

On 16 November Tony Fadell, 2017 Laureate of the RA President's Global IT Award, Received the Award from Serzh Sargsyan



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POLITICS

Armenian, Russian Presidents Meet in Moscow



Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin on November 15 as part of his working visit to Moscow.

According to a report released by the Kremlin, the two leaders discussed "nteraction of the two countries in the political and economic spheres, in the sphere of security and humanitarian cooperation."

Putin reportedly also thanked the Arme-

nian president for his efforts on the organization in Moscow of an exhibition dedicated to the opening of the Days of Armenian Culture in Russia.

"Advancement of Russian-Armenian cooperation is evident in all directions," President Sargsyan said in his turn. "Close contacts between our people, cultural, educational, scientific ties are of particular important to us."

According to the information released by the Armenian president's press office, during the meeting the sides also addressed the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement process. No details, however, were presented.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is expected to pay visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan early next week.

Russia's TASS news agency on Tuesday quoted Lavrov as saying that his trips to Yerevan and Baku will be related to the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Russian-Armenian and Russian-Azerbaijani diplomatic relations.

Still, the top Russian diplomat said that international issues will also be discussed during the meetings. "We will try to understand at what stage our efforts on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement are after the meeting of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Geneva," Lavrov said.

Armenian President Sargsyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev pledged to intensify the peace process and bolster the ceasefire regime in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone when they met in the Swiss city on October 16.

Brazil's Foreign Minister visits Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan

A Brazilian delegation led by Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes Ferreira visited the Tsitsernakaberd memorial on November 17.

The guests laid a wreath at the Memorial to the Armenian Genocide victims and paid tribute to the memory of holy martyrs with a moment of silence.

Acting Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum (AGMI) Gevorg Vardanyan briefed the Brazilian Foreign

Minister on the history of construction of the memorial. Aloysio Nunes Ferreira visited AGMI, got acquainted with documents testifying to the Armenian Genocide and left a note in the guestbook.

The Minister planted a fir tree in the Memory Alley.

Aloysio Nunes Ferreira was the initiator of adoption of a resolution on the recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide by the Brazilian Senate on May 27, 2015.





POLITICS 3

Armenian FM confirms meeting with Azerbaijani counterpart in Vienna

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian has confirmed he will be meeting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov within the framework of the 2017 OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna.

Speaking at a joint press conference visiting Foreign Minister of Brazil, Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, Edward Nalbandian said the exact date has not yet been set, but the meeting is expected to take place between December 6 and 8.

As for statements from Baku on concrete expectations from the talks, Minister Nalbandian said: "The Minsk Group co-chairing countries urge on the highest level to refrain from non-constructive, maximalist approaches."

"The Co-Chairs call to reiterate commitment to the exceptionally peaceful settlement of the issue. Is Azerbaijan doing that? The Co-Chairs call to reiterate commitment to the three well-known principles of international law-non-use of force or the threat of force, self-determination and territorial integrity. Is Azerbaijan doing that? The Co-Chairs call for unconditional respect for the ceasefire agreements. Is Azerbaijan doing that? The Co-Chairs call to implement the investigation mechanism. Is Azerbaijan doing that?



The Co-Chairs call to expand the monitoring capacities of the team of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Is Azerbaijan doing that?" Minister Nalbandian stated.

Speaking about Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming visit to Armenia, Minister Nalbandian said the visit will first of all be dedicated to the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations, but an important issue on the agenda will be the Nagorno

Karabakh issue. He said the visit will also provide an opportunity to discuss a broad range of issues on bilateral agenda, implementation of the agreements reached on the level of the Presidents of the two countries.

Asked whether Lavrov is coming with new proposals, Minister Nalbandian said "Offering something new in this settlement process is very difficult. A number of working documents have been discussed over years, but the basis of the negotiations remains unchanged."

"If Azerbaijan shows more respect for the calls of the international community, broader perspectives will open up for furthering the negotiation process and achieve results," Minister Nalbandian stated.

"Our position on the Nagorno Karabakh issue is clear. Brazil is a peace-loving country, which preaches a peaceful settlement to issues on the basis of international law," Brazil's Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes Ferreira said, in

"On this particular issue, we consider that the conflict should be solved within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship format. To reach a final settlement, it's necessary to respect the ceasefire.



Armenian Students Halt Protests Pending "Roundtable Discussions"



Leaders of a student movement protesting against a controversial law restricting the rights of young men to draft deferments for academic purposes have declared a halt in their weeklong protests after agreeing with a senior parliamentarian on the organization of a relevant roundtable discussion next week.

The decision was announced by David Petrosyan, a leading activist involved in the protests, after his and four other protesters' meeting with Eduard Sharmazanov, a deputy speaker of parliament and senior member of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK).

Representatives of the HHK and its junior coalition partner, Dashnaktsutyun, which enjoy a comfortable majority in the 105-seat National Assembly, voted 86 to 6 to pass the controversial bill in the second and final reading at a session earlier today. The only votes against the bill came from the opposition Yelk faction.

Under the legislation, in order to get a draft deferment all male students who want to pursue their studies must sign contracts with the Ministry of Defense and agree to serve three years in the military after completing their studies at the location chosen by the Ministry. Otherwise, the legislation stipulates, the students will be drafted to the army once they attain the age of 18 to serve for two years.

Critics of the legislation argue that the measure will discourage a lot of students from pursuing scientific careers and will eventually harm the development of science in the country. Proponents of the law, including Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, see no such risks. They point out that the law will give a fairer treatment to all students and will reduce corruption by closing a key loophole to avoiding compulsory military service.

