

MAN OF THE YEAR



➔ page 12

PM again meets Jermuk residents to discuss Amulsar project

p. 2

Iranian President, Singapore's PM expected to attend upcoming EAEU Summit in Yerevan

p. 4

High-tech Ministers from 20 countries confirm participation in WCIT 2019 Yerevan

p.7

Armenia ready to establish relations with Turkey without preconditions – FM

p. 5

Next

Pashinyan meets with Gui Tessier's delegation, highlights their role in NK conflict settlement

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received the delegation of the National Assembly of France led by Vice President of the France-Armenia Friendship Group, President of the France-Artsakh Friendship Circle Gui Tessier.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan welcomed the guests and emphasized that they have a great contribution to the development of Armenian-French friendship and the just solution of the Artsakh issue.

“We highly appreciate your activities that displays the unique relations between Armenia and France. We are thankful for your support to the protection of the rights of the people of Artsakh, for your consistency and resolve. With your activities you greatly contribute to the peaceful solution of Artsakh issue and the preservation of peace and stability in the region”, Nikol Pashinyan said.

Gui Tessier thanked PM Pashinyan for the high assessment and noted that being the Vice President of the France-Armenia Friendship Group for nearly 30 years, he continues working for the strengthening of



the Armenian-French relations with great passion. He referred to the visit of the French parliamentarians to Artsakh a few days ago and shared with his impressions. He noted that the people of Artsakh have the will to raise their voice and determination to live in peaceful conditions and the members of the France-Artsakh Friendship Circle will continue to visit Artsakh aimed at supporting the peaceful solution of the issue.

Gui Tessier said that the French people follow the democratic development in Armenia and have a deep respect towards those developments. In this context he spoke about the Comprehensive and En-

hanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Armenia and the EU and expressed readiness to support the implementation of the CEPA in the sidelines of the Armenian-French inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The PM highlighted the support of Armenia's European partners, including France, to the democratic reforms in Armenia and also highlighted the launch of visa liberalizations talks.

Nikol Pashinyan also expressed gratitude for the steps of France in the direction of the international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, as well as for the decision of French President Emmanuel Macron, who has declared April 24 national day of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which shows the irreversibly friendly relations between the two countries.

PM Pashinyan answered a number of questions of the French parliamentarians, which were about the reforms in the country, the involvement of women in the social-political life and fostering their economic activities, the integration of Syrian-Armenians in Armenia and so on.

Armenian FM receives US delegation led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense



Armenian foreign minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on September 11 received the delegation led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia Laura Cooper, the foreign ministry told Noyan Tapan.

Welcoming the guests the Armenian FM stated that the further strengthening and deepening of friendly and partnering relations with the United States has been and remains among Armenia's foreign policy priorities. The sides agreed that this visit

is a good opportunity to examine the areas which will enable to further strengthen and expand the cooperation between the two countries on peace, security-related matters.

The sides also highly appreciated the US-Armenia continuous cooperation within NATO's Partnership for Peace and Resolute Support mission. In this context the foreign minister reaffirmed Armenia's readiness to continue and expand its contribution to the international efforts aimed at maintaining peace.

Minister Mnatsakanyan introduced Armenia's foreign policy and security priorities, its principled position and approaches on the peaceful settlement process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In this context the sides also highly valued the US efforts, as an OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair country, towards the peaceful settlement.

French Lawmakers Visit Karabakh

Seven members of France's parliament have drawn praise from Armenia and strong condemnation from Azerbaijan for their visit to Nagorno-Karabakh that ended on September 13.

The six deputies of the French lower house of parliament and one senator met with Karabakh's leaders, visited local cultural and educational institutions and laid flowers at a war memorial in Stepanakert during the three-day trip. They also spoke in the Karabakh parliament.

Bako Sahakyan, the Karabakh president, reportedly told them on Wednesday that the Armenian-populated region is "interested in further development of cooperation with France."

The multi-partisan delegation was headed by Guy Teissier, the chairman of the France-Artsakh Circle of Friendship in the French parliament. It also comprised fellow pro-Armenian deputy Valerie Boyer and two ethnic Armenian lawmakers, Daniele Cazarian and Guillaume Kasbarian. The latter are affiliated with French President Emmanuel Macron's La Republique En Marche party.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan praised the lawmakers when he met with them in Yerevan on Friday evening.

"We highly appreciate your activities which testify to privileged French-Armenian relations," Pashinyan said. "We are grateful for



your support of the rights of the Artsakh (Karabakh) people and for our principled stance, consistency and resolve."

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry condemned the French delegation's trip to Karabakh on Thursday, summoning the French ambassador in Baku and sending a protest note to Paris. It said that such "illegal" trips to "occupied territories of Azerbaijan" undermine peace efforts of

the OSCE Minsk Group co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States.

The ministry also said that the French parliamentarians have been added to a long list of foreign nationals declared persona non grata in Azerbaijan for visiting Karabakh without Baku's permission.

Boyer and Teissier, who both represent France's opposition Republicans party, had already been blacklisted by Azerbaijan after travelling to Karabakh in 2011.

