

Eleven forces to run in Armenia's parliamentary elections



Nine political parties and two blocs will participate in the early parliamentary elections to be held on December 9. The following forces have submitted documents to the Central Electoral Commission:

My Step bloc headed by Nikol Pashinyan

Menk bloc headed by Aram Sargsyan

Republican Party of Armenia headed by Vigen Sargsyan

Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaktsutyun headed by Armen Rustamyan

Bright Armenia Party headed by Edmon Marukyan

Christian Democratic Rebirth headed by Levon Shirinyan

National Progress Party

Orinats Yerkir Party headed by Arthur Baghdasaryan

Prosperous Armenia Party headed by Gagik Tsarukyan

Sasna Tsrer Party headed Varuzhan Avetisyan

Citizen's Decision Party headed by Suren Sahakyan

The Armenian National Assembly was dissolved by virtue of law earlier this month after two failed attempts to elect Prime Minister. The election was more of formal character, as PM Nikol Pashinyan had resigned to trigger early parliamentary elections.

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Nikol Pashinyan meets with Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin II



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan praised the Armenian Apostolic Church and acknowledged its “special significance” for many Armenians when he met with its supreme head, Catholicos Garegin (Karekin) II, on November 14.

It was apparently the first one-on-one meeting of the two men at the church headquarters in Echmiadzin since Pashinyan swept to power in May in a wave of mass protests organized by him. The premier has been very critical of Garegin in the past.

“For us, for our people, for our country, the values of the Armenian Church have a pivotal significance for identity. This perception has always guided and is continuing to guide us,” Pashinyan told Garegin

in his opening remarks.

“The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin has a special significance for the lives of our people, for every adherent of the Armenian Apostolic Church, including me and my family,” he said. “And in general, one must visit the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin from time to time. This is also the most convenient place to reflect on the past and the future.”

For his part, Garegin wished Pashinyan success in his “patriotic endeavors.” The Catholicos also said that he will take the opportunity to discuss with him “solutions to a number of issues preoccupying our church.”

Official press releases on the meeting gave no further details.

Pashinyan had denounced Garegin’s perceived acquiescence of the deadly breakup of post-election opposition protests staged in Yerevan in 2008. The 43-year-old former journalist was one of the main speakers at those protests.

Shortly after the success of the Pashinyan-led “velvet revolution” Garegin came under strong pressure from an obscure group accusing him of having close ties with the country’s former government and demanding his resignation. Dozens of its members partly occupied his Echmiadzin headquarters in July. Police waited for several days before forcing them out of the premises.

The slow police reaction prompted strong criticism from representatives of the former ruling Republican Party (HHK) and other conservative critics of Pashinyan’s government. They portrayed it as further proof of what they see as government contempt for “traditional Armenian values.”

HHK lawmakers went on to draft a bill that would ban any protests inside church premises. Pashinyan’s cabinet rejected the bill last month.

The Armenian Apostolic Church is one of the world’s oldest Christian denominations to which the vast majority of Armenians nominally belong. Armenia’s constitution affirms its “exceptional mission.”

Artsakh President’s meetings in Paris

Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan met in Paris with the leaders of the French structure of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Dashnaktsutyun and discussed issues related to the Artsakh domestic and foreign policy, Artsakh-Diaspora cooperation and regional trends.

The President attached importance to such meetings and extended his gratitude to the representatives of the party for their special attitude towards Artsakh.

Bako Sahakyan next met with Armenia’s Ambassador to France



Hasmik Tolmajian.

The meeting addressed issues of enhancing the Artsakh-France

ties. President Sahakyan highlighted the role of close cooperation between the diplomatic mis-

sions of Artsakh and Armenia in developing bilateral relations as a necessary precondition for the successful implementation of targeted programs.

At a meeting with a group of members of the France-Artsakh Friendship Circle the President noted that the development of relations with France is one of the fundamental directions of Artsakh foreign policy.

He expressed gratitude to members of the Circle for the efforts made to deepen and expand bilateral relations.

