

Philanthropist Levon Hayrapetyan Dies in Russian Prison



Noted philanthropist and businessman Levon Hayrapetyan died overnight on Wednesday in a Russian prison in Mordovia, where he was serving time on politically-motivated charges of alleged embezzlement and bribery. He was 68 and was in poor health ever since his arrest at the Moscow airport in 2014.

Hayrapetian, who made his fortune in

Russia in the energy sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union, invested and donated millions of dollars in Armenia and Artsakh, and has made philanthropic contributions to Diaspora organizations.

His contributions and support for Artsakh and Armenia were unwavering and he became a respected and popular figure in Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora. He financed

the upgrading of Artsakh's infrastructure as well as the restoration of the 13th century Gandzasar Monastery in Artsakh. He is best known, however, for sponsoring a mass wedding of 700 couples in Artsakh in 2008. Aside from covering the cost of the weddings and the reception, he also gave each couple \$2,500 to start their families.

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Senior Armenian lawmaker assesses Novruz Mammadov's announcement absurd

Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia, spokesperson of the ruling Republican Party Eduard Sharmazanov has reacted to the announcement of Novruz Mammadov, assistant to Azerbaijan's president for foreign policy issues, according to whom President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan has violated the agreement reached during the Geneva talks and presented details of the negotiations during the meeting with the Armenian community in Switzerland. Vice President of the parliament of Armenia stressed that Novruz Mammadov has obviously problems with understanding. "His announcement, as well as the announcements of other Azerbaijani officials who try to create an illusion that the President wanted to present details immediately after the talks by which he violated an agreement are nothing more than absurd", Eduard Sharmazanov said. As refers to the 2 key points - Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan and the issue of security is the most important, the Armenian side has said it 10 years ago and will say today and tomorrow. "We are in no way responsible for revelation of negotiation details and there is no need to try to mislead the public and the international community", the RPA spokesperson said. According to him, President Sargsyan's remarks on the impor-



tance of security and Artsakh are in no way linked with the details of the talks and as refers to the details of the talks President Sargsyan has said only what the Minsk Group has promulgated. "And as refers to Artsakh, be it Mammadov or anyone else, Artsakh will never be part of Azerbaijan, the Armenian side one again reiterates that", Sharmazanov added.

Armenian MP positively assesses Sargsyan-Aliyev negotiation results



Koryun Nahapetyan – chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on defense and security, positively assesses the results of the meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents in Geneva. Koryun Nahapetyan told that in previous interviews he said he has no great expectations from the meeting, but added that the results achieved during the meeting can serve as a good base for ensuring certain progress in the future. "I think taking additional steps for easing tension in the line of contact must have a great affect in near future. You know there is a great tension in the line of contact. Our expectation that the Azerbaijani side

must take measures for easing that tension was reflected in the last statement issued by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs. In this sense, of course, the meeting results can be considered as positive", Nahapetyan said. Commenting on the fact that Azerbaijan has constantly violated the agreements reached during the negotiations, and there is no guarantee that this time it will not take that step, Koryun Nahapetyan said: "First of all it is very important to reach certain agreements. This is not being done easily. This means that both the mediators and the respective agencies of the sides carried out a great work. As a first step, of course, it is

necessary to reach an agreement. The second most important step is the maintenance of these agreements. The Armenian side completely implements its commitments, but life showed that the Azerbaijani side can announce something and do completely other thing". The lawmaker said the international community and especially the Minsk Group Co-Chairs must be consistent in the implementation of these agreements. "If there is an agreement to take measures to reduce tension in the line of contact, we should see in near future what actions have been made on this path", he said. At the initiative of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, the meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents was held at the residence of the Swiss permanent representative in the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva on October 16. The meeting was attended by Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers Edward Nalbandian and Elmar Mammadyarov, as well as the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group – Igor Popov (Russia), Stephane Visconti (France), Andrew Schofer (USA) and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk. The meeting was followed by a private meeting of Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev.

NATO chief welcomes Armenia's readiness to participate in discussions on peace in Syria



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed Armenia's readiness to participate in discussions on conducting peacekeeping operations in Syria. During the meeting with reporters on October 17

head of the Armenian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Koryun Nahapetyan said during the Assembly's plenary session he asked a question to the NATO chief on the situation in Syria and the possibilities to carry out peacekeeping actions there. "We were interested in what directions NATO sees for the implementation of peacekeeping operations in Syria.

We have also expressed Armenia's readiness to actively take part in such discussions which has also been stated by the Armenian President in the UN. The Secretary General presented the situation in Syria, as well as how he sees NATO's role in conducting peacekeeping operations there. He welcomed our readiness, as well as that of NATO member and other partner states to participate in these discussions", Koryun Nahapetyan said. At the same time, the NATO chief said at the moment it is appropriate to carry out peacekeeping operations in Syria within the frames of the UN.

President of Artsakh visits Flemish Parliament in Brussels

On October 18 Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan visited the Flemish Parliament in Brussels, met with a group of its members and attended the solemn ceremony of establishing the Flanders-Artsakh Friendship Group, press service of the Artsakh President's Office told. President Sahakyan extended gratitude to all those who spared no efforts to establish the Friendship Group, noting that as a symbol of sincere friendship between Flanders and Artsakh the group signaled the willingness to develop bilateral relations and adherence to universal values. Bako Sahakyan underlined that Flanders was the oldest center of the Armenian Diaspora in the territory of the present day Belgium, where the Armenian community for centuries had been a unique bridge between the West and the East, their historical homeland and this beautiful country, adding that such a rich history of relations, naturally, would have a positive impact on the current period too.



Baku is engaged in cheap manipulations – Armenian FM to Azerbaijani counterpart

After the summit of the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents in Geneva Baku again makes cheap and primitive manipulations claiming that allegedly an agreement was reached in Geneva to refrain from making any comments not on the outcome of the Summit but the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution as a whole, Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian said at the 4th European Armenian Convention commenting on the recent statement of Azerbaijani FM Elmar Mammadyarov. "Baku tries to avoid the responsibility for its own destructive policy. First, the damage caused to the peace process by the April 2016 Azerbaijani aggression against Nagorno Karabakh has not been overcome yet. Second, Baku has refused to implement Vienna and St. Petersburg agreements, which were aimed at creating conducive conditions for moving the peace process forward. It is well known, that Azerbaijan has backtracked from the agreements on numerous occasions previously questioning its credibility as a negotiating party. Third, Azerbaijan refuses to reiterate the principles of the

Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution that have been presented by the Co-Chair countries as a basis for the settlement, namely: the non use of force or threat of use of force, self-determination and territorial integrity. Fourth, despite numerous calls of the Co-Chairs to respect the 1994-95 trilateral ceasefire agreements, that do not have time limitations, Baku continues grossly violating the ceasefire", FM Nalbandian said. The minister said Armenia is convinced that there is a need to conduct intensive negotiations, strongly believes that if Baku abides to the calls of the Co-Chairs to strictly respect the ceasefire, implement previously reached agreements, reiterate its adherence to the principles of the conflict resolution proposed by the Co-Chairs and constructively engage in the negotiations that will open the possibilities for moving the peace process forward. "Armenia, together with the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group will continue the efforts aimed at the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict exclusively by peaceful means", he added.