Boyer scoffed at the Azerbaijani protest note. "Azerbaijan still practices the policy of threats," she tweeted earlier on Friday.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry also denounced the Azerbaijani reaction. "Human rights are about human beings and this also applies to the people living in Artsakh," said the ministry spokeswoman, Anna Naghdalyan. She accused Baku of trying to "dehumanize" the Karabakh Armenians.

Armenia re-confirms plans to open Embassy in Israel



Armenia sees good bases for the development of relations with Israel, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anna Naghdalyan told a press briefing on September 13.

"There is a bilateral commitment to take steps to utilize the untapped potential," Naghdalyan said.

"We have had an active dialogue with the Israeli side over the year, there have been political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries," she added.

"By opening a diplomatic representation in Israel, we'll reinforce our position in an area where we have primary interests. The opening of the Embassy should be viewed from this perspective," the Spokesperson said.

She added there is a bilateral commitment to move on with the plans, and steps are being taken in that direction, but refrained from providing further details.

The issue was first raised in the state budget request for Fiscal Year 2020.

Government Bill ‘No Threat to Bank Secrecy’

The Central Bank of Armenia (CBA) dismissed on September 13 concerns voiced about the government’s plans to facilitate law-enforcement authorities’ access to bank account data.

A bill approved by the government on Thursday would allow investigators to see what not only criminal suspects but also individuals linked to them have in their domestic bank accounts. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said this would help the Armenian authorities fight against corruption more effectively.

However, some economists said the measure would seriously undermine bank secrecy, a key feature of Armenia’s financial system, and lead to capital flight from the country. The Union of Armenian Banks



likewise called it a “step backwards.”

The CBA sought to allay these fears, saying that the bill, if passed by the Armenian parliament, will not soften banking secrecy. In a statement, it argued that investigators would continue to need permission from both senior prosecutors and courts to access information about bank accounts.

Requests for such permissions could be filed only in “exceptional cases” and would

have to be backed up by “relevant, credible and sufficient facts,” said the statement.

“Banking secrecy has been and remains one of the pillars of financial stability and the planned regulation is not a softening compared to the existing regulation,” it said. “The Central Bank is determined to maintain banking secrecy and ensure financial stability in the country.”

Pashinyan complained on Thursday that because of the existing rules the authorities were recently unable to stop a “high-ranking official or his son-in-law” from selling a dubiously acquired asset and “hiding the loot” abroad. He did not name those persons or disclose the asset.

Military Insurance Fund collected 18 billion drams, paid 1.3 billion drams in compensations



Since January 1, 2017 the Military Insurance Fund of Armenia has provided compensations to the families of more than 370 soldiers who were killed or sustained disabilities during the military service, Director

of the Military Insurance Fund Varuzhan Avetikyan told a press conference in Armenia. “During over two years of our operation, a total of 18 billion drams have been collected and more than 1.3 billion drams have been paid in compensations. We receive the main funds by each citizen working in Armenia and Artsakh from the monthly paid 1000 drams”, he said.

of the Military Insurance Fund Varuzhan Avetikyan told a press conference in Armenia.

“During over two years of our operation, a total of 18 billion drams have been collected and more than

Avetikyan said the Fund has two main groups for allocations – families of fallen soldiers and soldier who became disabled during the service.

“When the law was adopted, it was stated that the Fund should provide compensation for the cases which have taken place after January 1, 2017. But over the course of the time we saw that we can compensate for the cases registered in 2015 and 2016 with these collected funds. The Board of Trustees of the Fund made such a decision. This year the Board of Trustees made one more important decision, to make compensations for the cases that have taken place during 2008-2014. The final goal is not to have any disabled soldier who hasn’t received a compensation”, the Director of the Fund said.

Armenian FM receives new EU Ambassador



New Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin on September 13 presented the copy of her credentials to Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, the Armenian foreign ministry told Noyan Tapan.

Minister Mnatsakanyan congratulated the EU Ambassador on assuming that important and responsible mission and expressed confidence that the Ambassador will contribute to the further deepening and development of the Armenia-EU partnership with her diplomatic service.

The foreign minister introduced the Ambassador on the ambitious agenda of re-

forms adopted by the Armenian government, highlighting the importance of the EU's support in this process.

The meeting participants discussed wide range of issues relating to the Armenia-EU partnership agenda. In particular, they touched upon the upcoming high-level mutual visits, the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and the roadmap for its implementation.

The FM and the Ambassador also exchanged views on the joint development of agenda of Eastern Partnership. The FM touched upon the preparation works of the Yerevan conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of Eastern Partnership which will take place on October 9.

Ad hoc committee gathers “very important information” on 2016 April War from summoned soldier



The parliamentary ad hoc committee looking into the circumstances of the 2016 April War has summoned a man who was a

conscripted serviceman during the events.

Chair of the committee Andranik Kocharyan told reporters that they gathered impor-

tant information during the session.

“Today we received very important information from the summoned person. It is about the situation that existed at the front-line. It was a person who deepened our knowledge about the April events, a person who’s had direct participation in the front-line,” Kocharyan said. He didn’t disclose the serviceman’s identity but said the latter is one of the heroic soldiers of the frontline.

