

Armen Sarkissian accepts Republican Party's offer to be nominated for President



A former Armenian prime minister who has lived in Britain for nearly three decades officially accepted on February 16 the outgoing President Serzh Sargsyan’s offer to serve as Armenia’s next president under a new, parliamentary system of government.

Armen Sarkissian communicated his widely anticipated decision to Sargsyan after a series of meetings held with Armenian political parties, non-governmental organizations, prominent intellectuals and business circles.

The next president of the republic will be elected by the Armenian parliament,

controlled by the ruling Republican Party (HHK), one month before the current head of state completes his final term on April 9. Armenia will then be transformed into a parliamentary republic, meaning that the most of the presently sweeping presidential powers will be given to the prime minister.

The outgoing president offered to nominate Armen Sarkissian as the HHK’s presidential candidate on January 19. Sarkissian, who has served as Armenia’s ambassador to Britain since 2013, said he needs time to decide whether to accept the proposal.

“With my entire essence and vigor, I am

ready to get involved in that very important endeavor if the National Assembly elects me president,” Sarkissian told the president on February 16.

The 64-year-old former scholar said his month-long meetings reinforced his belief that “a lot needs to be done in various areas.” He said that as president he will strive to “make my contributions” to Armenia’s foreign policy, international economic relations and, in particular, government efforts to attract more foreign investment.

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Bulgarian President pays state visit to Armenia

At the invitation of President Serzh Sargsyan, President Rumen Radev of the Republic of Bulgaria arrived in the Republic of Armenia on State visit with his spouse.

President Serzh Sargsyan and Mrs. Rita Sargsyan greeted President Rumen Radev and Mrs. Dessislava Radeva at the Presidential Palace. After the official welcoming ceremony, Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Rumen Radev held a private meeting.

Welcoming President Radev to Armenia, President Sargsyan expressed the hope that the Bulgarian President's visit would be successful, and President Radev would be back to friendly Bulgaria with fond impressions and many agreements reached during the trip.

"Over ten years have already passed since my visit to Bulgaria. I very much enjoyed my stay in your country as it was full of warmth and manifestations of sincere friendship. It is a pleasure to state, Mr. President, that we have made serious achievements during the past 25 years. While the potential inherent in bilateral relations has not been tapped in full, I should note that we have recorded normal achievements due to the fact that our relationship is based on deeply rooted friendship.

Mr. President, taking this opportunity, I would like to congratulate Bulgaria on your presidency in the Council of the European Union and wish you every success in meeting your presidency priorities. It is as much



important for us, since we are striving to get closer to the European Union. Once again, welcome to Armenia," President Sargsyan said.

Thanking President Serzh Sargsyan for the invitation to visit Armenia, the Bulgarian President stressed that he was pleased with it.

"The relations between our two countries are not just friendly: they are truly friendly in terms of history. As you mentioned, our peoples have much in common from the perspective of history, and they entertain great respect and love for each other.

We even owe it to our nations because they are looking forward to a more dynamic rela-

tionship. This visit, which follows your invitation, comes to fill the gap. I mean that there was no such a visit paid for over ten years now. And this is the best prerequisite for developing our relationships in all areas.

I am glad that this visit will have a specific bias as we are going to sign four landmark documents of cooperation. I have four members in my delegation, which are the presidents of our most important organizations and, in this sense, I hope that our relations will be overhauled in the spheres of trade and economy," Bulgarian President Rumen Radev said during the private talks with President Serzh Sargsyan.

Aliyev proves Artsakh's international recognition is inevitable, Armenian Deputy FM says



Armenia's Deputy FM Shavarsh Kocharyan says the situation in the Karabakh conflict zone is explosive, but Armenia is ready for any development.

"It's obvious to everyone that the situation is explosive, and the 2016 April

events are a testament to that," Shavarsh Kocharyan told reporters on February 15.

He said the Armenian sides are ready for any development.

"Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's recent speech makes it clear that who is ready and who is not ready to move forward in the negotiation process," the Deputy Minister stated.

"Aliyev explicitly proved that Karabakh can never be part of Azerbaijan and that the international recognition of Artsakh is inevitable," Kocharyan said.

The comments come after the US intelligence said in a report that "tensions in Nagorno Karabakh could devolve into large scale military conflict."

Macron, Trudeau confirmed to attend Francophonie summit in Armenia

French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have confirmed their participation in the Francophonie summit in Armenia, Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharyan told reporters on February 15.