Students who have participated in protests since November 7, including the boycotting of classes and hunger strikes, delegated five representatives for a meeting with lawmakers inside the National Assembly after rallying there for several hours.

After emerging from the meeting that was held behind closed doors activist Petrosyan and deputy parliament speaker Sharmazanov announced that a roundtable discussion with the participation of all stakeholders will be held on November 22.

"We have discussed three main things. The guys proposed a roundtable discussion and we as the National Assembly, a body for dialogue, are ready to engage in it," said Sharmazanov. "This roundtable discussion will be attended by all stakeholders, including scientists, scholars and lecturers named by these students. Both the issue of draft deferments and various other issues of concern to students will be discussed. All that will

be public and transparent. Today we have proved that we are ready to listen to every citizen of the Republic of Armenia and particularly our students."

Sharmazanov said that they, at the same time, asked the protesters to stop their boycotting of classes, demonstrations and hunger strikes "because we are entering a constructive phase."

The senior lawmaker said that a lot of things envisaged by the law will have to be elaborated in government decisions and that an offer was made to members of the student group to make relevant proposals.

Petrosyan, for his part, said: "We are trying to be as constructive as possible and contribute to the formation of our civil, political culture. And our top goal is to have a positive impact. At this moment we consider this to be the best option among possible options and declare that all those people who would like to be present at the round table as our representatives can contact us. We are ready to sit down with everyone to discuss the format so that people who really have arguments can have an opportunity to present them."

"As for the hunger strike, the hunger strike was, of course, a means to make our voice heard. At this moment, this means has worked and that's why it is necessary to stop it and get ready for the round table," he added.

To the question whether there will be further protests, Petrosian said: "If there is an arrangement about a roundtable discussion... What will be after the round table will be after the round table... The boycotting of classes until the round table is halted."



European Parliament calls for end to hostilities between Armenian, Azerbaijani forces



In a text adopted on November 15 ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Brussels on November 24, the European Parliament recommended the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service to call for an immediate end to military hostilities between Armenian and

Azerbaijani forces, which unnecessarily claim the lives of civilians and soldiers whilst hampering socioeconomic development.

The European Parliament also advises to reaffirm support for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs' efforts to solve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and to their 2009 Basic Principles, which include territorial integrity, self-determination and the non-use of force.

It recommends to call on Armenia and Azerbaijan to re-launch negotiations in good faith with a view to implementing these principles to solve the conflict, which cannot be solved using military force, to call on the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to hold high-level talks and commit to genuine confidence-building measures and dialogue between Armenian and Azerbaijani civil society; to make the ratification of new agreements between the EU and each of the parties conditional on meaningful commitments to and substantial progress towards solving the conflict, such as maintaining the ceasefire and supporting the implementation of the 2009 Basic Principles.

The European Parliament stresses that Armenia serves as an example of how membership of the Eurasian Economic Union and participation in the EU's neighborhood strategies can coexist.

Putin notes the role of Armenian Church Diocese in the development of bilateral ties

Russian President Vladimir Putin has hailed the contribution of the "Russia and New Nakhijevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the reinforcement of friendly, good-neighborly relations that have been linking Russia and Armenian for centuries."

In an address to the participants of the solemn ceremony dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the Diocese, the Russian President said that "established in distant 1717, the Diocese united the Armenian churches on the territory of the then Russia, and became a truly spiritual center for thousands of people, a most important factor of saving the unique culture of the Armenian people, its customs and traditions."

"Over the past decades the Diocese has been carrying out an important humanitarian, enlightening, charitable mission, sincerely caring about the establishment of the eternal moral values in the society, the ideals of peace, good and justice,"



Vladimir Putin said.

He added that "the Diocese has been paying special attention to the bringing up of the growing generation, development of fruitful dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church and representatives of other traditional religions in Russia."

Putin stressed the "exceptionally im-

portant" role of the Diocese in the reinforcement of friendly, good-neighborly relations that have been linking Russia and Armenian for centuries."

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan has left for Moscow to participate in the events dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the Armenian Apostolic Church Diocese of Russia and New Nakhijevan.

Career and Job Fair launched in Armenia with U.S. Embassy support

The U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, together with Haykuhi Gevorkyan of Career Lab and Araksia Martirosyan of International Academy of Business, connected job recruiters with job seekers at a career and entrepreneurship fair at the Marriott Hotel in Yerevan.

The fair offered workshops on resume writing, panel discussions on jobs of the future, career guidance, and more. Companies with current vacancies to fill—more than 180 vacancies in total—attended the fair aiming to recruit Armenia's top talent.

"In today's globalized world, entrepreneurs and job seekers alike have to be flexible, willing to take risks, and able to seize on opportunities when they are presented," said U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills, Jr., at the fair's opening ceremony, "And this fair is one such opportunity."

The career and entrepreneurship fair is the largest U.S. Embassy-supported event in Armenia during Global Entrepreneurship Week, a weeklong promotion of entrepre-



neurship in nearly 170 countries worldwide. The U.S. Embassy in Yerevan worked with alumni of its various exchange programs to support entrepreneurs through discussions with successful women business owners, a "pitch night" for fledgling companies in need of business advice, and discussions on how to run a successful business in Armenia.

"In my travels across this country, I have

seen first-hand the amazing brain power and creativity of the Armenian people," Ambassador Mills noted. "From start-up IT companies, to designers and engineers working for established multi-national corporations, Armenia is growing thanks to those who are using their education and technical know-how to better their lives and communities – these are the true entrepreneurs."

