

## PM visits Vanadzor on Vanadzor Day and gets acquainted with city development plan



Accompanied by his spouse Anna Hakobyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited Vanadzor to attend festivities dedicated to Vanadzor Day. Taking the opportunity, the Premier got acquainted with the city development plan.

The Premier first called at the Vanadzor Museum of Fine Arts after Karlos Abovyan, where reconstruction works are being carried out with a government subsidy, co-financed by the Vanadzor Municipality. 92 million drams have been earmarked for the project. The Head of Government inspected the site, which is due to be complete by this yearend.

The Vanadzor Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1974 and is one of the most important cultural centers in Lori region, featuring both classical and contemporary Armenian art works. The Museum boasts about 1800 exhibits - paintings, graphics and sculptures, as well as decorative and applied art pieces by local and non-native artists.

Nikol Pashinyan and Anna Hakobyan next visited the Vanadzor Armenia Resort Complex and attended the opening of the renovated medical facility. The Prime Minister was briefed on the investment program and healthcare services.

➡ page 11

Armenian, Russian PMs meet in Moscow

Ratification of Armenia-EU CEPA on agenda of French Senate

Armenia's economic activity index grows by 7.1% in 9 month

FM Mnastakanyan's Interview on BBC's HARD-talk

p. 2

p. 4

p.7

p. 5



## Armenian, Russian PMs meet in Moscow



On a working visit to Moscow, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

“Our meeting is a good opportunity to discuss trade and economic cooperation,

investments, and cooperation between our countries,” Medvedev said.

In general, he added, everything is developing successfully, “but this does not mean that there is nothing to improve.”

He expressed gratitude for Armenia’s suc-

cessful chairmanship of the Eurasian Economic Union.

PM Pashinyan, in turn, expressed gratitude for the warm welcome. He noted that Armenia’s chairmanship turned out to be fruitful, because it saw the treaty between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union come into force, and agreement signed with Singapore and Serbia.

“Negotiations with some of our partners are proceeding at a good pace, and I am sure that the geography of countries that will have agreements with the Eurasian Economic Union will definitely expand. And of course, this is a very good reason to discuss issues of bilateral relations between our countries,” the Armenian Prime Minister noted.

During the meeting the Prime Ministers discussed issues related to cooperation in different spheres of economy, touched upon the agenda of the Armenian-Russian relations.

## “Armenia and EU boast a hectic agenda of cooperation” - PM receives EU Ambassador to Armenia



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received newly appointed Head of EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Victorin.

Welcoming the EU Ambassador, Pashinyan stated: “Cooperation with the European Union is of paramount importance to Armenia at this important stage of reforms. The EU has been one of the most important partners of our democratic agenda following the Velvet Revolution, and we view your appointment from the perspective of forging closer ties of partnership between Armenia and the European Union. We consider the political dialogue with the EU effective and stand ready to endeavor toward making our partnership more productive.”

With reference to Armenia’s democratic reforms, the Premier touched upon the judicial sector, the electoral system, the anticorruption policy, as well as the economic development programs.

“It is a great honor to be appointed as Head of EU Delegation to Armenia and have an opportunity to promote the development of EU-Armenia relations. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to continued support for your reform agenda aimed at Armenia’s development based on the rule of law and our shared values,” the Ambassador said, adding that she was impressed with the fundamental transformations underway in Armenia. She reaffirmed that the EU will continue to back our country on the way to strengthening democracy in the spheres specified by the Prime Minister and complementing the EU-Armenia agenda with new mutually beneficial programs and initiatives.

The Armenian Prime Minister and the Head of EU Delegation discussed several issues high on the bilateral cooperation agenda, including the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the Eastern Partnership, the implementation of new joint projects, etc. Both sides highlighted the actions aimed at launching visa liberalization talks. They stressed the need for the Armenian side to get acquainted with the new EU leadership.

The parties exchanged views on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Premier hailed the EU’s balanced position on the conflict settlement process. In turn, Ambassador Victorin said the EU supports the negotiation process and the formation of an atmosphere of dialogue conducive to peaceful settlement.

## Agreement with Serbia another step to expand EAEU partnership – Armenian PM



The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stéphane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America), together with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office (PRCIO) Andrzej Kasprzyk, visited the region from 14 to 17 October.

The Co-Chairs met with Prime Minister

Nikol Pashinyan in Yerevan on 15 October and with President Ilham Aliyev in Baku on 17 October, and held consultations with the respective Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers in both capitals.

During their visit, the Co-Chairs also met with the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh. In Baku, the Co-Chairs met with the Chairman of the Azerbaijani

Community of Nagorno-Karabakh. While in Nagorno-Karabakh, the mediators were briefed on humanitarian issues by the local representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The two leaders briefed the Co-Chairs on their recent conversation during the CIS summit in Ashgabat and presented their ideas on how to advance the settlement process. The Co-Chairs welcomed the prospect of implementing specific humanitarian and security measures to prepare the populations for peace and reduce tensions.

The Co-Chairs once again stressed the critical importance of monitoring missions led by the PRCIO, in accordance with his mandate and longstanding practice. The Co-Chairs called on the sides to continue to support fully the activities of the PRCIO and his team and to ensure that any obstacles potentially interfering with monitoring missions are removed immediately.