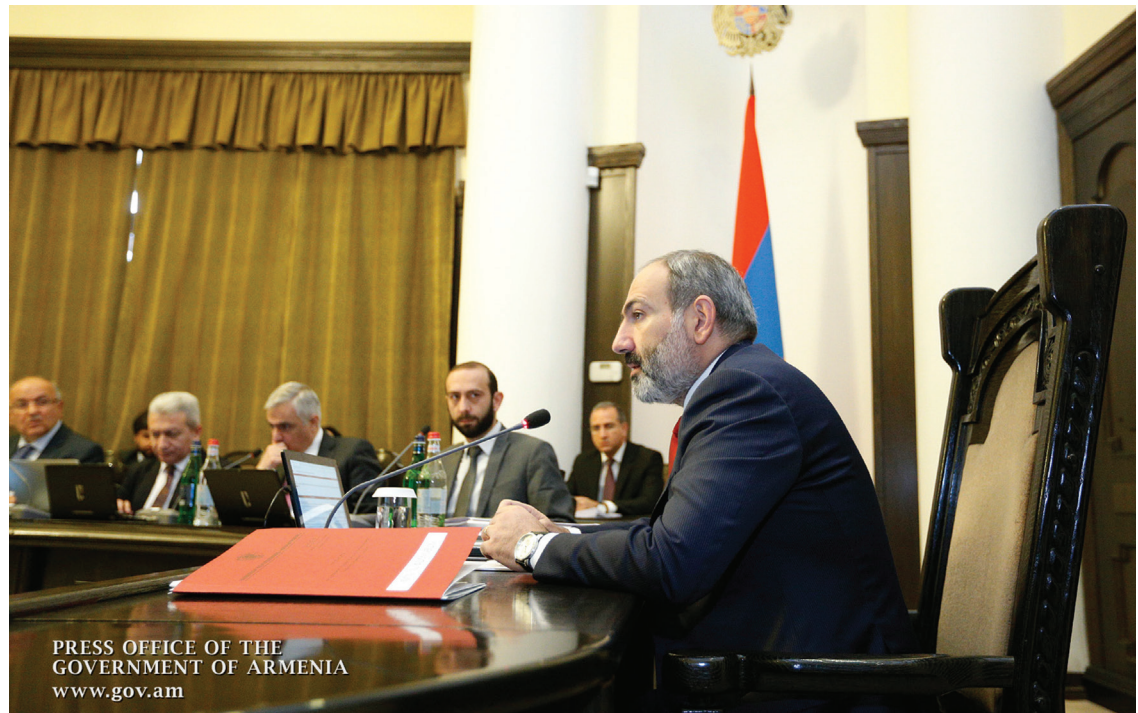
Nikol Pashinyan: "We must hold elections in line with best international standards"

A Cabinet meeting was held on November 15, chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Before discussing the agenda items, Nikol Pashinyan touched upon the scheduled snap parliamentary elections.

"The pre-election stage is in full swing; the deadline for applications for participation in snap parliamentary elections is over, and our government has assumed political responsibility to hold elections. We have set a task to hold the best ever elections in the history of the Third Republic. I think the bar should be raised: we should say highest international standards-compliant elections rather than the best election in the Third Republic's history.

In this regard, as I stated in the National Assembly yesterday, we need to emphasize that the use of administrative resource should be ruled out in these elections. In particular, I mean a number of traditions inherited from the past, when general schools were involved in political processes. We need to eradicate the phenomenon when administrative levers are used to direct voters in one direction or another. There used to be such people who told us who we should vote for. This phenomenon should be ruled out, and the voter's decisions should be formed as a result of propaganda and political content," Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Acting Prime Minister emphasized that the official results of elections should be formed exclusively according to the ballot. "We should exclude even a ballot paper, as it is commonly said to be put in a wrong rack, and not only in



the inter-party, but also in the intra-party format. What do I mean? Since the rating system is still operational, votes are distributed not only between parties, but also between different candidates within the same party. Of course, we have to convey a very clear and strict message: anybody making such an attempt will be strictly punished," the Acting Premier said.

The next problem, according to Nikol Pashinyan, is the direct or indirect practice of vote bribing. "I hope our law-enforcement bodies - particularly the Police and the Special Investigative Service - are prepared to not only adequately respond to the situation, but also to prevent this phenomenon through prophylactic work. During the election campaign, we will provide for a truly free competition between political parties, there should be no restrictions on access to respective audiences: all political forces should have equal opportunities to communicate with voters,"

Nikol Pashinyan said.

The Government decided to authorize the Yerevan Mayor to sign a new agreement on behalf of the Republic of Armenia with EMC CJSC concerning the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the State and the contracting side during the property alienation process in the area enclosed by in Arami, Buzand and Y. Koghbatsi streets.

Highlighting the program's importance, Nikol Pashinyan noted: "We must work to that effect. There are also 8 units of architectural monuments in the given area. Our policy is that they should not be damaged in any way, let alone the scenario of demolishing them at all. We are working with the investor to amend the project so that the monuments could remain intact during project implementation."

The fourth program under the Government's Open Government Partnership Action Plan has been approved. It has been developed on the basis of proposals made by govern-

ment agencies and civil society. The 4th program consists of 11 commitments, covering such areas as transparency of budget funds, establishment of an actual owners' registry based on best international standards, transparency and accountability for educational, health, water and land data, etc.

Concerning three bills submitted by NA deputies in the form of a legislative initiative on making additions and amendments to the Tax Code of the Republic of Armenia, Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan noted that all these issues can be discussed in the context of the Tax Code Reform. "It turns out that due to political processes, our Tax Code-related plans may be reconsidered in terms of timetable," he said, adding that the Tax Code will have to be adopted by this January.

According to Nikol Pashinyan, the electoral campaign is another good opportunity to hold public debates on the Tax Code Reform.