Opposition Criticizes Government Over 2018 Draft Budget

Members of the opposition factions in parliament leveled harsh criticism at the government over the draft budget for next year, claiming that it falls short of the ruling party's promise of increased pensions and salaries in 2018.

Lawmaker Lena Nazaryan from the opposition Yelk faction said: "The public must know that the Republican Party of Armenia and the government have failed to live up to their promise of raising pensions and the minimal salary."

The opposition lawmaker reminded that while speaking in a television show ahead of the April parliamentary elections Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said that pensions and the minimal salary will be raised in 2018 "if everything continues at the same rate."

Naira Zohrabyan representing the Tsarukyan Alliance's parliamentary faction also mentioned the failure to raise pensions and salaries among the reasons for not voting against the government-drafted budget. "Besides, this budget does not curb disgraceful inflation, it cuts more than 5,500 jobs in the public sector, reduces spending for education and health," she said.



The oppositionist also described the country's demographic situation as "catastrophic". She disagreed with Prime Minister Karapetyan's statement that how people feel economic growth is an immeasurable factor. "No, Mr. prime minister, this is quite a measurable factor. If you and your team felt at least for one day what an ordinary Armenian citizen feels, then you would surely not say that economic growth is an immeasurable factor," Zohrabyan charged.

The government promises to ensure a

4.5-percent growth of the Gross Domestic Product in 2018. It expects the industrial and services sectors to provide the bulk of this growth.

Deputy Parliament Speaker Eduard Sharmazanov, who represents the ruling Republican Party of Armenia, responded to the opposition's criticism. "Instead of giving fish to our people we should teach them how to fish. With our contribution we should enable people to create conditions for themselves to catch that fish," he said.

World Bank provides \$2 million loan for the development of Armenia's irrigation system

More than 630 Armenian farmers will directly benefit from improved water service delivery, thanks to a US\$2 million loan for Additional Financing of the Irrigation System Enhancement Project, signed today by Armenia and the World Bank. The financing aims to further assist the Government in its efforts to ensure efficient, cost effective and sustainable irrigation, through reduced use of energy and improved timing of water supply.

Additional investments will include the construction of a tertiary system to supplement the planned Baghramyan-Norakert Gravity Scheme, as the existing tertiary system is unable to reliably deliver irrigation water directly to farmers' plots. Financing was originally provided only for the gravity structure, plus the main and secondary canals. Rehabilitation of the tertiary system will therefore ensure that the benefits of the initial investment are fully realized.

"This activity builds upon the results achieved so far by the ongoing project. The Bank's intervention will decrease water shortages experienced by farmers, increase reliability of water supply and timely delivery, which in turn will allow for an increase in productivity," said Sylvie Bossoutrot, World Bank Country Manager for Armenia. "In addition, the reconstructed tertiary system will be designed to encourage farmers to have a choice of on-



farm technologies, such as drip irrigation."

The Baghramyan-Norakert Gravity Scheme embraces the construction of an approximately 5km long feeder canal to receive water from the Tkahan Canal (whose original source is Lake Sevan), and delivers it through the reconstructed gravity system to about 573 ha of agricultural land, helping 635 farmers in the cultivation of their vineyards and orchards. Following the construction of the canal, the three pump stations (Norakert-1-2 and Baghramyan-1) that have exceeded their working life will no longer be needed.

Another achievement of the project is the completion of construction of three lots of the Meghri gravity scheme. The construction of the Geghardalich gravity scheme, as well as two lots of the Kaghstrashen gravity scheme are under way, both of which have

been modified to address concerns of residents of the Goght and Garni communities. Expected outcomes include energy savings of about 36.4 million kilowatt hours (kw/h) annually, equivalent to about 30% of the total irrigation needs in Armenia. The rehabilitation of selected diversion canals has also been completed, leading to improvement in the conveyance efficiency of the outlet canals by reducing water losses by about 23 million cubic meters annually.

The Additional Financing of the Irrigation System Enhancement Project, in the amount of US\$ 2 million, is an IBRD loan with a variable spread, with a 14.5-year grace period and repayment of 25 years.

Since joining the World Bank in 1992 and IDA in 1993, total IDA and IBRD commitments to Armenia have amounted to US\$ 2.3 billion.

Japan assists Armenia in disaster risk reduction



Yerevan /Mediamax/.
Minister of Emergency Situations of Armenia Davit Tonoy-

an received on November 17 Katsutoshi Fushimi, Chief Representative of Uzbekistan Office of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JIKA).

The Ministry of Emergency Situations informed that the parties discussed the preparation for the program, which is implemented in the frames of a grant provided by Japan.

The program will be launched in May 2018. Its main objective is to promote reduction of disaster risk in Armenia through the competent strategy and mechanisms of public awareness.

The program includes creation of a technically equipped educational center, which will teach disaster awareness and explain emergency procedures during various disasters to all target groups. Retraining of representatives of Armenian media is a significant component of the program.

Davit Tonoyan also stressed the importance of raising public awareness about different types of disasters and the emergency procedures for each of them.

Tony Fadell: "In Armenia, I have been Surprised Every Hour..."

And..."To stay only two full days in Yerevan, Armenia as the Global IT Award 2017 Laureate will not be enough to see, experience and interact... The schedule is very compact but with everyone's efforts we will make it very effective and productive..."



Gourgen James Khazhakian Chief

Tonv Fadell, world famous American inventor of Lebanese origin, arrived in late at night on November 15, 2017. To

remind, Tony Fadell is the 2017 Laureate of the RA President's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Humanity through IT (Global IT Award). As Senior VP of Apple, he led the team that created the first 18 generations of iPod and the first 3 generation of iPhone. As the founder and CEO of Nest Labs, he was able to create Nest Thermostat, a true IOT device and system.