"The final number of the heads of state going to attend the summit is not yet known, but the leaders of two important Francophone countries have confirmed their participation.

Armenia will host the Francophonie summit in October 2018.

Minsk Group Co-Chairs call for additional steps to reduce tensions

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America), together with the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk, met with President Ilham Aliyev in Baku on 7 February and President Serzh Sargsyan in Yerevan on 9 February. In both capitals, they also held consultations with the respective Foreign Ministers. The Co-Chairs also traveled to Nagorno-Karabakh on 9-11 February to meet with de facto au-

thorities and visited specific locations in the Zangelan, Kubatly, Agdam, Lachin, and Kelbajar districts.

The Co-Chairs underscored the importance of fulfilling, in good faith, all commitments undertaken during the October 2017 Summit in Geneva and at previous summits, in particular, Vienna and St. Petersburg.

The Co-Chairs expressed deep concern over the recent loss of life on the Line of Contact. The Co-Chairs call upon the Sides to take additional steps to reduce tensions, as agreed in Geneva, and to respect the cease-

fire. The Co-Chairs also call upon the Sides to refrain from inflammatory statements and provocative actions.

The Co-Chairs reiterate their commitment to helping the Sides find a peaceful solution to the conflict based on the core principles of the Helsinki Act, including the non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.

The Co-Chairs welcomed the parties' expressed intention to continue intensive negotiations, taking into account the current electoral period.

Thirty years after the fall of Berlin wall, Turkey keeps Armenia border closed – Serzh Sargsyan

The lack of political will on the part of the Turkish leadership is the chief impediment to the establishment of relations with Armenia, President Serzh Sargsyan said at the Munich Security Conference.

"At the times of the Cold War, Armenia was on the border of one of the two rival blocks. Thirty years have passed since the fall of the Berlin wall, but Turkey still continues to keep the border with Armenia closed. It seems that the clock stopped ticking there," Armenia's President said.

"I am convinced that Armenia has taken all the possible measures in order to overcome that impasse. I initiated a process of normalization of the relations between Armenia and Turkey, which could have created new opportunities for both of our nations and the region at large," he reminded.

Nevertheless, the President said, the Protocols that Armenia and Turkey had signed back in 2009 remained on the paper. "Turkey not only failed to ratify these documents, but also came up with preconditions

that had no connection whatsoever with the Protocols. It was nothing but a failure to take advantage of the historic opportunity."

"Is Azerbaijan preventing Turkey from establishing relations with Armenia, as many are trying to convince us? No, it is not the case. The chief impediment is the lack of political will on the part of the Turkish leadership," he noted.

"I believe you may be aware that many representatives of the Armenian diaspora were not too happy about that decision of ours. It was natural, as they were successors of survivors of the Genocide and of homeland dispossession. I travelled around the globe back then, met with our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora, community after community, and discussed with them this very sensitive issue," Serzh Sargsyan said.

Have the Turkish leaders displayed such political will? Have they been faithful to the commitments they had signed up to?

"We cannot wait eternally for Turkey's response. The Protocols were negotiated

under the existing circumstances. If Turkey desires to await other circumstances and only then to ratify the Protocols, then it is profoundly mistaken. Under potential new circumstances, a new document is to be negotiated. Armenia does not resort to the language of preconditions, but equally, Armenia shall never accept preconditions put forth by anyone," President Sargsyan stated.

"A brilliant son and statesman of the French nation, Charles de Gaulle, outlined a vision of united Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. I think that it is the most accurate response to the question put forth for the discussion by this panel," he added.

"I strongly believe that the fruits of mutually-beneficial and inclusive cooperation will best serve to bringing the European nations together and to ensuring their prosperity. This is the position adopted by Armenia, and we stand ready to further contribute to the realization of that objective," the President stated.

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He said he will also try to improve the quality of public education and strengthen the Armenian civil society.

Under Armenia's amended constitution, Serzh Sargsyan's successor will be primarily tasked with ensuring "observance of the constitution" by various branches of government. He will be empowered to appoint

members of the government, ambassadors abroad and the Armenian army's top brass. But all of those officials will be nominated by the prime minister, who will also be the army's commander-in-chief.

Sarkissian has insisted during his frequent contacts with journalists in recent weeks that he will be more than a figurehead if he runs for president and gets elected. He has

also called for a "national dialogue" among Armenia's political and other organizations, saying that it is necessary for healing serious divisions existing in the society.

