

Francophonie summit in Armenia touted as success



Armenia - Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and French President Emmanuel Macron greet each other at a Francophonie summit in Yerevan, 11 October 2018.

The leaders of over three dozen mostly French-speaking counties wrapped up on October 12 a two-day meeting in Yerevan which Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said has raised Armenia's international profile. French President Emmanuel Macron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other participants of the summit adopted a joint declaration that was not immediately made public.

They also appointed Rwanda's Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo as head of the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF). The summit, also attended by government delegations from over 40 other states, was the largest international forum ever held in Yerevan. It highlighted what the current and former Armenian governments have described as Armenia's "privileged relationship" with France.

"We can say for certain that this event has helped to boost the international standing of our country and to strengthen the International Organization of La Francophonie and its authority," Pashinyan said in a video address to the nation. "The summit was very well-organized."

continued on page 3

Nagorno Karabakh should have a decisive voice in peace process, Armenian PM says

It is a great pleasure for the entire Armenian nation to welcome 17th Conference of the Francophonie, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in an address to the participants of the Summit.

He welcomed everyone to Armenia – the cradle of civilization, to Armenia with millennia-long history, which celebrates the 2800th anniversary of its capital Yerevan this month, to Armenia with a strong identity, creative energy and dynamics, which has sustained the tragedy of 1915 genocide and is moving forward confident in its future.

The Prime Minister said Armenia is aware of the burden of responsibility and wishes the event to remain in everyone's memory as one of the exceptional moments of the Organization's institutional life, as an important expression of Francophone co-existence and solidarity.



“Armenia is proud of its membership in the International Organization of La Francophonie, which is a common platform for cooperation, dialogue and exchange,” he said.

Nikol Pashinyan said the Summit will address a number of challenges facing the humanity such as issues of peace, democracy

and stability, fight against climate changes and terrorism or migration problems.

The Prime Minister attached importance to doubling efforts to prevent new genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

“The existence of conflicts forces us to reiterate our commitment

to solving conflicts in a peaceful way within internationally accepted formats. This applies to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well,” PM Pashinyan stated.

“We are confident that Nagorno Karabakh should have a decisive voice in the peace process and determine its status based on the right of its people right to free expression of will,” Pashinyan stated.

At the same time stressed the importance of security for Nagorno Karabakh. “We believe that establishment of an atmosphere conducive to peace is key to furthering the negotiation process and all our efforts are targeted at reaching a rapid and comprehensive agreements on confidence-building measures, which are of vital importance for preparing the populations of the all parties to the conflict to peace,” the Prime minister stated.

Armenian-Canadian friendship has great potential for future – President Sarkissian receives Justin Trudeau

President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian received Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau on October 11, who is in Armenia on a state visit.

As press service of the Armenian President's Office informed, Armen Sarkissian welcomed the Prime Minister of Canada in Armenia's capital city and the temporary capital of Francophonie.

“Our people are well aware of your family. Canada is a very friendly country for Armenia. We have always appreciated the warm attitude of the people and Government of Canada towards the Armenians who are in need. Armenians will never forget your act when you personally greeted our compatriots from Syria. These are not just good words, but are words of deep appreciation.

Of course, we also greatly value what your father did. When you visited Armenia in the past it was the period after the earthquake and the country was standing on the threshold of independence. But it was also a period when Karabakh movement started, which turned into an independence movement”.

Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau said, “I am glad to be back to Armenia. It's a pleasure to talk about the Armenian-Canadian

friendship, which has a good background, but a greater potential for future”. According to him, Armenia is in a wonderful political situation at the moment, which leads to a more realistic and deeper democracy and greater economic opportunities.

The Canadian PM highly appreciated the contribution of over 60 thousand citizens of Armenian origin in the success story of Can-

ada.

The Canadian PM also hoped that Armenia and Canada will manage to shape a firmer future, noting that Armenians are a unique people and wherever they live they preserve their national identity, language and culture.

The interlocutors shared the opinion that the two countries can successfully cooperate in education and IT.



Pashinyan, Tsarukyan agree on early elections

Armenia - Prosperous Armenia Party leader Gagik Tsarukyan and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sign a memorandum in Yerevan, 8 October, 2018



One week after being driven out of Armenia's governing coalition, Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) leader Gagik Tsarukyan committed himself on October 8 to helping Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan force snap general elections in December.

In a joint memorandum signed after a meeting in Yerevan, the two men said they "concur regarding the conduct of pre-term parliamentary elections" before the end of this year. The document says that the BHK will therefore not nominate or endorse any other candidate for the post of prime minister after Pashinyan's widely anticipated resignation.

The Armenian constitution stipulates that the 105-member National Assembly, in which the BHK holds 31 seats, can be dis-

solved only if lawmakers fail to elect another premier in case of that resignation. Pashinyan has pledged to step down to ensure that fresh polls are held in December.

As recently as on October 2 Tsarukyan's party helped former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) push through a bill that could complicate the success of Pashinyan's plans. The premier reacted furiously to the development, accusing the BHK and another coalition partner, Dashnaktsutyun,

of involvement in a "counter-revolutionary" conspiracy. He also scrapped his power-sharing agreements with the two parties reached in May.