As usual, the Laureate's first visit was to Vi-

vaCell-MTS headquarters where Tony Fadell was introduced as the 2017 GIT Laureate at the meeting with the ICT community and formal press conference.

Besides Mr Fadell, speakers were Viva-Cell-MTS Founding General Manager, a member of the GIT Award Selection Panel Ralph C. Yirikian, Chairman of the Award Committee Executive Board, Director of Synopsys Armenia Hovik Musayelyan and a member of the GIT Award Selection Panel, Silicon Valley entrepreneur and the founder of Viasphere Technopark, the first commercial Business Park and Incubator in Armenia Tony Morovan. So they introduced the 8th Laureate.

Traditionally, the event was opened by Ralph C. Yirikian, the Host, Founding General Manager of Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator VivaCell-MTS, General Partner of the GIT Award since its very establishment in 2009:

"Welcome to VivaCell-MTS, it is the eighth time we are gathered to welcome the GIT Award Laureate. Advanced technologies are the key to economic development and progress. Technological solutions are the product of creative thinking, quality professional education and inno-



vation enhancement. In the field of high technologies, Armenia has an incomparable powerful potential. As an ICT sector representative, VivaCell-MTS continuously supports the implementation of ICT programs of national importance in the field of high technologies, thereby encouraging further advancement of the sector. For the eighth consecutive year,

we are participating in the implementation of this project, first of all, with the goal of promoting Armenia as a country with a promising perspective on ICT development in the eyes of Armenian society and the world, and we are ready to do everything

for this", said Mr. Yirikian.

Next Hovik Musavelvan commented, "It is quite unbelievable that we have the eighth Laureate already... Just eight years ago this very important Award ceremony was set up. Few people believed that it could be realistic that the legends of the global IT industry would come to Armenia every year to receive this honorable prize. Today it is fully accomplished

> and accepted by the international technological community. Me and my colleagues are very proud on this occasion, and we are proud to host today Tony Fadell, a legendary person who invented world famous brands."

Musayelyan formed the audience on the agenda of the awarding, the central event of which was the Awarding ceremony to be held at the Armenian President's Office the same day evening.

Tony Moroyan followed: "This year, we have a great honor to add among the Laureates of the RA President's Global IT Award Tony Fadell, the global IT genius who has had a great impact on humanity through his discoveries. It is absolutely impossible to talk in few minutes about a person who has more than three hundred patents and leading edge numerous



start-ups...I've spent all my life in Silicon Valley, but I have never seen that 390 M USD could be raised by a single start-up company as Tony did in early 90s. Tony's professional life has been dedicated to trying to realize his vision, and his vision has been to create the ultimate mobile platforms such as iPod and iPhone that have changed globally not only the IT industry, most of industries, the global economy and humanity. ...He is a fantastic role model for young IT specialists, no doubt."

Notably, ALP and Nest products Tony Fadell created surpassed one billion sales. According to Tony Moroyan who has

known Tony Fadell since 1991 as a friend

and Silicon Valley executive, "in May 2016, TIME named the Nest Thermostat, the iPod and the iPhone as the three of the "50 Most Influential Gadgets of All Time."

"I have to thank everybody gathered here, and first of all Tony Moroyan who brought me here, (although) it took seven years to convince me...For 25 year Mr. Moroyan, a real son of Armenia, has been telling me how this country is beautiful,

and being here just for half-day, I've seen it and felt the warmth of Armenians...I am here to get to know more about your country as well as to hear questions on how we create new technologies/industries in Silicon Valley and around the world...", Tony Fadell said.

Referring to the RA Presidential Award, Mr. Fadell said: "For me it is a great honor to receive the Award and no matter how small or big your country is."

And "...Wherever you are in the world, it just takes one person or one team to create a very large change in the world. I have over 250 businesses in all around the world, and every single company is to create new businesses for the community, for the country and sometimes for the world. So, I encourage everyone who is in IT business in Armenia to make sure you understand that you can do the great things with just resources you have as long as you want to go and embrace the world and learn from it. You don't have

to come to Silicon Valley and to replicate that success...

... It was 1991- the exact year Armenia got its independence when I got to Silicon Valley and it was a wonderful time. I lived there for 25 very meaningful and informative years. I learnt a lot from select masters. Today however, I decided that I needed to go around the world to learn more about how technology can be infused into different communities to make them better and stronger...

...Think about how to change your whole environment...Every single business, - be it IT, or agriculture, or waste management should be thinking about the next century and how to change the

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businesses with technology to help both the business and the community.

...And today technologies are open for you to embrace and make your own".

Questions from The Highlights were the following: 1) How and what Mr. Fadel knew about Armenia and the Armenians? 2) What made him to come to Armenia? 3) What was the main secret of his tremendous success?

According to legendary inventor, there are three real conditions for creating a technological industry: the first is the education system, - you should have the great education to train the next generation to being able to use technology; 2) a supportive government; 3) open borders to allow investors to come and learn.

Fadell: "...As I told you already, the first reason was tenacious Tony (Moroyan), and...People around me who about Armenians, told me stories, and one of them I want to share with you (looked like a kind of anecdote - author): a clos-

est friend of mine, of the Jewish origin, told me the following: Armenians are very special people, and the reason is the following: it takes five Christian negotiators to equal one Greek negotiator; it takes three Greek negotiators to defeat one Jewish negotiator, and it takes seven Jewish negotiators to defeat one Armenian negotiator" (The audience laughed and applauded - author). And so then I said to myself: I have to learn a lot about the Armenian people and about what you do here, the tenacity and the resilience that kept Armenians to last and survive 3-4 thousand years, to keep your people, your language and your culture that I think I will love so much to learn more

about it".