Kocharyan didn’t reveal other details.

He said the committee has a confirmed list of summoned people, and the number of people on it has increased.

He said then-officials have been summoned to the committee’s sessions until now. Kocharyan said they will do everything so that no shortcomings happen at the military in the future.

Government to return 56 billion in VAT debt to businesses in monumental move

The Government of Armenia has approved amendments to the tax code which is aimed at returning 56 billion drams of VAT obligations back to businesses.

State Revenue Committee President Davit Ananyan said at the Cabinet meeting that debit balances or “over-payments” exist in terms of VAT which have appeared from the VAT paid to suppliers in tax estimates presented to tax bodies or VAT charged by customs bodies and the obligation’s negative difference.

“Now we have old and new debit amounts. New debit amounts are returned every three-months, while old debit amounts are directed only for the payment of upcoming VAT obligations. With this decision we are eliminating the differen-



tiation of the old and new debits”, he said.

Ananyan said businesses having up to 5 million drams debt will be given back the VAT amounts without applying to the tax bodies, while a simplified procedure will be in place for businesses having 5-40 million drams of debt (businesses will submit an application and the amounts will be returned without studies). Businesses

having more than 40 million drams debt will be granted the VAT return upon validating the paperwork and on principles of substantiation.

“The state owes 56 billion 443 million drams to those having old debits”, he said, adding that there are nearly 9000 businesses having debit that pay VAT, 3 thousand of whom are those having old debits.

Ananyan said as of January

2018 they owed the taxpaying companies 275 billion drams. “If we are regulating the issue of the 50 billion drams today, we are having only 72-75 billion drams of current obligations, which are formalized and paid. This has reduced to 50 billion. In 2020 we can announce that in two years we have lowered by 220 billion drams our debt to the businesses, something that is appropriate to a strong state”.

PM Nikol Pashinyan said that his will mean that the government will finance the economy by 220 billion drams. “Basically no one even hoped they will get these 56 billion drams. This opportunity came up from the fact that the budget revenues have increased this year”, the PM said.

Soft skills play big role in modern job market, Deputy PM says at Education to Employment launch



Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Avinyan participated in the presentation of Education to Employment, a program by the Armenia National SDG Lab and the Institute of Public Policy.

In his remarks Avinyan congratulated the commencement of the project and expressed hope that the successful implementation of the program will contribute to overcoming a number of challenges which exist in the Armenian job market.

The Deputy PM said that almost all countries face the unemployment problem and it is getting more and more difficult to manage it with traditional approaches, the main reason being the rapid

changes in the world. The demands for the job of a teacher, a public servant and engineer today significantly differ from the demands ten years ago. Parallel to the Fourth Industrial Revolution new professions are emerging and the old ones are disappearing. The changes in the employment sector are forcing to seek new and creative solutions. The Education to Employment program has adopted these very approaches and is completely in line with the government’s Work Armenia initiative’s goals, which focus on the development of policies based on facts in the employment arena.

Avinyan attached special importance to the studies of the job market’s trends and demand of the future’s professions using AI, which can become the basis for developing a new education policy.

The Deputy PM also spoke about Education to Employment’s component of contributing to the development of soft skills. He emphasized that soft skills have a big role in the modern job market, however these skills aren’t fully developed in the formal education process. Whereas it is extremely important to teach someone who is entering the job market the soft skills of critique, creating, teamwork and others. This issue is also on the government’s agenda and is included in the Work Armenia program.

Minister Tonoyan receives US delegation led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Armenian defense minister Davit Tonoyan on September 11 received the delegation led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, Eurasia Laura Cooper, the ministry told Noyan Tapan.

The meeting was also attended by US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy.

During the meeting the Armenian minister mentioned the 9/11 tragedy, stating that all efforts should be made to prevent such incidents in the future.

Minister Tonoyan introduced the process of the Armenian-American partnership in the field of defense, noting that it covers many areas, as well as expressed hope that the development of cooperation will continue.



In her turn Laura Cooper said she is happy to be in Armenia to examine the areas that will enable to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation on peace and security-related matters. She said Armenia is a key partner for the United States, and the US highly values the constant partnership within the frames of NATO's Partnership for Peace program and Resolute Support mission. Mrs. Cooper ex-

pressed the readiness of the American side to continue the joint work on numerous common interests, including the guarantee of regional and global security.

Other issues of mutual interest were also discussed during the meeting.

Ameriabank signs USD 20 mln equivalent Local Currency Facility Agreement

FMO (Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank) and Ameriabank CJSC signed USD 20 million equivalent Local Currency Facility Agreement channeled to "green" projects and youth financing in Armenia.

The 7-year facility will be dedicated to renewable energy and energy efficiency projects as well as first time home mortgage, education and business loans to persons younger than 35.

This is the first local currency loan issued by FMO on its own books in Armenia.