The Foreign Ministers confirmed their intention to meet again under Co-Chair auspices before the end of the year.

The Co-Chairs will travel soon to Vienna to brief the OSCE Permanent Council and the members of the Minsk Group.

## Authorities report hefty payout from Sargsyan bodyguard

The former chief bodyguard of ex-President Serzh Sargsyan and his wife prosecuted on corruption charges have paid the state almost 2.9 billion drams (\$6 million) in compensation, investigators said on Friday.

Vachagan Ghazaryan, who headed Sargsyan's security detail for over two decades, stands accused of illegal enrichment and false asset disclosure. The charges stem from his failure to declare to a state anti-corruption body more than \$2.5 million in cash that was mostly held in his and his wife's bank accounts.

Ghazaryan was obliged to do that in his capacity as deputy head of a security agency providing bodyguards to Armenia's leaders. He held that position until May 2018.

Ghazaryan was first detained in June 2018



after police raided his apartment in Yerevan and found \$1.1 million and 230,000 euros (\$267,000) in cash there. The National Security Service (NSS) said he carried a further \$120,000 and 436 million drams (\$900,000) in a bag when he was caught outside a commercial bank in Yerevan.

Ghazaryan, who has the rank of NSS general, was released from custody in July 2018 but arrested again last November. A Yerevan court granted him bail in December after he offered to transfer as much as

\$6 million to the state.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) said on Friday the once powerful officer and his wife have completed the payment. An SIS spokeswoman described the cash transfer as a recovery of financial "damage" inflicted on the state.

It remains unclear when the SIS will complete investigation and whether Ghazaryan will stand trial.

Earlier this year, another law-enforcement body, the National Security Service (NSS), secured an even heftier payout, worth \$30 million, from Serzh Sargsyan's indicted brother Aleksandr. The money was held in Aleksandr Sargsyan's Armenian bank account frozen by the NSS shortly after the 2018 "Velvet Revolution" that topped the former president.



## Ratification of Armenia-EU CEPA on agenda of French Senate

On October 25, within the framework of the Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe Speaker of Parliament of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan met with the President of the Senate (upper house of parliament) of France Gérard Larcher, the Armenian Parliament told Noyan Tapan.

Ararat Mirzoyan expressed satisfaction with the current level of the Armenian-French relations and highlighted the continuity of the regular dialogue of high level. He has stressed that the contacts between the two parliaments are considered to be its most important component, especially in the international parliamentary organizations.

The sides also highly assessed the close cooperation of the Armenian-French Friendship Groups.

Ararat Mirzoyan particularly highly evaluated the activity of the Friendship Framework of the members of the Senate of France with Artsakh, including the visits of its members and the parliamentary delegations in general.

Touching upon the cooperation in the EU framework Ararat Mirzoyan has noted that the National Assembly urges all its international colleagues to end the process of ratification of the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Agreement within possible short term, after which it will be possible to launch the



dialogue over the visa liberalization with the European Union. He has particularly stressed that after the Velvet revolution and in parallel with the development of democracy there are great expectations in the Armenian society, and Armenia expects the support of friendly France.

At the request of the President of the Senate of France Ararat Mirzoyan touched upon the current phase of the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, underlining that

all rights of Nagorno Karabakh population should be respected, irrespective of the fact Artsakh is a recognized state or not.

The existing tendency in Europe to facilitate the visit of the representatives of the international structures and the Council of Europe to the “grey zones” was emphasized.

Reaffirming the Armenian-French special relations the President of the Senate Gérard Larcher has noted that the ratification of the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Agreement is on the agenda of the Senate, and the Senate will turn to it in the near future. Highly assessing the commitment of Armenia to exclusively peaceful solution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Gérard Larcher reaffirmed that France as an OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair country, would continue making efforts for the peaceful and long-lasting settlement of the problem.

## Meetings between Armenian, Azerbaijani FMs are announced in agreed manner, foreign ministry



The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has commented on OSCE Chairperson in Office, Slovakia's FM Miroslav La-

jčák's statement on an upcoming meeting between the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers due in Bratislava.

“First of all, let me mention that the meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani FMs and leaders are taking place solely at the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs and high level representatives of the co-chairing countries.

Indeed, the co-chairs have made a proposal on organizing a meeting, something which is mentioned in both the press statement regarding the New York meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijan FMs and the press statement as a result of the co-chairs' regional visit. As you know, we announce these kinds of meetings in an agreed manner, and we won't breach this principle,” foreign ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said.



## FM Mnatsakanyan's Interview on BBC's HARDtalk

LONDON — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's UN address, voicing a call for achieving a universally acceptable solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) conflict, reaffirms Armenia's support to a peace process, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an interview on BBC's HARDtalk.



His statement came in response to Stephan Sackur's remark that the premier's slogan – “Artsakh is Armenia- period” – runs counter to the peaceful conflict settlement efforts.