BHK representatives said that the fresh elections should be held in May or June, rather than in December. Like HHK leaders, they argued that political forces need time to amend the Electoral Code and properly prepare for the ballot.

Tsarukyan signaled a change of this position in a televised interview aired early on October 5.

"If the people want the pre-term parliamentary elections to be held in December then so do we," he said.

Pashinyan hailed that statement at the start of Monday's meeting with Tsarukyan. "It was obvious from the content of your interview that we have something to discuss," he said in remarks publicized by his office.

Tsarukyan, who is also a wealthy businessman, stressed for his part that he and his party supported the Pashinian-led "revolution" that toppled Armenia's previous government headed by Sargsyan. "Nobody expected that Serzh Sargsyan will resign," the tycoon told Pashinyan. "I told the people then that I stand with you."

Sargsyan's HHK controls around half of the parliament seats. The former ruling party remains opposed to holding the elections in December. But it has yet to clarify whether it will try to install another prime minister if Pashinyan tenders his tactical resignation this month.

Sarkissian hails La Francophonie Economic Forum in Yerevan as 'historic event'

President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian says holding the La Francophonie Economic Forum in Armenia is "a historic event".

"Seeing this forum in Armenia is a great honor. This event is very important. Leaders of francophone countries have come to Armenia, a country which too is a La Francophonie member. This is an historic event for us. We are opening the first La Francophonie Economic Forum in Yerevan, but I hope it won't be the last. I hope that many future forums and events of La Francophonie will be held in Yerevan," the president said.

The Armenian president also noted that the International Organization of La Francophonie is also connecting Europe with Africa. "I believe this is the most important connection, from north to south, to help discovering new ideas, new generation in Africa," he said.

Sarkissian thanked La Francophonie Secretary General Michaelle Jean not only for holding the summit in Armenia, but also the huge volume of implemented work.

The La Francophonie Economic Forum kicked off at Yerevan's TUMO Center For Creative Technologies.

The forum is organized under the high patronage of President Armen Sarkissian.

Back at the 2014 summit of La Francophonie in Senegal, participants agreed to deepen the economic direction of the organization – adopting the first economic strategy of La Francophonie.

Yerevan is hosting the XVII International Organisation of La Francophonie summit in 2018. The events will take place October 7-12, with the summit scheduled for the final two days.

Armenia is a member of the organization since 2008.

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from page 1

"I want to thank all those people who were involved in organizing it," he said, naming several senior Armenian diplomats and other government officials.

Pashinyan also acknowledged that Armenia's former government and former Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian in particular deserve credit for the Francophonie organization's de-

cision in 2016 to hold its next summit in Yerevan. "Special thanks to Mr. Nalbandian for those efforts," he said.

The Armenian leader, who swept to power in a wave of mass protests in May, also used the forum to solidify his seemingly warm personal rapport with Macron. Private videos captured the two men as well as Trudeau and Prince Albert of Monaco dancing at an official dinner late on Thursday.

Pashinyan and Macron hugged each other before the latter left the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concert Complex, which served as the summit venue, for Yerevan's Zvartnots international airport on Friday afternoon.

The Francophonie grouping comprises 54 member states where French is spoken or where there is an affinity toward French culture. Many of them are former French colonies.

Republicans not to nominate candidate for Prime Minister

The parliamentary faction of the Republican Party of Armenia has announced it will not be nominating a candidate for Prime Minister.

Yet, the faction considers that holding parliamentary elections in December is untimely and insist that holding them in spring 2019 would be more reasonable.

“We remain committed to our policy not to hamper the government activity. We have said on many occasions that we are not against parliamentary elections, which the government bears full responsibility for,” the statement reads.

Republicans insist that holding the elections in May-June would be more reasonable, noting that this would allow to fully discuss the amendments to the Electoral Code with parliamentary and non-parliamentary forces, civil society, international organizations in Armenia, the Venice Commission and the OSCE ODIHR Monitoring Committee.



Not accepting the government's arguments for holding early elections in December, members of the Republican

faction say they have no intention to nominate their candidate for Prime Minister.

Republican Lawmakers side with Armenian PM



(Yerevan - RFE/RL) At least ten lawmakers representing the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) have broken ranks to voice support for Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's efforts to force snap parliamentary elections in December.

They include Gevorg Kostanyan, the chairman of the Armenian parliament committee on legal affairs who served as prosecutor-general from 2013-2016.

Speaking to RFE/RL's Armenian service on Monday, Kostanyan said that Pashinyan is “honest in his goals and desires,” enjoys overwhelming popular support and must therefore be able to execute his political plans.

Nine other members of the HHK's parliamentary faction on Tuesday signed a statement

that called for a quick dissolution of the current National Assembly. “The Armenian people stand by these authorities,” one of them, Knyaz Hasanov, told reporters.

The statement was also signed by seven other parliamentarians. Six of them defected from the HHK faction shortly after Pashinyan swept to power in May in wave of mass protests that toppled the country's former government headed by Serzh Sargsyan. The latter remains the HHK's chairman.