The presidential frontrunner said on Friday that he intends to launch such a dialogue. Serzh Sargsyan praised his "readiness for dialogue" in his opening remarks at the meeting.

Azerbaijan's territorial claims on Armenia "nothing but delirium" – President

The Nagorno Karabakh issue must be resolved as soon as possible, and by peaceful means, Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan said, addressing the Munich Security Conference.

"Azerbaijan's position regarding the Nagorno Karabakh issue is a flagrant violation of the Helsinki spirit. It is particularly evident in the recently-launched election campaign. President Aliyev uttered territorial claims reaching as far as Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, calling it a historically Azerbaijani territory – nothing but delirium – which can have serious consequences if Europe turns a blind eye to it," he said.

"The Nagorno Karabakh issue must be resolved as soon as possible, and by peaceful means. This mission of ours is led by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, namely the Russian Federation, France, and the United States of America," the President added.

"The three principles of international law – non-use of force or threat to use force, peoples' equality and right to self-determination, and territorial integrity – have been proposed by them as the cornerstones of the peace process. The European Union in turn has reiterated on numerous occasions that it supports the efforts and proposals of the Co-Chairs.



The efforts to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh issue can serve as an example of how Russia, the EU, and the US can positively coordinate their positions for the benefit of international peace and security. We desire to see more frequent manifestations of such common positions," Serzh Sargsyan said.

"It is especially important, since conflicts in all corners of the world are increasing and expanding. We are concerned by the sweep-

ing changes taking place in the Middle East and elsewhere, which are accompanied by never-ending wars. We are concerned by the state failure and disintegration of a number of countries. We need to think of cooperative, comprehensive, and indivisible security, so as to effectively respond to those challenges. This is the only possible and realistic way to overcome the current crises," Armenia's President stated.

Knesset votes down bill recognizing Armenian Genocide



The Knesset rejected a bill by Yesh Atid chairman Yair Lapid to have Israel

recognize the Armenian genocide, in a preliminary vote on February 14, The

Jerusalem Post reports.

"There is no reason that the Knesset, which represents a nation that went through the Holocaust, shouldn't recognize the Armenian genocide and have a remembrance day for it," Lapid said. Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said sent a parliamentary delegation to the 100th anniversary event in Yerevan, but will not take an official stance on the matter "in light of its complexity and diplomatic repercussions, and because it has a clear political connection."

Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein called on the government to change its stance in 2015, and in 2016 the Knesset Education Committee recognized the genocide.

Will US sanctions against Russia's defense industry affect Armenia?



Will the US sanctions against the Russian defense industry complex affect Armenia? Opinions are divided on the issue, which has been widely discussed in Armenia.

Russian military expert Vladimir Yevseyev says the US sanctions will apply to Russian companies only, and it is impossible for them to spread over Russia's partners from the legislative point of view.

"It's more likely the US will not impose sanctions against the countries that buy Russian weapons," the expert said at a discussion hosted by the Media Center.

He believes there will be no direct influence, but considers the US will use other le-

vers against those countries, e.g. suspension of financial assistance. According to Yevseyev, this may apply to Armenia, among others, and advises the Armenian lobby in the US to take action. Besides, he says, two buyers of Russian weapons – Armenia and Azerbaijan should not be put on the same level.

"It has to be brought to Congressmen that the sanctions should not affect Armenia, which is in a state of isolation," the expert said.

President of the Center on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC), political scientist Stepan Grigoryan is confident that the US sanctions against the Russian

military complex are a result of the latter's policy in Ukraine, therefore, have nothing to do with Armenia and the Armenian people.

To him, all discussions on the topic are senseless. "What do we have to do with those sanctions?"

The political scientist notes that Armenia has good relations with Russia, and none of the deals are in the shadow, i.e. when Armenia gets weapons from Russia, it's never secret, it's official. Besides, he says, Armenia does not violate the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Therefore, there is no threat for Armenia, especially considering the volume of weapons concerned.

Military expert Karen Vrtanesyan says the sanctions can affect Armenia "only theoretically," but the probability is small.

"The US is well aware that Armenia has to cooperate with Russia in the military domain, whether it wants or not. Besides, they have a good understanding of the Russian-Azerbaijani military cooperation," Vrtanesyan said. He is confident sanctions will bypass Azerbaijan, as well.