“Artsakh’s independence is the right of Armenian people”- Catholicos Aram I

The Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia is expressing its continuous support to the Armenian National Committee of Europe, Catholicos Aram I said at the opening of the 4th Congress on European Armenians. “We’ve gathered here once again as people belonging to the same family. Due to various reasons, we live in different places, we approach issues from different aspects, however there is one goal on the path of our lives, because we have the same homeland, the same demand. We are speaking and must speak with different approaches and emphasis – having one sacred goal before us, which for me is national demand”. “Today more than ever, it is the independent Armenia itself which is entitled to the fair rights of our people, and the declaration of the 100th anniversary, which was read by the Armenian President



in Tsitsernakaberd in front of the whole world, proved that Armenia is entitled”, the Catholicos said. According to him, the basis of national demand is also the protection and strengthening of the sovereignty and independence of the people of Artsakh. “Armenia, Artsakh, the Armenian Nation-

al Committee offices, all of us carry out work in different ways, and must continue doing so. I notice the complete support of Armenia and the Diaspora for Artsakh. Artsakh’s independence is the right of our people, above all it is the historic right of our people, because our people are there, in Artsakh. Our people are on their historic lands”, the Catholicos said. “And with this consciousness we stand with support for the independent state of Artsakh”, he said. The Catholicos proposed to have Armenian National Committee offices in other parts of the world as well, at the same time mentioning the importance of Europe and North America. “Northern America and Europe are important, but I think the Muslim World is also important, because we don’t have enough representation there”, he said.

War scenario not ruled out in future Karabakh settlement efforts – Russian analyst

The Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) conflict settlement process has entered a new phase threatening high chances of a war scenario, a Russian political analyst has said, commenting on the recent meeting between Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev.

In an interview with Tert.am, Grigory Trofimchuk described the talks in Geneva as just a meeting under an autumn tree (referring to the photo of the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders) not expected to mark a major breakthrough in the continuing peace process.

“An important moment was that the new US co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group

[Ambassador Andrew Shofer] attended the meeting. I don’t think the dialogue will yield any result. We can expect an outcome only after the ceasefire violations end along the Line of Contact,” he said, adding that much now depends also on the United States’ activity.

“We don’t know what the new American co-chair of the Minsk Group is up to, but we have seen the conduct of the US Department of State’s representatives, for instance, [during the crisis] in Ukraine. We have heard them voicing sharp-worded statements. Only a sensational development can help

resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. And that sensation may have also negative implications,” he noted.

Trofimchuk said he sees those negative elements in any solution.

“A war isn’t ruled out, especially after the April fighting that resulted in so many casualties. It is the continuation of the war along the Line of Contact. If we do not have thousands of victims now, that doesn’t absolutely suggest we aren’t facing a war. We need to give attention to every victim as that happens every day, and all the sides suffer losses,” he added.

Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents in Geneva agreed to take steps to reduce tension

During the meeting in Geneva the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents agreed to take measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact, Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian said in his speech at the 4th European Armenian Convention. “The peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is one of the highest priorities on Armenia’s foreign policy agenda. As you know three days ago a Summit of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan was held in Geneva. When it comes to the outcome of the meeting itself everything was clearly indicated in the joint statement of the Foreign Ministers and the

Co-Chairs. The meeting took place in a constructive atmosphere. The Presidents agreed to take measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions on the Line of Contact. The Co-Chairs expressed their satisfaction with these direct talks, which took place after a long interval. They remain ready to work with the sides on mediating a peacefully negotiated settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As a next step, the Co-Chairs will organize working sessions with the Foreign Ministers in the near future”, FM Nalbandian said. He stated that the Armenian side has long been advocating for the peaceful negotiated settlement and for the reduction of

tensions and all these have been reflected in the joint statement. The meeting of the Presidents after about sixteen months interval was made possible due to the able mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and this in itself can be considered as a positive thing. For the first time in about four years it was possible to adopt, although quite brief, a joint statement with the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan together with the Co-Chairs. As you know on numerous previous occasions Armenia expressed its readiness to join the statements of the Co-Chairs, however Azerbaijan always refused to have a common statement”, the Armenian FM stated.

New EU-Armenia agreement ‘very ambitious project’, says expert



The revised EU-Armenia partnership and cooperation agreement is a very ambitious document allowing the sides to crystalize future relations, according to Gevorg Melikyan, an associate expert at the Armenian Institute of International and Security Affairs.

Speaking to Tert.am, he described the deal as a specific project expanding the frameworks of relations. “It opens up a road map for future steps in a way, allowing the sides to commit themselves to future cooperation and reforms. The Armenian authorities will be facing the main burden in terms of enforcing the keynote provisions,” he said, emphasizing also the importance of the society’s participatory role and demanding attitude.

The European Union published the text of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on Friday. The document is to be signed on the sidelines of the EU Eastern Partnership Summit on

November 24.

Melikyan dismissed the growing fears that several Council of Europe member states’ failure to translate the document may delay the process. He said he now has only two major concerns, i.e. - that the commitments and obligations enshrined in the document may remain on paper, and that “Armenia may fail to demonstrate a consistent approach to eventually bring those provisions to life”.

“The European Union will be consistent when it comes to the reforms, but Armenia, as the beneficiary, should be itself interested in the agreement’s implementation,” he added.

EEU’s future is in implementation of strategic development agenda – Tigran Sargsyan

Respects and taking into account the interest of each member state is the institutional base of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which gives an opportunity to make decisions acceptable for all the member states and allow maximally utilizing the strategic advantage, reports Chairman of Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), Tigran Sargsyan announced at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. He spoke about the economic priorities of the Eurasian integration union, principles of cooperation with 3rd countries and international organizations, as well as presented his view on the opportunities to cooperate with the OSCE. Afterwards, Tigran Sargsyan discussed with OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger the aspects for dialogue between the EEC and the OSCE,



as well as economic and environmental security issues. Thomas Greminger invited the EEC representatives to participate in the digital summit to be held in January, 2018 under the auspices of the OSCE. Italy is the organizer of the large-scale forum. “The EEU has elaborated a development agenda for the period until 2025 that is based on the obvious advantages of the Union – transit, industrial, intellectual potential,

diversity of raw and natural resources, 180 million-strong market and simplicity in mutual interactions”, Sargsyan underlined. According to him, projects that will be able to harmonize with the Chinese initiative “Silk Road” will be the main directions of EEU’s progress. The EEC Board Chairman added that the works on the trade and economic agreement between China and the EEU are currently underway. Tigran Sargsyan specially focused on the cooperation prospects in transport and logistics, the benefits of which will be enjoyed not only by China and the EEU member states but also Europe. The creation of a common transport area, the establishment of trans-border corridors will raise the effectiveness of transportations creating new opportunities for business partnership.

Azerbaijan is not ready to constructive talks on NK conflict settlement – senior lawmaker

By violating the ceasefire regime on Karabakh-Azerbaijan contact line Azerbaijan shows that it’s not ready to constructive negotiation for the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, RPA spokesperson, Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia Eduard Sharmazanov said after the Executive Body meeting of the party, commenting on the ceasefire violation by Azerbaijan on October 19, as a result of which one serviceman was killed. “Unfortunately, by this shooting Azerbaijan showed the existing gap between its acts in theory

and practice. By this Azerbaijan showed that it does not respect its international commitments assumed just a few days ago in Geneva and declared by the Co-chairs and the foreign ministers of the negotiating sides. This shooting was not only against Armenia, but also against the Geneva talks”, Sharmazanov saying. He reminded that a joint statement was issued in Geneva and this was the first joint statement of the recent years adopted not only by the Co-chairs but also by the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. “Both the Co-chair coun-

tries and the negotiating parties point out the necessity of a peaceful settlement in that statement and document that measures aimed at alleviating tensions on the contact line should be taken. And alleviating tensions on the contact line means the implementation of the agreements reached and declared by the Co-chairs in Vienna and St. Petersburg”, the Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia emphasized. Sharmazanov hoped that at least now the international community will give a clear and direct assessment.

PM holds consultation on community development programs



Consultation was held in the Armenian government led by Prime Minister Karen

Karapetyan on October 17 during which issues relating to community development

programs were discussed, press service of the government told Armenpress. Minister of territorial administration and development Davit Lokyan reported on the observation results conducted in certain provinces for that purpose.