“He does want peace because the prime minister of Armenia has been saying that the solution, we want to achieve has to be acceptable to the people of Armenia, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and the people of Azerbaijan. We are waiting from Azerbaijan a signal and a message which refers to our interests and our concerns – and the concerns of the security in people of Nagorno-Karabakh. But they have been refusing to do that,” the minister emphasized.

Mnatsakanyan also highlighted Karabakh's paramount role on the pan-Armenian agenda. “The pan-Armenian agenda concerns Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia is pursuing a development agenda, an agenda of consolidation, and it doesn't leave out the people of Nagorno-Karabakh ... We are a nation which is within the Republic of Armenia but [also] a nation of a global nature. Within that, Nagorno-Karabakh is a land with our compatriots,” he said, emphasizing Armenia's role as a security guarantor.

Reiterating Armenia's commitment to a peaceful conflict settlement, the minister emphasized that Nagorno-Karabakh's security and status are an “ultimate priority” in those efforts. “We haven't been retrack-

ing from the peace process,” he added.

Sackur later referred to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's response – voiced at the Valdai Discussion Club – reminding the foreign minister of Russia's close strategic alliance with Armenia, as well as military base on the country's territory. Mnatsakanyan had to refer to Armenia's position again, calling for an adequate signal

and message by Azerbaijan. “Armenia has been inconsistently and consistently insisting that we need a message – message of compromise – from Azerbaijan.

“When the prime minister went on insisting that the solution should be acceptable to all the people – the people of Armenia, the people of Azerbaijan and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh – he received a lot of criticism on that. And our government has been receiving a lot of criticism, but we insist on that; we insist that compromise is the way out. [We need a compromise] in which there is a parity of commitments,” he said.

## Armenia-EU formed agenda demands to start visa liberalization dialogue – deputy FM



Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Avet Adonts says the agenda formed between Armenia and the European Union demands at least to start the visa liberalization dialogue.

dova and Armenia through exchange of experience” in Yerevan.

The deputy FM said the talks on visa liberalization will start when there is a con-

“This is today's demand because the formed agenda, its content and the implementation of its agenda require that”, the deputy FM said during an international conference titled “Effective promotion of visa liberalization in Georgia, Mol-

sensus between all member states over the launch of the dialogue. The deputy minister said there is no consensus yet, despite the fact that the EU's institutions have positive moods and repeatedly announced that.

“The inter-agency group formed in Armenia, which involves representatives of the Police, the Foreign Ministry and the Migration Service, already visited more than 10 EU member states, and currently technical issues are being discussed. But now I can state that this issue has started to bear a political character”, he said, adding that the visits and the working consultations continue.

The deputy FM expressed hope that the visa liberalization dialogue will launch by the end of the year.

## Salesforce to open representation in Armenia



Salesforce, the world's #1 CRM (customer-relationship management) platform, will open a representation in Armenia thanks to the efforts of the Systronics company.

The issue was discussed on October 24 at a meeting between Systronics founder and CEO Zareh Tutunjian and Armenia's Minister of High-Tech Industry Hakob Arshakyan.

Tutunjian briefed Minister Arshakyan on the activity of the company with a 42-year history. He noted that Systronics operates in different countries around the world, offering complex solutions for the technology sector, from software development to software consulting and IT infrastructure deployment. The Armenian branch of the company, SistroTech, has been operating

since 2001.

Hakob Arshakyan, in turn, referred to Armenia's engineering potential and achievements. At the same time, he noted that there is still work to be done on in the field of business consulting and steps are already being taken to fill the gap.

The Minister noted that technological universities are planning to implement training programs in this field next year. Zareh Tutunjian expressed readiness to support the implementation of the project.

According to the Minister, the program aims to provide technological knowledge to about 6,000 people in Yerevan and the regions. And they do not have to be specialists in the field, anyone who wants to study can be included in the program.

Hakob Arshakyan also underlined that great efforts are being made to develop the artificial intelligence and cyber security sectors, and presented the activities carried out in that direction.

During the meeting they discussed a number of other opportunities for cooperation with Systronics.

## Armenia slides in investment climate rankings

The World Bank has downgraded Armenia's position in its annual survey on the ease of doing business around the world despite reporting an improvement in the country's investment climate.

Armenia ranked 47th, together with Belgium and Moldova, in the latest Doing Business survey which assessed economic conditions in 190 nations with a range of specific indicators. It was 41st in last year's global rankings.

Armenia scored poorly in two of the ten categories used by the bank for evaluating the ease of engaging in entrepreneurial activity: "Protecting Minority Investors" and "Resolving Insolvency." Even so, the World Bank said the Armenian authorities have "strengthened minority investor protections" over the past year. It also found improvements in taxation procedures and construction quality control.

As a result, the country's overall Doing Business score went up from 73.2 to 74.5. "This means that over the course of last year Armenia has improved its business regulations as captured by the Doing Business indicators in absolute terms," the head of the World Bank office in Yerevan, Sylvie Bossoutrot, said in a statement issued on Thursday.

This latest edition of the study documents reforms implemented in the 190 economies over a 12-month period ending on May 1, 2019, one year after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his gov-

ernment took office. Pashinyan has repeatedly claimed to have eradicated "systemic corruption" and significantly improved Armenia's business environment.