The HHK, which now controls 50 of the 105 seats in the parliament, is opposed to holding the elections in December. It says that they should be delayed until May or June so that political forces have enough time to properly prepare for them and enact anti-fraud amend-

ments to the Electoral Code.

Under the Armenian constitution, the parliament can be dissolved only if it fails to elect, within two weeks, another prime minister in case of Pashinyan's resignation. Pashinyan has pledged to tender his resignation this month.

The HHK's parliamentary leaders have so far declined to clarify whether they will respond by nominating or endorsing a prime-ministerial candidate. The effective defections of more HHK lawmakers dealt a further blow to the party's ability to scuttle Pashinyan's plans.

The 43-year-old premier on Monday secured the crucial backing of businessman Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) which holds 31 parliament seats. In a joint memorandum, Tsarukyan and Pashinyan said the fresh elections must be held in December.

As recently as on October 2, the BHK helped the HHK to enact a bill that could have complicated the conduct of the vote. Pashinyan reacted furiously to the move, telling his supporters to rally outside the parliament building in Yerevan and firing government ministers representing Tsarukyan's party.

Pashinyan, who controls only a handful of seats in the current legislature, stepped up his push for snap general polls after his My Step alliance won as much as 80 percent of the vote in the September 23 municipal elections in Yerevan. Observers believe that his political team could do just as well if the polls are held in the coming weeks. By contrast, the HHK would most probably struggle to win any seats in the next National Assembly.

Argentina's Tucuman Province recognizes Armenian Genocide

The legislature of the Tucuman Province in Argentina on October 4 passed a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, keeping in line with Argentina's national law to declare every April 24 as the "Day of Action for Tolerance and Respect between Peoples" in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, Agencia Prensa Armenia reports.

"In Argentina, the agenda for the defense of human rights has a point dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, which is why the adhesion of the provinces is not only an act of accompaniment to the community, but the ratification of the commitment to this chapter of the human tragedies of the early twentieth century, which is closely linked to those that occurred later. This significant step of Tucuman, a province with little community presence, goes in that direction," said Nicolas Sabuncuyan, di-



rector of the Armenian National Committee of Argentina.

Lawmakers Osvaldo Morelli, Irene Medina, Sandra Mendoza and Sara Assan presented the resolution, which in the past was introduced by Silvia Rojkes. With this resolution, Tucuman will become the Argentina's 21st province to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

On June 28, the University of San Pablo de Tucuman hosted the series of lectures entitled "Denialism as a form of discrimination" organized by the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI), the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (DAIA) and the Armenian National Committee of Argentina. This event

helped to propel the provincial legislator to formally recognize the Genocide.

On January 11, 2007, the Argentine State declared National Law 26,199, which establishes that on April 24 of each year it will be remembered as the "Day of Action for Tolerance and Respect between Peoples" in memory of the Armenian Genocide, with an article that invites the provinces to adhere to it. The provinces that already joined the National Law are Buenos Aires, Catamarca, Chaco, Chubut, Córdoba, Corrientes, Entre Rios, Jujuy, La Pampa, La Rioja, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquen, Rio Negro, Salta, San Luis, San Juan, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, Tucuman and Tierra del Fuego, along with the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. The provinces of Santiago del Estero and Formosa still did not adhere to national recognition.

High-level Russian Armenian dialogue continues despite domestic changes – Grigory Karasin



High-level Russian-Armenian dialogue continues despite political changes in Armenia, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin has said.

Speaking to Izvestia, Karasin reminded that Russian President Vladimir Putin has had three meetings with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and

the Prime Ministers of the two countries have met twice over a few months. The leaders have also talked on phone, he added.

"The main political outcome of these contacts is the confirmation of the unchanged course of further reinforcement of Russian-Armenian allied relations both in bilateral format and within common

integration frameworks such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)," Karasin said.

"Despite some domestic political instability in Armenia, systematic joint work on specific areas of cooperation continues. A testament to that is the positive dynamics in commodity turnover, which made \$925.6 million in the first half of 2018, marking a 23.4% growth as compared to the same period of 2017," the Deputy Foreign Minister noted.

No alternative to peaceful settlement through negotiations

Speaking about the perspectives of Karabakh conflict settlement, Karasin said "there is only one perspective – a peaceful settlement through negotiations."

"The vital interest of the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples in

security, stability and development forms the basis and political driving force for the negotiation process, which Russia strongly supports," he said.

"As an OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing country, Russia is working closely with the other members of the trio – France and USA. In compliance with the general line of the co-chairs, in the framework of the decisions taken on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we also strive to do our part to the best of our ability to assist the parties to the conflict in developing peace agreements," Karasin added.

"This position of ours remains unchanged. It is fixed in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation and confirmed during Vladimir Putin's recent meetings with the leaders of the two countries," the Deputy FM stated.

Armenian public debt to rise further in 2019



Armenia's public debt will rise by about 3 percent to \$7.3 billion next year, Finance Minister Atom Janjughazyan said on October 4.

Janjughazyan downplayed the anticipated increase, saying that the debt will fall as a share of Gross Domestic Product. The debt-to-GDP ratio is projected at around 55 percent for this year.