Asked about "the next technological breakthrough in the world", Tony Fadell replied: "Through my investments I've been doing for around twenty years already, I've been looking at different areas/industries around the world, and what I've found: the best new territory to break ground for new technologically enabled businesses is not just in consumer domain as you know like TV, etc., but in biology,

- computation of synthetic biology is a big field, obviously, artificial intelligence, agriculture technology is one of the 10-15 biggest businesses in the world in terms of investment, it is a tremendous place where technology has been able to increase yield to help communities around the world, and both the energy generation and the waste remediation indeed ..."

As Tony Moroyan added, waste remediation and management are very important industries and Armenia is looking currently for companies to cooperate with on these issues, specifically to convert the garbage to the energy and to eliminate new and old landfills.

Answering to a question about the possible threats to the humanity posed by the proliferation of the robots in all areas, Mr. Fadell told that he was quite optimistic about co-existence of human beings and robots.

To be continued

Amberd Fortress Castle: "Amazing Fortress Full of History"



By Gourgen Khazhakian

Chief Correspondent

Amberd Fortress was more known during the Roman era as well as after the birth of Jesus Christ. According to some sources, an Urartian Fortress was built during the Bronze Age there.

Fortress construction took several centuries, until the seventh century. It's naturally protected by the gorge on three sides. Accordingly, Amberd served as a summer residence for Armenian Kings.

From letter dated by 1050s by prominent Armenian scholar *Grigor Magistros Pahlavuni* it was known that at the beginning of the

The three-storey castle covered an area of 1400 square meters and was built with huge basalt stones. The castle included five rooms on each of the first two floors and several rooms that served as reception halls on the last floor. The castle was burned during the Mongol invasions and remained abandoned until the excavations that were launched in 1936.

The heating was supplied only to the owners of the castle, while the servants and the soldiers had to somehow stand the cold winters.

The servants woke up early in the morning. They prepared the breakfast and then were busy with cleaning and washing until the dinner time approached.

Men were busy with hunting. The main targets were boars, deer, wild sheep, bears and so on.

Water supply has been of utmost importance for Amberd Fortress Castle both in peaceful and war times, so that the local population did ly carved below the cross. It comes with four pairs of loops the overall number of which makes eight; eight bears mystical meaning in both pagan and Christian symbolism.

The first excavations here were held in the 20th century. Renovation works were launched in 1970s. The church was mainly renovated. Excavations and reinforcements are still being held at the site, but the fortress and the castle are regarded as highly endangered monuments.

As usual, few comments from TripAdvisor:

Ricardo B London, United Kingdom

Great fortress and amazing drive

This fortress is high in the mountains and it is incredibly atmospheric but as great as the



tenth century the Fortress and the adjacent buildings belonged to the Pahlavuni Princely family.

In 1026 the Church of Amberd was constructed, and after that the fortress was converted into the seat of the Pahlavuni family. There is an inscription on the northern wall of the church entrance that indicates the church was built by Prince Vahram Pahlavuni.

In 1070s Seljuk Turks captured Amberd and turned it into a military base. Amberd Fortress Castle was liberated in 1196 by the united

Armenian-Georgian forces led by Amirspasalar (Commander-in-chief) *Zakareh Zakary-an*

Importantly, Zakaryan family liberated almost all of Armenia, and the time for peace and prosperity. Several monasteries, churches, castles were built. The walls of Amberd were fortified and it was renovated. Alas, in 1236 the fortress was captured and destroyed by Mongols. The fortress was reconstructed only at the end of the 13th century by the princely family of Vachutyans.

The fortress was completely deserted at the end of the 14th during the invasions of *Lenk Timus*

The complex of Amberd Fortress Castle includes defense walls, the castle, bath and the church



not die of thirst. The secret way taking to Arkashen River was used to get water when the fortress was invaded.

Also, water tanks were discovered in the castle, in which the snow water was being gathered. Some of the water tanks were meant for animals.

The bath was constructed in the 10th-11th centuries. It represents a vaulted stone structure with a small changing room and a comparatively large swimming pool.

Church of Saint Astvatsatsin (Mother Mary) was built in 1026 by Prince Vahram Pahlavuni who defeated Byzantine and Seljuk Turks Forces in Ani (Capital of the Bagratuni Kingdom).

A khachkar of 8th-9th centuries leans on one of the church walls. The Tree of Life is clear-





castle and the neighbour church is, the drive to get there is magnificent from mountains valleys and small rivers. Beautiful and certainly worth the visit

Emin S

Amazing fortress full of history

Really great and adventures place. The fortress, the sounding and the nature is just amazing... The air is so clear and fresh here, the water very delicious and satisfying. The place is cold so be sure

to take a jacket:) its an amazing site for ancient history lovers!

Abrumar Shrewsbury, United Kingdom

Fortress, Church and Mt Ararat

What a view! In the foreground you have the Amberd Fortress, in the distance you can see the 11th century Vahramashen church and, if you are very lucky with the weather, a wonderful view of Mt Ararat. The Fortress was built on the slopes of Mt Aragats and, at 2300 metres high, aptly named the "Fortress in the Clouds". First constructed in the 7th century by the Kamsarakan family it was finally destroyed by the Mongols in 1236 and has been a ruin ever since. Well worth a visit.