It was reported that the ministry has already summarized about 50 programs that are directed towards increasing the chances for public to receive revenues, improving the investment environment and social condition. PM Karapetyan tasked to continue the works and amend the community development programs attaching importance to installing concrete business logic in them which will contribute to boosting economic activeness in communities, developing infrastructures and creating jobs.

Armenia and EU have no disagreements on future operation of Metsamor NPP, says lawmaker

The European Union doesn't put forward new questions and isn't saying that Armenia cannot have its nuclear power plant. The EU is saying that the resource of the current nuclear power plant is nearing its completion and decisions should be made in this regard, Khosrov Harutyunyan, chairman of the parliamentary committee on economic affairs said, commenting on the point in the Armenia-EU comprehensive and expanded partnership agreement draft regarding the further destiny of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant. "Armenia and the EU don't have disagreements in this matter, moreover I would like to draw your attention on the fact that we have an agreement with Russia, agreed also with the IAEA, and are working for ensuring the resource for the current nuclear power plant until 2026", he said, adding that this doesn't cause concerns among anyone. According to him, consistent steps are implemented particularly for constructing a new quality and new capacity reactor, with new safety guarantees. "We extended the deadline of the nuclear power plant's resource for one reason only, in order to have an operating nuclear power plant which provides cheap and sustainable energy, and on the other hand we will have time to design and construct the new reactor, which requires big investments", he said. He also added that international structures consider Armenia's experience in re-launching the nuclear power plant, and implementing its quality and safe activity to be almost exemplary.

President Sargsyan meets with participants of conference "The Role of the Constitutional Courts in Overcoming Constitutional Conflicts"

President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan met at a tea table with the participants of the 22nd international conference "The Role of the Constitutional Courts in Overcoming Constitutional Conflicts" on October 20. The conference will last from October 19-21. Serzh Sargsyan greeted the guests and highlighted the conference dedicated to the discussion of issues of constitutional justice. According to President Sargsyan, the fact that the conference has brought together numerous highly qualified specialists speaks about the demand of cooperation in that format. Serzh Sargsyan noted that direct interaction is the best means of partnership for finding joint and effective solutions to issues of common interest, as well as for conducting exchange of experience. In this context Serzh Sargsyan talked about the partnership with "Democracy through law" (Venice Commission) and other European institutions, thank to which democratic reforms have been underway in Armenia for years. The President also referred to the constitutional changes of Armenia of 2015, which became

the starting point for the strengthening of Armenia's state governance and democratic institutions. The participants of the international conference thanked the President for the cordial reception and the organizers of the conference for holding the event in Yerevan at a high level. They noted that during the last two days rather productive dialogue had been launched in the sidelines of the conference, during which they touched upon a number of issues from professional viewpoint, such as separation of powers, strengthening democracy and rule of law, the role of constitutional courts in democratic systems and so on. The participants of the conference expressed readiness to continue close interactions and cooperation in the professional aspect.



Armenia's 2018 budget to be directed for ensuring progressive growth of capital expenditures

For the first time the budget policy vector will be directed not for the implementation of social expenditures, but for the capital expenditures, the development of infrastructures and capital capacities, Khosrov Harutyunyan – chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on economic affairs, told reporters speaking about Armenia's 2018 budget draft.

"For the first time it is clearly stated in the budget policy that it is necessary to ensure progressive growth of capital expenditures against social protection expenditures. We need to achieve a guaranteed and constant growth of budget revenues in order to have

impressive development and increase of social expenses, and this is possible by the volumes and rates of capital expenditures and investments", Khosrov Harutyunyan said. He said this policy will continue for another 1-2 years, and the budget capacities will be used for increasing Armenia's economic potential and constantly guaranteeing budget revenues. According to him, the capital expenditures will relate to road reconstruction, energy infrastructures, water supply. "Those are the infrastructures necessary for any economic entity to effectively carry out its activity", Khosrov Harutyunyan said.

He said in 2008 the situation was good in terms of social protection, but in 2009 when 14% decline in GDP was recorded, the revenues gradually decreased, but the social obligations didn't reduce.

Thus, the state borrowed a debt for conducting its policy, which, according to Khosrov Harutyunyan, is the most effective policy. "Now if we borrow a debt, it must be used for ensuring progressive growth of capital expenditures", he said. According to the 2018 state budget draft, the revenue part will amount to 1 trillion 307 billion AMD, the expenditure part – 1 trillion 464 billion AMD and the deficit – 157 billion AMD.

Armenian delegation, IMF & World Bank officials meet in Washington



Armenia's finance minister Vardan Aramyan had a meeting in Washington with high level representatives of the World Bank

and the IMF on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the two organizations. The Armenian delegation included Vice-PM Vache Gabrielyan, Central Bank president Arthur Javadyan and other officials. The delegation namely met with WB Vice President Cyril Muller and WB Executive Director for Dutch Constituency Frank Heemskerk. The meetings focused on the timeline of the "Country Partnership Circle" document preparation, the appropriateness issue of using the "Development Policy Tool" in 2018 and further joint steps for realizing the "Debt for Nature Protection" program. Meetings also took place with IMF Executive Director Anthony De Lannoy and Middle East and Central Asia Department Director Jihad Azour. The sides discussed the possible proposal on implementing a new program within the framework of the IMF External Fund Facility tool. The sides agreed to continue joint efforts on revising Armenian fiscal rules, also in terms of involving new technical assistance from the IMF.

Only cost-effective nuclear plant may be realistic for Armenia - minister



The political decision to construct a new nuclear power plant in Armenia may be realized only in case the idea proves cost effective, the minister of justice said today, not ruling out the possibility of revising the plan.

Speaking at a news conference, Davit Harutyunyan cited the government's long-term strategy, which he said is built on a mathematical

model to evaluate the consumer-friendly methods based on forecasts.

"We will repeatedly revise it depending on the technological developments. A new technology allowing us to operate the [Metsamor] Nuclear Plant with 50MW blocks is now available, and that essentially changes the evaluation principle. It may allow us to opt for a completely different solution to create a nuclear plant with a much lower capacity. New technologies may develop, so we may revise our approaches," he added.

The minister said the large-scale programs will also focus on economic effectiveness to consider consumers' interests. "Any non-transparent tool motivated by political processes is unacceptable," Harutyunyan said, agreeing that nuclear power plants are the cheapest energy resource ensuring also a higher degree of independence.

"We do not have raw production and are dependent, to a certain extent, on raw manufacturers, This is why we now try to consider all the elements," he said.

PM Karapetyan attends opening of renovated Rustaveli street in Gyumri

Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan visited Gyumri on October 18 during which he attended the opening of Rustaveli street which has been renovated within the frames of Kumayri historical center development program, press service of the government told. During the tour the PM got acquainted with the results of the renovation works. The PM attached importance to the Kumayri historical center development program, the restoration of historical-cultural values of Shiraz and Rustaveli streets and the

improvement of infrastructures. Within the frames of the program centers for art, crafts, entertainment will be created, different business programs will be implemented, attractive conditions will be created for tourists in Gyumri's historical center.

The PM told reporters that he liked the renovated street very much, and the next street will be the Shiraz street which will be renovated under the same program. It is planned to launch the construction works in March, 2018. "We will definitely complete the Ku-

mayri historical center's program. Our main goal is to maintain Gyumri's uniqueness", he said. The residents of Gyumri thanked the PM for implementation of the program and for always keeping Gyumri in spotlight. Thereafter, PM Karapetyan visited the newly-opened information center for visitors of Gyumri, got acquainted with its services provided. It was reported that the center will serve as a place providing any kind of information about Armenia and Gyumri to a tourist.