Armenian experts say it's a struggle between 'big players,' which we have nothing to do with. They don't think there is a need for the Armenian side to take any actions in this regard.

Armenia assumes vice-chairmanship of key UNESCO Committee



As member of the Intergovernmental Committee on Non-material Cultural Heritage of UNESCO, Armenia became Vice President of the Bureau of the Committee for a one-year term, receiving the unani-

mous support of the Committee's member states.

Bureau members were nominated in 2017 the 12th session of the Committee held in the Republic of Korea on December 4-9, the fi-

nal approval was made during the February electronic consultations.

Armenia is a member of the Committee for a period of 2016-2020.

The core functions of the 24-member Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage are to promote the objectives of the Convention, provide guidance on best practices and make recommendations on measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

The Committee will further examine requests submitted by States Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the Lists as well as proposals for programmes and projects. The Committee is also in charge of granting international assistance.

Armenia, Japan agree to liberalize and protect investments



On February 14, Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian and Eiji Taguchi, Ambassador of Japan to Armenia signed the Agreement on Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of

Investments between the Government of the Republic of Armenia and the Government of Japan.

In his remarks addressed to the attendees at the signing ceremony, Foreign

Minister Nalbandian said: “Last year we marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Japan. In recent years the political relations between Armenia and Japan have passed a considerable path of development. Without doubt, the opening of Embassies in both capitals contributed to the further intensification of relations”.

Edward Nalbandian noted that there is a huge potential for economic cooperation between the two countries and Armenia is ready through joint efforts to fully realize it. Foreign Minister emphasized that Armenia is the first country in the region to sign an agreement for promotion and mutual protection of investments with Japan and we greatly appreciate that fact, being convinced that the agreement signed today will give a new impetus to the economic cooperation between the two friendly countries.

Armenia has great potential for IT growth – Minister of Transports tells Emerging Europe



The Armenian IT sector has been growing by 25 per cent per annum over the past several years, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said at the Digital Agenda in the Era of Globalisation Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in early February.

“The current tendency looks really impressive and the government is ready to support and ensure this trend continues,” Vahan Martirosyan, minister of transport, communication and information technologies, told Emerging Europe.

“We have great potential for growth, and now Armenia must work on specific boutique solutions — unique and dedicated, because the value is there. As a result our target should be to increase productivity and deliver pure value to customers, and this should be our doctrine for the next couple of years. It is not easy, considering that more than

70 per cent of IT value is generated by exporting services to global markets, which means that macro-economic factors are really important for the Armenian IT industry,” the minister says.

“We are part of the global society and global challenges affect us the same way as others,” the minister adds. “On average, each and every nation delivers about 6-8 per cent of technically minded people and we must work on making use of all this potential. We must make the quality of our education better than ever, because only educated people can foster ambitious plans and projects. We must use the power and potential of the Armenian diaspora, which can offer transnational support.”

“One main vector is already implemented — we have ARMAT robotics and engineering laboratories growing fast in secondary schools all over the country; we have microelectronics and telecommunications being studied in high schools and technical colleges; with the support of world leading ICT companies we created centers of excellence transforming 100 years of traditions at the Pyrotechnical University. We have computer science teaching in each and every school, but more there is still more to be done,” added Mr Martirosyan.

The minister views ICT as an industry and that all “industrial” instruments supporting the growth of exports are just as valid for ICT, with one added advantage: “it is “border-less,” he says. “This means that not only is cross-border cooperation much easier in the IT ecosystem, but because there are no limits and no stereotypes. As I mentioned before we must work on creating unique services to be introduced to the global market, services with high levels of added value. This is what we will use to facilitate the export of ICT products and services from Armenia.”

Armenia's Central Bank leaves refinancing rate unchanged at 6.0%



At the February 13th of 2018 meeting, the Board of the Central Bank of Armenia decided to leave the refinancing rate unchanged, at the level of 6.0%.

There was 2.7% inflation in January of 2018, almost as much as the indicator registered in the same month of the previous year, and the 12-month inflation rate amounted to 2.7% at the end of the month. Moreover, direct and indirect effects of change in tax and customs duties were within the estimation by the CBA.

Actual developments in the external environment have largely reflected con-

tinued trends for improving global economic growth and persisting inflationary patterns in some commodity markets of the world. In view of such developments, the CBA Board keeps anticipating minor inflationary effects from the external sector, as external demand recovers.