Armenia insists on keeping top CSTO post

A representative of Armenia must run the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) until 2020, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan insisted on November 16.

Russia and five other ex-Soviet states making up the alliance agreed in 2015 that their representatives will take turns to serve as the organization's secretary generals on a rotating basis. They appointed Armenia's Yuri Khachaturov to that position in 2017.

The new Armenian government cut short Khachaturov's three-year tour of duty after he was controversially charged in July in connection with the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan. It hoped that another Armenian official will be allowed to replace Khachaturov.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan insisted on that at a CSTO summit held in Kazakhstan's capital Astana on November 8. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko as well as Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev demanded, however, that a representative of Belarus be named as new head of the CSTO.

The CSTO leaders said they will again try to reach consensus on the issue when they meet again in Saint Petersburg, Russia on December 6.



In an interview with the Russian TASS agency, Mnatsakanyan said this does not mean that another Armenian official cannot become new head of the CSTO. He said Armenia must keep the vacant post as it has a "good cadre potential for that."

"The organization comprises six equal members and they make decisions by consensus," stressed the minister.

Lukashenko reiterated his demands when he met on Monday with a senior diplomat

from Azerbaijan, a country which is at war with Armenia and not part of the CSTO. He noted that another Russian-led bloc, the Eurasian Economic Union, is also run by an Armenian.

"This is a very heavy burden for a country which is going through a period of transition," added Lukashenko. "Can Armenia carry that burden?"

The Armenian Foreign Ministry denounced Lukashenko's comments.

Kocharyan's remand appeal overturned



YEREVAN—Armenia's Court of Cassation on November 15 reversed an appeals court ruling to free former president Robert Kocharyan who was remanded into custody after being charged with breaching Armenia's constitutional order in connection with the March 1, 2008 post-election violence that led to the killing of eight civilians and two police officers.

On July 27 Kocharyan was charged and remanded into custody. An appellate court overturned a lower court's decision on the remand and on August 13 he was released from pre-trial custody. The court ruled then, citing Armenia's Constitution, that current and former leaders of Armenia were immune from prosecution.

On November 15 ruling by the Court of Cas-

sation, Armenia's highest criminal appellate court, satisfies Armenia's Prosecutor General's request of remand. However, the court sent the case back to the appellate court for review. Kocharyan could be arrested following a ruling by that court.

Kocharyan has vehemently denied the charges, calling the entire process a "political vendetta."

In another ruling on Thursday, the Court of Cassation reversed a lower court's ruling free former president Serzh Sarkisian's lead bodyguard Vachagan Ghazaryan on bail. Immediately after the ruling, Ghazaryan was remanded into custody.

Ghazaryan was charged on June 25 of falsifying income statements and false asset declaration. At the time of his arrest he was carrying \$500,000 cash, which he said he was going return to an unnamed owner. Investigations also revealed that he was going to attempt to withdraw \$3 million from his and his wife's accounts.

Bail was set for 1 billion drams (\$2.5 million), which was paid before being freed from pre-trial detention.

Government to enable qualified professionals to be involved in public administration

Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has said that the government will enable qualified professionals to work in public administration.

“During my 6 months premiership one of the most fair complaints that I heard is the following: people are complaining that by being high professionals they are often unable to reach the country’s prime minister to propose their services for the benefit of the Republic of Armenia,” Pashinyan said on Facebook.

He said that he has decided to create a working, consultative mechanism to deal with the issue. He called on all those who are convinced that they deserve to be involved in different branches of public administration to send resumes and motivation letters to cv@gov.am.

“Just one request, in this case too the selection is a highly discretionary process and I am asking



not to feel insulted or rejected in any event. After all, if willingly or unwillingly you are being subjected to injustice, with your own co-

herency you will be able to prove your justness in any stage. I know this for sure. Also, with my own example,” he said.

European Film Festival kicks off in Armenia

The grand opening of the European Film Festival took place November 17 at Yerevan’s Moscow Cinema. New movies from 11 European countries will be screened in the festival.

Screenings will take place in Yerevan, Gyumri and Dilijan.

“Armenia is the country of Sergei Parajanov,” said EU Ambassador Piotr Switalski. “A country that has had its huge and valuable contribution in cinematography in many countries worldwide and in Europe. We see that the Armenian audience is watching films of various productions – Hollywood, Bollywood, MosFilm, and we thought why not show European production movies to the Armenian society? We believe that through this festival we will be able to strengthen the bridge between the Armenian society and the expanded European society,” he said.

The festival kicked off with the screening of *Colette* – a 2018 biographical drama, directed by Wash Westmoreland, based upon the life of the French novelist Colette.

The film stars Keira Knightley, Dominic West, Eleanor Tomlinson, and Denise Gough.

The EU delegation announced about the festival earlier on November 13.

Armenian, Italian presidents discuss enhancement of ties in Rome

Armenian President Armen Sarkissian and Italian President Sergio Mattarella held a meeting on November 17 in Rome, the president’s office said.