4200 more jobs to be created by state assistance to 70 investment programs

In the first half of 2017 the volume of foreign investments inflow in real sector of the economy comprised about 1 billion 24 million USD, the direct investments comprised about 328 million USD which increased by 36.6% and 26.3% respectively compared to the same period of 2016. Minister of economic development and investments of Armenia Suren Karayan presented the statistics on investments at a meeting with reporters urging to assess the amount of investments by the net growth of inflow rather than by the volume of

money inflow. "The net growth is the difference of the investments made in the country and the money coming out of the country, of course, the deductions do not mean an outflow of capital", he said. The minister also presented statistics on the state assistance to 70 investment programs which currently are at different stages of implementation. "Based on the implementation of programs nearly 493 million USD investments will be made in 2017 and nearly 7300 jobs will be created", he said. According to the minister, the monitoring

showed that already over 250 million USD investments have been made, 3200 jobs have been created. He said over the past year works have been made for improving the legislative field aimed at attracting investments. "Recently the government approved the new draft law on foreign investments which enables to further improve the protection institute of foreign investors", minister Karayan said. He also attached importance to the ongoing works aimed at increasing Armenia's recognition among foreign investors.

Armenian Government thinks of returning to policy of constructing small reservoirs instead of mega ones

Armenia's priority goal in water economy remains raising the effectiveness of water management, Minister of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources of Armenia Ashot Manukyan told the reporters on October 20. "The main solution to this is the construction of reservoirs. Last year the construction of Vedi reservoir kicked off with a total volume of 29 million cubic meters. The works are still underway. We had started talks with the German KFW Bank, which are already in the stage of completion. With the funding of the bank we will start the project of raising the effectiveness of management of Akhuryan River basin, which presumes construction of Kapsi reservoir with 25 million cubic meters total volume and the reinforcement of the protective wall of Arpi lake", the Minister saying. He added that it was planned to build the Yeghvard reservoir with a total volume of 90 million cubic meters. "But here the Government stopped because all our discussions with the expert circles returned us to the vision that the Government ideology needs changes in the direction of reservoir construction. The Government starts to think that it might be right to suspend the mega projects of reservoir construction and set to construction of smaller ones", the Minister said. Ashot Manukyan



emphasized that the relief of Armenia with deep and steep canyons and gorges give an opportunity to construct small reservoirs making use of the natural dams.

Korean company plans establishing production of biotechnological drugs in Armenia



Healthcare Minister of Armenia Levon Altunyan received the delegation led by the head of the Korean company “GL RAPHA” Mr. Wang accompanied by the director of Armenian Pharmaceutical Company “Asteria” Koryun Karapetyan. The Korean businessman informed the Armenian minister that their company, active in different countries, wants to establish a joint production of biotechnological drugs in Armenia with “Asteria” company. Greeting the guests, Minister Altunyan emphasized that the ministry will do everything to support the implementation of the project. The minister stressed that Armenia can become a bridge for exporting the biological drugs to other countries of the region. Biological drugs are made from a living organism or its products and are used in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of cancer and other diseases. They possess no chemical substances.

FM Nalbandian highlights importance of launching Armenia-EU visa liberalization dialogue

Armenia enjoys close ties with the European Union and intends to expand the comprehensive cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, foreign minister Edward Nalbandian said in his remarks at the 4th European Armenian Convention in Brussels. “The European Union provides valuable assistance for the ongoing reforms in our country, supports the efforts made by Armenia towards the continuous promotion of human rights and the rule of law, further strengthening of democratic institutions, improving judiciary and effective governance. I would like also to emphasize our cooperation in the context of parliamentary elections held in Armenia last April”, the FM said. Edward Nalbandian added that the support of the European Union also extends to different sectors of Armenia’s economy, including energy, transport, agriculture. Some of them have a regional importance, like the modernization of the Armenia-Georgia border checkpoints and the construction of the high voltage transmission lines. “We actively cooperate in the fields of education, innovation, science and culture, including through such programs as Horizon 2020, Erasmus Plus and others. This year we have concluded the negotiations with the European Union on “Creative Europe” programme and the Common Aviation Area Agreement”, he stated. The FM specifically highlighted that the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership



Agreement has been finalized and initialed. The signing of the Agreement can become one of the main achievements of the EU Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Brussels in November. Among the issues on the Armenia-EU cooperation agenda, the minister also highlighted the importance of launching the visa liberalization dialogue that was one of the commitments enshrined in the Riga declaration of the EU Eastern Partnership and is an important component for the enhanced mobility and deepening of people to people contacts.

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By
**Gourgen James
Khazhakian**

**Chief
Correspondent**

The following extract from one of the most interesting and all-encompassing travel sites on Armenia, traveltoarmenia.am seems to this author surprisingly exact and touching:

"Armenia is unfortunately not the country where you will be able to visit royal palaces filled with luxury and classics where you will feel yourselves as one of the princes or princesses that once lived there. But Armenia has a number of fortresses and castles in and over which the heroic spirit of the

knowledgeable (some 500 metres).

Different versions explaining origins of the name of this Fortress still exist.

According to one of them, it was named after **King Smbat** who is buried in Yeghegis (Her Majesty The King is believed to have reconstructed the Fortress).

However, the version according to which the Fortress received its name from **Prince Smbat** (Orbelyan) of Syunik who lived in the 10th century seems the most trustful one. Notably, in his "History of Sisakan" (Syunik) work Armenian historian **Stepanos Orbelyan** wrote: "When in 922 upon the order of **Yusuf amira** of Atrpatakan (Persia – Iran at present), general **Nsr** attacked Syunik, ruling Prince Smbat organized resistance in Yeghegis. Seeing they are

ration in 1221, as well as destruction of the Village of Yeghegis in the late 11th century, one can assume that the Fortress also fell to invaders within the 11th century.

However, according to an evidence, the Fortress was defended up to the 13th century. And such an assumption could mean that Smbataberd was captured by Mongols even rather than by Seljuq Turks. The Fortress was included into Atropatene when Armenia was under the Roman rule. In Greco-Roman sources Atropatene refers to the "State of Atrpatakan."

Smbataberd is protected from the east, west and south by natural cliffs which are strengthened by tall and wide pyramid walls; it is accessible only from the northern side.



Armenian people still smoothly soars. As you go in through the main entrance of those fortresses it seems like you are one of the medieval knights that were always warmly welcomed by the local people..."

Really, phrase it better if you can indeed...

Smbataberd Fortress which one of the oldest and largest fortresses not only in historical Syunik but in entire Armenia, is one of the most attractive travel destinations, it is located on the western side of Yeghegis Village, Vayots Dzor Marz (region) on the top of vertically rising inaccessible mountains (about 140 km from Yerevan, the capital of Armenia). The road to the Fortress is a narrow one, and cars like Niva are recommended to get there, but "climbing" the Fortress on foot seems much more interesting and

unable to bring down the defenders, the enemy retreated. Meanwhile, wise Smbat was quietly sitting in Vayots Dzor Province."

According to some sources, Smbataberd was founded in the 5th century, but was seriously fortified in the 9th -10th centuries under the patronage of legendary Armenian princely family of Orbelians.

Water was supplied to the Fortress through underground clay water pipe from the springs found close to **Tsakhats Qar** (Sold Stone) Monastery. A legend says that Smbataberd was captured by the Seljuq Turks in the same way as the Fortress of Proshaberd - a thirsty horse was used to sniff out the pipeline so as to cut off the water supply.

Taking into account the fact of Tsakhats Qar Monastery destruction and its resto-

Due to its location the Fortress has been in fact inaccessible for the enemies within many centuries. It was protected by the deep canyons of rivers *Artabuni* and Yeghegis. Later the 2-3 meters wide walls of the Fortress were built. The walls were fortified by pyramid-like towers. Alas, by now only the northern part is preserved.