"This is another remarkable achievement which we celebrate with our long-standing partner FMO since 2009. This agreement creates new opportunities for the economic development of the country and for improving welfare of the population. Financing of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects will further promote sustainable development of the energy sector while ensuring efficient use of energy amongst the enterprises and population. New funding opportunities for young people will trigger growth of entrepreneurship in our country and will raise the living standards of the population", said Artak Hanesyan, Chairman of the



Management Board-CEO at Ameriabank. FMO's Chief Investment Officer Linda Broekhuizen commented: "FMO is proud of its strong and successful relationship with Ameriabank, supporting the further economic development of Armenia. This new loan facility will enable Ameriabank to support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, and to increase access to finance to young entrepreneurs."

Ameriabank CJSC

Ameriabank is a dynamically developing bank and one of the major and most stable financial institutions in Armenia. The first investment bank in Armenia, Ameriabank has been providing a large package

of innovative banking services since 2007. Now Ameriabank CJSC is a universal bank offering corporate, investment and retail banking services in a comprehensive package of banking solutions. Ameriabank is the leading bank in Armenia as measured by all key financial indicators (assets, liabilities, loans portfolio, net profit and equity) as of June 30 2019. For further information, please visit www.ameriabank.am.

FMO

FMO is the Dutch development bank. As a leading impact investor, FMO supports sustainable private sector growth in developing countries and emerging markets by investing in ambitious projects and entrepreneurs. FMO believes that a strong private sector leads to economic and social development and has a more than 45-year proven track-record of empowering people to employ their skills and improve their quality of life. FMO focuses on three sectors that have high development impact: Financial Institutions, Energy, and Agri-business, Food & Water. With a committed portfolio of EUR 9.6 billion spanning over 82 countries, FMO is one of the largest bilateral private sector development banks globally.

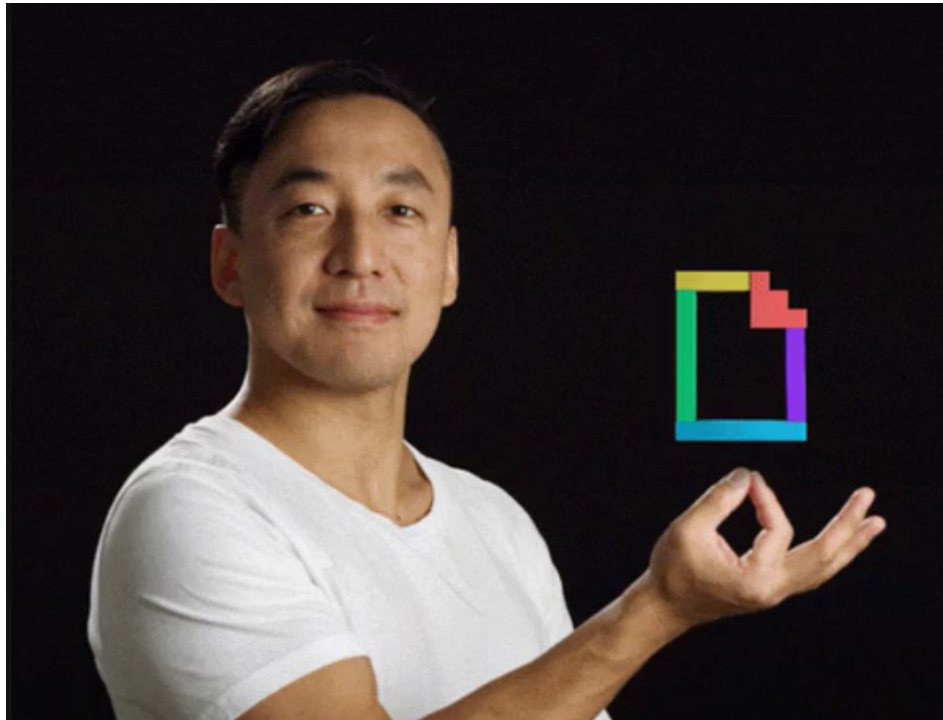
GIPHY founder Alex Chung to join Kim Kardashian on a panel at WCIT 2019

The 2019 World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT 2019) organizing committee announced today that Alex Chung, founder and CEO of GIPHY, will be joining the conversation at WCIT 2019 as a panelist. WCIT is one of the oldest and most prestigious ICT events in the world and will take place this year in Yerevan, Armenia from October 6-9. Mr. Chung

will participate on a plenary panel called “Marketplace of Ideas”, along with Kim Kardashian West.

“GIPHY is one of those internet companies which have totally changed the way we express ourselves over Social Media, Mr. Chung’s participation in the Marketplace of Ideas panel is bound to bring interesting discussion”, said Alexander Yesayan, chairman of the WCIT 2019 Yerevan organizing committee, president of the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises of Armenia (UATE) and co-founder of UCom! the largest telecommunications provider in Armenia.

Alex Chung has an extensive background in the field of technology. He is the founder and CEO of GIPHY, the world’s first and largest GIF search engine as well as the world’s third largest search engine. Over 500 million people send more than 7 billion GIFs every day on GIPHY. That adds up to 11 hours of GIFs viewed every



single day. GIPHY is where thousands of artists, brands, and content partners make today’s expression a little more moving. On GIPHY, users can not only search for their favorite GIFs and Stickers but post, embed, share, and more.

