC also rejected them as "baseless."

Last week, the PSRC indicated its plans to allow Veolia to set the water price at 202 drams per cubic meters. But it announced on Wednesday that Veolia has agreed to delay the price hike until 2025 as part of a deal with the Armenian Ministry of Energy

and Natural Resources signed on Monday.

In a separate statement, the ministry specified that in return for keeping the price unchanged the company will be allowed to make less capital investments in the water network than were envisaged by the 2016 management contract. It presented the deal as proof of increased "mutual trust" between the Armenian government and Veolia.

According to the PSRC, the government will also continue to subsidize the water tariff in 2019. This means that Armenian households will keep paying 180 drams for every cubic meter of water.

Veolia managed the water and sewerage network of Yerevan from 2007-2016, phasing out Soviet-era water rationing in the vast majority of city neighborhoods. "By 2030 the entire population of Armenia will be supplied with drinking water [around the clock] thanks to Veolia," the company pledged in November 2016.

EU Official sees greater aid to Armenia

The European Union intends to increase its financial and technical assistance to Armenia, a senior EU official said on November 28.

"We have increased and will increase our support to Armenia because we see a [government] will to move in the direction supported by us," Luc Devigne, a deputy managing director at the European External Action Service, told RFE/RL's Armenian service in Yerevan.

Devigne noted that the EU is currently implementing 250 million euros (\$283 million) worth of projects in Armenia. "We also have loans for 1 billion euros in Armenia. We will do more," he said without specifying future aid volumes.

After meeting with top EU officials in Brussels in July, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan criticized the 28-nation bloc

for not boosting its assistance to Armenia following mass protests that brought him to power. The head of the EU Delegation in Yerevan, Piotr Switalski, countered at the time that Pashinian's government needs to propose specific reform-oriented projects before demanding greater aid.

"We have seen a number of what we believe are positive actions taken by the government," Devigne said, singling out its efforts to combat corruption in Armenia. The anti-graft drive bodes well for greater EU investments in the Armenian economy, he added.

The EU official spoke after co-chairing, together with Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Karen Nazarian, the first session of the EU-Armenia Partnership Committee. The body was set up recently in line with the Comprehensive and Enhanced

Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed by Brussels and Yerevan in November last year.

"At the meeting, the EU reiterated its support for the Armenian government's reform process," read a statement released by the committee late on Tuesday. The Armenian side, for its part, pledged to ensure that the December 9 parliamentary elections in the country are "genuinely free and fair," according to the statement. "We are confident that on December 9 the parliamentary elections will take place in good order," Devigne said in this regard.

Earlier this month, the EU and three of its member states -- Britain, Germany and Sweden -- allocated 2.9 million euros in aid aimed at facilitating the proper conduct of the snap polls.

Armenia and Bulgaria sign 2019 defense cooperation plan

The Armenian and Bulgarian defense ministries have held bilateral cooperation consultations.

The consultations were held November 29-30 at the Armenian defense ministry headquarters in Yerevan, chaired by Levon Ayvazyan, director of the Defense Policy Department at the Armenian defense ministry, and Daniella Grigorova, director of the Regional Initiatives Department at the Bulgarian defense ministry's defense policy directorate.

Issues concerning global and regional security were discussed.

The stances of the defense ministries of the two countries regarding international development of security and defense issues were presented.

The Armenian-Bulgarian bilateral defense cooperation programs were also discussed, as well as the prospects of cooperation in multilateral formats in NATO and the EU.

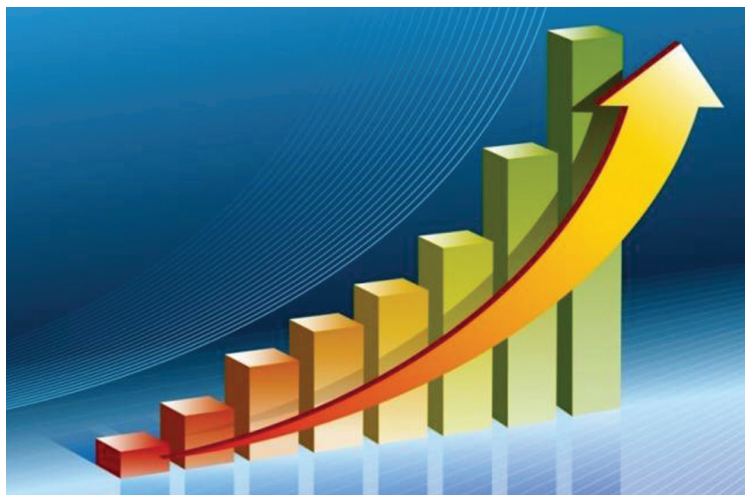
The 2019 bilateral cooperation program



between the Armenian and Bulgarian defense ministries was signed. The deal includes nine actions in peacekeeping,

military medicine, military police, personnel training, military-technical and other sectors.

Armenia leads EEU countries on level of economic growth – official EEC data



According to statistical data published by the Eurasian Economic Commission, Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) countries had a 1,9% GDP growth in 2018 January-June against the same period of 2017. Moreover, the highest GDP growth indicator in the reporting period was recorded in Armenia – 8,3%.