In Janjughazyan's words, Armenia's government and Central Bank will owe a total of \$7.1 billion to mainly foreign creditors in December, up from almost \$6.9 billion in January 2018.

Their combined debt rose by \$863.5 million in 2016 and by 832.5 million in 2017. It totaled just \$1.9 billion before the 2008-2009 global financial crisis that plunged the country into a severe recession.

Janjughazyan defended the current government's plans for more borrowing, saying that it is needed to finance the state budget deficit which is projected to fall to 2.2 percent of GDP in 2019. "We borrow not to take care of our current expenditures or to please a part of the society but to create more output which can generate new capacities," he told a news conference.

"When we say that we are going to borrow that creates the impression that we are making the situation worse," complained the minister. He insisted that the situation will actually improve because the debt burden will ease in relative terms next year.

The draft state budget for 2019 approved by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's cabinet last week sets aside 85 billion drams (\$176 million) for debt servicing. The sum is equivalent to roughly 5 percent of overall budgetary expenditures planned by the government.

Snap elections good for Armenian economy, says tax chief



The Armenian economy will suffer if snap parliamentary elections sought by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan are delayed until next year, the head of the State Revenue Committee (SRC), Davit Ananyan, said on October 4.

"In places where the situation is not stable in the political sense business takes a back seat and waits to see what kind of political solutions there will be," Ananyan told reporters. "So the

prime minister is definitely right."

"The longer this wait-and-see situation persists, the worse for the country," he said.

Vahagn Khachatryan, an economist affiliated with former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's Armenian National Congress (HAK) party, agreed. "Business loves stability," Khachatryan told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

Pashinyan began pushing for the holding of

such elections in December immediately after his political alliance won municipal polls held in Yerevan on September 23. He has argued, among other things, that political uncertainty resulting from his team's modest presence in the current Armenian parliament is hampering badly needed investments in the domestic economy.

The Republican (HHK) and Prosperous Armenia (BHK) parties, which control the two largest parliamentary factions, want the elections to be held in May. A senior BHK lawmaker on Monday challenged Pashinyan to name those investors who are reluctant to expand or set up businesses in Armenia before the polls.

Meanwhile, Pashinyan's chief adviser, Arsen Gasparyan, said on Thursday that "pre-term parliamentary elections have absolutely nothing to do with investors." "Pre-term elections are first and foremost the people's demand," he said.

"In August and September many investors from various parts of the world visited my office," Gasparyan told reporters. "I must say that entrepreneurs regard the political changes that have occurred in Armenia as very positive."

Snap elections good for Armenian economy, says tax chief

The upgrading and capital repair of the Yerevan Thermal Power Plant's active power block has been successfully completed, the ministry of energy infrastructures and natural resources said.

The ministry said that all planned works have been completed and the plant has

re-started electricity production and has successfully been connected to the electricity-energy system of the country.

The gas turbine station has been upgraded to MXL 2.

The original 220 MW capacity of the plant will get increased to 227 MW as a

result.

The standard frequency of repair will be extended from 4 years to 6 years, the ministry said.

The American General Electric and Japanese FUJI Electric were involved in the renovations.



Armenia's President honored with John Edwin Mroz Global Statesman Award

On October 3 the EastWest Institute (EWI) held its Annual Gala attended by famous state, public, and political figures, ambassadors, entrepreneurs, renowned members of the Armenian-American community.

At the gala ceremony in New York, President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian was awarded the prestigious John Edwin Mroz Global Statesman Award named in the honor of a Co-Founder of the Institute, American diplomat John Mroz.

This reputable international institution bestows its annual awards on the individuals who have been singled out for their exceptional leadership, innovative spirit and ability to be game changers. Among the awardees of the EastWest Institute are the 41st President of the United States George Bush, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel, former President of Finland, winner of the Noble Peace Prize for year 2008 Martti Ahtisaari, and others.

At the official award ceremony, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the EastWest Institute Ross Perot in his welcoming remarks said: "We are honored to hand the John Edwin Mroz Global Statesman Award to the representative of Armenia, His Excellency Armen Sarkissian for his long-lasting career and achievements in statesmanship as well for considerable contribution to global development.

The selection of the President of the Republic of Armenia has come to augment his vast experience in the areas of Physics, private sector, and state administration. In the times, when Armenia is going through the period of great changes, Sarkissian was entrusted with ensuring stability and creation of a new vision for his country which, we are confident, he will lead towards a more democratic and prosperous



future.

The EastWest Institute is committed to the development of innovative and creative solutions to solve current problems and get ready for the future challenges. Individuals like Sarkissian make our efforts possible."

The President of the Tavitian Foundation, the Armenian-American benefactor Aso Tavitian spoke of Armenia's role as a bridge between the East and the West. The President of the Carnegie Corporation Vartan Gregorian presented his vision of Armenia's future.

The President of Armenia expressed his thanks for the award and noted in his speech that the award is very important for him while the EastWest Institute is not just a think tank among many in the world but a special institution. According to the President, when there is an idea, an important one, the Institute participates in its implementation. "You have this great energy of thinking about something, believing in something and going to implement and trying to make that small but very important change."

