

Yerevan to host 14th Golden Apricot Film Festival



The 14th Golden Apricot Yerevan Film Festival will take place from 9th to 16th of July, 2017.

The representatives of Golden Apricot Yerevan IFF, the RA Ministry of Culture and general partner of the festival VivaCell-MTS announced the start of the 14th edition of the Festival.

The press conference started with the presentation of the official poster. The apricot-shaped geometric figure (Cuboctahedron) symbolizes the 14th edition of the festival.

see page 4

In This Issue

OSCE Vows Continued Engagement in Armenia p.3

Center for Excellence opens at National Polytechnic University of Armenia p.4

Anti-Smoking Measures Planned In Armenia p.5

Border situation tense, but stable – Artsakh Defense Minister p.8

Noyan Tapan Press-Center

Noyan Tapan Press-Center holds different discussions, press conferences, round tables, teleconferences, seminars each week which are broadcast live on the internet. We invite you to take advantage of the Center, as well as the place your banner in our Press Room.

Tel.: 060 35 11 22.

Address: Isahakyan 28, 3rd floor, Yerevan, 0009

Noyan Tapan Printing House

is offering coloured and black and white offset and digital printing of: books, brochures, booklets, journals, etc with high quality and low prices.

Tel.: 060 35 11 22.

Address: Isahakyan 28, 1st floor, Yerevan, 0009

Goethe Institute considers establishing center in Armenia

President Serzh Sargsyan received on June 2 Klaus-Dieter Lehman, President of the Goethe Institute, which is Germany's largest cultural institution.

Welcoming the guest, the President of Armenia expressed the hope that Mr. Lehman's visit will open up a new chapter in Armenian-German cultural cooperation and will thereby help strengthen interstate relations between the two countries.

Noting that Armenia and Germany are marking the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations this year, President Sargsyan said to be pleased with fact that the Armenian-German relationship has been on the rise all the way through these years. Armenia and Germany boast a high-level political dialogue and sustained inter-parliamentary relations. They are successfully developing bilateral trade and economic exchanges, cooperation in education and culture as supported by close interaction at the decentralized level.

In Serzh Sargsyan's opinion, this is a good basis for the launch of advanced teaching of German language in our country, which in turn will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral relations in all areas of mutual interest. In this context, the interlocutors discussed the possi-



bility of establishing the Goethe Institute Center in Armenia in parallel to the already operational German Language Center, which dates back to 2009.

President Serzh Sargsyan expressed readiness to provide State support for the project, should the parties reach a relevant agreement. For his part, Klaus-Dieter Lehman assured that the Goethe Institute would do its utmost to boost cooperation with Armenia.

Any attempt by Azerbaijan to shell Artsakh settlements fraught with dangerous consequences – MFA



Any attempt by Azerbaijan to call its threats to life will have quite predictable and extremely dangerous consequences, Artsakh Foreign Ministry Spokesman has said.

The comments come after Azerbaijani Defense Ministry's statement, in which it accuses the Armenian side of shelling the Azeri

territory and threatens to strike a blow to populated areas in Karabakh.

"The Defense Ministry of the Republic of Artsakh has already refuted this statement of the Azerbaijani side. We, in turn have repeatedly noted that by accusing the Armenian sides of violating the ceasefire regime the Azerbaijani authorities, in fact, try to conceal their responsibility for escalating the tensions on the Line of Contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan and undermine the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs aimed at the settlement of the Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict exclusively by peaceful means," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Artak Nersisyan said in comments to News.am

He deemed the threats of Azerbaijan to shell the settlements in the depth of the territory of the Republic of Artsakh as "extremely irresponsible."

"This is not the first time the Azerbaijani side makes such statements. Back in April 2016, the Azerbaijani Defense Minister threatened to launch missile strike on Stepanakert, the capital city of Artsakh," Nersisyan reminded.

"It seems that the Azerbaijani side does not fully realize the seriousness of its actions and statements, since any attempt to call such threats to life will have quite predictable and extremely dangerous consequences, first of all, for Azerbaijan itself," the Spokesperson concluded.

Armenian FM, EU Envoys discuss cooperation agenda

Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian received on May 31 the Special Envoys for Eastern Partnership from the Foreign Ministries of EU member states Latvia, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden led by Slovakia's Special Envoy for the Eastern Partnership Dušan Dacho.

The interlocutors held a detailed discussion on Armenia-EU relations, cooperation within the framework of the Eastern Partnership Program, the preparations for the Brussels summit.

The parties emphasized the dynamic development of relations between Armenia and



the European Union, the achievements of the past years, including Armenia's inclusion in Horyzon 2020 and COSME programs, its participation in Creative Europe program and the negotiations on Common Aviation

Area.

Reference was made to the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and the Armenia-European Union 2017-2020 Partnership Priorities document, which create a solid basis for cooperation.

The parties attached importance to the expected decision on the launching of negotiations of visa liberalization.

The EU Special Envoys hailed Armenia's constructive and active involvement in the processes taking place within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Armenian-Azeri summit “unlikely for now”

A fresh meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents is still not on the cards despite international mediators’ efforts to reinvigorate the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian indicated on May 30.

“Armenia has never objected to meetings at the level of [foreign] ministers or presidents,” he said. “If conditions are ripe, such meetings are possible. But this kind of meetings especially at the high presidential level, have to be properly prepared for. Ministerial meetings are aimed at ensuring that as well.”

“For the time being, we can only talk about a meeting at the ministerial level,” Nalbandian told a joint news conference with Lamberto Zannier, the visiting secretary general of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev most recently met in Saint Petersburg last July for talks hosted by their Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. The Karabakh peace process has remained essentially deadlocked since then.

Richard Hoagland, the U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, expressed hope in March that Nalbandian and Azer-



baijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov will “prepare the ground” for a fresh Aliyev-Sargsyan encounter. The two ministers met in Moscow in late April. A Russian Foreign Ministry statement on their talks said nothing about the possibility of an Armenian-Azerbaijani summit.

Nalbandian also announced on Tuesday that Hoagland and his fellow Minsk Group co-chairs from Russia and France will visit Yerevan and Stepanakert next week.

OSCE Vows Continued Engagement in Armenia After Office Closure



The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will continue to promote wide-ranging reforms in Armenia despite the closure of its Yerevan office forced by Azerbaijan, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier said on Tuesday.

“The closure of the office does not mean that we will conclude our cooperation with Armenia,” Zannier said during a visit to Yerevan. “There are many important issues on our agenda.”

“We will therefore try to find various ways of working together and ensuring that the closure of the office only means that one chapter of our cooperation has been closed but other avenues of joint work have opened up,” he told a joint news conference with Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

The OSCE office has implemented projects relating, among other things, to human rights, tax and police reforms, gen-

der equality and press freedom ever since it was opened in 2000. Azerbaijan vetoed late last year a further extension of its mandate, objecting to a humanitarian demining program sponsored by it in Armenia. It claimed that the program could “strengthen” the Armenian military in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Armenia has repeatedly shrugged off those allegations. It says that Baku is simply keen to force the closure of the Yerevan office after having a similar OSCE office in Baku shut down in 2015 in line with its poor human rights record.