To note, the interior space of the Fortress was able to shelter hundreds of people. At its upper part Smbataberd had two citadels - for the princes and their families/servicemen. A wall divides the fortress into northern and southern parts in which the ruins of citadels, living area were found.

In total, Smbataberd has three entries: the main entry is from the north, and there are two more entries from the west and east of the Fortress. The main en-

trance of the Fortress was made upon the principle of barbican (a fortified outpost or gateway) which means that the high walls and the steep rocks didn't allow to advance into the fortress and it gave an opportunity to keep the situation under control.

At the citadel of the Fortress the economic structures, arsenals, residences etc. existed. And when the living areas of the Fortress were captured, the population was finding shelter in the Citadel where food, water and ammunition were stored in advance to that.

And, as usual, travelers' reviews from Tripadvisor:

*70ava,
Beijing, China*

A place that should not be missed!!



This is one of those places not highlighted in any guidebook or tourist info, but should not be missed. Make sure you reach this place on a clear day and try to get a 4X4 car to take you all the way up. The road is passable and beautiful. The views from the top, the enormity of the fortress, the quietness, the birds and the vegetation are all incredible. Make sure you visit each corner of this fortress, since the views from each place are different. You can easily combine it with some other attractions in the area.

*patrickmeyer,
Washington DC, USA*

Spectacular ancient fortress built high on a precipice overlooking Yeghegis village, great hiking experience!

A group of 5 of us visited in late-March 2016. The drive to Smbataberd Fortress is surprisingly well-signed with blue tourist signs at each intersection leading to the fortress. From what I saw on Google Maps, I thought we'd be able to drive right up to the castle, but in reality we were able to drive no closer than the bottom of the hill on the west side of the castle. From there the road was blocked by a water-level stream crossing and too much snow. If you had a jeep, you could likely continue.

We hiked from there, about 1.7 miles one-way. The jeep trail on the west side of the castle is easy to hike, wide and easy to see, however it is quite steep. Some parts were still covered by 5 inches of snow. We monitored our progress on Google Maps -- data connection is perfect here.

We approached the castle and were

gle-track trail. It would be impossible to drive on the east side, unless you had a motorbike. The hike down the east side was easier, with no snow, and a direct line of sight to Yeghegis. We reached the main road and headed to the Yeghegis Cemetery.

Smbataberd is a relatively unknown place. I asked many of my Armenian colleagues and they were unaware it even existed. As a tourist, please go explore this place. The history is rich and powerful, the air is clear, and the views are stellar. Enjoy!

*JGDynamo,
Canada*

Rhymes with Smbataberd

Up a rocky track is the Smbataberd Fortress or more aptly the ruins that



pleasantly surprised to find a multi-language USAID tourist information sign describing the castle and its history. We hiked through the front gate of the castle and into the main plaza. The main structure would have been HUGE at one time. Now, mostly only the outer walls still exist and they have been partially restored.

The view from the castle walls is incredible, and you can see a far distance in every direction. The castle is built on a strategic precipice, overlooking deep valleys on each side. You can see Yeghegis Village to the east.

Our next destination was Yeghegis Jewish Cemetery, so we decided to hike down the east side rather than return the way we came. The "road" on the east side is significantly more worn out and at some points it is no more than a sin-

were the fortress. There is still much of it to see, the outer walls, and a sense of the sheer size that this place would have been. What you probably will notice most is the view from here across the valleys to the other mountains and down on to Yeghegis. The place is also signed in a number of languages so you should be able to get an understanding of what it is all about. If you aren't into ruins you should go anyway, the hike up is revitalizing and the views as I have said before are worth the trip up.

The author used materials from Wikipedia and traveltoarmenia.am when preparing this story

*Photos by
ArmGeo, Mr Rick Ney,
Azdak Daily*

Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator Recently: (As Usual) Supporting the Armenian Countryside and the Mother Nature...

E-bike station opening and outdoor illumination system modernization in Garm

Two green events: the opening of electric bicycles' station and the launch of modernized outdoor illumination system took place in the ancient Garm village rich with historical and architectural monuments.

The opening of the e-bike station of the Green Mobility project took place in the frames of SunChild 7th International Environmental Festival.

The Green Mobility e-bike station is equipped with solar panels and batteries. The bicycles are charged only by solar energy not emitting any harmful substances into the atmosphere. One of the main aims of the e-bike station installment in Garm is tourism promotion.



VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**, the FPWC Founder **Ruben Khachatryan**, Head of Garm Community **Aharon Sahakyan**, Deputy Ministers of Nature Protection, Economic Development and Investments, Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resources and Agriculture of the RA took part in the bicycles' station opening ceremony. After the ceremony the participants rode e-bikes to Garm temple and back.

It is possible to charge or rent e-bikes in the bicycles station. Green Mobility is implemented by the support of the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme, VivaCell-MTS and the FPWC. The aim of the project is the promotion of e-bikes as an alternative transportation means, which do not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

"The opening of the e-bikes station is a nice impetus for healthy lifestyle, development of cultural and environmental tourism in Armenia, nature protection, as well as a precondition for the creation of comfortable conditions for bicycle riders. Not every person is able to move easily by mechanical bikes, taking into consideration the geographical

specifications of our country. In this matter there is no alternative to the construction of electrical engine bikes infrastructure", the Founding General Manager of VivaCell-MTS **Ralph Yirikian** said.

47 LED lights illuminating more than 2 km long territory were installed in Garm in the first stage of outdoor illumination system modernization in the frames of Alternative Energy project implemented due to the co-operation of the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets and VivaCell-MTS.

The former outdoor illumination system of the village was not energy efficient, consumed more electricity than expected providing not enough illumination. The former system's lights were 5-6 times more energy consuming than the newly installed energy efficient and environmentally friendly LED

lights.

The introduction of energy efficient outdoor LED lightening systems in the settlements intends to economize community means. Use of environmentally friendly and energy efficient LED lights is economically beneficial since it will curtail energy consumption by 80% thus contributing to communities' welfare.

In summer outdoor illumination of the village will be provided from 21:00 to 00:00, and in winter from 18:00 to 23:00. During holidays illumination will be provided for the whole night.

Partnership aimed at infrastructure development in communities

Installation of outdoor illumination energy efficient systems continues in the borderland villages. This time, in the frames of Alternative Energy project, due to the joint efforts of the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) and VivaCell-MTS, 41 LED lights were installed in Zaritap village of Vayots Dzor, illuminating

1500 meter-long territory.

The introduction of the outdoor energy efficient illumination system is a very vital community development precondition. As a result of the project, community budget expenses will be curtailed and the saved amounts can be directed to the solution of other problems.

VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**, the Founder of the FPWC **Ruben Khachatryan**, the Head of Zaritap community **Simon Babayan** and the village population took part in the launching ceremony of the modern system.

"The program implemented in borderland communities resolves more than one problem. We have had opportunities to share about the environmental, energy-saving, economic profitability of the program. But there is one more aspect to reflect on: this



infrastructure with the opportunities it offers can become a unique model of business management for the community. It will let manage the modest budget of the community and steer the saved means to efficient implementation of other programs in longer-term perspective. After all, each community has its own approach in assessing the problems, and its principle of prioritizing the solution of those problems," VivaCell-MTS General Manager **Ralph Yirikian** said.

In comparison with light bulbs, LED lights are capable of lasting for a much longer period of time and consume 80% less electricity.

With the support of VivaCell-MTS, introduction of energy efficient technology, combined with environment friendly components, helps to curtail financial expenses of the community and stimulates village life solving the problem of secure night drive and walk.

The streets of the village will be illuminated from 21:00 until 02:00 in summer time and from 18:00 till 01:00 in winter. During holidays the illumination will be provided for the whole night.