Before founding GIPHY, he worked on hardware at Intel and music videos at MTV as well as over a dozen startups over the last 20 years.

He was named on Business Insider’s Top 25 most influential technologists in New York, Ad Age’s 50 most creative people, Fast Company’s most creative people in business right next to Beyoncé, and has degrees in philosophy, engineering, and graphic design.

This year, WCIT will address The Power of Decentralization: Promise and Peril and explore how information and communications technology is transforming our lives for better and for worse, and its impact on profits and prosperity, safety and security, democracy and humanity.

The conversation that begins at WCIT 2019 will continue beyond the close of the conference in an ongoing series of discussions called The Yerevan Talks.

WCIT is expected to attract more than 2,500 participants from more than 70 countries.

The Government of Armenia has declared IT a strategic area of focus and its legislation creates favorable conditions

for foreign direct investments in the IT sector. Furthermore, consistent efforts are made to promote the development of high-tech innovations, ecosystems, and start-ups in the industry. Over 45 percent of the industry exports go to the USA and Canada, 25 percent to Europe, and 11 percent to Asia. Armenia is a home to over 900 ICT companies, including the globally-recognized PicsArt, Renderforest, Softconstruct, and Joomag.

WCIT 2019 will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9, 2019. The Congress is hosted by Armenia with the support and under the high patronage of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA). Its main organizing body is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE).

Pashinyan argues against 'Illegal' mine closure



(RFE/RL – Yerevan) - Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said on September 11 that he will not break laws to prevent a British-American company, Lydian International, from mining gold at the Amulsar deposit in southeastern Armenia.

Speaking in the Armenian parliament, Pashinyan also complained that environmental activists are excessively focused on the multimillion-dollar Amulsar project and pay little attention to environmental risks posed by other, functioning mines mostly built in Soviet times.

"If we are talking about an [environmental] disaster, then that disaster happened a long time ago. We just don't know or are not told about that so that our spirits remain high," he said with sarcasm.

On Monday Pashinyan called on protesters to end their more than yearlong blockade of all roads leading to Amulsar, saying that his government has no "legal grounds" to pull the plug on Lydian's project. He said

the project's continued disruption would have severe consequences for Armenia's economy and even national security. He also argued that Lydian has given the Armenian government more guarantees that mining operations at Amulsar would not contaminate water, soil and air.

During the government's question-and-answer session in the National Assembly an independent parliamentarian strongly opposed to the project, Arman Babajanyan, challenged Pashinyan to explain why his government is not unilaterally revoking Lydian's mining license issued by Armenia's "former criminal regime" in 2016.

"My position on Amulsar and any other issues is that everything must be according to the law," replied the prime minister. "This is very important because we are talking about [building] a rule-of-law state, and if in some cases there are environmental, emotional and economic approaches to an issue I believe that the right solution to those approaches must be a legal approach."

"If we illegally shut down the [Amulsar] mine now, we will illegally shut down a media outlet tomorrow, illegally shut down a factory the day after and so on," he said.

Pashinyan also defended the government's decision early this year to pay a

Lebanese consulting firm, ELARD, \$400,000 to conduct an environmental audit of the mining project.

ELARD submitted a written report to Armenia's Investigative Committee a month ago. According to the law-enforcement body, the report concluded that Lydian's operations would pose only "manageable" risks to the environment.

But at an August 24 video conference with Armenian officials moderated by Pashinyan, ELARD experts said they cannot definitively evaluate environmental dangers of the project. They claimed that Lydian had submitted flawed and incomplete information to regulatory authorities. The U.S.-based company strongly denied that.

The several dozen protesters blocking Lydian's access to the mine site were quick to reject Pashinyan's appeal on Monday. The premier did not say on Wednesday whether he will order police to forcibly unblock the Amulsar roads.

Before the road blockade Lydian was due to complete the construction of its mining and smelting facilities in late 2018. It planned to produce 210,000 ounces of gold, worth over \$315 million at current international prices, and pay \$50 million in taxes annually in addition to creating about 800 permanent jobs.

Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial included in map of genocide monuments

The International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights with the support of UNESCO has launched an interactive map of memorial monuments dedicated to genocides, gross human rights violations and atrocities against humanity which have taken place during the 20th century in different parts of the world.

The Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial is included



in the map with the photos of its opening in 1967 and commemoration events.

Thanks to this website, which is available in English and Spanish, the creators aim at raising the level of awareness among the international community, make the memory sites available and prevent the future crimes against humanity.

Armenian PM's spouse attends premiere of I Am Not Alone documentary about 2018 Velvet Revolution

The world premiere of *I Am Not Alone* documentary about the 2018 Armenian Velvet Revolution was held on September 7 on the sidelines of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Anna Hakobyan, spouse of the Armenian Prime Minister, chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of My Step and City of Smile charitable foundations, attended the premiere.

The movie was screened at Toronto's Scotiabank movie theater and was attended by director Garin Hovannisian, producer Erik Israyelyan, executive producer Serj Tankian, Armenian Ambassador to Canada Anahit Harutyunyan, US Ambassador to Canada Richard Mills, Armenian community representatives.