OSCE decisions on opening such missions and extending their activities have to be unanimously approved by all 57 member states of the organization.

Baku did not drop its objections even after the Armenian government agreed in January to exclude demining from the wide range of OSCE activities in Armenia. Its uncompromising stance prompted a stern warning from the United States, with a senior U.S. diplomat saying in February that the office closure would “reflect poorly on Azerbaijan.”

A representative of Austria, the current holder of the OSCE presidency, told the OSCE’s Permanent Council in Vienna on May 4 that the Azerbaijani government remains adamant in demanding the shutdown.

The issue seems to have dominated Zannier’s separate meetings with Nalbandian and President Serzh Sargsyan. The OSCE secretary general described the talks as “useful” in a written statement issued later in the day. “I would like to see the achievements of the Office preserved and built upon as far as possible,” he added.

Center for Excellence opens at National Polytechnic University of Armenia

President Serzh Sargsyan visited the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, where he attended the opening of the Center for Excellence. The center was co-founded by Schneider Electric, the world-renowned French company and Russia-based Tashir Group of Companies. The Center of Excellence is being opened in Yerevan in the presence of President of Armenia three months after the signing in Paris of a memorandum of cooperation between Electric Networks of Armenia, a subsidiary of Tashir Group, and the French Company. The memorandum was signed on March 8, 2017 on the sidelines of President Serzh Sargsyan's official visit to France.

Accompanied by RA Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan, Tashir Group President Samvel Karapetyan, Schneider Electric Company President for the CIS Johan Vanderplaets, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Electric Networks of Armenia Karen Darbinyan, other officials, and French Ambassador to Armenia Jean-Francois Charpente, the President of the Republic made a tour of the new center, inspecting the work done so far, the conditions and the possibilities of this state-of-the-art high-tech center.

Established on the basis of the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, the center will be the first experience of close collaboration between Schneider Electric and Armenia's scientific community.



As witnessed by the responsible officials, dozens of students and young researchers will have the opportunity to develop their skills and get acquainted with modern technologies in the fields of energy and automation. The new center will also be useful for the practitioners engaged in the field of electricity supply.

During the opening ceremony, a four-party agreement was signed between the representatives of Schneider Electric, Tashir Group of Companies, National Polytechnic University of Armenia and Electric Networks of Armenia.



Yerevan to host 14th Golden Apricot Film Festival

From page 1

Minister of Culture of Armenia Armen Amiryan, VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian, Golden Apricot IFF Founding Director Harutyun Khachatryan, Programs Director Mikayel Stamboltsyan, and Artistic Director Susanna Harutyunyan, reflected on the importance of the long-term cooperation, and presented some of this year's programs. In particular, they announced the names of international jury members, as well as the titles of the opening and closing films. This year the Golden Apricot has received about 1100 film submissions from 96 countries.

More than hundred films were included in the competition and non-competition programs.

"There are events, which leave an invaluable mark on the public life: they shape minds, create opportunities to bolster the country's reputation, and to educate generation. I won't be mistaken if I say the 'Golden Apricot' Film Festival is one of those events in Armenia. It shapes a system of values, uses the language of the art to raise problems, and to sow seeds of beauty and vigor. It has been the visit card of Armenia for 14 years in a row. I am proud of our cooperation and of the festival's achievements for all these years," said VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

Anti-Smoking Measures Planned In Armenia



The Armenian Ministry of Health has called for a legal ban on smoking in public places and a sharp rise in the prices of cigarettes, citing the need to reduce the large number of smokers in Armenia.

Health Minister Levon Altunyan unveiled on Wednesday a new “anti-tobacco strategy” drafted by his staff and submitted to the government for approval. He said a corresponding government bill will likely be sent to the Armenian parliament in November.

“Armenians are a law-abiding nation,” Altunyan told a news conference. “Armenians like novelties. Armenians like being healthy and successful.”

“I am convinced that we will succeed in defeating this evil,” he said. “The best way to do that is to target [smokers’] pockets, rather than minds.”

Under the ministry proposals, excise duties levied from cigarettes would be raised by 15 percent annually from 2017 through 2021. The

government would also prohibit smoking in government and private offices, as well as all restaurants, cafes and bars. The owners of such businesses failing to comply with the ban would be fined an equivalent of as much as \$10,000.

“It all boils down to this: if you want to smoke, go out, smoke and come back,” said Aleksandr Bazarchyan, the director of the government-funded National Institute of Healthcare. “Nobody is telling people not to smoke.”

The ministry is also seeking a complete ban on all forms of tobacco advertising. Armenian TV and radio stations were banned from airing such commercials years ago.

According to ministry estimates, 55 percent of Armenian men are regular smokers. The smoking rate among women in the socially conservative society is much lower: 3 percent. It is considerably higher in Yerevan where around 10 percent of women aged between 30 and 40 are tobacco addicts.

The Armenian authorities already took a set of anti-smoking measures over a decade ago. A special law that came into force in 2005 banned smoking in hospitals, cultural and educational institutions and public buses. Additional restrictions introduced a year later required other entities, including bars and restaurants to allow smoking only in special secluded areas. But with no legal sanctions put in place against their violation, those measures proved largely ineffectual.

Skeptics are now questioning the authorities’ ability and willingness to enforce the new and tougher measures advocated by the Ministry of Health. Babken Pipoyan, who heads a non-governmental consumer right group, is worried that some restaurants may be allowed to flout the smoking ban and thus gain an unfair competitive edge.

PM Karen Karapetyan has no reason to resign – President



President Serzh Sargsyan dismissed on June 6 media claims that Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan is increasingly at odds with him and will step down soon.

A number of Armenian media outlets and commentators have speculated in recent weeks that Sarkisian plans to become prime minister or replace Karapetyan by someone else after serving out his final term in April 2018. Some of them have claimed that the premier will resign or be sacked before that time because of his worsening relationship with the president.

The Yerevan daily “Zhoghovurd” reported on Tuesday that Karapetyan has already twice tendered his resignation and that Sargsyan has refused to accept it. Citing unnamed sources, it said that Karapetyan will not remain in office much longer.

“The prime minister has no reason to resign,” Sargsyan said in rare comments to Armenian reporters made later in the day. “Periodical reports about alleged differences or a confrontation are untrue.”

“We understand very well, both at the party and the government levels, who the authors of those fabrications are and what they want. But I think that that cannot have any impact on the situation,” he added, according to the Armenpress news agency.

Sargsyan appointed Karapetyan as prime minister in September last year with the stated aim of improving the socioeconomic situation in Armenia through more radical reforms. The 53-year-old premier, who is a former business executive, has since repeatedly pledged to create a level playing field for all businesses, combat corruption and tax evasion, and attract large-scale investments in the Armenian economy.