Sarkissian is currently on a working visit to Italy.

The presidents discussed issues concerning the further deepening of the Armenian-Italian relations, Sarkissian’s office said.

They mentioned that high-level mutual visits will significantly contribute to enhancing bilateral relations and will boost the development of cooperation between the two countries.

tries.

Sarkissian briefed his Italian counterpart on the meetings and agreements he had during his visit to the country.

The presidents underscored that broad opportunities for cooperation exist in both economic, cultural and scientific sectors and attached importance to full utilization of the existing potential.

Sarkissian had a number of meetings in Italy, including with ANCE executives, the CEO of Leonardo and Italian National Research Council president.



Nikol Pashinyan visits Megerian Carpet Company and has working lunch with Harvard University's Armenian graduates

Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan visited Megerian Carpet Company, where he toured in the company's museum and got acquainted with the works of the company.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the official website of the Prime Minister of Armenia, the leadership of the company introduced to the acting PM the development projects of Megerian Carpet. The sides exchanged views on prospects for developing busi-



ness in Armenia.

Afterwards, Nikol Pashinyan

had a working lunch with Harvard University's Armenian graduates. Highly assessing their education, Pashinyan noted that he is interested in their involvement in state administration system. The acting PM expressed confidence that their knowledge and abilities can foster the development and modernization of the state administration system. Various issues about the opportunities of Armenia's development were also discussed.

ADB approves \$50 million loan Enhance Financial Markets in Armenia



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$50 million policy-based loan as part of an ongoing program of financial reforms to strengthen public debt and fiscal risk management and develop financial markets in Armenia.

The second subprogram of the Public Efficiency and Financial Markets Program supports the Government of Armenia's efforts to consolidate fiscal reforms, reduce financial risks in the economy, provide a sustainable framework for financial markets development, and usher in a more conducive environment for private sector involvement in infrastructure development. ADB provided \$40 million in October 2017 to the first subprogram.

"ADB is committed to helping the Gov-

ernment of Armenia improve its economic growth and financial stability outlook through policy and technical assistance," said ADB Senior Financial Sector Economist Mr. João Farinha-Fernandes. "The reforms that enabled the approval of this \$50 million policy-based loan will continue the efforts laid out in the first subprogram."

While financial institutions in Armenia have improved their contribution to the country's economy over the years, financial markets remain nascent. This limits the development of the private sector in the country, which is vital for Armenia's growth and development. This situation is also affecting public finance, fiscal management, as well as macroeconomic and financial stability in the country—factors that are crucial in improv-

ing investment levels in Armenia, which has declined to 18% in 2017 from about 40% of gross domestic product before 2009.

Through various policy reforms, the Public Efficiency and Financial Markets Program is aimed at strengthening Armenia's public debt and fiscal risk management through capacity building of various agencies including the Public Debt and Management Department as well as the Ministry of Finance. It also aims to improve the government's securities market and money-market infrastructure, while broadening the range of financial instruments available to attract more private investments in the country. The second subprogram continued these reform efforts.

If the reforms are sustained, more developed financial markets will help Armenia in various ways, including supporting government funding in the domestic market; developing local capital markets; providing suitable instruments to authorities to deal with macroeconomic shocks and risks to financial stability; and improving the efficiency of capital allocation and intermediation in the country.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2017, ADB operations totaled \$32.2 billion, including \$11.9 billion in cofinancing.

Armenian gas operator accused of tax evasion



Tax authorities have accused Armenia's national gas distribution owned by Russia's Gazprom giant of evading millions of dollars worth of taxes.

The State Revenue Committee (SRC) announced the launch of criminal proceedings against the Gazprom Armenia operator on Wednesday. The SRC claimed that the company inflated its expenditures and underreported its earnings in 2016 and 2017. It said that translated into "several billion drams" in unpaid

taxes.

No Gazprom Armenia executives have been formally charged yet.

The head of the SRC's investigative division, Eduard Hovannisian, told RFE/RL's Armenian service on November 15 that tax inspectors are still "ascertaining" the scale of the alleged tax evasion. "The criminal investigation has only just started," he said.

Gazprom Armenia strongly denied the accusations. "I insist that they are base-

less," its chief executive, Hrant Tadevosyan, told a news conference.

"Our company has repeatedly received SRC certificates of a 'law-abiding taxpayer,' most recently in September," he said.

Tadevosyan also accused the government agency comprising the Armenian tax and customs services of damaging the gas operator's business reputation. He claimed that the criminal case has called into serious question Gazprom Armenia's plans to obtain a multimillion-dollar loan from a Russian commercial bank.

The SRC brought the tax fraud case amid ongoing negotiations between the Armenian government and Gazprom on the price of Russian natural gas delivered to Armenia. The most recent Russian-Armenian gas agreement set the price at \$150 per thousand cubic meters. It expires in December.

The government hopes that Gazprom will cut the tariff or at least keep it unchanged. The Russian gas monopoly has given no such indications so far.