The CBA Board notes that economic activity was strong enough in the fourth quarter of 2017, driven primarily by high growths reported in services and industry. High economic activity was concurrent with rapid growth in domes-

tic private demand, which continues to be promoted by expansionary monetary policy and a relatively high growth in lending to the economy by the financial system. Nevertheless, there is still a need for monetary stimulation to secure sustained recovery of demand, especially since additional inflation expectations have rather weakened.

Taking the abovementioned into account, the CBA Board finds it reasonable to maintain the current level of monetary conditions. At the same time, the Board believes that, in light of predicted developments, a gradual offsetting of expansionary monetary conditions would be needed in the medium run to fulfil the inflation target. As a result, inflation will continue to gradually increase, floating within the confidence band and stabilizing around the target afterwards.

Should there emerge risks to economic growth outlook and to the inflation deviating from its recovery path, the CBA would adjust the monetary policy directions accordingly.

Detailed information on setting of the interest rate will be available in Inflation Report (Monetary Policy Program, Q1, 2018), to be published by February 27, 2018.

McDonald's to come to Armenia in April



McDonald's fast food company will come to Armenia in April. Georgian businessmen Temur Chkonian intends to open a chain of restaurants in Armenia.

"The first restaurant must be in a well-visible, respected place. We have received 2-3 offers and by April we'll make a decision on the location of the first McDonald's in Armenia," Chkonian told Public Radio of Armenia.

The businessman has opened a chain of 14 restaurants in Georgia, each serving an average of 25,000 visitors a day.

The food safety authorities are not very delighted with the perspective of the fast food company entering the Armenian market.

Food security expert David Pipoyan says fast food restaurants use a lot of supplements to preserve semi-finished products as long as possible. Besides, you never know what these establishments serve in reality.

EAEU membership no obstacle to Armenia's cooperation with EU



Armenia's President says the country's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union has in no way impeded the cooperation with the European Union.

Addressing the Security Conference in Munich, President Serzh Sargsyan said: "Armenia has always been open for cooperation, and has respected the interests of others and done her best to match them. We have always attempted not to impose upon our partners a choice, and whenever possible, to build an environment of positive cooperation. I can say that all of our partners have by and large supported this policy of ours and the steps taken as a result of it."

"Armenia acceded to the Eurasian Economic Union with a clear understanding that doing so would best serve the development of our economy and the future of our nation. The results achieved since our accession do prove our trust in the path we embarked upon. Meanwhile, it has in no shape or way impeded our cooperation with the European Union, especially in the areas of institutional reforms and modernization," he said.

"Our cooperation with the European Union has been elevated to a new level by the recently concluded Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. It is now important for the ratification of this document to proceed at due speed," the President added.

"Modernization is a constant process, which makes us keep pace with the times. We shall always strive to cooperate with all those powers that boast great achievements and can contribute to the modernization of

my country. The above policy facilitates Armenia's cooperation with both the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union. It also unleashes opportunities for everyone who is interested in the development of entrepreneurial ties with these two integration structures," President Sargsyan noted.

"We have been negotiating with all the interested countries with the objective of creating a new transit corridor between the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf. We hope that their successful conclusion will render a list of beneficiaries that will be far more extensive than the countries engaged in the negotiations process. In my view, collaboration of the member States of the EU and EAEU in both bilateral and multilateral settings is

consistent with our shared interests and will contribute to our economic advancement," the President said.

President Sargsyan attended the Munich Security Conference at the invitation of Munich Security Conference Chairman, Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger.

In his speech Serzh Sargsyan addressed Armenia's foreign policy in the current geopolitical environment, the country's effective cooperation with the EAEU and the EU in the framework of the ongoing integration processes and the security challenges faced in the region. In that context, the Head of State referred to the OSCE Minsk Group-brokered settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Azerbaijani authorities' non-constructive stance, which hinders the talks.

The President also spoke about the commitments assumed and negotiated within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, emphasizing that the Helsinki Accord, which started as early as in the 70s of the last century, sought to achieve security and cooperation in Europe, strengthen solidarity between peoples and ensure a dignified and legitimate cohesion, which still goes high on the European agenda.

The President of Armenia stressed that the ten principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Prospect are closely interrelated, and none of them should be separated or opposed to others.