Zvi Zilber: Investigation against Israeli dronemaker could be linked to foreign policy issues

Launching of the criminal investigation against the Israeli drone manufacturer Aeronautics Defense Systems Ltd. could be linked to foreign policy issues, says Zvi Zilber, editor at the Voice of Israel radio station.

"I cannot be confident, but rumors say the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian's recent visit to Israel could have played a role here," Mr. Zilber said in an interview with Public Radio of Armenia.

"Most details of this investigation have not yet been published as court has approved a gag order for the case, but what we know is that law enforcers visited the Aeronautics head office and seized certain documents," he added.

The comments come in the wake of the announcement by the Israeli Police on criminal investigation against an Israeli drone manufacturer that allegedly attempted to bomb the Armenian military on behalf of Azerbaijan during a demonstration of one of unmanned aerial vehicles earlier this year.

"Aeronautics said in a statement it would fully cooperate with any examination on any issue and would work to the best of its capabilities so the investigation will be as swift as possible," Mr. Zilber said.



According to him, although it has not been announced that the investigation is linked to Azerbaijan, one can assume that, because in the official statement the Police refers to a "deal with a significant customer."

Besides, he reminded that in late August, the Defense Ministry Defense Export Controls Agency halted Aeronautics' export license for its Orbiter 1K model UAV to Azerbaijan.

"What's taking place within the framework of the current investigation is not yet clear.

What's clear is that we deal with certain political developments," Zvi Zilber added.

He hopes details of the case will be revealed after the gag rule is called off. "However, judging from what we have, this has to do with political relations between Azerbaijan, Iran, Israel and Armenia," he stated.

As for Armenian-Israeli ties, the expert said "it's quite obvious that the relations are developing, and the frequent visits are a testament to that."

"The recent visit of the Armenian Foreign Minister and the dialogue launched within that framework, the numerous attempts to have the Armenian Genocide recognized by the Israeli Parliament are a clear demonstration of development of relations," Zvi Zilber stated.

He believes that the "wise things" Edward Nalbandian was talking about in Israel will contribute to the development of dialogue between countries and nations and hopes the ties will keep reinforcing.

The Armenian Foreign Minister visited Israel last week. Minister Nalbandian summed up the results of the visit in an interview with the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Israel.

European Parliament Calls for Dialogue on Visa Liberalization with Armenia

(Yerevan – RFE/RL) Ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit, which is to be held in Brussels next week, the European Parliament has called on the European Union bodies to launch a dialogue with Armenia on visa liberalization.

A resolution passed at the European Parliament's plenary session earlier this week refers to significant progress made since the last Eastern Partnership summit in Riga two years ago as well as to the conclusion of negotiations on a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia, which, it says, "serves as an example of how membership of the Eurasian Economic Union and participation in the EU's neighborhood strategies can coexist."

RFE/RL's correspondent in Brussels Rikard Jozwiak explains that considering this progress, the MEPs want to start a Visa Liberalization Action Plan with Armenia, something that Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova did before. However, the final decision is to be made by the EU member states and the European Commission, he says.

"The European Parliament is probably the body in the European Union that is more sort

of forward-looking. They obviously want to start what is called VLAP, which is the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, which is sort of a big action plan that Armenia has to fulfill when it comes to different rules and regulations. In fact, it's the same sort of things that Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine did before," Jozwiak says. "The EU Council, the member states, the Commission are thinking about this, but still, I don't think that they will really grant it to Armenia at the [Brussels] summit."

"It's in the works. But what we have to remember is that the action plan usually takes two, three, four years to fulfill. I think it was two years with Georgia, two years and a half with Ukraine. If it happened, it would be the very start of a project that will be very long for Armenia," RFE/RL's correspondent in Brussels adds.

Offers of the MEPs on Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova are even more ambitious and promising. Highly appreciating the progress of these countries in the direction of democracy and liberalization of the market, the European lawmakers urge their leaders to give a clear signal that Georgia, Ukraine

and Moldova may, too, one day become full members of the European Union.

"We propose EP+ format, which includes the establishment of a trust fund, a new European investment plan, a financial support mechanism for the implementation of the association agreements... When the time comes, when the homework is done and necessary requirements are fulfilled, potential membership of these countries in the customs union, the digital union, the energy union should be considered as an option," said coauthor of the resolution Laima Andrikiene, an MEP from Lithuania.

Promising broad political and financial opportunities, the European Parliament simultaneously underlines that Brussels should set clear limits and stop cooperation with and assistance to those countries that do not respect European values and human rights.

"As our resources are limited, the principle of 'more for more' and 'less for less' should be implemented. We should focus our resources much more on those Eastern Partnership countries that have made remarkable progress on their European path," Andrikiene stated.

Armenian Culture Days open in Russia

The Presidents of Armenia and Russia Serzh Sargsyan and Vladimir Putin visited the Tretyakov Gallery, where the ceremonious official opening of the Armenian Culture Days in Russia was held, attended by the leaders of the two countries.

The event began with the exhibition of great Armenian painter Martiros Saryan's works. The exposition features about three dozen exceptional masterpieces by Saryan available from the National Art Gallery of Armenia, the Yerevan House Museum of Martiros Saryan and from the collection of the Tretyakov Gallery, created by the famous master during his trips to the Middle East, as well as based on memories of these trips.

After the exhibition, the Presidents of Armenia and Russia delivered speeches in the Vrubel Hall of the Tretyakov Gallery.