Director Garin Hovannisian thanked Anna Hakobyan and her family for the fairytale they gave it to them. "I want you to go and take this news to Armenia that the revolution is a good achievement, that we will continue it and will present it to the world", Hovannisian said.

In her turn the Armenian PM's wife also

shared her impressions after watching the film. "What our people have done deserves to be presented to the world. I am confident this film will do that perfectly", Anna Hakobyan said, adding that the miracle of the Velvet Revolution also became possible thanks to the great and decisive participation of the Armenian women.

Serj Tankian also highlighted the importance of the film. "This film is unique because it contains the secret key to bring a progressive change via a decentralized civil disobedience in any part of the world", he said.

The second screening of the movie was held on September 9, another one is expected on September 15 in the same Scotiabank movie theater.

Statue of nurse who rescued thousands of Armenian orphans to be erected in Canada documentary about 2018 Velvet Revolution



A statue to Canadian nurse and humanitarian **Sara Corning**, who helped rescue and care for thousands of orphans during the Armenian Genocide will be erected in Yarmouth, Canada, the [Armenian Weekly](#) reports.

A number of events are planned for the weekend of September 14-15 in Yarmouth, Canada.

Born in the village of Chegoggin, Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1872, nurse Sara Corning made it her life's mission to help oth-

ers. In her mid-twenties, she moved to the United States for training and worked in New England for almost 20 years, before returning to Nova Scotia to help the 10,000 victims of the Halifax Explosion.

In 1918, at the age of 46, Sara was certified by the American Red Cross and joined Near East Relief—an organization created to help civilians affected by the Great War. Landing in Constantinople (Istanbul) soon after, she helped rescue and care for thousands of Armenian and Greek orphans, often risking her life in the process, for more than a decade.

In 2016, nearly a century after Corning's heroic decision to dedicate her life to help genocide survivors, David and Jennifer Chown of Nova Scotia founded the Sara Corning Society, which honors the nurse's life and humanitarian work.

Recent News from the Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator: Another Family from Gyumri to Leave the Metal Container

The volunteer groups from VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia yet again visited Gyumri with the same purpose – to change people's lives and mindsets through house building. Partners are convinced that any support can contribute to the development of Gyumri. And the town will not be described as a “disaster zone” any longer.

Like many other families the **Soghoyans-Tadevosyans** lost their home during the 1988 earthquake. This was followed by long years of living in a metal container. In 2012, the family managed to purchase a semi-constructed building but was unable to complete the construction works. After marriage, Christina, who lives in the metal container to this day, has gone through various hardships. Due to her husband's serious health problems, the dream of home remained unfinished. The young woman has taken responsibility to get out of the situation to support her husband being treated abroad. Christina's initiative has been supported by VivaCell-MTS and the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia, partners, who have a successful experience in the field of house building.

“It is cold in winter in the metal container. Mornings are the worst... We try to make warmer in the container but it is useless. And in summer is unbearably hot. Our dream is to get rid of the metal container as soon as possible. We are grateful to the volunteers for giving a helping hand and bringing the completion of the construction works one step closer,” said Kristina.

“We are back in Gyumri to support this family striving for the ‘independence’ of its own. It is a symbolic event for in only 10 days we will be celebrating our country's Independence Day. These two things may seem unrelated at first sight. That may be true, but this is a good occasion to celebrate while working on the construction of this house. This is particularly so, as the construction is taking place in Gyumri, where every family still deprived of a home bears the memories of the earthquake and the consequences of the devastations it caused. It is the high time to leave all the memories of the past hardships, face the

problems, and try to solve them to grow stronger with every memorable day to move forward and to grow. The big success starts with small victories. We are here to share all these with you,” VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph C. Yirikian** said.

“To lose a home is really sad. Despite the health and financial problems the family has faced, they have not lost their hope and continue to believe that their children will grow up in a house with decent conditions. Volunteers' participation in the construction works was a great help to the family. This year in Gyumri the housing problem of five families will be solved with the house building program,” said Fuller Center for Housing Armenia President **Ashot Yeghiazaryan**.

The construction of the long-awaited house will be finished by the end of the year. With the help of the volunteers, concreting works of the floors have been completed.

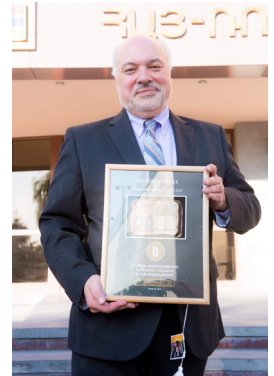


On September 14, the Artistic Director of the Armenia Opera and Ballet House, Honored Artist of the Russian Federation Maestro Constantine Garrievich Orbelian was awarded the title “MAN OF THE YEAR” in “Music and Support of the National Culture” nomination within celebration of the 22nd anniversary of the Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University.

And the soloists of the Al. Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater

Mary Movsisyan and Hovhannes Ayvazyan amazed a large audience with unforgettable impressions from their magnificent performance. The “Art-Cinema” Quartet also pleased the guests with its performance. Well, we wholeheartedly congratulate Maestro Orbelian on the next Award and wish him new creative heights and many victories.