Pashinyan discussed the country's worsened position in the investment climates during a cabinet meeting in Yerevan. Economy



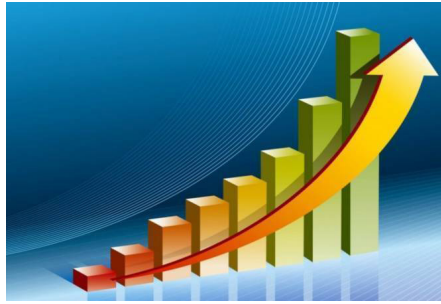
Minister Tigran Khachatryan blamed it on what he described as a change in the bank's methodology of measuring minority shareholder protection. Artur Javadyan, the Central Bank governor also present at the meeting, claimed, for his part, that Armenia's poor score in that category is the result of a "technical error."



## Armenia's economic activity index grows by 7.1% in 9 months

Armenia's economic activity index in January-September increased by 7.1% compared to the same period of 2018, according to the data released by the National Statistical Committee.

In particular, the industrial production volume grew by 9.7%, and the volume of gross agricultural output decreased by 4.8%. Construction volume increased by 4.4% in January-September. The growth of the trade turnover comprised 8.8%, the ser-



vices volume increased by 15.5%.

In January-September 2019 the consumer price index grew by 1.6%, and the indus-

trial production price index by 0.5%.

Electricity production volume decreased by 2.2% in these 9 months.

The average nominal monthly salary in Armenia increased by 5.9%, comprising 178.633 AMD.

External trade turnover recorded 5.8% growth. Moreover, the export grew by 7.9% and the import by 4.7%.

## Armenia, Mitsubishi mull perspectives of cooperation

On a working visit to Japan, President Armen Sarkissian visited on October 25 one of the world's largest industrial and

met with Mitsubishi Group board member, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries board chairman Shunichi Miyanaga.



technological companies, the Japanese Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Company, and

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, which started as a shipbuilding company, has

grown into a large industrial and technological companies.

Emphasizing that human mind, creativity and ideas are going to be real values in a rapidly changing world, President Sarkissian said he wants Armenia to become a scientific and technological hub.

According to him, a number of presidential initiatives are also aimed at developing the newest technologies based on artificial intelligence, big data management and mathematical modeling, and this is the field where "there can be partners."

The interlocutors talked about the perspectives of cooperation and opportunities of applying leading technologies of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Armenia.

President Sarkissian invited Shunichi Miyanaga to Armenia to get acquainted with the existing potential and opportunities for cooperation.

## EAEU-China trade deal enters into force as sides adopt joint statement in Moscow

During session of the Eurasian Inter-governmental Council in Moscow the heads of government of the EAEU member states adopted a joint statement with China relating to the entry into force of the trade-economic cooperation agreement.

The joint statement highlights the importance of the EAEU-China multisectoral partnership.

The statement was made on behalf of the

Prime Ministers of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and China.

The agreement creates a legal base between the Eurasian Economic Union and China for economic cooperation. It is not in the format of a free trade agreement, doesn't envisage decrease or elimination of custom duties. The agreement aims at raising the level of transparency of the regulation system, facilitating the trade

procedures, as well as developing the commercial ties.



## Eurasian Economic Commission carried out huge works in last 4 years, says Armenia's PM

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered remarks at the extended format session of the Eurasian Inter-governmental Council in Moscow, stating that the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has carried out huge works during the 4 years of its activity.

Pashinyan said tangible results have been recorded in terms of the creation and strengthening of the EAEU institutions.

"I think that almost 4 years of its activity the EEC has really carried out major works in practical implementation of principles of freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labor force. Tangible results have been registered in terms of the creation and strengthening of the EAEU institutions. It can be proudly stated that our organization has made a great step in establishing its place and role in the international economic system with a diverse package of cooperation", the Armenian PM said.

He praised the results achieved and highlighted the



main branches of economy and cut the bureaucratic burden on the business.

"We face many issues directed for deepening the cooperation between our countries in different areas. One of those issues is the creation of a legal field for the operation of a single market of alcoholic drinks", he said adding that the signing of a respective international agreement



will enable to form mutually beneficial commercial mechanisms aimed at creating competitive advantages of member states. Pashinyan said the agreement will allow to eliminate the existing restriction linked with the absence of mutual recognition of stamps.

"As February 2020 approaches, the issues of forming the new staff of the EEC Board become more relevant. We think that the selection of a rotation mecha-

nism can put a base for the fair distribution of function based on the principles of equality of interests of each other and mutual respect. As I stated for many times, one of Armenia's 2019 chairmanship priorities in the EAEU is the diversification of foreign economic relations and the geographical expansion of free trade agreements", the PM noted.

He congratulated all on the successful agreement on a free trade and stated that today it will be signed with Serbia.

"Armenia is going to completely use all the mechanisms this agreement gives us. In the context of the implementation of the goals and issues of the Union's international activity, another important event is that the agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU, its member states and China has entered into force. Despite that the agreement doesn't envisage elimination of customs duties or automatic decline of non-tariff barriers, it will improve the access of goods to the Chinese market from the EAEU countries", he said.