Serj Tankian announces 7 notes music challenge-competition

Lead vocalist of System of A Down, singer/songwriter Serj Tankian announced 7 notes music competition-challenge, reports Armenpress. “A lot of people ask me where the music comes from, where the songs come from. I always frankly believe that they come from collective consciousness, that they don’t necessary reside within an artist. Every song begins with an idea, a concept or a sound”, he said in a video on Youtube. The singer adds that the challenge is simple. “You got these 7 notes you have to start with, so the first 7 notes of your composition have to be these 7 notes. You can make a jazz song, a rock song, symphony, whatever music you want. It can’t be longer than three minutes. The rest is up to you. I am Serj Tankian and



this is my challenge, I give you 7 notes and you give me your best”, he said. The winner of the challenge will get a prize worth 5000 USD.

Nest Labs founder, iPod designer Tony Fadell to receive Armenian Presidential Award for IT

Nest Labs founder and iPod brand creator Tony Fadell has received the 2017 Armenian Presidential Award for global contribution in Information Technologies. “Tony Fadell is a legendary person in the IT branch, he is the creator of the digital iPod player. Until 2008, Fadell worked for Apple, after which he founded Nest Labs in 2010, which he subsequently sold to Google for 3 billion dollars. He is the youngest laureate whom we will be hosting in Armenia”, Hovik Musayelyan, chairman of the executive council of the Armenian Presidential Award for global contribution in the IT

sector told a press conference in the Armenian Presidential Palace on October 19. He reminded that this is already the 8th year that the Armenian Presidential Award is bestowed, and IT moguls arrive in Armenia and have meetings with young Armenian IT professionals, students and lecturers. Fadell will arrive in Armenia November 14. “During the visit a private meeting will be held between him and the Armenian President, the official awarding ceremony, and a meeting with the Armenian Prime Minister. Tony Fadell will be given the title of Honorary Doctor in the Polytechnic

University in Yerevan, after which he will meet with the academic staff and students. He will later pay tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims in the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial”, Musayelyan said. Chief of Staff of the President’s Office Armen Gevorgyan, who also serves as the chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Presidential Awards, said the awards bring the spotlight on the prospects of development of the IT sector in Armenia. “Technological development is one of the prospects of our country, in which IT professionals themselves will have great contribution. This year, the Armenian Presidential Award will be received by a person who has significant reputation in the sector”, Gevorgyan said, adding that the main purpose is to present Armenia to the world as a country with serious progress in the IT field. The Awards are sponsored by Viva Cell. Viva Cell CEO Ralph Yirikian said serious work is required for the development of IT in the country, in order to make Armenia more recognizable in terms of its achievements and progress. Previously the Presidential Award was bestowed to CEO and chairman of the board of Intel Corporation Craig Barrett, Apple Computer founder Steve Wozniak, Chairman Emeritus of Synaptics, president of Federico and Elvia Faggini Foundation Federico and others.



Wei Jizhong: "V Asian Games "Ashgabat - 2017" were unique, in all conscience"

By Gayane Araqelyan

"The V Asian Games that are taking place in Turkmenistan exceeded all our ideas and expectations," representatives of the partner organizations of Turkmenistan in working-up to the Fifth Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games "Ashgabat-2017" declared at the meeting with journalists in Ashgabat.

As it was mentioned, Olympic Council of Asia participated in preparation of the

tor, and provides his suggestions," – mentioned Wei Jizhong, Honorary Vice-President of the Olympic Committee of Asia (OCA), expressing gratitude to President of Turkmenistan for his success. By the way, it was just at the proposal of the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov that horse riding (show-jumping competition) and Turkmen national wrestling "goresh" were included in the program of V Asian games. Wei Jizhong also informed

with the organization and conducting of the Games.

OCA Vice President called given games distinctive also from another point of view: according to him, everything involved in the games, such as the Olympic village for athletes and media, as well as other objects are located conveniently, and it is easy to reach any object with the monorail and shuttle buses.

"I have been initially involved in this



"Asiada-2017" Olympic Games, and that's really unique games that demonstrated the correct decisions when carrying out similar games. Confidence was expressed that these achievements will contribute to the lives of the entire population of the country.

"I was participant of ten Olympic Games, and took part in organizing of nine Asian Games, and for the first time we have seen how games are directly going on under direct leadership of the President of Turkmenistan. We also found that the President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov is not only a sports lover but also is aware of the main aspects of management in this sec-



that all pending issues have been resolved at the next meeting of delegations' heads, no further problems have arisen, and all missions and delegations were satisfied

process of planning of the Olympic complex, and I can confidently say that this project is a high profile sports event of the world level, and Turkmenistan can organize the Olympic Games in their country, which has been originally our goal," OCA honorary lifelong vice-president Wei Jizhong said.

According to Gene Tomlin, Executive Director of the British company "Trivandi Chanzo Limited", Turkmenistan collaborate in working-up to the V Asian Games, totally over 400 specialists from different areas and countries have been involved in these works. She said that the Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan rendered fan-

tastic support, indeed, thanks to which also volunteer students were involved. In total, more than 8000 volunteers were involved during the Asiad, 31% from which were women. On Tomlin's opinion, it should be considered serious rate and prominent achievement.

"The most important thing we leave is the so-called "women's heritage", which will have a major impact on development of Turkmenistan", she said, expressing hope that all this experience and knowledge will be used in Turkmenistan and in the future, and similar global regional and world events will be organized there in future.

Azat Muradov, Head of the National Olympic Committee of Turkmenistan, in his turn, noted that the whole Turkmen people are proud of their athletes who have become heroes of Turkmenistan. "We achieved what we were striving to. These Games will serve as an example for our citizens, and will become a good stimulus for sports development in the country. And all this has been possible to achieve thanks to our President," Muradov said.

And really, at the end of the V Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games the national team of Turkmenistan has become an unprecedented leader in total medal classification, receiving a total of 245 medals, including 89 gold, 70 silver and 86 bronze.

In General, gold medals were awarded to athletes from: Turkmenistan-89, China-40, Iran-35, Kazakhstan-28, Uzbekistan-24, Thailand-21, and Korea-15.

As for the table of awards, it looks as follows:

			Total
Turkmenistan	- 89 (Gold), 70 (Silver), 86 (Bronze),		245
China	- 40 (Gold), 30 (Silver), 23 (Bronze),		93
Iran	- 35 (Gold), 22 (Silver), 59 (Bronze),		116
Kazakhstan	- 28 (Gold), 28 (Silver), 38 (Bronze),		94
Uzbekistan	- 24 (Gold), 33 (Silver), 73 (Bronze),		130
Thailand	- 21 (Gold), 20 (Silver), 29 (Bronze),		70
Korea	- 15 (Gold), 11 (Silver), 15 (Bronze),		41

work of the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, a tournament in eSports as a demonstrational discipline took place;

In the course of competitions in Ashgabat, first Central Asian city that became capital of the Asian Games, new records were committed:

- Iranian weight-lifter, Sohrab Moradi, Olympic champion at the 2016 Olympics in Rio, beat the world record, which has kept for 18 years. Sportsman, acting in the weight category up to 94 kilograms, lifted the sum of the two attempts 413 kg – 185 in the snatch and then 228 in the clean and jerk;

- Result of the women's swim team from Hong Kong became the best for all the

years of Asian games holding. Medley relay 4x50 meters they swam for 1:48, beating the representatives of China and Thailand;

- Olga Rypakova, Kazakhstan became the best in Indoor athletics arena, winning six gold medals over three days of competition;

- In the famous Equestrian Centre, the Qatari rider, Hamad Ali Al Attiyah, won a



gold medal in show jumping in the individual discharge. Saudi Arabia won the team gold, and Turkmen rider Nikolay Beglaryan became the winner of the tournament for the Ahal-Teke Cup among the local breeds of horses;

- for the first time within the frame-

ident, particularly, said: "I would like to mention with special proud that representatives of the national team performed at the Asian games with a triumph: they won 89 gold, 70 silver, and 86 bronze – a total of 245 medals, showing to the world a rapid development of sport in the independent Turkmenistan. Current Games entered into a number of historical events of special significance both for our country, confidently advancing along the path of peace, creation and progress, and for the international community. Competitions revealed the enormous athletic potential of the country. Victories of our sportsmen brought the V Asian Games to a higher level".