Karapetyan has also indicated his desire to retain his post after the end of Sarkisian’s decade-long tenure, which will be followed by Armenia’s transition to the parliamentary system of government. He told reporters on May 9 that he does not “see” preparations by Sargsyan to take his place at the helm of the government.

The president himself has not publicly ruled out such a possibility. In a March 25 speech in Nagorno-Karabakh, he said vaguely that he would like to “play a role, in some capacity, in ensuring the security of our people” after April 2018.

A spokesman for the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) declined to clarify last week whether Karapetyan, who is also the HHK’s first deputy chairman, will stay on as prime minister next year.

Armenia, Cyprus sign 2017 Action Plan on defense cooperation

Defense Ministers of Armenia and Cyprus Vigen Sargsyan and Christoforos Fokaides discussed avenues for deepening defense ties between the two countries, as they met in Cyprus on May 29.

Christoforos Fokaides voiced hope that the first official visit for the Armenian Defense Minister since 20002 would give new impetus to bilateral relations.

According to him, the centuries-old Armenian-Cypriot relations, the common interests and challenges serve as important prerequisites for the deepening the ties. He emphasized the role of Armenians, who established in Cyprus back in the 5th century and served a unique bridge between the two countries.

Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, in turn, expressed gratitude for the participation of Cyprus' President and Parliament Speaker for attending events dedicated to Armenian Genocide centennial in 2015.

Minister Sargsyan said there are two programs for deepening the defense ties – a minimum program, which includes the steps that need to be taken in the coming months, and a maximum program meant for a longer-term cooperation.



Vigen Sargsyan briefed his counterpart on the situation at the Artsakh-Azerbaijan line of contact. The Defense Minister of Cyprus welcomed the Armenian side's commitment to solve the issue exceptionally in a peaceful way, despite periodic provocations on the

part of Azerbaijan. Following the meeting the parties signed the Action Plan for defense cooperation between Armenia and Cyprus in 2017, as well as an agreement between the Governments of Armenia and Cyprus on mutual protection of secret information.

Armenian Government Stands By Faster Growth Forecast



The Armenian government remains confident that economic growth in the country will accelerate to at least 3.2 percent this year, Finance Minister Vartan Aramyan said on June 1.

"We will make every effort to ensure that growth actually exceeds the 3.2 percent target a little" he told reporters.

The Armenian economy grew by up to 0.5 percent last year amid a continuing recession

in Russia, Armenia's main trading partner and source of large-scale cash remittances. Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan's cabinet set the 3.2 percent growth target for 2017 in its budget approved by parliament late last year.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have forecast similar growth rates in recent weeks. The bank cautioned in a May 11 report, however, that the country's

growth outlook is susceptible to "negative impact external shocks."

Hossein Samiei, a senior IMF official, said in Yerevan in April that "decisive" reforms promised by Karapetyan's government are essential for achieving faster and sustainable growth in Armenia. He said the government is committed to improving the business environment, tackling tax evasion and attracting foreign investment.

In Aramyan's words, the government expects domestic economic activity to be stimulated by at least \$830 million in mostly foreign investments which it has repeatedly pledged to attract this year. The minister said that foreign direct investment already rose by 30 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Minister for Economic Development and Investments Suren Karayan stood by the ambitious pledges in separate comments to the press. "The [investment] programs that we announced are on track," he said.

Karapetyan has repeatedly stated that that his government has all but secured \$3.2 billion in funding for around 350 investment projects to be implemented in Armenia in the coming years. Critics of his government are highly skeptical about that.

Another Russian Firm Seeks To Leave Armenian Energy Sector



(Yerevan – RFE/RL) A state-owned Russian company, RusHydro, has reaffirmed its intention to sell off Armenia's second most important hydroelectric complex belonging to it.

The sale of the Sevan-Hrazdan Cascade would further reduce the presence of Kremlin-controlled companies in the Armenian energy sector heavily dependent on Russian gas and nuclear fuel.

The Soviet-era facility consists of seven hydroelectric plants built along the Hrazdan River flowing through central Armenia. It accounts for roughly 10 percent of Armenian electricity output.

The Armenian government handed over

ownership of the Sevan-Hrazdan Cascade to Russia in 2003 in payment for the Metsamor nuclear plant's massive debts Russian nuclear fuel suppliers. RusHydro acquired it from another state-run Russian firm in 2011. Russian media reported in 2015 that the energy giant, which operates most of Russia's hydroelectric plants, is now prepared to sell its Armenian subsidiary.

The TASS news agency quoted RusHydro's chief executive, Nikolay Shulginov, as saying on Thursday that his company has been negotiating with potential buyers. "One of them emerged but then vanished," he said. "Another one has now popped up.

We are now holding [negotiations.]"

Shulginov declined to name those companies or disclose RusHydro's possible asking price for Sevan-Hrazdan.

Another Russian energy conglomerate, Inter RAO, essentially pulled out of Armenia in late 2015, selling the country's debt-ridden electricity distribution network and largest thermal power plant to the Tashir Group of Samvel Karapetyan, a Russian-Armenian billionaire.

RusHydro's withdrawal would leave only one Kremlin-controlled company, Gazprom, owning a power-generating facility in Armenia: a thermal power plant in the central town of Hrazdan. Gazprom is also the country's principal supplier of natural gas.

Gas is used for generating around one-third of Armenia's electricity. The Metsamor power plant and hydroelectric facilities meet the rest of its energy needs.

The Armenian authorities now seem keen to diversify foreign ownership in the domestic energy sector. More than a year ago they sold Armenia's largest and most modern hydroelectric complex, the Vorotan Hydropower Cascade, to the U.S. company ContourGlobal in a \$250 million deal strongly backed by the U.S. government. And in March this year, an Italian company started building a new thermal power plant in Yerevan.

World Bank projects 2.7 percent growth in Armenia in 2017



The World Bank forecasts that global economic growth will strengthen to 2.7 percent in 2017 as a pickup in manufacturing and trade, rising market confidence, and stabilizing commodity prices allow growth to resume in commodity-exporting emerging market and developing economies.

According to the World Bank's June 2017 Global Economic Prospects, growth in advanced economies is expected to accelerate to 1.9 percent in 2017, which will also benefit the trading partners of these countries. Global financing conditions remain favorable and commodity prices have stabilized. Against this improving international backdrop, growth in emerging market and developing economies as a whole will pick up to 4.1 percent this year from 3.5 percent in 2016.

Growth in Europe and Central Asia is forecast to accelerate broadly to 2.5 percent in 2017, and to 2.7 percent in 2018, supported by continued recovery among commodity exporters and unwinding of geopolitical risks and domestic policy uncertainty in major economies in the region.

Armenia is expected to grow at a 2.7 percent rate in 2017 and by 3.1 percent in 2018.