To be continued.



“THE ARMENIAN TREASURES” IS BACK, THIS TIME – WITH BJNI FORTRESS...

By Gourgen James Khazhakian
Chief Correspondent

Holder of the title *Honored Journalist of the Republic of Armenia*

The Highlights dedicated readers definitely remember a heading entitled *The Armenian Treasures* telling about historical-cultural monuments of Armenia we were running in 2017-2018. After a break we announce about its restart, SO...



The Bjni archaeological site is located 13 km southwest of the Hrazdan City, center of the Kotayk Marz of the Republic of Armenia, on the promontaries near the homonymous village, on both banks of the Hrazdan River. On the eastern side of the village one of the prominent fortress-building structures, the Bjni Medieval Fortress is situated. It is registered as a separate unit /state index 6.19.1/ in the State List of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture of the Republic of Armenia that are not subject to alienation and are under aegis of the Service of Preservation of Historical-Cultural Museums and Historical Environment of the RA Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (later on - RA MESCS).

Bjni Fortress is divided into two parts: the Great (Upper) Fortress / state index 6.19.1.1 / that includes the following monuments:

St. Cross Church /state index 6.19.1.1.1 / - IX-X centuries, Reservoir / state index 6.19.1.2 / - X c., Chamber / state index 6.19.1.1.3 / - X c. and the Lower Fortress / state index 6.19.1.2 / - X-XVI cc., with the secret passage /state index 6.19.2.1 / - X c., multilayer residential and industrial

complexes of X-XV centuries as well as a monumental polished stone secular building, still partially excavated, of the X-XI centuries.

The area of the Bjni archaeological site is 17.5 hectares and the Fortress itself takes 7,06 hectares. The first archaeological excavations in Bjni were made in 1928. At that time, or a year later, a fragment of the Urartian cuneiform inscription was found in Bjni. On the same promontory there is also a large Cyclopean fortress, in the area of which there are cultural traces dated back from the Early Bronze Age to the Antiquity, as the following ones: as a result of the excavations held in 1977-1978, main walls of the basilica of the Holy Cross Church having the central dome and a cruciform planning (IX-X centuries), the reservoir, the secret passage, the two-hall vaulted palace building, with its refectory, details of the secular and worship buildings of the early medieval church, numerous small, yet unexcavated rooms, visible on the surface were opened. During excavations at the medieval castle area in 2002-2007 fragments of black lacerated pottery typical for I c BC were found that let's to



assume the area of the medieval fortress was inhabited at least in the Antic times. There is a prominent medieval castle-building example, the Bjni Fortress there. It is located on the right bank of the Hrazdan River, on the east side of the Bjni village. In 2007-2008 its fortifications, the foundations of the secular building and the adjacent structure, and of the churches, the reservoir and the beginning of the passage were restored.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The first mention of Bjni was left by the fifth century historian *Ghazar Parpetsi*. It is assumed that Bjni's name is a result of successive distortions of the name Bur-gana coming yet from the Kingdom of Van (versions suggested by Grigor Ghapantsyan and Hovhannes Gharaghyozyan). Since the 10th century, its history relates to the prominent *Pahlavouny* Ministers' House who rebuilt it and made it their See Castle. The Castle has been mentioned since the early Middle Ages. Pahlavouny Princes rebuilt the ancient fortress, turning it to a powerful fortress that was one of the most important strongholds of the defense system in the north of *Ani*, the capital of *Bagratids'* Armenia. Notably, the 1066 Catholicos elections were held in Bjni. In XI-XIV centuries Bjni becomes a bishopric settlement.

In the 15th century Bjni was domain of a prominent Armenian scientist and politician *Grigoris Magistros*.

However, after the fall of the Bagratids' Kingdom (1045), Grigoris Magistros was forced to give Bjni and other domains to Byzantium in exchange of the estate he received in Mesopotamia.

In 1072 Bjni was captured by the Seljuk Turks and handed over to the Shaddad Kurdish tribes. In the beginning of XIII c., Princes *Ivaneh* and *Zaqareh Zaqarians* liberated Bjni that became the See of Prince Ivaneh Zaqaryan. In 1387-1388 the village was subjected to the invasions of *Leng Temur*.

Alas !, it was destroyed in XIV-XVII cc.

In 1673 the French traveler *Chardin* stayed here. And in 1770 French traveler *Tournefort* also visited Bjni.

In the Middle Ages Bjni was one of the most important centers of the Armenian writing. Some Armenian manuscripts copied in XII-XVII cc have been found there.

Thus, Bjni is one of those settlements of Eastern Armenia that represents a culture that encompassing period from the earliest stages to the modern times and is almost uninterrupted.

Armenia Wine's Gold Victory at Grand International Wine Award MUNDUS VINI

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan joined his daughters to attend a concert at A. Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, devoted to renowned Armenian composer, RA Honored Art Figure, RA People's Artist Tigran Mansuryan. The concert is being held within the framework of Maestro Mansourian-80, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Tigran Mansuryan.