During the event, Russian President Vladimir Putin handed to President Serzh Sargsyan famous Russian painter Mikhail Vrubel's painting entitled "The Demon and the Angel with the Soul of Tamara," which was stolen from Armenia in 1995.

The Russian President told President Sargsyan about the Russian side's intention to hand over the painting to Armenia during their March 15 meeting in Moscow.

Remarks by President Serzh Sargsyan delivered at the opening of the Days of Armenian Culture in Russia

Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich!

Dear Friends!

It gives me a great pleasure to attend together with the President of the Russian Federation the opening of the Days of Armenian Culture in Russia at one of the world's largest and most renowned museums —the Tretyakov Gallery.

Today's event is timed to the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries and the 20th anniversary of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation.

These are significant dates that testify to a qualitatively new level of Armenian-Russian relations of strategic partnership, built on centuries-old ties of friendship, which bind the destinies of our two fraternal peoples. We have always been together: both in peacetime and during the years of hard trials. Our fathers and grandfathers often used to fight side by side on the fronts.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the opening of the bust to twice Hero of the Soviet Union Marshal Hovhannes Khristoforovich Bagramyan at the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow.

Cardinal changes have taken place in the lives of our countries and peoples over time, but the reciprocated warmth and sincerity of Armenian and Russian peoples, imbued with simple human destinies, remained unchanged.

In the last quarter of a century, impressive progress has been made in the development of humanitarian contacts. Committed to traditional values and national identities, our peoples have always been open and deeply interested in interpenetrating cultures.

We have much in common – openness, goodwill, sociability, emotionality and, of course, receptivity to everything new. Russia is rightfully considered to be one of the world's cultural centers. It is no coincidence that a significant number of Armenian cultural figures – writers, musicians, architects and artists – have not only been graduates of the Russian school of art, but also continued to build on its glorious traditions to multiply the common cultural and spiritual heritage.

Today, the Armenian culture, like the culture of Russia, can not



be imagined without such well-known personalities as Hovhannes Aivazovsky, Aram Khachaturyan, Arno Babajanyan, Mikael Tariverdiyev and many other outstanding figures who have become symbols of the Armenian-Russian friendship.

It is not just coincidence that we are inaugurating the Days of Armenian Culture with the exhibition of the works by one of last century's greatest painters, Martiros Saryan, a courageous innovator who skillfully connected the picturesque traditions of the East with the new trends of Russian and European art of the 20th century. And literally today a commemorative plaque to the great master was unveiled on the facade of the house where he lived in Moscow.

As early as half a century ago, Saryan said, "Art can humanize and bring people closer to the amazing discoveries of science and technology." This was Saryan's perception of the world and the understanding of culture, perpetuated in his work by timeless universal values.

I am sure that over time we will have new Saryans and Aivazovskys, Khachaturians and Tariverdiyevs, while our cooperation in the field of culture will be enriched with bright and interesting projects.

Dear Friends!

It is noteworthy that the Days of Armenian Culture are being held not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but also in the regions of Russia. This is an excellent opportunity to get even closer to each other, open up the unknown pages of Armenia's history and culture.

I am confident that this great cultural project will give fresh impetus to the development of bilateral relations and their continued mutual enrichment.

The unique literary and musical heritage of Russian culture, the monuments of architecture of Russia, the traditions of the people of Russia have always been of great interest in our country. I believe that this is reciprocal, and that the events within the framework of the Days of Armenian Culture will be equally interesting both for representatives of culture and art and the general public, and for the younger generation, in particular.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin for supporting this unique initiative. Initiatives like this help develop the living fabric of our friendship.

Also, I want to extend a special vote of thanks for the return to Armenia of famous Russian painter Mikhail Vrubel's "The Demon and the Angel with the Soul of Tamara" painting, which was stolen from Armenia in 1995.

I wish to thank our Russian friends for their thoughtfulness of today's exhibition and the series of events that will take place on the margins of the Days of Armenian Culture.

I wish all those present and all the participants of the upcoming events a vivid and exciting experience.

Armenian Assembly urges congressional hearings on Turkish interference in America's democratic institutions

Amid reports that Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert Mueller will be filing new indictments after probing a potential quid pro quo scheme, whereby then National Security Adviser Michael Flynn would be paid \$15 million to secretly carry out Turkey's bidding, the Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) calls for thorough public Congressional hearings to fully expose these matters.

Flynn was already paid \$530,000 last year for work the Justice Department says benefited the government of Turkey, and did not register as a foreign agent at the time.

The Assembly has repeatedly highlighted Turkey's attempts to gain surreptitious influence over U.S. officials and media to the detriment of U.S. national security, and has urged investigations therein. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Member, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), in a June 2017 op-ed in The Hill titled "Did Turkey's payments to Michael Flynn delay our military operations against ISIS?" stated that "questions regarding Turkey, however, reveal most clearly how personal considerations may have overridden



our national interests."

In addition, the Assembly has also highlighted Azerbaijan's attempts to undermine western democratic values and institutions through the billions it has spent in the "Laundromat scheme" to buy silence. Investigations are now bearing fruit. The Assembly has also urged with some success those Representatives who joined the Turkish and Azeri Caucuses to withdraw.

"The latest news regarding secret payments to Michael Flynn to carry out Turkey's bidding are just the tip of the iceberg," stated Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian. "Illegal Turkish and Azerbaijani money has been flowing into D.C. and we have an obligation to immediately stop

these corrupting practices.