Transportation, communication and IT commission set up at Public Council

The new commission of transportation, communication and information technology affairs of the Public Council elected a chairperson during its inaugural sitting.

The commission is comprised of 42 members.

UEICT (Union of Employers of Information and Communication Technologies) president and UNICOMP founder Armen Baldryan, one of the two candidates for the commission chair, was elected to office.

The commission is composed of representatives of leading companies of the sector who are willing to bring forward fresh ideas in the system, raise issues and propose innovative solutions.

Baldryan expressed hope that the commission will become a productive and mutually beneficial arena for cooperation between the government and the specialized community.



U.S. sanctions on Iran 'explained' to Armenian Government, Banks

(Yerevan – RFE/RL) A team of U.S. officials has visited Armenia to brief its government and private sector on the implications of economic sanctions against neighboring Iran that have been re-imposed by President Donald Trump.

The U.S. Embassy in Yerevan said the “subject matter experts” from the U.S. departments of state and treasury met with senior Armenian government officials on November 15 as part of Washington’s efforts to “explain U.S. sanctions policy against Iran to governments around the world.”

“They also met with the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Armenia as well as with private banks, members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia, and Armenian academics and think tank experts,” read an embassy statement.

“The delegation emphasized U.S. efforts to change the Iranian regime’s malign behavior through maximum economic and diplomatic pressure, while also outlining areas for cooperation with partners like Armenia,” it added.

Armenian government bodies issued no statements on the discussions with the visiting U.S. officials.

The discussions came less than a month after U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton’s trip to Armenia. The renewed U.S. sanctions against Tehran were a major theme of his talks with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other Armenian leaders.

Bolton said he told them that the Trump administration will enforce the sanctions against Iran “very vigorously” and that the Armenian-Iranian border is therefore “going to be a significant issue.”

“Obviously, we don’t want to cause



damage to our friends in the process,” Bolton told RFE/RL’s Armenian service. “So I think conversation between the government of Armenia and the United States is going to be very important.”

Speaking in the Armenian parliament a few days later, Pashinyan said he made it clear to Bolton that his government will maintain Armenia’s “special” relationship with Iran. “We respect the national interests of any country, but the Republic of Armenia has its own national and state interests which do not always coincide with the interests and ideas of other countries,” stressed Pashinyan.

Bolton tweeted after his visit that Armenia is an “important friend” of the United States.

With Armenia’s borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey closed due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iran as well as Georgia serve as the sole conduits for the landlocked country’s trade with the outside world.

Armenia also imports Iranian natural gas and other fuel. The volume of the gas supplies should rise sharply after the ongoing construction of a third power transmission line connecting

the two countries is completed next year.

Accordingly, both the current and former Armenian governments have supported a 2015 multilateral accord on Iran’s nuclear program that led to the lifting of the U.S. sanctions. Trump unilaterally pulled out of that deal earlier year.

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan commented on the move’s possible impact on the Armenian-Iranian relationship in an interview with the Russian TASS news agency published on Friday.

“For us, this is a highly sensitive issue because Iran is an important partner of Armenia with which we have ... a bilateral agenda extremely important to Armenia,” said Mnatsakanyan.

U.S. officials have yet to publicly say which Armenian-Iranian commercial operations, if any, could be affected by the renewed sanctions.

According to official Armenian statistics, Armenian-Iranian trade stood at \$263 million last year. Pashinyan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani discussed ways of expanding it when they met in New York in September.

Newly-Elected House Democratic Majority Will Paralyze Trump's Presidential Powers



By
**Harut
Sassounian**

The midterm elections held on November 6, 2018, will significantly restrain President Trump's rule of the United States as a dictatorship.

In the first two years of his presidency, Trump often abused his powers by signing Executive Orders and by controlling both the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government through the Republican majorities in both the House and Senate. During this period, President Trump made many outrageous statements and acted as he pleased disregarding any politically, legally and morally correct behavior.

However, the President's free ride has come to an end! With the new Democratic majority in the House of Representatives, President Trump will no longer be able to do as he pleases. He will be unable to propose any bills without the consent of the House Democrats who will investigate the illegal actions of the President and his cabinet members, as well as protecting the Special Prosecutor's Russia collusion probe in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections. The new Democratic majority in the House will be able to subpoena President Trump's campaign associates which the previous Republican majority had blocked, and will also demand the release of the President's tax returns which he has adamantly refused to disclose, hiding his business dealings in foreign countries.

This new state of affairs will have two concrete consequences. The U.S. government will be in gridlock for the next two years. Hardly any new bills initiated by President Trump will be approved by the House. Secondly, frustrated by the House blocking his actions, President Trump will lash out at the Democrats even more harshly than before. The President has already declared that if the Democrats investigate him, he will investigate them in return! This means that President Trump's anger and hostility will rise to new heights, leading him to send more insulting tweets and deliver more outrageous speeches at his political rallies.