"It's a great honor for me to represent my nation and my state here. I really have a dream or a vision for the future and that dream or a

vision which includes also the fact or the reality that we are facing, i.e. where this world is moving to," President Sarkissian noted.

"If the 20th century was the century of natural resources and based on that the age of other political forces, the 21st century is going to be deferent. The 21st century is the century of research, development, new technologies. The 21st century is the century when things will be done and ruled by new ideas, by new research conducted by those who are quick, by those who are young and energetic regardless of how old they are. That will be the 21st century. The politics will be done differently."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau said that "It is solely on the basis of common interest that every society should be." Freedom and the right to live are not only absolute and indisputable values but represent that very common interest which should bring together everyone's interest.

And I do truly believe that the 21st century is Armenia's century. That's why I think we will be victorious. I am happy to be part of the Armenian nation. We are a small state but a global nation. There are not many nations of that sort. But I do believe that small states but global nations that have the global connectivity can get together and build their own country. That's the future, and I do believe that the institutions like the EastWest Institute are going to be among the leaders of the 21st century.

Thank you again for this wonderful prize. It will remind me that I have still a lot to do. It will remind me about the wonderful people that I have had a chance of meeting in my life at the EastWest Institute. It will always remind me about the wonderful man whose name was John Mroz, and it will always remind me that there is much to do in our world. And I have also a duty to serve my nation and my country — a country that in the 21st century will be one of the world leaders.



Canada willing to support Armenia's development, Trudeau tells Pashinyan

Following the official welcome ceremony, the interlocutors discussed a wide range of issues of reciprocal interest including those related to political changes in Armenia.

Justin Trudeau noted that at a time processes endangering democracy are taking place in the world, Armenia set an example to the whole world, which was great not only for Armenia, but also for the entire world.

The Canadian prime Minister underlined that he has arrived in Armenia to express his country's willingness to support Armenia's development.

"The democratic processes in Armenia bring honor not only to Armenians but also to the whole world," he said.



Trudeau noted that Canada is ready to assist Armenia in economic development, attracting investments, improvement of infrastructures and other areas.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan noted, in turn, that the

Armenian government aims to change the country's economic structure making Armenia a technological country and expressed confidence that there is a necessary potential for that.

The Prime Minister added

that the Armenian government has made serious progress in overcoming the corruption and convinced that it will promote the improvement of the business environment and economic progress.

Nikol Pashinyan donated gave Justin Trudeau the Armenian translation of his "Common Ground" book.

"This comes as another proof of my words that you have a special role in the perception of Armenian citizens and this is the Armenian translation of your book, which I am delighted to present to you," the Prime Minister noted.

Justin Trudeau thanked for the book, noting that he was unaware of the translation and was very happy about it.



Armenia proud to be a platform for Francophonie Summit – FM

Armenia is proud to be the platform of this important international meeting, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan told a final press conference of the Francophonie Summit in Yerevan.

"Committed to the hospitality traditions of its ancestors, the Armenian nation welcomed delegates from five continents," the Foreign Minister said.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan he can't but remind of the "moments of sadness we lived because of the death of Charles Aznavour – a great artist who gave so much to Armenia and France."

He once again expressed gratitude to French President Emmanuel Macron for making Armenia part of the national homage to Charles Aznavour on October 5.

Turning to the Francophonie Summit, the Foreign Minister hailed the constructive dialogue under the "Live together" slogan proposed by Armenia. "We developed a roadmap that sets out the goals we seek to reach to resist the challenges facing our societies," Minister Mnatsakanyan stated.

He added that the roadmap will guide the organization in its activity in

the coming years.

"This roadmap reiterates the Francophonie's commitment to peace, democracy, humanity, gender equality, cultural and educational diversity," the Foreign Minister said.

He added that as a presiding country Armenia will implement a number of initiatives in cooperation with OIF, at the same time developing close cooperation with regional and international organizations such as UNESCO, Council of Europe and others.



Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at UCLA: Maestro Constantine Orbelian has been Heightening Armenia's Prestige in the World

By Gourgen James Khazhakian
Chief Correspondent

A memorable event was held in the evening of October the 4th at the Aram Khachatourian House Museum.

... It started with a kind of inconvenience for the honourable public gathered at the door of the venue that included UN Ambassador to Armenia H.E. Mr **Shombi Sharp**, Ambassador of France S.E. Monsieur **Jonathan Lacote**, **Robert Anderson**, Chief of the Public Affairs Section at the US Embassy, prominent rep-

public, - on arrival at the House Museum they found it enveloped in complete darkness...

Desperate calls to the operator of the electric networks resulted in the following soothing manner: unfortunately, a breakdown happened, do not worry, repair crews are doing their utmost to restore power supply ASAP...

But unexpected darkness did not prevent yours truly from spotting a gentleman whose haircut, dress and manners revealed him to be a 100 % foreigner but...

gatherings, meetings etc, especially speeches said, but this time we decided to make an exception, and we hope you will understand why after reading the main extracts of the speech below.