Beyond thorough investigations and indictments, exposure through public hearings and legislative reform to increase reporting and penalties are necessary to stop officials who can be bought by the Erdogans and Aliyevs of the world from hijacking the American government," they added. "

Members ought not to associate themselves with such corrupt and authoritarian regimes. Given Turkey's treatment of Christians, dangerously rogue behavior, denial of the Armenian Genocide and support for Azerbaijan's ISIS-style beheadings and other attacks, it is well past time for Members of Congress to withdraw their membership from the Turkish and Azeri Congressional Caucuses."

Atom Egoyan to get IFFI Lifetime Achievement Award



Acclaimed Canadian Armenian filmmaker Atom Egoyan will be bestowed the Lifetime Achievement Award at 48th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2017 which begins on November 20, United News of Idia reported.

An accomplished Director, Writer and Producer, Egoyan has made a mark in the mainstream and alternate cinema all over the world.

His work is often credited for exploring different themes

that carry a rich amount of emotions and effective use of Technology.

Born to Armenian – Egyptian parents, Egoyan discovered a lot about his heritage when he attended the University of Toronto, and started to study Armenian history.

Egoyan directed 15 full-length films thereafter, several television episodes, and a few shorter pieces.

His debut film 'Next of Kin' won a major prize at the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg.

His commercial breakthrough came with the film 'Exotica' (1994) for which he won a lot of accolades including the FIPRESCI Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and eight Genie Awards.

His film 'Ararat' was the first feature film on the Armenian genocide and received critical acclaim and appreciation for taking a bold stand on this sensitive topic.

It won Best Film on Human Rights by The Political Film Society of Hollywood.

Celebrated as one of the best Contemporary filmmakers on the international scene, Egoyan's brilliant depiction of his artistic and flawless scenes and capturing the emotions of the audience is widely appreciated.

This year, at IFFI 2017, three of the best films by Atom Egoyan will be screened namely 'Exotica', 'The Sweet Hereafter' and 'Remember'.

Lebanese Ambassador hailed Tony Fadell as the recipient of GIT Award

Tony Fadell-Anthony Michael Fadell- a Lebanese American, inventor, entrepreneur and is known as one of the fathers of the I Pod and also founder of NEST labs corporation, was honoured by the President of the Republic of Armenia His Excellency Mr. Serzh Sargsyan as the 8th Laureate of the Global IT award during an official and solemn dinner at the Presidential Palace.

To congratulate Mr. Fadell on this remarkable occasion Ambassador of Lebanon and Mrs. Graziella Makaron have held a dinner at the Embassy of Lebanon in the presence of the Ambassador of Egypt, Ambassador of France, President of AUA Dr. Armen Ter Gureghyan with his wife and distinguished members of the selection committee of GIT.

Ambassador Makaron said in his welcoming words: "The great achievements of Mr. Tony Fadell need no introduction, he worked hard and demonstrated creativity and deserves indeed such honour". And he appreciated all members of the selection Committee who endorsed the name of Mr. Fadell to be the recipient of this distinguished Award and he added that this is indeed an excellent



gesture from Armenia that shows how much Armenia attaches great importance to excellence and aims to encourage talented people to make a difference in their work and research. Ambassador of Lebanon has highlighted the notable role of Mr. Ralph Yirikian and Mr. Tony Moroian and all members of the selection committee for making the event of GIT Award a great success.

Jean Makaron, Ambassador of Lebanon has culminated the AWB activities BREXIT was the main topic of elegant and civilized discussion with German Ambassador and British Ambassador

Ambassador of Lebanon Dr. Jean Makaron has culminated the series of activities under the roof of Ambassadors Without Borders in a cultural and social event during a dinner held at the Residence of the Lebanese Embassy.

The key speakers, the German Ambassador H. E. Mr. Bernhard Matthias Kiesler and the British Ambassador Mrs. Judith Farnworth, explained in a very interesting way the current situation of European Union after BREXIT, all guests were satisfied with their important inputs and the speakers have answered many questions raised by the audience.

This event was attended by: Ambassador of Russian Federation, Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassadors of Lithuania, Romania, Czech, Turkmenistan, Belarus, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Greece, Kuwait, Bulgaria, Syria, France, Brazil, UNDP Representative, Iraq, Argentine, Sweden, President of AUA with his wife, Lebanese investor Mr. Nicolas



Abou Fayssal, Lebanese businessman Mr. Levon Bardakjian and his wife. Most of the Ambassadors were accompanied by their spouses.

Ambassador Makaron said in his introduction the following: "These series of activities were indeed a good opportunity to exchange ideas, we learned from each other and promoted rapprochement and friendship between all who participated in these activities."

He extended with his wife special thanks to all guests.

This event was animated by a talented lady Tamar Bardakjian who created beautiful ambiance in performing on the violin.

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Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks to support Children of Armenian Fund Gala

The Children of Armenian Fund (COAF) will hold its 14th annual star-studded gala on December 16.

This year's event to be held in New York will be supported by a number of celebrities, including Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Ariana Grande, Chloe Kardashian, Connan O'Brien, Tina Fey and others.

Emmy award winning actress Andrea Martini will be the host of the event. Famed Swiss art auctioneer Simon de Pury will host an auction of exceptional works. The silent auction will be attended by celebrated art workers and designers.

The gala will feature more than 400 guests, including Hollywood stars, bloggers and journalists.

Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) works to secure a future for children in Armenia's impoverished rural villages through improved education, healthcare, community life and economic conditions.

Founded in 2000, COAF launched its own ground operations in 2004, expanding to a cluster of 6 villages by 2006. Over the course of its history, the model has expanded and evolved to meet the needs of more than 28,000 people.



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