During the next two years, President Trump will be so busy attacking his political rivals that he will be unable to pay full attention to domestic and foreign policies which will hopefully limit his mischief in the United States and around the world!

Armenian-American Candidates in the Midterm Elections

On the positive side, at least eight Armenian-Americans won local, state and federal political seats during the Nov. 6, 2018 midterm elections.

Armenian-American Anna Eshoo (Dem.-CA) won reelection to the House along with Jackie Kanchelian Speier, another Democrat from California. Armenian-American Anthony Brindisi (Dem.-N.Y.) is 1,293 votes ahead of the incumbent Republican Congresswoman Claudia Tenney as of election night, pending thousands of votes yet to be counted. If Brindisi wins, he will be the third Armenian-American serving in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In the history of the United States, there have been only seven Armenian-Americans elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. They are:

— Thomas Corwin (1831-1840; 1859-1861), Republican from Ohio.

— Steven Derounian (1953-1965), Republican from New York.

— Adam Benjamin (1977-1982), Democrat from Indiana.

— Charles Pashayan (1979-1991), Republican from California.

— Anna Eshoo (1993-present), Democrat from California.

— John Sweeney (1999-2007), Republican from New York.

— Jackie Speier (2008-present), Democrat from California.

Incredibly, Thomas Corwin, of Armenian and Hungarian descent, was a highly-accomplished politician and diplomat. He is the only Armenian-American who became a U.S. Senator (1845-1850), a Republican from Ohio. Besides his service in the House and the Senate, Corwin was the Governor of Ohio (1840-1842), and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury (1850-1853). In addition, he served as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico (1861-1864).

Danny Tarkanian, Republican congressional candidate from Nevada, lost his election bid on Nov. 6, running against Democrat Susie Lee. Tarkanian trailed with 43.4% of the vote to

Lee's 51.4%.

Johnny Nalbandian, Republican congressional candidate from the Glendale, CA area, lost his election bid to incumbent Democrat Cong. Adam Schiff. Nalbandian had 23.5% of the vote to Schiff's 76%.

Democrat Adrin Nazarian from the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles won reelection against Republican challenger Roxanne Hoge for the California State Assembly. Nazarian won 77.9% of the vote to Hoge's 22.1%.

Elizabeth Warren (not to be confused with U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren), granddaughter of Armenian Genocide survivors, lost her election for the California State Assembly to fellow Democrat Tasha Boerner Horvath.

Republican Rita Topalian lost her race for the State Senate against Democrat Bob Archeleta, who won by 65% of the vote.

Outside of California, Mari Manoogian, 26, Democratic candidate for Michigan State House, defeated her opponent former Michigan GOP chair David Wolkinson, with 57% of the vote vs. Wolkinson's 43%. Manoogian was endorsed by President Barack Obama, Sen. Gary Peters, and Governor-Elect Gretchen Whitmer.

Another Armenian-American candidate, Sara Gideon, a Democratic member of the Maine House of Representatives, was reelected.

Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte was re-elected to Ward Three on Westbrook, Maine's City Council. Turcotte, a refugee from Baku, Azerbaijan, is a strong advocate for Artsakh's independence.

Finally, Lorig Charkhodian, a Democratic candidate for Maryland's House of Delegates, was elected to become the first Armenian-American to serve in the Maryland State legislature.

Most Armenian-Americans who ran for political office on Nov. 6, won. The same is true for many non-Armenian supporters of the Armenian-American community. The Armenian National Committee of America reported that 92% of the congressional candidates it endorsed won their seats. This is great news!

On the other hand, Armenian-Americans are pleased that Cong. Pete Sessions (Rep.-Texas), co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Turkey, lost his reelection bid, despite contributions to him by pro-Turkey donors!

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

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

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

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

Apart from the professional knowledge the company pays a great attention to the humanitarian qualities of the serving staff, to their kindness, patience,



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

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

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

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

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



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Armenian Parliament rejects pro-church bills



Deputies from Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) walked out of the Armenian parliament on Friday after failing to push through bills meant to protect the supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church against physical threats.

The HHK drafted the two bills after Catholicos Garegin II faced calls for his resignation following this spring's "velvet revolution" in Armenia.

An obscure Armenian group launched a series of protests against Garegin in June, accusing him of corruption and close ties with the country's former government. Dozens of its members partly occupied his Echmiadzin headquarters in July. Some of them also physically confronted Garegin when he subsequently travelled to a medieval monastery in the southeastern Vayots Dzor province.

Police waited for several days before forcing the protesters out of the Mother See of the Armenian Church. This prompted strong criticism from the HHK and other conservative critics of the newly elected Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. They accused the government of showing contempt for "traditional Arme-

nian values."

One of the HHK bills would ban any demonstrations inside church premises. Pashinyan's cabinet spoke out against the bill last month. Only 43 members of the 105-seat National Assembly voted for it.