The closing ceremony of the "Ashgabat 2017" Games was held under the supervision of Simone Ferrari, Creative Director of the Balich Worldwide Shows Company. According to him, "the ceremony became a final point of all the exciting and challenging days of competitions, which have been attended by tens of thousands of spectators, and of the incredible efforts of thousands of volunteers, the first stars, who demonstrated friendliness and warmth of Turkmenistan to all guests of the Games. Ferrari mentioned that closing ceremony was devoted to volunteers – "Games' first stars", as it would be impossible to imagine such a successful staging of the Ashgabat-2017 Games without their dedicated and successful work. "I am hopeful that they will go away happy with a sense of pride, creating a portrait of Turkmenistan, which is not in the books, and they will be able to know themselves and their place in the history of the people," Ferrari said.

Let's remind that "Ashgabat 2017" V Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games was taking place during 17-27 September in the city of Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan. About 6,000 sportsmen from 45 countries of the Asian region and 19 countries of Australia and Oceania, as well as a team of African refugees that performed under the flag of the Olympic Council of Asia, participated in the Games. The number of delegations in Ashgabat beat all records of the Asian Games. In the framework of the Olympic Games, competitions in 21 sports were held. The first such Game took place in 2005 in Bangkok (Thailand), the second – in 2007 in Macau, the third – in 2009 in Vietnam. Since the IV Asian Indoor Games, it has become held every four years and with addition of martial arts into the program of competitions. The fourth Asian Games took place in 2013 in the Korean city of Incheon. Japan and Indonesia are in the number of next hosts of the Asian Games.

In current year, Armenia will receive \$ 17 million financial assistance from the USAID for programs to be realized here **25th Anniversary of Cooperation with the USAID Was Celebrated in Armenia**

In current year, Armenia will receive \$ 17 million financing from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) for the programs to be realized here.

As USAID Armenia Mission Director Deborah Grieser informed at the day of the 25th jubilee, mentioned that the amount will be mainly directed to the areas where projects have already been implemented.

According to Grieser, these areas are tourism development, electricity industry, democracy, reforming of the civil society, mass media and local self-government.

The event dedicated to the 25th anniversary of collaboration between USAID and Armenia was held at the American University of Armenia. Richard Mills, U.S.

Yerevan, more than \$ 1 billion has been provided to Armenia as assistance – in the form of projects implemented in almost all sectors of the economy and society.

According to him, as the first officer at the US State Department, responsible for Armenian issues, he has kept track

into programs of long-term economic development, mainly working through international organizations.

USAID eased Armenia's transition to market economy, helping to create competitive private sector, to implement economic reforms, market liberalization, and promotion of investments.

Besides, USAID assisted Armenia in strengthening of democratic governance, development of civil society and political parties, and predominance of the law.

In his turn, RA Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan remarked that projects implemented by USAID in Armenia have strengthened not only the economic and cultural mutual relations, but also just human connection.



Ambassador to Armenia, Karen Karapetyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, more than 300 USAID partners and recipients, including governmental bodies' officials, heads of private companies, representatives of civil society and the international community, etc., attended the event.

"This place, the American University of Armenia, where we celebrate 25 years of cooperation with Armenia, is, perhaps, one of the USAID major achievements. This university is an advanced centre of education that educates future leaders of Armenia", Mills said when talking with journalists.

Regarding the event as such, he stressed that since 1992, when USAID opened in

of the difficulties that have come to the Republic of Armenia, which has declared its independence, and he can note that USAID has made a significant contribution to the development over the past 25 years.

"Looking back to the past, I can say that during these 25 years the projects have been implemented as effectively as possible, and they have been aimed at solving problems considered foreground for the Armenian nation", Mills mentioned.

During 1996-2008 United States have rendered long-term assistance to Armenia.

Thus, after reduction of the humanitarian crisis and economic reforms USAID projects transformed from humanitarian

On his estimation, implemented programs also have had a positive impact to economic and social development of Armenia.

"We should note that since 1992 we have a very trusted partner in the face USAID," said Karapetyan, adding that the joint work done within 25 years have arisen directly from the requirements of the time period, and from priority calls, as well.

Currently, USAID implements more than 30 projects in all provinces of Armenia, contributing to the joint efforts of the Government, private sector, civil society, local institutions, Armenian Diaspora, and other donor organizations.

Eliza Zakharyan, Noyan Tapan

Unique High School Teacher Who Changed My Life



*By Harut
Sassounian
Publisher,
The California
Courier
www.TheCaliforniaCourier.com*

I would like to dedicate this article to the sad occasion of the passing last month of my dear high school teacher, Olivia Balian, who changed my life with a noble gesture.

The year was 1968. I was a student at the Sophia Hagopian Armenian High School in Beirut, Lebanon.

When the time came to register as a 10th grade student, I went to the Principal's office and told the staff that my parents could not pay the tuition. Although I was the top student in my class, I was sent home due to lack of money! This was a heart-breaking experience for a young man, as I loved being in school and desperately wanted to continue my education.

I went home and spent my day at the tire repair shop of my father who could barely earn enough to pay the tuition of my two other siblings. A very old man and respected member of the Ramgavar Party saw me in the shop and wondered why I was not in school. I told him I was sent home due to lack of funding. He offered to help by calling the Principal of the AGBU Hovaguimian-Manougian High School and asking him to register me tuition free. Even though the school was far away from my home, I could not pass the opportunity to continue my education. I took a city bus to downtown Beirut and went to the Principal's office. Being embarrassed to tell him that I was supposed to get free tuition, I told the Principal that arrangements were made for me to study at a discounted tuition. I was stunned when the Principal screamed at me that there was no such thing as a discounted

tuition. I immediately turned around and rushed back to my father's tire shop!

On the third day, one of my classmates from Sophia Hagopian High School came to my father's shop to inform me that the Principal had sent him to tell me that I should come back to school and register. When I arrived at my school, I told the registrar that I could not pay the tuition. She informed me that my tuition was fully paid and to go and join my classmates. I asked the registrar to tell me who paid for my tuition so I can thank that wonderful individual. I was told that the benefactor wanted to remain anonymous!

So I went to my classroom, but kept wondering who was the person or organization that gave me the golden opportunity to continue my education. I went back to the Principal's office after classes and begged the registrar to disclose the name of the benefactor. Upon my insistence, she reluctantly informed me that the benefactor was none other than my English teacher, Olivia Balian, on condition that I do not go and thank her and risk the registrar getting fired for breaking her confidentiality. I promised that I would not talk to her. The registrar also told me that when the school year started and she noticed that my classroom desk was unoccupied, she inquired why I was not in school. She was told that my parents could not pay the tuition. She then told the Principal to deduct my tuition from her salary!

The whole year I sat in Ms. Balian's class, thinking about her magnanimous gesture, but unable to express my appreciation to her. A year later, I came to the United States and eventually received two Master's degrees, one from Columbia University in New York in International Affairs and the second an MBA from Pepperdine University in Los Angeles.