Industrial output grew 3,3 in the EEU, with 62,7% growth in reprocessed industry and 27,9% in mining. And again, the highest growth in industrial output was recorded in Armenia – 9,6%, despite the fact that a 12,7% decline was recorded in mining.

In agriculture, however, Armenia had a 4,6% decline. The

sector declined also in Belarus and Russia, 2,3% and 3,3% respectively. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan the indicator grew 2% and 4% respectively. At the same time, Armenia's share in the overall agricultural output in the union increased 0,2%, totaling 1,6%.

Construction volumes in January-September remained unchanged, despite growth recorded in all countries, except Russia. In Armenia, construction volumes grew 19,2%.

Cargo shipments grew 3,2% in all EEU countries, and passenger flow grew 5,3%. Unlike the other EEU countries, a 5% decline in passenger flow was recorded in Armenia, which is associated with decreased transportation volumes by automobile vehicles – 10,2%.

Retail trading grew 3,1% in EEU, with the highest indi-

cator recorded in Belarus and Kazakhstan – 9,1% and 7% respectively. In Armenia, the indicator grew 1,6% in the 3rd three-months period.

Exports within the union grew 13,5%, while foreign exports grew 22%. Russia's share in the foreign trade amounted 84,1% in January-August, 9,8% in Kazakhstan, 4,8% in Belarus, 0,6% in Kyrgyzstan and 0,7% in Armenia. Armenia's exports grew 10,2%, while imports grew 37,4%. High growth was recorded in foreign exports of textile productions in Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan – 23,4%, 25,6% and 39,3% respectively.

Armenia leads in growth of exports volumes – 33,1%, which is contributed by growth in exports of vehicles, equipment, textile production.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

You are in high gear this week. You must use your wits and think quickly. You rather like this kind of stimulation, but use caution with the accelerator. There may be a cop on every corner. Pay attention to what you are doing with knives and other tools. Your reflexes are off a notch.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Relationship(s) may be challenging at the beginning of the week. Tensions that have been submerged may suddenly erupt and one of you may depart the scene. If you are in a normally stable relationship, then one of you is looking for some fresh excitement. Allow some change and reshaping to enliven the picture.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

Given that your planetary ruler (Mercury) is retrograding, this may be the week in which you back out of a relationship or a previously made agreement. Don't force yourself to carry it through if your instincts tell you to withdraw. You need to give this plan more thought.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

You may have a minor struggle with yourself about whether to take care of others or yourself. Helping others may look good, but it isn't what you want to do right now. Because Mercury is turning retrograde this week, you may be splitting your time and attention between both. The solution isn't perfect, but it will have to do.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

It is probable that you have been spending money freely on things which please you. But your inner or outer partner thinks otherwise. Maybe this situation is the other way around. Partner may be spending too much for your comfort. It will be easier to compromise if you understand that the struggle is with an inner self, for each of you.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

You are likely second guessing yourself on a decision you thought was final. Oops! No, it isn't. Do some research on anything concerning your property. There may be a better solution if you dig into the options. Don't hurry yourself into what could be an expensive venture.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

It is unusual for you to feel irritable with others, but this week brings an increase in adrenalin. You probably need some personal space and want to move at your own pace rather than following another. Issues related to shared resources may be at the bottom of your irritation.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

You and a loved one may be irritating each other this week. Do your best to create space between you. You need a break from each other. The loved one may be a lover or a child. If creating space is not feasible, consider planning an activity that requires energy and use of large muscles.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

You may very well be involved in an ambitious project. You must take care with those who could be thought of as 'authorities'. If you press as hard as you want to, you likely will encounter resistance from these folks. If your plan is good for a number of people, and not at the expense of others, you could score a coup.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

You may feel compelled to raise your flag and promote your plans now. Do some self-searching ahead of time to find your true motive. If it is for the good of all, you will gain support from others. However, if you are really after a prize that will simply allow you to preen, let go of it. Your product or idea is not yet ready for exposure.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

In 2020 you will need to recreate your sense of identity. Now is a time of "grace" in which you are given time to rest and recuperate, whether or not you have a job. You are allowed to coast while you pull your thoughts together and build plans for your future.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Your intuition is on target and likely even uncanny. Go with it because you will assist others, perhaps without even knowing it is happening. This is a time in which setting boundaries is useful. Someone may be assuming power that interferes with your space. The Fish do not like to snap at others, but now may be a good time to draw a line.

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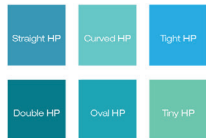
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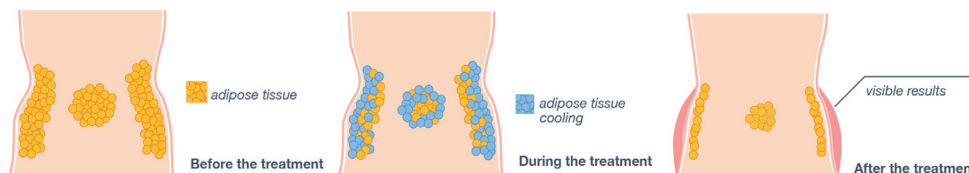
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