Citing this summer's incidents, HHK lawmakers also drafted separate legal amendments that would obligate the state to provide Garegin with bodyguards on a permanent basis. Some of them seemed to imply that the summer protests against him were provoked by other, non-traditional religious groups active in the country.

"We want to protect the Catholicos against sexual and religious minorities that are financed from abroad and fight against the Armenian statehood and Armenian faith," the HHK's Hakob Hakobyan said during a heated parliament debate.

"Our church is an inseparable part of our national security. Anyone who is against that church is also against national security," declared Samvel Nikoyan, another deputy representing the former ruling party.

Lawmakers allied to Pashinyan rejected the bill. One

of them, Lena Nazarian, said there is no need for such legislation because the government will protect the Catholicos whenever he feels that his security is at risk.

Another pro-Pashinyan deputy, Sasun Mikaelyan, argued against "protecting the Catholicos against the people." Mikaelyan said the HHK itself is responsible for Garegin's perceived unpopularity because the latter had grown too close to the previous government.

"Against whom is the prime minister protected by his security detail? Against the people?" countered the HHK's Margarit Yesayan.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) also backed the HHK initiative, saying that not only Garegin but also the church as a whole needs stronger state protection. "I don't think it's right to put the Catholicos in a situation where he himself has to ask for protection," said Armen Rustamian, Dashnaksutyun's parliamentary leader.

Only 28 mainly Republican deputies voted for the bill. Their colleagues representing Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party, the second largest force in the outgoing parliament, abstained.

"This is the most disgraceful vote in independent Armenia's history," charged Eduard Sharmazanov, a deputy parliament speaker affiliated with the HHK.

"There may be 28 of us today. There will be 2,800 of us tomorrow and 2.8 million the day after," Sharmazanov said before he and several other HHK parliamentarians walked out in protest.

The Armenian Church's official position on the proposed legislation is not known. Its chief spokesman could not be reached for comment on Friday.

The HHK bills were debated two days after Pashinyan visited the Echmiadzin seat of the church and met with Garegin. The premier acknowledged the church's "special significance" for many Armenians. Few other details of their meeting were made public.

Pashinyan had strongly criticized Garegin in the past.

The Armenian Apostolic Church is one of the world's oldest Christian denominations to which the vast majority of Armenians nominally belong. Armenia's constitution recognizes its "exceptional mission" in the country's history and social life.



Premier of Australian state of Victoria pledges \$35,000 for Armenian Community Center

The Premier of the Australian state of Victoria, the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP has announced that, if re-elected, his government will provide \$35,000 funding towards the upgrade of the Armenian Community Center (Hye Getron), located on Police Road in Springvale, reported the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC-AU).

With the Victorian State Election scheduled to take place on Saturday 24th November, the ANC-AU - Melbourne Branch has sought meetings with incumbents and candidates in Armenian-populated seats. Andrews is the current Member for Mulgrave, which is populated by many Melbourne Armenians, while it also houses the Armenian Community Centre (Hye Getron).

Following discussions with Andrews's office, ANC-AU - Melbourne Branch secured the \$35,000 grant, which will upgrade the carpark and fencing of the centre, which also houses the Hamazkaine Mesrob Mashdots Matheossian Saturday School.

Andrews, who has been the Labor Premier of Victoria since 2014, reaffirmed his support for the Armenian community by stating: "Our Armenian community makes a proud contribution to Victoria and I'm proud to offer this support. With these investments, we'll will make sure that the Armenian Community Centre has the facilities it needs to keep serving Armenian



Victorians for years to come."

ANC-AU - Melbourne Branch Chairman, Asbed Boymoushakian thanked the Premier for his commitment before outlining his team's next steps.

"This is a great result for our community," he said. "Many of our unsung heroes who work in the background to make this Centre a true home for so many of us will wholeheartedly appreciate the commitment provided."

Boymoushakian added: "An upgrade for our Community Centre is thoroughly appreciated. Importantly for us at the Ar-

menian National Committee, elections are opportunities to build on relationships that will allow for advancement of our community's core public affairs priorities, including Armenian Genocide recognition and the self-determination rights of our brothers and sisters in Artsakh, which we will focus on within the next Parliamentary term."

ANC-AU - Melbourne Branch is in discussions with the campaign of the Liberal Party's candidate for the seat of Mulgrave, Ms Maree Davenport to seek her position on the funding commitment.

International meeting on Syria to be held in Astana November 28-29

The international meeting in Astana to resolve the situation in Syria will be held November 28-29, TASS reported citing the Kazakh foreign minister's statement.

"The guarantors of the 'Astana process' - the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to hold the next, 11-th international high-level meeting on Syria in the framework of the 'Astana process' on November 28-29 in the capital of Kazakhstan," TASS quoted Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Abdrakhman-



ov as saying.

He said that the meeting is planned "in the traditional format with the participation of delega-

tions of the countries-guarantors, the government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Syrian armed opposition, observers are invited to this meeting - the UN and Jordan."