But I never forgot the kindness and generosity of Ms. Balian who paid for my tuition from her meager salary. Almost 40 years later, I returned to Beirut for the

first time, to donate a total of \$4.5 million from Kirk Kerkorian's Lincy Foundation to all 28 Armenian schools in the country. Among the schools I visited was my former High School. While handing the Principal the donation of several hundred thousand dollars, I advised him never to keep any student away from the school for lack of money, because one never knows what that student will become in the future if he had continued his education. He could be a brilliant doctor, a good diplomat, the principal of a school, a church leader or someone who ends up working for a billionaire benefactor who would make a major donation to the school!

While in Lebanon, I very much wanted to see Ms. Balian and thank her for her generosity so many years later. She had retired from teaching long ago and lived in an apartment by herself outside Beirut. I arranged for my former classmates and the Archbishop of Lebanon to take me to her place. She was so thrilled to see me as I was. We had a very warm visit. Sitting next to her, I was finally able to thank her, but she did not want to hear about it and humbly changed the subject. I offered to assist her anyway possible, including financial help or special recognition by the community for her many decades of service to the education of young Armenians. She declined all offers.

I left her apartment with much contentment because I was able to finally acknowledge her generosity after all these years!

While this column is about Ms. Olivia Balian, it is also a testimony that one person can make a great difference in the lives of others. Without her timely assistance, giving me the unique opportunity to study English, I probably would have never come to the United States and would not have ended up as the publisher of an English-language newspaper, The California Courier. I probably would have spent the rest of my life repairing tires at my father's shop in Beirut!

Philanthropist Levon Hayrapetyan Dies in Russian Prison

from page 1

The mass wedding that Hayrapetyan sponsored in Artsakh in 2008

The mass wedding that Hayrapetyan sponsored in Artsakh in 2008

“We have learned with deep sorrow in Artsakh about the death of prominent Armenian entrepreneur, great patriot and philanthropist, devoted son of our people Levon Hayrapetyan. The memory of Levon Hayrapetyan will always remain bright in the memory of generations,” said Artsakh president Bako Sahakian in a condolence letter issued on Wednesday.

“Levon Hayrapetyan stood at the forefront of the Artsakh Republic’s formation, spared no effort to improve his homeland and make it prosperous, to create better living conditions for his native people and raise their living standards. With his assistance numerous large projects in diverse economic sectors were implemented in Artsakh—the Gandzasar monastic complex was renovated,” said Sahakian.

“Levon Hayrapetyan’s contribution to the development of Artsakh was highly appreciated by the state. For services rendered to the Homeland Levon Hayrapetyan was awarded the order ‘Mesrop Mashtots’ and the ‘Gratitude’ medal,” added Sahakian in his statement.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Tigran Balayan, described Hayrapetyan as a “great son of the Armenian people” and

an “exemplary patriot” in a Twitter statement that announced his death. “May he rest in peace,” Balayan wrote in Russian. “We will never forget Levon Gurgenevich and his legacy,” reported Azatutyun.am.

Artsakh’s State Minister Arayik Harutunyan also echoed the praise by noting Hayrapetyan “invaluable” contributions to Artsakh. “This is undoubtedly a great loss for all Armenians,” he told the Armenpress news agency.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation released a statement mourning the untimely death of Armenian businessman and philanthropist Levon Hayrapetyan.

“Mr. Hayrapetyan was a patriotic figure who was concerned with the fate of the nation and worked towards its prosperous and secure future. One may recall his several initiatives directed at the revival and strengthening of Artsakh, which inspired and broadly addressed the hearts of grateful compatriots,” read a part of the statement.

“[Hayrapetyan’s] unselfish devotion was also demonstrated by his steadfast readiness to support the activities of the Armenian Cause,” the ARF statement continued.

Hayrapetyan—said to be a citizen of Armenia, Russia, and the United States—was born in Vank in Artsakh’s Martakert district in 1949, where he invested millions of dollars improving the village’s infrastructure. He attended Yerevan State University and Moscow State University, after which he spent more than a decade working in the oil

sector in Siberia.

The last years of his life were marred by the politically motivated arrest and subsequent incarceration, stemming from charges that he allegedly embezzled funds from Bashneft, the oil company he helped establish.

In July 2014, he was detained by Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) upon his arrival at a Moscow airport. Hayrapetyan had gone to Moscow from Yerevan for medical treatment.

Hayrapetyan’s arrest and subsequent detention stemmed from suspicions of collusion and embezzlement around the 2009 sale of the oil company Bashneft. He was formally charged with receiving a \$50 million fee as part of the Bashneft sale and was put under house arrest, all while he maintained his innocence and denied any wrongdoing. He was released in Sept. 2015 after the maximum period of house arrest had expired.

In April of last year, Hayrapetyan was sentenced to a four-year prison term by a Moscow district court on charges of embezzlement. Hayrapetyan was found guilty of defrauding the mother of former Russian senator Igor Izmaystev—who is serving imprisonment for murder—of \$700,000. The court rejected an earlier motion for a seven-year prison term by the prosecution.

His health was already deteriorating when the criminal proceedings against him began. His last wish was to be buried next to his family members in Moscow.

Asparez

Armenian PM, US Ambassador discuss cooperation in anti-corruption field

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan on October 20 received US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills and USAID Armenia Mission Director Deborah Grieser, press service of the government told. The PM and the US Ambassador discussed a number of issues relating to the Armenian-American bilateral agenda. The sides touched upon the cooperation in anticorruption field, as well as discussed the ongoing works and the further steps. PM Karapetyan said the government continues consistent policy on improving the situation in anti-corruption field at three main directions – reduction of corruption risks, upgrading and improvement of normative-legislative field and active work of Anti-Corruption Council. In this context he attached importance to the US Assistance to the Armenian government’s steps. The US Ambassador welcomed the Armenian PM’s efforts to fight against corruption and improve the business environment which contributed to increase of interest of US investors towards Armenia. He said over the past 8-10 months he has received positive signals from the American companies operating in Armenia especially over the reforms made in the customs field. Richard Mills reaffirmed the US readiness to continue providing assistance to the Armenian govern-



ment in fight against corruption. The meeting also focused on the process of program ‘My Armenia: cultural tourism in Armenia’ launched two years ago. It has been developed based on the cooperation of the Armenian government, USAID and Smithsonian Institution and aims at preserving the national culture through the development of cultural tourism in Armenia. The officials also exchanged views on other issues relating to Armenia-US cooperation.

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Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory undergoes structural changes



Structural changes are being made in the Byurakan Astrophysical Observatory, Areg Mikayelyan – Director of the Observatory told, adding that making structural changes is one of the key points of his program. “The Observatory didn’t have a scientific structure for many years. The researchers were jointly working only in case of a grant. As the grants were not provided on regular basis, the groups as well as were not working regularly. I think this hindered the right process of the entire scientific-research work. That’s why we decided to establish a stable structure”, he said. At the moment the Observatory has 9 scientific-research departments. They include the traditional departments, as well as the new ones which will significantly change the situation. Areg Mikayelyan said now the researchers know in which structural unit they are and what works they need to do. “But this, of course, doesn’t mean that researchers are limited, the cooperation, all types of research is promoted, but each person must be responsible

for implementing his/her own scientific tasks”, the Observatory Director said. He informed that in addition to scientific-research departments, infrastructural departments have also been created. However, the issue of personnel still remains a problem for the Observatory. Areg Mikayelyan said over the recent years the staff was constantly decreasing and reached 37. “This is a very painful fact, previously we had 120 researchers. At the moment we are trying to create conditions for supplementing the staff with young cadres. We now have several young people working here. Currently the number of researchers is 42”, he said. The Observatory also carries out active works with PhD students, as well as it expands the cooperation with foreign cadres, in particular with those Armenian astronomers who previously worked in the Observatory, but now they live abroad. They have certain obligations such as to regularly visit the Observatory, give lectures, hold trainings, work with the youth engaging them in different programs aimed at increasing their professional level. Areg Mikayelyan has been elected as Director of the Byurakan Observatory in April, 2017.



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