According to the World Bank, geopolitical tension in the region or at its periphery could suppress growth. A re-escalation of violence in Syria could undermine investor and consumer confidence. A terrorist attack in Russia, a cargo blockade in the eastern region of Ukraine, and a continued dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan are instances of turbulence in the region.

ICG: Armenia and Azerbaijan closer to war than at any time since 1994



A year after Nagorno-Karabakh's April 2016 violent flare-up, Armenia and Azerbaijan are closer to war than at any point since the 1994 ceasefire, the International Crisis Group said in a new report.

"Political and security conditions that prompted the April 2016 escalation have become more acute and both sides claim a new wave of escalation already has begun," the Group said.

It said any descent into all-out war could draw in regional powers, which include Russia and Turkey – closely allied to Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively.

Since mid-January this year, deadly incidents involving the use of heavy artillery and anti-tank weapons have occurred and May saw a significant increase, including reports of self-guided rockets and missiles used near densely populated areas along the contact

line.

"While violence remains at a relatively low boil, any escalation quickly could spin out of control," the think-tank, which works to prevent conflict, said.

The ICG, which based its report on the findings of analysts who had talked to residents and observers on the ground, said the settlement process had stalled, making the use of force tempting, at least for tactical purposes, and both sides appeared ready for confrontation.

"These tensions could develop into larger-scale conflict, leading to significant civilian casualties and possibly prompting the main regional powers to intervene," the ICG said.

According to the report, Armenia – concerned about Nagorno-Karabakh's security and angered by Baku's increased assertive-

ness – insists on a lowering of security risks before substantive talks can start.

It said Azerbaijan – frustrated with the longstanding status quo and concerned that additional security measures could further cement it – insists substantive discussions cannot be delayed.

ICG reminds that 'in their May and June 2016 talks, the two presidents agreed in principle to strengthen peace monitoring and introduce an investigative mechanism to lower tensions, while committing to substantive talks to address key sticking points in the settlement process.' It notes, however, that "so far, there has been neither monitoring, nor an investigative mechanism, nor substantive talks."

"In light of growing threats of confrontation, the mediators' primary task should be to resume regular communication between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders and insist that Yerevan and Baku soften positions that have calcified over the past 23 years as well as tone down martial rhetoric that fuels their publics' belligerence," ICG advises.

According to the reports "the mediators should push Yerevan and Baku to agree to immediate measures to restore confidence and security, including: increasing the number of OSCE personnel to monitor the conflict zone; establishing an OSCE-led investigative mechanism to hold the two sides accountable, while introducing a degree of transparency regarding their military arrangements in the conflict zone; and establishing regular contacts between their respective field-based militaries."

Border situation tense, but stable – Artsakh Defense Minister

Azerbaijan will likely ratchet up tensions along "the line of contact" around Nagorno-Karabakh in the months ahead, Artsakh Defense Minister, Lieutenant General Levon Mnatsakanyan told reporters on June 2.

"Azerbaijan will certainly do everything keep up tensions on the frontline," "It will increasingly seek to inflict damage on us, while we will do everything to respond accordingly and, if need be, if we find it expedient, deal a final blow."

Mnatsakanyan said that in the past several months truce violations around Artsakh have been much less serious than they were last year, which saw heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in April known as "the four-day war."

Over the past year the Artsakh army has reinforced its frontline positions with new defense fortifications, more weapons as well as special equipment such as night-vision surveillance devices. The latter helped it fight back in late February two Azerbaijani commando raids

that left at least five Azerbaijani soldiers dead.

In Mnatsakanyan's words, Azerbaijani special forces have not attempted more such incursions since then. "As regards gunshots fired from various weapons, they have decreased sharply since 2016," added the general.

Truce violations on the Artsakh frontlines have periodically intensified this year. In the most recent escalation, Azerbaijani forces fired guided missiles at an air-defense system of Artsakh's Defense Army on May 16. The latter retaliated with mortar fire targeting Azerbaijani military facilities.

The U.S., Russian and French mediators co-heading the OSCE Minsk Group condemned the "significant violations of the ceasefire." In a May 18 statement, they urged the parties to "take all necessary measures to prevent any further escalation in the conflict zone."

A senior official in Stepanakert insisted on Friday that continuing armed incidents are unlikely to escalate into a full-scale war.

Azeri Billionaire Gives Erdogan \$25 Million Oil Tanker as a 'Gift'



Harut Sassounian

When Recep Tayyip Erdogan first came to power as Turkey's Prime Minister in 2003, he was welcomed by the majority of Turks as a devout Muslim and honest politician, after being ruled by corrupt leaders for several decades.

Regrettably, as time passed, Erdogan and his fellow Islamist Party leaders (AKP) became gradually corrupted! Greed replaced their piety, and the temptation of big money was too hard to resist. The expression, 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,' aptly describes the transformation of Erdogan into a corrupt and autocratic leader.

In a lengthy article on the website *theintercept.com*, Andrew Fishman disclosed the unusual circumstances of Erdogan's family receiving a \$25 million oil tanker as a gift, under a secretive offshore arrangement! This sensational revelation comes a few years after the exposure of Erdogan's recorded telephone conversations with his son Bilal, during which he advised him how to hide hundreds of millions of dollars in cash obtained mysteriously by Erdogan.

According to Fishman, the oil tanker was donated to Erdogan by Azeri billionaire Mubariz Mansimov back in 2008, as revealed by the European Investigative Collaboration (EIC) network, composed of 49 journalists from 13 media organizations in 16 countries. "Mansimov became a Turkish citizen two years earlier and adopted a Turkish name, Mubariz Gurbanoglu, allegedly at Erdogan's suggestion," Fishman reported. Not surprisingly, "after the deal was struck, his business dealings in Turkey took off, including lucrative contracts with state firms."

Mansimov also befriended Pres. Donald

Trump and was an invited guest at the presidential inauguration earlier this year, as a major investor in Istanbul's Trump Towers. "When the 39 floors of residential and office block of Trump Towers opened in Istanbul in 2009, Mansimov was the first customer — buying eight apartments, including the penthouse," according to the website: *theblacksea.eu*.

Fishman's article on the intriguing and convoluted details of how the 13,000 ton ship was donated to Erdogan was based on the Malta Files, an investigation led by EIC, using a leaked cache of 150,000 documents from a Malta-based provider of legal, financial and corporate services, as well as a scraped version of the Malta Public Register of companies. In 2007, Mansimov pur-

family."

Another source, *Sg.news.yahoo.com*, estimated the value of the oil tanker donated to the Erdogan family as \$29.64 million. This website also disclosed that the "close personal friend of Erdogan" who paid \$7 million for the purchase of the oil tanker is Sitki Ayan, a Turkish businessman.

The newspaper, *Malta Today*, revealed that Erdogan's son-in-law, Berat Albayrak, in 2012 set up eight companies in Malta to avoid paying millions of dollars in taxes for his company, Calik Holdings, a massive energy, textile and construction conglomerate that earned billions of dollars in public tenders. He also opened four companies in Sweden.