The symphonic orchestra performed works by the master of classical music of Armenian classical music. In his speech, Prime Minister Pashinyan emphasized that Tigran Mansuryan is one of the greatest figures of our contemporary art and music.

"But we usually record the fact because it is more visible and perceptible and sometimes, we don't notice the path that is actually more important. On January 27 as I had the opportunity to visit the maestro to congratulate him on his birthday and spend some time in his family environment, I discovered a new Tigran Mansuryan for me because I understood the perception that people usually have and certainly have in the case of Tigran Mansuryan, needs some revision, because I am sure a lot of musicians, artists, just seeing and looking at Tigran Mansuryan, they say, here's a lucky man, here's a successful man, here's a story of a successful life, here's a person born under a lucky star is listening.

In fact, however, this is not a gift of fortune to man, but a victory of destiny, because a man born in Lebanon as a refugee and hoping for a good life in Soviet Armenia, found himself in an extremely difficult social situation, in extremely difficult conditions, and here is the point. has been able to rise to the floor of creative glory.

This story is more important to me because when the maestro was telling his story that day, so it is in 90 percent of Armenian families, his relatives say, well, those difficult stories, difficulties, Tariri is told to be the queen of wines, and the best of Armenian wines. This was announced during the Grand International Wine Award MUNDUS VINI – a wine competition that was founded 18 years ago.

One hundred seventy international wine experts from 45 countries had been tasting, evaluating and choosing world's best wines at Grand International Wine Award MUNDUS VINI for several weeks, and Armenia Wine was named one of the gold medalists.



Tariri Dry White 2017 won the Best of Show gold medal. It was the first time when white Armenian wine received such a high and prestigious award.

However, this was not the last medal of Armenia Wine at this prestigious Wine Award MUNDUS VINI Summer Tasting 2019. Takar Extra Brut Rose and Takar Red won silver medals.

"The peculiarity of Armenian wine is that you feel what you cannot express in words," an international jury member from France

said quoting Charles Aznavour. He praised Tariri and expressed his willingness to visit Armenia Wine winery.

"Dreams come true at Armenia Wine ... We have awards from various international competitions, but this is the first time when Armenian white wine has received such a high assessment. We are very proud of this, as there was heated competition, and wines from all over the world were presented," said Jean-Baptiste Soula, chief consultant to Armenia Wine company from Bordeaux, France.

The guests were interested in the secret of Tariri, and what was written on wine label.

Chief winemaker Grigor Aleksanyan says super-premium class Tariri wine looks like a real journey to the origins of Armenian winemaking.

"The ancient Urartian cuneiform tell about the luxurious gardens of King Menua's daughter, Tariri. There was a tradition in the Kingdom of Urartu that grape orchards were given to princesses and future queens as a gift. Those who flourished the gardens would also be able to care about their family and the whole kingdom," Aleksanyan said.

Jean Baptiste Soula hastens to add that this wine is truly unique and is made with a unique combination of grape varieties: France's Chenin, Aligoté and Armenia's Kangun grapes were aged in French oak barrels.

"This victory not only brings great honor to our company, but also to our homeland, which has a centuries-old history of wine-making. It returned the title of 'wine cradle'", Aleksanyan concluded.

18 new pre-schools opened in Armenia in 2019 MUNDUS VINI

18 new pre-schools have been opened September 1, 2019 in various towns of 8 provinces in Armenia, Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Arayik Harutyunyan said.

"Pre-school education is the primary circle in the children development process because it's important in what kind of an environment children are growing up. Studies show that children who attend pre-schools more easily adapt to the educational environment in the future and are readier to perceive the knowledge they learn at schools. It is noteworthy that the educational program has very important significance in the pre-school education phase: it must be maximally adapted to the capabilities of the children of the given age group," the minister said.

Harutyunyan said the new pre-schools have been opened in the provinces of Gegharkunik, Shirak, Kotayk, Syunik, Armavir, Tavush, Lori and Vayots Dzor.

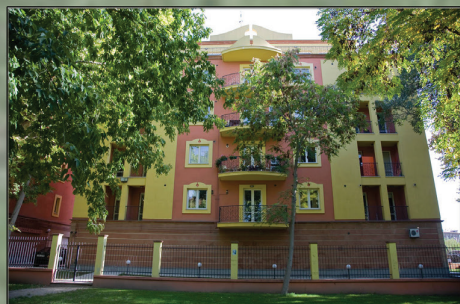
Currently 40% of children aged 3-6 attend pre-schools, and the



minister said they plan to make the figure grow to 70% by 2024.

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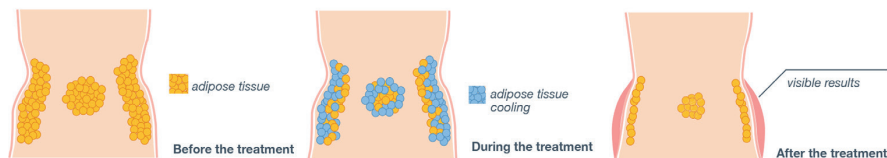
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