Summing up his remarks, the Armenian PM said today's session is the last session of the Inter-governmental Council which he attends as the head of a chairing country.



necessity to further improve the normative legal base, eliminate shortcomings and restrictions, coordinate the policy in





## ‘Armenian government implements open-door policy towards foreign investments’ – PM Pashinyan

The Armenian government implements an open-door policy towards foreign investments, providing for full property ownership, PM Nikol Pashinyan told Gulf News in an interview.

“Armenia provides an excellent opportunity for investors in areas such as information technology, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, energy and many others”, he said. “Our government implements an open-door policy towards foreign investments, providing for full property ownership. Foreign investors can have free access to any sector and geographic location within the country with no restrictions on personnel recruitment, free and unlimited repatriation of profits, unlimited currency exchange on market rates, and guarantees against nationalization. The five-year grandfather clause protecting foreign investors against investment-related legislation changes is also a part of our foreign investment framework. With regard to international economic relations, Armenia has bilateral treaties on investment promotion and protection with 43 countries, including the United States. Armenia is a member of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. We have treaties on the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with 46 countries. This means that the investors are granted a number of guarantees – in particular, national treatment, protection from expropriation, free transfer of means and full protection and security”.

Pashinyan noted that the World Bank has ranked Armenia 41st out of 190 countries in its Doing Business report.

“In terms of ease of starting a business, Armenia is 8th in the world, and 14th for registering a property. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, Armenia is the 47th freest economy in the world. We are continuing to carry out deep and comprehensive reforms to improve our business environment. The



government is working on legislative reforms to establish a most-favoured-nation regime to define the guarantees provided for foreign investors, as well as to introduce effective dispute settlement mechanisms. We are currently working on expanding opportunities and clearly defining the legal framework for public-private partnerships. “Armenia is a small, landlocked country” is a description that you may find in many books and articles. Well, I agree, we are a small country. But, we are a nation with a wide and global network, which makes us great. Armenia is located in a place that bridges cultures and economies. Some may claim that Armenia has a small market, but I am here to challenge that view. Armenia is a part of the Eurasian Economic Union market that has over 180 million consumers. Armenian producers also benefit from GSP+ preferential treatment with the European Union, and GSP with the United States and some other countries. Armenia is also deepening cooperation with the European Union through a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. This ambitious agreement provides a framework for Armenia and the EU to work together for the benefit of the citizens of Armenia in the areas of strengthening democracy and human rights, creating more jobs and business opportunities, fairer rules, more safety

and security, a cleaner environment, as well as better education and opportunities for research”, the Armenian Prime Minister said.

In response to a question regarding the reduction of the number of ministries, the PM said there were simple reasons for doing so. “One of the goals of our reform agenda is the optimization of public administration and the establishment of more efficient and less costly government institutions. Reduction of the number of ministries will help us meet this goal and enhance the efficiency of our government.”

He said that the reforms in Armenia are long-term and strategic, and therefore the economic revolution will have a long-lasting effect on the country’s economic development and people’s lives.

“Meanwhile, let me share some already recorded results with you. In 2018, we registered a 5.2% economic growth rate and maintained a moderate inflation rate. These are very positive results for a year that saw a revolution. We have also had a 9% increase in exports. The positive dynamics are continuing this year with 6.5% growth recorded in the first half of the year. In August 2019, Moody’s upgraded Armenia’s credit rating to “Ba3”. These results are promising; however, there is much more that needs to be done.”

## Speaker Mirzoyan delivers speech at PACE European Conference of Presidents of Parliament

Speaker of Parliament of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan delivered remarks at the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), touching upon the judicial reforms in Armenia, the Parliament told Noyan Tapan.

We present the full text of the Speaker's speech:

"Distinguished Madam President,  
Distinguished Madam Secretary General,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real honor for me to be here today, in the Chamber of the organization that 70 years ago embarked on a fascinating, yet difficult journey of creating a Europe united in its determination to establish societies based on universal system of values with a human being, human rights and democracy at its center.

Using this opportunity, I would like to focus on recent changes and developments in Armenia. The non-violent peaceful revolution that happened in my country last year was purely about democracy, rule of law, human rights, independent judiciary and free and competitive economy. The revolution ended the nightmare era of injustice, systematic corruption, oligarchy, falsification of results of elections etc. Under the strong pressure of citizens, the anti-democratic forces were driven out from power in May 2018. The snap parliamentary elections in December of the same year, which were marked as unprecedented free and democratic by international observers, became the final manifestation of democratic changes designing current features of executive and legislative powers. During this one and a half year we have already managed to initiate some substantial political, economic, judicial reforms making sure that the democratic developments in Armenia are irreversible. However, there still exist some challenges and threats our young democracy is facing and countering that I would like



to share with you.

The large-scale fight against corruption, investigation of many cases on corruption, illegal enrichment, as well as massive violation of human rights at some point certainly deal with the judiciary. Unfortunately, some in Judiciary haven't gone through the process of self-transformation being most probably and presumably themselves engaged in corruption and illegal enrichment (investigations are going on and respect for presumption of innocence doesn't allow me to say more) and/or having strong visible political motivation and political affiliations to the corrupt and antidemocratic forces fully rejected a year ago by the citizens of Armenia.