Albayrak, the husband of Esra Erdogan, the President's eldest daughter, received from a close associate an email in 2011, warning him that the secretive offshore companies are "based on tricking the finance authority; it's not a secure system. If the finance authority discovers this, it wouldn't be good for [Calik's] reputation,"



chased the oil tanker Agdash in Russia and registered it in the name of Pal Shipping Trader One, a Maltese holding company. In 2008, Bumerz, a company registered in the tax haven Isle of Man [UK] co-owned by Erdogan's son (Burak Erdogan), brother (Mustafa) and brother-in-law (Ziya Ilgen) purchased all shares for \$25 million. "The next day, that firm took out a \$18.4 million loan arranged by Mansimov.... Documents show that Mansimov pledged to pay off the entire seven-year loan plus interest in exchange for leasing rights through 2015 (the remaining \$7 million of the purchase price was paid by a close personal friend of Erdogan for reasons unknown. Mansimov's company, which controls two-thirds of Black Sea oil shipping, extended the leasing option through 2020 for \$1.2 million a year. All told, the deal amounts to a \$21.2 million cash transfer from Mansimov to Erdogan's

according to *Malta Today*.

In the end it turns out that Albayrak did not need a secret offshore network because in 2015 he was appointed by Erdogan as Minister of Energy and Resources. He helped pass the "Wealth Peace Act," a tax amnesty which allowed Calik Holdings to repatriate unlimited amounts of offshore cash, tax-free!

Malta Today also reported that Erdogan is grooming his son-in-law Albayrak as his successor. It is not surprising that Albayrak accompanied Pres. Erdogan on his recent trip to the United States.

The reason many foreign companies are registered in Malta is that the country "boasts the lowest effective corporate tax rate [5%] in the European Union and has become a preferred destination for tax avoidance in the EU," whereas in France, for example, the corporate tax rate is 33.33%, according to Fishman.

International Children's Day Celebrated at the Viasphere Technopark by the SCDM



By
**Gourgen
Khazhakian**

**Chief
Correspondent**

It is for several years in row already SCDM Armenia, the second largest company residing at the Viasphere Technopark, on 1 June that is marked in the entire world as the Children's International Day, has been organizing an attractive festive event for the children of its employees in which the parents participate actively. An organizer of the event, company's HR Manager **Lilit Papikyan** reminded The Highlights

correspondent meaning of the event.

In her words, here in Armenia 1 June is a regular working day so employees can not bring their children to the numerous events held across the City.

But at the Viasphere Technopark garden they are granted a good chance to spend a couple of hours with the kids at the festive lively event, to see how happy their children are, by this getting an additional good motivation for a good job. *"And we ask our employees to have relatives to bring here the children and take them to home after event; normally they are grannies/grandpas"*, Mrs Papikyan said.

As a novelty your author noticed a well-organized picturesque show ac-

companied by music, - dances and games for the kids having age ranging from 1.5 to 14-15 years. And the traditional huge cake-cutting was a source for a children's real delight indeed! (See the pics).

As **Karen Muradyan**, team leader of the quality insurance, a company veteran whose three children – daughters **Erna**, 15, **Toma**, 14 and son **Mushegh**, 7 were among the participants of the event, stressed, they are *"happy to see the children enjoying such a nice celebration that is an evidence of a special treatment to the employees/their children from the SCDM leadership"*.

Other employees shared Karen's words, adding that this is a good chance



for their children to get familiar to each other as well as their parents job.

Varoujan Masarajian, Director General of the Viasphere Technopark noted that such joyful and attractive events give to the hard-working employees of the companies residing

at the Technopark an additional stimulus to work better and better.

To note, this year SCDM Armenia was the only company at the Viasphere Technopark that organized 1 June event.

Photographs by the author and courtesy SCDM



VivaCell-MTS Recently...

The Construction Works of the Current Year Have Been Launched

The long-term partnership between VivaCell-MTS and “Fuller Center for Housing” Armenia continues. The housing project implemented in various regions of Armenia is not limited to financial assistance or organizational works. Volunteering is also an important part of this project which translates a message to the society to deny indifference.

VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikyan, staff members of the company and the “Fuller Center for Housing” Armenia team have launched this year’s construction works in Aragatsotn village of Aragatsotn region.



For decades, the **Gevorgyan** family had not been able to finish the construction of their half-built house. Owing to the support of partner organizations, the construction will finally be finished by the end of the year.

“For many years we lived in my husband’s paternal house with his parents and his brother’s family in Ujan village. For years, we have dreamed of having our own home. Decades ago, my father-in-law purchased this house hoping that we will be able to finish the construction and move in there within a short period. Years have passed, but we have not been able to turn that half-built house into a decent home. Last fall, we had to move into a metal container, as the house was too crowded, and it was no longer possible to live there. I cannot believe that soon we will have our own house and will live in decent conditions. Thank you,” said the mother of the family, Narine.



By the end of the year, the construction of 7 half-built houses in four regions of Armenia will be completed. The long-term partnership between VivaCell-MTS and “Fuller Center for Housing” Armenia is a success: in total 57 communities, of which 16 are borderland, have benefited from the program. The housing problem of already 146 families has been solved.

“Community development has always been the focus of our attention. We continuously support programs that require long-term commitment, dedication, and ceaseless efforts. The housing program is one of them. It is aimed at providing proportionate development of both urban and rural areas, helping socially vulnerable families to overcome

poverty, and awakening their faith in a better future. By implementing construction works, we provide more than merely material assistance, as we also give moral support to these families, which, in their case, is arguably more important,” said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.

“This partnership is a vivid manifestation of Corporate Social Responsibility VivaCell-MTS team is guided by. This is one of the best ways to eliminate poverty in Armenia, that can serve as an example for others,” said “Fuller Center for Housing Armenia” President Ashot Yeghiazaryan.

In 2017, VivaCell-MTS has invested AMD 25 million for the implementation of the housing program.



VivaCell-MTS hosted a group of young volunteers of “Dipi Hayk/ Birthright Armenia”

VivaCell-MTS hosted a group of young Diaspora Armenians from different countries of age between 20 and 32 years. The meeting with VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian has inspired them, even more, to discover their Homeland from inside and get closer to their roots. Ralph Yirikian presented the major achievements of VivaCell-MTS. The volunteers got acquainted with the key values guiding the Company, the roadmap of Corporate Social Responsibility strategy and received valuable advice on successful business administration tools.



“In order to succeed, one needs to have a clear vision of the goals and the steps required for their achievement, needs to be patient, responsible, adhere to the values of the organization and appreciate team work. This is true not only for businesses but for any other professional sphere,” said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

Twenty volunteers from France, Argentina, Brazil, the US, Russia, Syria, Australia, and Canada shared their impressions on Armenia and opinions on the economic issues and social life of the country. The meeting went in question-answer format, followed by discussions, and ended with a tour around VivaCell-MTS Headquarters.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



The address:
Baghramyan
1st DL, 2-nd building,
2-nd floor.