In Astana, nine rounds of talks were held to resolve the situation in Syria. The main result of the meetings in the capital of Kazakhstan was the creation of de-escalation zones, which significantly reduced the level of violence in the country.

The last meeting in the Astana format at a high level was held in Sochi, Russia on July 30-31.

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

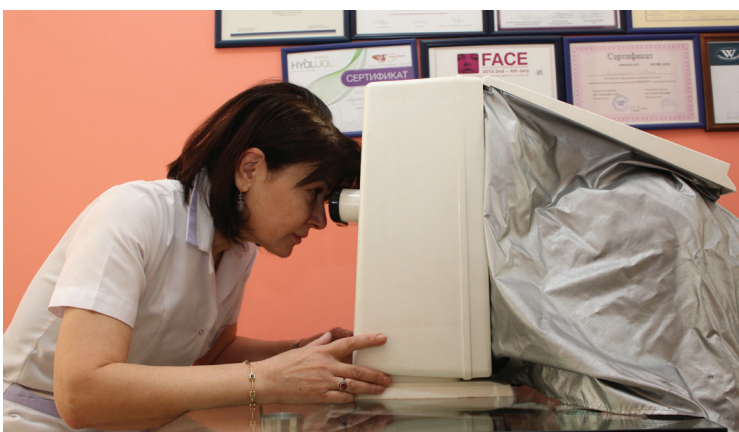


method (dynamic mode) which allows to treat very large areas of the body within few minutes.

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 recontouring. 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



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.

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Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

Over the next six weeks life will work more smoothly if you let yourself be led by the “signs,” circumstances, and people around you. It will not be a time to attack in anger or initiate new ideas. However, you can effectively respond to what comes your way.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Your ruling planet, Venus, has been retrograding in the house of personal health since early October. It is possible that this has been discouraging in relationship to any self-improvement routines, leading you to feel you can't possibly accomplish your goals. That was a plateau effect. Now that Venus is direct you will have rapid improvement.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

Mercury, your planetary avatar, turns retrograde in your seventh house of relationships this week. This suggests that your partner or other significant people in your life may change their minds and back out of previously made agreements. Have patience. Maybe the plan really needs revision before going forward. Double check details before committing.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

This fall you have made a subtle shift in the direction of taking care of yourself first. This stance fits well with the cosmic plan. There is, however, a development early this week that causes you to overrule your new decision. It requires your time and attention for a short while and then you can return to your original plan.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

This week is about finding healing on either the physical or emotional levels. You may be the healer or the healee. It is possible that alternative medicine may play a role. If a friendship or a more significant relationship needs mending, now is the time to do so. The willingness to open your heart and mind to give and to receive is yours at this time.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

Last week I wrote about Jupiter, moving into the territory of home, hearth, and family. It encourages you to expand and improve on your environment. Now we have Mercury, turning retrograde in the same area. This is a more immediate message that suggests you reconsider the specifics of your plans for a few weeks before you plunge forward.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

During the last two months you may have felt tentative about decisions because you weren't clear where your life is headed. Now that Venus turns direct in your sign, you will find yourself feeling gradually more decisive. The fog will lift and you may be surprised how much better overall you feel.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Your attention shifts to matters concerning children, play, romance and recreation for the next few weeks. You will likely be the one to initiate activities on these fronts. If you have hesitated to ask someone to date you, now is the time to make an invitation.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

The planets are having a heyday with you this month. Last week Jupiter, planet of strength moved into your sign, giving you a signal of increasing strength for the next year. No sooner has that happened than Mercury turns retrograde in Sagittarius, telling you to slow down and think it over. The “slow down” message is for only a few weeks. Jupiter's “go forth” message lasts for a full year.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

You have been identifying with something or someone that represents your well-being. This week you have helpers who may or may not realize what they are doing, but their influence is positive. Give attention to your dreams and also to interesting “coincidences”.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

There is a shift of circumstances in your favor. This shift may involve the law, publishing, internet contacts, travel, or your relationship to your place of worship. Your personal attitude may alter for the better to allow this to happen. Be open to change in these areas.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

Mars, the red planet of war, enters your sign this week and will be traveling with you for six weeks. This energy is best used to handle physically heavy projects or take initiatives that you might not otherwise tackle. If you are choosing not to deal honestly with this assertive energy, the common side effects are irritability and infections. It is healthier to take charge of it.

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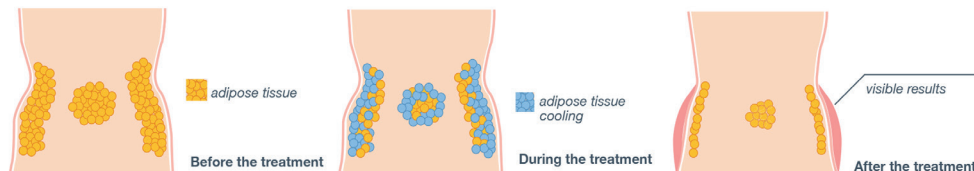
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