I am sad to say, but the Constitutional Court of Armenia does not stay apart from these negative processes and in the eyes of people is perceived to be the symbol of the systematic injustice and a last stand of the past regime. The body, which ought to protect the constitution, ensure its supremacy and assure the checks and balances, is acting rather as a group of politically motivated people, deviating from their constitutional mission and consequently being a threat to common democratic values, which unite us under the umbrella of the Council of Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We, the democratic and legitimate Parliament and the Government of Armenia, cannot keep a blind eye to the degradation of rule of law and collapsing of democratic institutions in our country. This situation is an imminent threat to constitutional security and stability which may ruin the new democratic fundament of Armenia if appropriate measures would not be implemented. Unfortunately, there are no proven universal solutions for such situations which we might usually see in transitional societies or young democracies. In some cases, young democracies fail to overcome these kinds of challenges remaining in a trap where literal interpretation of written procedures is underestimating the spirit and philosophy of law.

Anyway, I want to restate that the settlement we will find in Armenia, will be in accordance with incontestable principles of democracy, human rights, institutional values and the spirit of law. Because these are core values of Armenian leadership and Armenian society, and Armenia will definitely continue its way based on these values.

It is a big honor for us to be united with CoE having these values in common and we will stand for them locally, regionally and globally".



## Armenian Genocide Resolution scheduled for a vote in US House of Representatives



Next week the Armenian Genocide Resolution H.Res. 296 will be put up for vote at the US House of Representatives, Congressman Frank Pallone said on Twitter.

“Next week, the House of Representatives will take a historic vote to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide. America must speak up in opposition to crimes against humanity, especially as Turkey threatens a new ethnic cleansing campaign in Northern Syria”, he said.

The Armenian Genocide resolution, H.Res.296, continues to gain momentum in the U.S. House of Representatives with five new co-sponsors added yesterday, the Armenian Assembly of America said.

“The Armenian Assembly of America greatly appreciates the efforts of Armenian Caucus leadership

and welcomes the decision to bring H.Res.296 to the House floor. This bipartisan resolution affirms the Armenian Genocide and America’s unprecedented humanitarian relief to help save the survivors of the first genocide of the twentieth century,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “We urge all Members to support this important human rights measure and send a strong message that the days of genocide denial are over.”

The leadership of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Rep. Peter King (R-NY), and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA), released the following statement regarding the announcement that H.Res. 296, Affirming the United States record

on the Armenian Genocide, has been scheduled for a floor vote next week.

“As the leadership of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, we are very pleased that H.Res. 296, a resolution recognizing and memorializing the Armenian Genocide, will receive a vote next week by the full House. The genocide, which lasted from 1915 to 1923 and killed 1.5 million Armenians as well as many other religious and ethnic minorities, was recorded in real time by American diplomats and is supported by historical records.

“Too many Americans are unaware of the first genocide of the 20th century, as well as the massive humanitarian response led by the United States which saved countless lives. At a time when Turkey has launched a campaign into Northern Syria, which has killed hundreds and displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians, it is all the more important that the House speak clearly and directly about crimes against humanity, whether they occurred a century ago or in the present day. Next week, all Members of the House can go on record to state clearly the historic fact of the genocide, joining 49 U.S. states and many of our closest allies that have already taken this important step.”

page 1 ➡

## PM visits Vanadzor on Vanadzor Day and gets acquainted with city development plan

He was told that USD 5 million shall be invested within about a decade in order to rehabilitate all 9 facilities.

Known as a center of mud therapy, Vanadzor Armenia Resort boasts a long-standing tradition of peat therapy. In addition to

mud therapy, there are hydrotherapy, paraffin therapy and climatology sections.

In addition to medical rooms, the renovated complex offers new standard, deluxe and luxury class hotel rooms. The resort will be open all year round.



## Recent News from Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator

### Home being built on border to make the village prosperous



### A housing problem of another family to be solved in Paravaqar village

Like other border villages of Tavush region, Paravakar has also been subjected to shootings frequently. There are buildings in the village damaged by enemy shootings or half-built houses the construction of which remained unfinished. The Chilingaryan family house is one of those. The older part of the building has collapsed, and the other new part has remained semi-constructed.

83-year-old Hrachya Chilingaryan started construction of the house many years ago, trying to adjust the building conditions to the needs of the family. The work, however, was interrupted by war in the 1990s, and later - due to financial problems. The elderly homeowner is concerned about children's future; the experience of living on the border shows that the will to protect the land is an important but not sufficient condition.

Hakob, the youngest son, has taken the task to finish his father's work. With a loan that he received twice, he managed to preserve what he had and build a roof. He

could not afford to do more, but preserving and making his parents' house a decent place is a goal to achieve for Hakob.

This year will be successful for a newly formed family. By the end of the year, their long-cherished dream will be fulfilled. The family is included in the housing project of VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia. Partners of the years consider supporting the families living in remote regions and especially in border villages important.