Phone: +374 60 536 536

E-mail:
spa.city@yahoo.com

Website:
www.cityspa.am

Peace Corps celebrates 25th anniversary in Armenia

On June 2, the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Mr. Richard Mills, swore-in 42 new Peace Corps Volunteers, who will depart to communities across Armenia where they will serve for the next two years with local schools, universities, and non-governmental organizations, as English Teachers and Community and Youth Development Volunteers. The volunteers are American citizens, who come from all parts of the United States and reflect America's great diversity. The Volunteers successfully completed an intensive 11-week training to learn the Armenian language and prepare them for their work in Armenia.

The swearing-in ceremony for this new group of Peace Corps Volunteers also coincided with the 25th anniversary celebration of the Peace Corps Program in Armenia. The first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Armenia



ing Director of the Peace Corps, Ms. Sheila Crowley, mentioned the importance of the partnership between the United States and Armenia and thanked the new volunteers for their dedication to service. The Minister of Education and Science, his Excellency Levon Mkrtchyan, as well as the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Mr. Arsen Karamyan, also attended the ceremony and shared remarks. They welcomed the new group of volunteers to Armenia and expressed their gratitude for the assistance that the volunteers of the U.S. Peace Corps have provided to Armenian communities.

With the addition of this new group, there are approximately 110 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in rural villages and towns throughout all of the regions of Armenia.

in 1992 and today the program celebrated this incredible milestone and also recognized the 1000th Volunteer to serve in Armenia!

An audience of over 300 people attended the event including: Government of Armenia representatives, U.S. Embassy Mission Staff, current and former Peace Corps Volunteers, families who have hosted Peace Corps volunteers in their homes, and international and local program partners. During this event, the attendees had the privilege of watching the premiere of a music video for an original song written for Peace Corps, as well as a "legacy video", that celebrated Peace Corps' history and impact in Armenia.

This special ceremony was also attended by the leadership of Peace Corps based in Washington DC. In her remarks, the Act-



Carnegie Endowment: U.S. interests in the South Caucasus important, but not vital



The United States has important but not vital interests in the South Caucasus, which include preserving regional stability; preventing the resumption of frozen conflicts; and supporting democratic change and better governance as well as the international integration of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said in a new report.

It says the “recent events—the breakdown of the post-Cold War European security order, changing global energy markets, instability to the region’s south, a new U.S. administration, and the European Union’s (EU) internal challenges—call for sustained U.S. engagement to advance those interests.”

The report prepared by Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky and Paul Stronski notes that “over the past quarter century, U.S. involvement in the South Caucasus—including peacemaking, as well as support for democracy, good governance, and economic development—has played a very important role in its progress at critical times. However,

some major ambitious initiatives the United States has championed have not had the transformative effect that was expected and advertised.”

The report suggests that “in the future, U.S. policy toward the South Caucasus has to take into account that Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia share a legacy of conflict, economic underdevelopment, and a very challenging geopolitical environment. U.S. policy toward the South Caucasus has been and should continue to be aimed at helping these states overcome these difficulties.”

“Another limiting factor is that Russia is committed to sustaining its influence in the South Caucasus and will actively oppose U.S. engagement with the region. Because of its combination of military capabilities, geographic advantage, and will to exploit them, Russia will remain the most consequential external actor in the South Caucasus that all other external powers vying for influence there will have to contend with,” the research says.

Authors say “the government of Armenia has made it clear that it is interested in pursuing closer relations with the EU in other ways. As in the case with Georgia, U.S. assistance and engagement with Armenia should be aimed at implementing key provisions of those agreements as the blueprint for enhancing its domestic resilience, economic prospects, and Euro-Atlantic ties. This too

should be coordinated with EU assistance efforts.”

“Azerbaijan represents a difficult partner for U.S. policy in the region due to its domestic authoritarian course, which poses a big obstacle to better bilateral relations. Baku’s crackdown on civil society, increasingly anti-American public rhetoric, and pervasive corruption should not be overlooked,” the report says.

“The United States has important interests in the South Caucasus but none that is vital. It should stay actively engaged with the three South Caucasus states, supporting their internal transformation and integration with the international community. All three face considerable challenges at home and abroad, and, in all three cases, change will be incremental rather than revolutionary,” the report suggest.

“U.S. policy in the region, therefore, should focus on supporting this change and commit to doing so for the long run, rather than seek out opportunities to promote transformational projects. Past U.S. efforts to effect transformational change in the region fell short of expectations and face little prospect of success in the future should attempts be made to replicate them. Slow and steady promises continue to be the better approach to meeting the requirements of the South Caucasus states and U.S. interests in the region,” the paper concludes.

Argentina National Congress marks 10 years of the law recognizing the Armenian Genocide



Agencia Prensa Armenia – The Chamber of Deputies of Argentina commemorated on Monday June 5 the 10 years of Law 26,199 that recognized the Armenian Genocide in Argentina with an act in the National Congress.

The event was convened by the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Emilio Monzo, and the President of the Parliamentary Group

of Friendship with the Republic of Armenia, Waldo Wolff, who was one of the speakers with Deputies Remo Carlotto and Brenda Austin, along with the President Of the Armenian National Committee of South America, Bartolome Ketchian.

Deputy Waldo Wolff said in a speech that “had the world not turned its back on the Armenian people during World War I, we would surely not be lamenting the number of genocides that occurred in the 20th century.”

Later he said he was proud to belong to a country that voted unanimously for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and expressed that he fully understands the indignation of the denial of genocide to the Armenians.

Brenda Austin said that “the genocide to which the Armenian people and the whole of humanity were a victim is perhaps the most cruel example of what a State is capable of when it does not recognize in the life of the Other human dignity.”

After describing as complicity the denial of the genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire, Austin recognized with great pride the role played in this regard by Argentina in the global context.

Review: 'The Promise' of representation



Perdi Higgs reviews this new historical drama with critical and personal expertise, highlighting the importance of cinema in representing the past.

With a starry cast and large budget, the Armenian Genocide finally gets the recognition it deserves OPEN ROAD FILMS.

by Perdi Higgs

The story of the Armenians has long been hidden away within modern history. Outside the world of the Kardashians, there is little known about this small country nestled between Turkey and Azerbaijan. But this nation has an incredible story to tell.

The release of *The Promise* stands as a groundbreaking moment for Armenians. For the first time, their story is being told in the mainstream media. As an historical drama, *The Promise* tells the story of the final years of the Ottoman Empire, and the Armenian Genocide that resulted in the murder of 1.5 Armenian people. It was a systematic, targeted destruction of a nation – yet people rarely seem to know very much about it. It is my family's story.

"The danger behind 'forgetting' is insidious but undoubtedly sinister."