(The "foreigner" made a speech that served as an opening for the official part of the EVENT):

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at UCLA and it's my pleasure to welcome you all to this gathering to celebrate Maestro (Constantine) Orbelian's recent successes at Yerevan Opera, espe-



representatives of the music world such as universally admired (even worshipped!) great composer **Tigran E. Mansourian**, soloists of the Armenian Opera and Ballet Theatre, music critics and lovers, and many, many other members of the

...That venerable gentleman was speaking Armenian in a way that could be a role model for many of us native speakers. So WHO was that man after all, eh?

...Normally The Highlights provides its readers with full info from the events,

cially his tours to the Persian Gulf last month, marking the latest in a series of firsts for the Opera under his leadership.

The House Museum of Aram Khachatourian, Armenia's most illustrious orchestral composer, is very appropriate

venue for our celebration. This has a personal connection for Maestro Orbelian as he made his concert debut in San Francisco at age (just) 11 playing Khachaturian's Piano Concerto.

Khachaturian more broadly symbolizes Armenia's entry into the classic symphonic and ballet repertoire, exploiting the new orchestral medium as yet another vehicle for Armenian musical expression. Tchukhadjian performed a similar feat for Armenian opera, one we are celebrating this year, marking the 150th anniversary of Arshak II, together with the 85th anniversary of the founding of Yerevan Opera, both reminders of Armenians' powerful ties with and contribution to that medium also.

This coincides with Maestro's 3rd year as its General Manager and Artistic Director.

Since taking office he has embarked on a whirlwind of activity at a frenetic pace, opening new horizons in repertoire, stag-



forgetting the props.

Clearly not the task for someone with a weak constitution or anything less than a complete control of all aspects of the pro-

the importance of Maestro Orbelian's cultural diplomacy in the Middle East, as before in encouraging Russo-American interchange, heightening Armenia's pres-



ing, location, and collaborations, providing an enriching experience for the performers and generating greater international exposure for the company, exporting **talent, arguably Armenia's greatest asset**, and literally putting Yerevan Opera on the map with his latest exploits. As you probably heard, his visit to Dubai resulted in local premieres of Carmen and The Magic Flute in six sold out performances to standing ovations and impressive reviews. Imagine the headaches involved in those productions, the 350 costumes to be sewn for the first (a reminder – at Maestro's own - NTH) and the multimedia requirements to communicate the magic of Mozart's 18th century work to a 21st century audience, not to mention the logistics nightmare of transporting the 157 strong contingent— not

cess, together with the ability to inspire the singers and instrumentalists to give their best performance on a daily basis.

That success was repeated in Kuwait at the prestigious Sheikh Jabar-al-Ahmad Cultural Center, the largest of its kind in the Middle East.

That venue is significant as a crystallization of the Gulf states' desire to emerge from isolation. What better means of heralding the region's appearance on the world stage with a big splash than through a world class opera house. After all isn't opera the art of arts, with roots in Ancient Greek drama, the cradle of modern civilization, its development in the Italian Renaissance, and its explosion under 19th century Romanticism?

As a cultural icon, it embodies the major movements of the human spirit. Hence

tige in the region, strengthening contacts with the Armenian diaspora there and creating goodwill by invoking universal cultural values.

"...Please join me in offering him a round of applause in appreciation of all that he has done to revitalize Armenian opera both at home and abroad and to wish him continued success in all his endeavors. Thank you".

...Are any words or comments needed to understand, FINALLY and IRREVERSIBLY, especially for those who write unsigned "letters" and anonymous "complaints" what this ("wrongly" generous for an American "capitalist") man has done for us Armenians within mere 2-3 years?

Thank you, Maestro Constantine Garrievich Orbelian!

VivaCell-MTS News: The 7th Regional HR Conference Dedicated to the Human Resource Management (HRM) has Launched

The 7th Regional HR Conference organized with the joint efforts of **Cascade People & Business** and the **Armenian HR Association** and entitled **“Gamification in Business or Fast Floating Race”** has launched. As always, this year as well, the conference convened on a variety of topics reflecting the most critical and essential issues of the industry.

Around **200** participants from more than **15** countries had applied for the most anticipated annual event in the sector. The stakeholders included HR managers, executive directors, trainers, consultants, and other beneficiaries from around **60** local and international organizations.

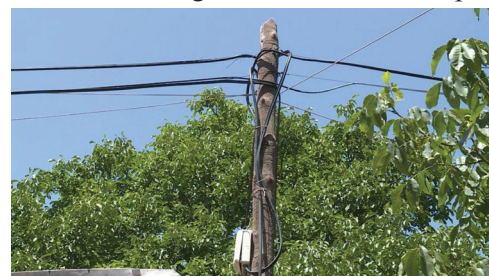
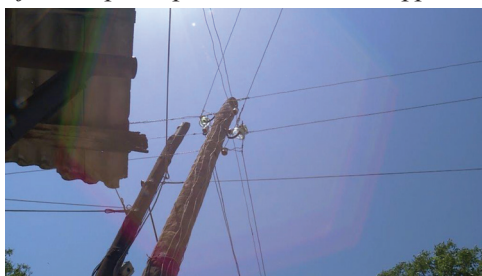
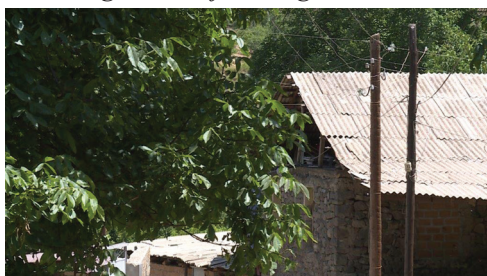
This year the conference hosted **25** internationally acclaimed speakers from Armenia, Russia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, United States, Austria, Germany, Philippines, and Poland. During the two-day conference, they delivered speeches and master classes.