*"I am inspired by the fact that the family living on the border, regardless of the difficulties and the problems they are having, strives to stay in their Homeland and to make it prosperous. It is a wonderful example of strong will and endless dedication. I want to inform this family that their dreams will come true, in somewhat changed order; the dream of a home will come true sooner, and they will think of another dream of having children. I am happy to support you in partnership with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia. We may not be able to participate in home construction due to a busy work schedule, but we are with you,"* said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian**.

In the border village of Paravakar, the Chilingaryans are one of the five families involved in the housing project.

### VivaCell-MTS granted awards to the winning teams of the Hackathon of the Digital UAV Forum 2019

Digital UAV International Forum 2019, the first in its kind event on artificial intelligence and unmanned aerial vehicles in Armenia, kick-started. The forum is organized by National Polytechnic University of Armenia Fund, Moscow Aviation Institute, "Ayb" School, "Locator" closed joint stock company, and the Union of Employers of Information and Communication Technology of Armenia. General partners of the forum are "Aurora Forum" and VivaCell-MTS.



As part of the Hackathon taken place during the Digital UAV Forum 2019, VivaCell-MTS granted prizes to the best three teams selected by the panel: first-place winner Improvis team received AMD 1 000 000 (one million), second-place winner Alpha & Omega team received AMD 700





## Inaugural Aurora Forum in Armenia a resounding success

The first-ever Aurora Forum, which concluded in Armenia on October 21st, successfully brought together thousands to participate in events and discussions on some of the toughest challenges facing the world today. The series of events was praised by different audiences as a platform to establish Armenia's prominent role as a regional humanitarian, educational, technological, social and cultural hub.

The Aurora Forum's agenda featured more than fifty events, ranging from festivals and exhibitions to conferences and symposiums. More than 500 leaders and experts, along with more than 150 speakers from across the globe participated in insightful discussions and presentations on innovation, ecology, arts, education, humanitarian aid and tourism. Thousands of locals also joined the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative at Freedom Square to celebrate the fourth Laureate of the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, Yazidi activist and Co-Founder of Luftbrücke Irak, Mirza Dinnayi.

The Aurora Tribute and Fundraising Concert, held on October 20, featured a special program by the Mariinsky Theatre Symphonic Orchestra conducted by Valery Gerгиеv. The main events of the Aurora Forum were attended by the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, his wife Anna Hakobyan, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian, President of the Speakers' House Ararat Mirzoyan, members of the Selection Committee and all Aurora Prize Laureates.

"As descendants of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, we honor the memory of their saviors who risk their lives to give a second chance to those fleeing atrocities. But memory is most effective when it brings action, continuing a virtuous cycle that begets positive change, what we call gratitude-in-action," said Co-Founder of



the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative Noubar Afeyan.

"Our goal with the Aurora Forum was to bring people from all over the world to Armenia to share experiences and envision better versions of the world together. I couldn't be prouder of what we have achieved," he added.

Several key events honoring saviors and survivors of the Armenian Genocide took place during the Aurora Forum, including a tree planting ceremony in Tsitsernakaberd organized in partnership with the Armenia Tree Project. The new grove of trees was named after Aurora Mardiganian, an Armenian Genocide survivor and the inspiration behind the Aurora Prize.

"These have been a fantastic few days honoring those who have opened their hearts to others. The Aurora Forum, the #AraratChallenge Fest and especially the 2019 Aurora Prize Ceremony have engaged people who strive to bring positive change to the world we all share. And since generosity has no expiration date, this cycle of giving, which Aurora began, will continue – supported by thousands more across the globe," said Vartan Gregorian, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

One of the greatest highlights of the Forum was the inaugural #AraratChallenge Fest, which gathered thousands of locals and visitors at Freedom Square to participate in timely discussions and workshops, designed to showcase Armenia's progress in education, humanitarianism, technology, cultural and social development. Another

event, The Impact Humanity Television and Film Festival, featured TV projects and films that educate and inform, helping prevent crimes against humanity around the world.

In line with the unprecedented growth experienced by the IT and technology industries in Armenia the Global Innovation Forum and the Conference on Issues of Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles offered insightful debates on the future of scientific and technological transformation.

"Thanks to Aurora Forum, we were able to show the uniqueness of Armenia to people from all over the world. Our goal was for people to engage and learn how the simplest acts of kindness are impactful and meaningful in resolving some of the world's most pressing issues. We believe humanity needs cooperation, and the Forum is a great example of how, together, individuals can join forces for the greater good. For us, this is the very definition of success," noted Ruben Vardanyan, Co-Founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

In Dilijan, the annual Aurora Dialogues presented the Humanitarianism in Education Conference, showcasing the youngest generation of socially responsible individuals and presenting the Young Aurora finalists' projects. Meanwhile, the European Cultural Parliament Symposium provided a platform for discussions and debate on crucial issues of European cooperation and culture.

Finally, as this year marks the fifth anniversary of UWC Dilijan College, the campus celebration brought together the local community and guests alike. The UWC educational experience is based on shared learning, collaboration and understanding, and empowers its students to act as champions of peace.

000 (seven hundred thousand), and third-place winner ThreeSmart team received 500 000 (five hundred thousand).

VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian handed over the prizes. *“Transition to digital world evolves on a fast pace, accelerating with every new day. Every nation has to choose for itself between getting to the forefronts of transition and growing into a leader of the process, to sacrifice time, resources, make efforts, fail, yet learn and create, and standing aside from the global processes and turning into a passive consumer of the odds. We have no alternative to becoming a vibrant center of global processes. We have the pre-conditions for that. As a leading company in information and telecommunication technologies, VivaCell-MTS has been supporting the initiatives of Armenian young professionals. I congratulate the winners and equally all the participants of this amazing event,”* **Ralph Yirikian** said.

The event aims at creating favorable conditions for development and strengthening of human potential at research and academic institutions, as well as engagement and uniting of young talents in the spheres of science, technologies and education.

The forum concluded on October 20.

## The “SunChild” 9th International Environmental Festival kicked off with support of VivaCell-MTS and World Vision Armenia

The 9th “SunChild” International Environmental Festival press conference revealed details about various exciting events within the framework of the festival program. The speakers at the press conference were VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian, “World Vision Armenia”

Country Director Zhirayr Edilyan, Founder of “SunChild” International Environmental Festival Ruben Khachatryan, Director of “SunChild” 9th International Environmental Festival Sona Kalantaryan, and Films’ Coordinator Varvara Hovhannisyan.

The press conference presented the agenda of the “SunChild” 9th International Environmental Festival and information about the films included in the screening program. The festival’s founder Ruben Khachatryan spoke about the idea of establishing the festival and its importance, and VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian, a company, which has been a permanent supporter of the festival, talked about the reasons why VivaCell-MTS supports the environmental festival, and the importance of the private enterprises’ support the development of nature conservation.

*“It is hard to overestimate the importance of the “SunChild” Festival. It has been established over the years, and it’s evolving more and more, becoming more participatory, more beloved and more influential in raising the awareness about the nature conservation. It is heartwarming that the festival is popular, especially among young people. It is a very important platform for rooting our caring attitude towards the nature as a core value,”* said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian.

## The 30-Year-Old Metal Container Finally Abandoned

Marine Meloyan from the town of Spitak was 27 when she lost her husband, one of her children, and was left homeless as a consequence of the earthquake in 1988. For 30 years, following the disaster, Marine lived in a cylindrical metal container; yet

she has not lost hope, endurance, and optimism for the future. Her grandchildren growing up in the same metal container will not have to face the hardships their father, Marine’s son, went through. Marine’s years of sufferings are in the past now thanks to the partner organizations, VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia.

The Meloyans became a beneficiary of the housing project at the beginning of the year. After only a few months, the family celebrated a housewarming and hosted the heads and teams of the supporting organizations in a completely renovated stone house.

*“Our partnership with ‘Fuller Housing Center’ has a long history. In the course of that partnership we have managed to inspire hope and optimism for the future in many families. The results are interesting and move our hearts at the same time: people too often express their happiness with so much reserve and calmness. Years of hardships have made them ‘get along’ with the situation, and get good news without extra emotionality. It is a pleasure to state yet another family has overcome the problem of many years. Every family rising from its knees is a reason of joy for us,”* VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager Ralph Yirikian said.

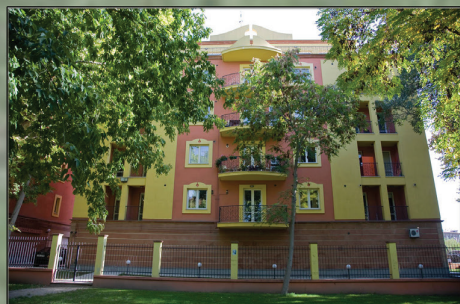
With the support of VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, in all regions of Armenia, over 200 families living in metal containers, half-built houses or basements have been supported. Only in 2019, VivaCell-MTS invested 109 million AMD for the implementation of the housing project.





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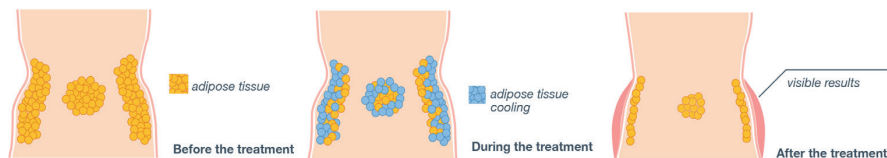
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The publisher: NT Holding LTD  
Լրատվական գործունեություն իրականացնող՝  
ՆՏ Հոլդինգ ՍՊԸ

Ծավալը՝ 2.25 մամուլ, տպաքանակը՝ 1500  
Circulation: 1500 print copies and  
15600 copies by e-mail list in PDF format

Weekly Newspaper, Since May 4, 1993

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**  
Computer Design: **Ashot Khalapyan**  
Համարի թող. պատ.՝ Մ. Հարությունյան

**ISSN 1829-0604**  
Գրանցման վկայականի համարը՝  
03U898368, տրված՝ 11.01.2013թ.  
Registration certificate and the date:  
273.110.00512, 15.12.1995

E-mail: [contact@nt.am](mailto:contact@nt.am)  
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