My great-grandfather was a teenager during the persecution of Armenians under the Turks. He was captured by soldiers and separated from his family, most of whom he never saw again. He was then sent to work as a slave for a

wealthy Turkish family where he remained until his escape. He was one of the fortunate ones. A large portion of the male population was exterminated or forced into labour camps. Women, children and the elderly were sent on so-called 'death marches' into the Syrian Desert.

This is the story told in Terry George's *The Promise* that records the persecution of Armenians under the Ottomans. Released to coincide with the anniversary of the Genocide, the film does not simply tell a story: it makes a statement. This was the truth. This happened.

As a big-budget Hollywood film, *The Promise* inevitably mixes its history with a romantic plot: a Titanic-esque love triangle, passion amongst chaos and disaster. However, this aspect ultimately gets lost behind the bigger picture. The film does not spare any of the horrific details: the public executions, the slaughter of women and children. The film has been praised for its historical accuracy, a fact which is of great importance. To this very day, Turkey has yet to admit to carrying out the Genocide. As a result, Armenians across the world still struggle to accept their difficult history, without the closure that acceptance would provide.

The Promise makes clear that the persecution of the Armenians was not simply part of a war, but a deliberate destruction of a race. The harrowing stories are told by those who lived

through it. My great-grandfather himself was a survivor, escaping from captivity in the middle of the night, finding his brother waiting for him on the border. His story is part of an incredible history previously unacknowledged.

When asked what they thought of the film, my grandparents said two things. One: that the accents were slightly too strong, and two: that they wish their parents had been alive to see it. A Hollywood film is ultimately more validation for their experience than the Armenians have ever received.

As a result of the Genocide, the Armenians are part of a diaspora. My grandparents form part of a vibrant community of Armenians who moved to London, and regularly meet up to gossip over plates of Kibbeh and Byoerk. In Los Angeles, there is an entire part of town called 'Little Armenia'.

So whilst Armenians remain a resilient and close-knit community, their history has been somewhat pushed under the rug. The unfairness of this is obvious. But the danger behind 'forgetting' is insidious but undoubtedly sinister. Hitler, speaking in 1939 once made the harrowing statement: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Escapist meditations: a guide to cinema etiquette

On a personal level, this representation provides my grandparents with a sense of acknowledgement they have always been denied. Furthermore, it reminds us of the importance of compassion. The film also recalls the vital importance of Turkish allies, those who risked their lives to protect Armenians. Finally, it reminds us to respect the past; to acknowledge history and take responsibility for it. Armenia deserves to have its voice heard.

I shall conclude with the words of my great-grandfather, Yervant Shekerdeman: "I do not seek money. I do not seek anger or hatred against the Turks. I seek peace. But what I do want is recognition – they are guilty of genocide – and I want them to recognise that. Turkey must recognise what they did to us and our dead. We must have our dignity."

Serj Tankian looking to set up music festival in Armenia

A year after Armenians launched a generous new peace prize, the frontman of rockers System of a Down sees more to come in the country — including perhaps a music festival.

Serj Tankian, singer of the chart-topping California hard rock band, composed a theme song for the Aurora Prize, which was inaugurated a year ago in the Armenian capital Yerevan.

The award, backed by Hollywood A-lister George Clooney, is presented on behalf of Armenians who survived the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

The second edition of the award was presented on May 28 to Tom Catena, the sole doctor in Sudan's conflict-ravaged Nuba Mountains who has cared for thousands of people, treating everything from war injuries to measles.

Catena, an American and Catholic missionary, will receive \$100,000 plus an additional \$1 million which will feed charities of his choice.

Tankian, who congratulated Catena in a video appearance at the ceremony as the band prepared for a European tour, said the Aurora Prize showed gratitude to those who helped survivors.

"Any group of people that have suffered immensely, whether it's genocide or any other type of human-created catastrophe, should embody compassion and an understanding of that pain better than anyone else," Tankian told AFP.

The Lebanese-born Tankian, whose grandparents survived with help from a Turkish mayor and an American missionary orphanage, said that too often, people fail to draw lessons from their ancestors' pain.

"I find it really disheartening that there are people who have suffered immensely, or whose grandparents have suffered immensely, and yet their position in life has been unequivocally egotistical and myopic in terms of how they see their lives and how they spend their money," he said.



Tankian said he wanted to do more in Armenia and was in the early stages of looking to set up a music festival.

The singer voiced hope that Armenia, rarely a destination for Western artists, could be integrated into the European summer festival circuit with touring bands carrying on to the Caucasus country.

"I've always dreamed of setting up an international music festival in Armenia," he said.

"As much as I have tried to do political work and social work," he said, "I would also like to carve out time to do art work, music work."

For the centennial in 2015, System of a Down played its first-ever concert in Armenia. Tankian said he felt overcome with a sense of history, seeing young people and remembering his grandparents. He viewed his band as "part of that catalyst between old and new."

"It felt like our whole career was built to play that one show in some ways," he said.

"Me and My Corner of Nature" exhibition opens in Yerevan



On the occasion of the World Environment Day the photo exhibition "Me and My Corner of Nature" initiated by the World Wide Fund for Nature Armenian branch (WWF Armenia) and UN Armenia was opened in Lovers' Park on June 5.

The exhibition includes photos sent by schoolchildren from different regions of Armenia within the educational campaign "Me and my corner of nature". Children are depicted in the photos in their favorite corners of nature. Photos by WWF Armenia's environmental specialist Alexander Malkhasyan depicting some endangered species that are included in the Red book of Armenia are also exhibited. On June

7-14, the photos will be exhibited in UN House Armenia.

The main purpose of the educational campaign "Me and my corner of nature" is to raise awareness among children about environmental goals of sustainable development as well as about a number of endangered species in Armenia among which are the Caucasian leopard, Bezoar goat and Armenian mouflon.

The authors of the best three photos will receive symbolic gifts, and certificates will be granted to all participants. In the second phase of the campaign the selected participants are expected to present their proposals addressing an environmental issue in their respective communities. The authors of the best proposals will participate in an environmental field camp in autumn.

This year the theme of World Environment Day is "Connecting People to Nature" and Canada is chosen to serve as host country which will be the center of celebrations. This Day aims to appreciate the beauty and importance of nature acknowledging that we are part of nature and intimately we depend on it.

The environmental objectives are clearly reflected in the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted by UN member states. It includes 17 global goals several of which relate to the environment. The countries have assumed to implement those goals till 2030 in order to have a better world and a safer planet.

Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

An abandonment issue from the past may be re-enacted in the present, only in different clothing. The symbolism points toward early issues with siblings or elementary education peers. If you have an overdone sense of rage this week, it is most probably caused by issues from long ago.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

You are planning to make a change soon that will surprise everyone. You have just a few more projects to accomplish and then you can tell everyone. You seek a practical and ordered change, which means laying all the bricks just right. Love life appears stable and unconflicted.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

This is a time in which you must take a look at reality. The facts are being exposed related to your life direction. Maybe you are just realizing how others see you. Possibly the culprit is yourself as you have avoided clear knowledge of your total picture. Becoming conscious brings the power to resolve issues.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

Mars, the warrior, enters your sign this week and will be traveling with you for seven weeks. This energy is especially helpful in defining our boundaries. Periodically we need to examine who we are and who we are not. Often something or someone is eliminated. In general, it increases your courage and physical strength.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

There is the possibility that you will attract someone who is needy, causing you to feel that you should help. Before you go very far, talk to your friends and ask who this person is. He or she might be a “vampire,” one who takes far more than he can give. On a higher level, there is also the possibility of an encounter with your Spirit.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

Your concentration is good at this time and will help you accomplish any mental project you need. Use your hands to create artwork and gardening is also favored. Love life and time spent with children would go well this week. Nurturing will feel good to you.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

Aspects favor the law, circumstances involving distant people, travel, and the internet. Relationships go well with a little surprise change in the mix. You have been needing to do something different together. Now is the time to experiment.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

A child or a lover might scratch an old emotional wound. In the old days it felt like an abandonment so this feels painful. It is important for your mental health to stay in the present moment, lest you overreact to the situation and generate misery for yourself and others. Try not to relive that old history in knee jerk fashion.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

Primary relationship(s) are going well now. The two (or more) of you may be working together to accomplish a long-term goal. You have been building and growing your new identity for the last two or more years. This week some of that effort is showing budding signs of favorable results.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

Relationships to your family of origin are given a boost. It is possible you are on a family vacation with everyone, including your adult family and children. Make an effort to reach out. Plan a barbecue in the backyard, if nothing else.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Let yourself make changes, even small ones, in your daily routine. It will be a refreshing shift from the norm. Give the artist in you an opportunity to spread its wings and experiment with a new or unusual medium. Play with accent pieces in new colors to brighten your mood.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

There are vampires loose in the world and the Fish tends to attract them. If you have aged a bit, you probably have begun to smell them when they enter your vicinity. Those who have not will be learning a lesson soon. It's a required course for this sign. Save some energy for yourself. Don't take over someone else's problem.

ARMENIA

Yezeguelian Hotel & Residence



In the Green Park
Near Congress Hotel
24 Studios and Apartments
€250 Per Week
(Payment Upon Arrival)

**In the Center
of Yerevan**



Warm Welcome
24/7 Security
Free Cafe & Bar

All Conveniences
Air Conditioned
Apartments



Kitchen, Refrigerator
Safe, TV, Internet



Modern
Rest Rooms

RESERVATIONS:

011 374 91 57 01 70
011 374 91 73 91 91

Yezeguelian@aol.com

Paris Office: 34 Avenue des Champs Elysees
Phone: 011 33 1 43 59 66 72
Yerevan Address: 8, Khorenatsi St.

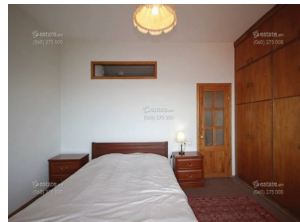
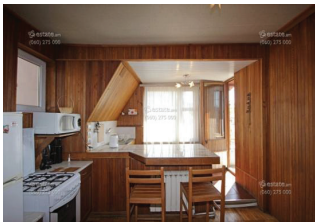
APARTMENTS FOR RENT



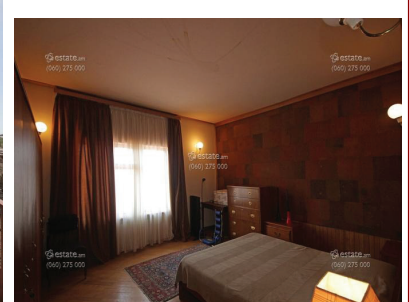
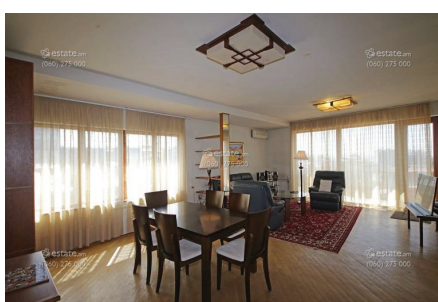
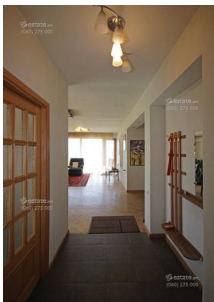
Comfortable two bedrooms apartments in the center of Yerevan, close to the hotel BASS. Each apartment is 110 sq.m., has two balconies, nice view to mount Ararat and separate entrance from the street. Both have central heating system, Wi-Fi, air conditionings, washing machines, TV sets, etc.
Address: Aygedzor Street 3, Yerevan.
Tel. (374) 095-27-87-09; 093-22-95-70 (landlord)



The apartment on the 2nd floor. Price for a long-time: \$ 850 per month; for a short time period: \$ 40-50 daily.



The apartment on the 3rd floor. Price: \$ 1300 per month.



Noyan Tapan Press-Center

Noyan Tapan Press-Center holds different discussions, press conferences, round tables, teleconferences, seminars each week which are broadcast live on the internet. We invite you to take advantage of the Center, as well as the place your banner in our Press Room.

Tel.: 060 35 11 22.

**Address: Isahakyan 28, 3rd floor,
Yerevan, 0009**

Noyan Tapan Printing House

is offering coloured and black and white offset and digital printing of:

- books,
- brochures,
- booklets,
- journals, etc with high quality and low prices

Tel.: 060 35 11 22.

**Address: Isahakyan 28, 1st floor,
Yerevan, 0009**

The Noyan Tapan
HIGHLIGHTS
 The publisher: NT Holding LTD
 Circulation: 1500 print copies and
 15.600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format
 Տպվելը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպարանակը՝ 1500
 Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝
 ՆՏ Խղիկինգ ՍՊԸ
 Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝
 03Ա898368, տրված 11.01.2013 թ.

President of the NT Media Holding:
Tigran Harutyunyan
 Editor-in-Chief of the Media Holding:
Gayaneh Arakelyan
 Director of the Weekly:
Marina Harutyunyan
 Chief Correspondent: **Gourgen Khazhakian**
 Proofreader: **Susanna Mkrtchian**
 Layout: **Diana Grigoryan**
 Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ. Հարությունյան
 Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993.
ISSN 1829-0604
 Registration certificate and the date:
 273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: contact@nt.am
URL: www.nt.am
 Address in Armenia: 28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA.
 Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-23
 (+374 60) 35-11-22
 Address in France: Masion De L' Armenie, Paris 17e - 95
 Bld. Gouvion, France.
 Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72
 Address in USA: 1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112, Glendale,
 CA, USA, 91206.
 Tel.: (+1 818) 646 10 72
 Հասցի՝ Բասիկյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009