“The regional conference gives an excellent platform to participants

of a company and become a leader in setting system of values,” VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

“It’s already the second time that Private Sector Development and TVET South Caucasus Programme implemented by GIZ has been contributing to Regional HR Conference, as part of its human capacity development measures. The topic of this year’s conference – Gamification in Business – is very important and relevant for us. Acting on behalf of the German government, one of our goals is to support introduction of innovative digital solutions particularly in the private sector to ensure sustainability and competitiveness of the sector in Armenia. We believe this conference bringing together the local and regional expertise will mark a new milestone in this direction,” said **Wilhelm Hugo**, GIZ PSD TVET Team Leader Armenia.

During the conference the **“Teamification”** application was introduced. The app is based on new technologies and has been developed



for sharing their experience. The title of each year’s conference is selected based on previous year’s surveys. This year’s conference is fully dedicated to games and game solutions in the business. We speak about game solutions in our profession - in recruitment, group work, workplace, learning process, motivation system, etc. We have gorgeous speakers and a very exciting program,” said **Arpi Karapetyan**, founder and CEO of Cascade People & Business, President of the HR Association of Armenia.

“Human resources play crucial role. They bridge companies with employees and with society, where traffic has more than one direction. The human resources have to have flexible approaches and shall provide development of both a company’s staff and encourage each and every one’s engagement in the work to help promote competitive advantages

and implemented by the joint efforts of the M. In. D. startup and Cascade People & Business.

The general partners of the conference are **VivaCell-MTS**, Representative Office of **Microsoft** in Armenia, and **Reebok Sports Club**. The conference was supported also by **HSBC Bank Armenia**, **Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training South Caucasus (PSD TVET) Programme**, implemented by **GIZ** on behalf of the German government, **PicsArt**, **Hatiq Printing Company**, **Skill.am**, and **Armenia Wine Factory**.

The opening ceremony and interviews can be found by the following link: <https://youtu.be/J0T2IGuu8MI>

And...

Ralph Yirikian. Success Starts with Time Management and Planning

How important are management tools and how to use them for achieving success? What is the role of ethics and responsible attitude in the management chain? What should be the value system of a company to ensure a healthy working atmosphere for the employees to deliver best results?

The history of VivaCell-MTS, Armenia's leading telecommunications company, continues to serve as a source of knowledge for students of different

universities. This time it was the future marketing professionals and students specializing in business processes who tried to dive deeper into the subject of management opportunities. Over 250 students participated in the lecture delivered by Ralph Yirikian.

"There are numerous management tools. One must be flexible in choosing and applying them. Theoretically, it is not so difficult, but in practice, it requires long-term stra-

tegic assessment, and based on this – strategy development and implementation. It includes uniting the staff around commonly-shared value system and applying of effective management toolkit. Here's is how a civilized corporate culture is introduced, including business ethics as its important component. In the core are respect, healthy work environment and consistency. Equally important is the ability to review one's approach, if nec-

essary," said VivaCell-MTS General Founding Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.

This format of meetings is an important platform for future professionals to acquire knowledge on the example of a leading company, analyze this information and use it in the future. Through the question and answer session, the participants of the lecture had an opportunity to understand the specifics of responsible model of management.



Aznavour Centre unveiled in presence of Armenian, French Presidents

The Aznavour Foundation unveiled on October 11 its inaugural project on the sidelines of the 17th session of the Francophonie Summit in Yerevan, Armenia.

Located on the heights of the Cascade, in the heart of the Armenian capital, the Aznavour Centre is the first cultural project to be supported by the Aznavour Foundation, created by Charles with his son Nicolas in 2017. Their aim was to make culture accessible to as many people as possible and contribute to strengthening Franco-Armenian ties.

The project was unveiled on October 11 at a ceremony attended

by the President of France Emmanuel Macron and the President of the Armenian Republic Armen Sarkissian, as well as many figures from the political and artistic spheres. During the event, both parties signed a letter of intent to establish the Institut Français within the center, which will provide courses and diplomas in French that are recognized in France.

The Aznavour Centre will open its doors following a complete renovation of the building, to be undertaken by architect Aris Atamian. The monument will house an interactive tech museum focused on the life and career of Charles Aznavour, as well as a cultural and educational center focused on three disciplines: cinema, music and the French language.

As a true multimedia exhibition dedicated to the life and work of Charles Aznavour, the Centre's museum will offer an extraordinary experience. Visitors will discover, guided by the artist's voice, the most significant stages of his life, from his parents' escape to his illustrious career. Along the way, visitors will be able to explore their own musical abilities by re-

cal French language instruction, the Centre will offer courses using a learning method based on using text of Charles Aznavour's songs. Visitors will also have access to a media library, a project made possible thanks to the support of the Institut Français, which will provide them with a wide selection of more than five thousand books in French, available on digital tablets.

"France and Armenia are united by a long-shared history, of which the 17th edition of the Francophonie Summit, held in Yerevan this week, is a striking symbol. With the foundation, Charles Aznavour wanted to build a bridge between

the tragic earthquake that struck Armenia on December 7, 1988 left a lasting impression of his dedication to philanthropic work. The artist was also involved in the fight to cure cancer and Alzheimer's disease and, more recently, mobilized to help victims of the earthquake in Haiti.

Nicolas Aznavour, co-founder of the foundation, explains: "It is obviously heartbreaking for me, as it is for everyone at the foundation, to present the Aznavour Centre without my father at our side; but I am also deeply grateful to be able to continue his battles in this way. I would like to thank



by the President of France Emmanuel Macron and the President of the Armenian Republic Armen Sarkissian, as well as many figures from the political and artistic spheres. During the event, both parties signed a letter of intent to establish the Institut Français within the center, which will provide courses and diplomas in French that are recognized in France.

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The Aznavour Centre will also be dedicated to knowledge and exchange. In particular, it will house a 200-seats amphitheater designed to host master classes led by the renowned cinema, theatre and film experts, several of whom have previously worked with Charles Aznavour. Classrooms dedicated to learning the French language will also be made available to users. In addition to classi-

cal French language instruction, the Centre will offer courses using a learning method based on using text of Charles Aznavour's songs. Visitors will also have access to a media library, a project made possible thanks to the support of the Institut Français, which will provide them with a wide selection of more than five thousand books in French, available on digital tablets.

Charles Aznavour, an illustrious ambassador for Armenia, leaves behind a considerable philanthropic legacy. His efforts mobilizing assistance for the victims of

the countless people who have supported us over the past few days, through their words and donations".

As a widely celebrated and hugely talented artist, simultaneously an actor, songwriter, performer and beloved public figure, Charles Aznavour will be missed by his audience and the artistic community. Through the foundation and its future projects, the values of love, generosity and humility that he embodied will live on.

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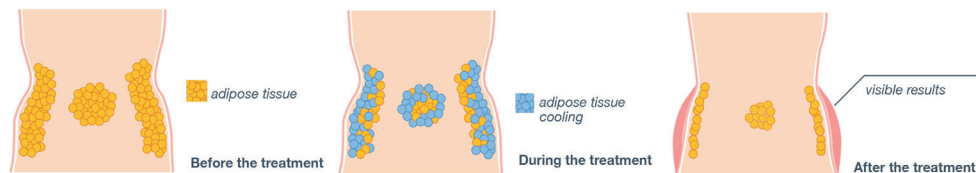
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AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Durachweg 15
CH-8200 Schaffhausen
Phone No: +41 52 632 09 10
Fax: +41 52 632 09 11

AZAD Pharma AG

Bahnhofstrasse 9
CH-3125 Toffen
Phone No: +41 31 810 40 10
Fax: +41 31 810 40 11

Canada

AZAD Fine Chemicals Ltd.

1895 - 55th Avenue
Dorval, Qc H9P 1G9
Phone No: +1 514 636 19 99
Fax: +1 514 636 75 55

Atlit Inc.

16 Westminster Ave.,
Suite 306A
Montreal, Qc H4X 1Z1
Phone No: +1 514 369 25 91
Fax: +1 514 369 81 67

China

Hangzhou Representative Office of AZAD Pharmaceutical Ingredients AG

Room 801-087, Lixin Plaza,
#102 Moganshan Road
310051 -Hangzhou China

Phone +86-571-8761 5336
Mobile +86-153-5505-0903
Fax: +86-571- 8895 8963

Germany

AZAD Pharma GmbH

Fritz-Reichle-Ring 6a
DE-78315 Radolfzell
Phone No: +49 7732 939101510
Fax: +49 7732 9391016

Armenia

AZAD Pharmaceuticals LLC

Vanahovit 8, Proshian
Ashtarak Ave., Kotayk Marz
Phone No: +374 93 40 40 62
Fax: +374 93 40 34 40

Noyan Tapan

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 ARAKELIAN
Director of the weekly:
MARINA HARUTYUNYAN
Chief Correspondent: **GOURGEN KHAZHAKIAN**
Proofreader: **SUSANNA MKRTCHIAN**
Layout: **DIANA GRIGORYAN**
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
URL: www.nt.am

Address in Armenia:

28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA
Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-22 (+374 60) 35-11-24

Address in France: Masion De L'Armenie,
Paris 17e-95, Bld. Gouvion, France
Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72

Address in USA: 1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112,
Glendale, CA, USA, 91206
Tel.: +1 (818) 646 10 72

Հասցե՝ Խաչատրյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009