St. Astvatsatsin Church or Kotavanq, a Pride of the Armenian Medieval Architecture

Compiled by
Gourgen James Khazhakian
Chief Correspondent

This Church (a monastic complex) is located at Nerqin Getashen village that, in turn is located along the Southwest coast of the Lake Sevan in the Martuni region of the Gegharkunik Marz (Province) of Armenia.

Kotavanq was built by Prince **Grigor Supan**, son of the Lord of Syunik **Vasak Syuni** and the daughter of Armenian King **Ashot Bagratuni, Mariam** in 851-901 in the historic town of Kot.

Both Kotavanq and Kot were partially destroyed by invasions in the 10th-11th centuries and later by an earthquake. After its capture by Turkish invaders, Kot was renamed **Adyaman**.

As to the Church plan, outwardly it is rectangular, inwardly there are three niches, with vaulted rectangular cross-wing from the west and has two stored vestries in four corners (the upstairs were caches) it is a domed structure. The entrances of the eastern vestries were built with the Northern and Southern apses and the entrances of the



Western vestries, with rectangular cross-wings. On the Eastern facade there are two "Armenian niches" of triangular cut.

The entrances are located at the Western and Southern sides, and they have walled yard built in accordance an inscription before the church. It shows that there was a monument before the foundation of the Church. There are monastic cells and the ruins of other buildings. The dome and roofs are half-ruined.

Inside the entrance of the South-Eastern vestry there is a khachqar (crossstone) of the first half of the 9th century instead of tympanum devoted to the memory of the **St. Vardan Mamikonyan**. On two sides of the horizontal wings of the cross is inscribed **St. Vardan Nahatak** (Martyr).

Above the studies were secret chambers that were meant to be used as places to hide from invading armies. These areas are partially viewable through two holes high upon the wall on either side of the apse. The dome and drum that once stood above, had numerous dec-

orations. Under the church were two tunnels; one that lead from the church to a nearby spring, and another used as an escape route in case of invasion that lead from the church to the valley.

Interestingly, there are near 120 khachqars (the oldest of which dated back to the 9th century) at the large medieval cemetery that surrounds the Church. A modern cemetery adjacent has started to encroach upon the old one, leaving many of the khachqars and ancient tombstones upturned in a pile, moved from their original locations. Upon a hill adjacent to the modern cemetery is yet another ancient cemetery with many khachqars. Within the village is a small ruined basilica called "Jam" by the locals with ancient khachkars and tombstones built into its walls, and not far away is a small shrine. There are also two large stone forts from the Middle Ages located 2 km to the east and 3 km the west of the village. Other khachqars may be seen along the main road leading to the hill where Kotavanq rests upon. In early medieval years it was the capital of the region known during that time as Kot.

Kotavanq is one of the most valuable monuments of medieval Armenia which plan is considered as one of the most impressive



achievements of the Syunik medieval architecture school.

Unfortunately, this masterpiece has reached the present time in half-ruined state.

In 1982-1986 reconstruction works have been done that, alas, have been suspended in 1990. The walls and the dome (partly) were reconstructed.

However, by the beginning of 2014 due to efforts of the town hall of Nerqin Getashen, the villagers, and those of them who have been gasterbeiters (in Russia, mostly) and

the benefactors the Church restoration works were started.

And so Kotavanq was in fact fully renovated by the fall of 2014!

Photos of the church prior the renovation (2009) and its process and close to the completion, captured respectively in September and November 2014 are: by Liveon001 © Travis K. Witt - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=35622556>

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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Armenian Genocide commemoration to be held in Times Square on April 22nd

Massis Post – On Sunday, April 22, 2018 from 2-4 pm, thousands will gather in Times Square (43rd St. & Broadway) to commemorate the 103rd anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide (Medz Yeghern), the first genocide of the 20th century. In recognition of Genocide Awareness Month in April, Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) will also be commemorated, along with other genocides committed in contemporary history.

This powerful event, free and open to the public, will honor the 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred by the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire and the millions of victims of genocide worldwide. Speakers will include well-known artists, politicians, academics and humanitarians. Armen McOmber, Esq. and Professor Nvair Beylerian, Co-Director of the Center for Peace, Justice, Reconciliation at Bergen Community College, will preside over the program, the theme of which is “Truth, Justice and Recognition.”

“These killings, which were labeled crimes against humanity and civilization at the time, exactly fit the definition of the word genocide, which was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer

in 1943,” said Dr. Dennis Papazian, Founding Director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. “In the long run, Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide is critical, since Turkey is the responsible successive government of the Ottoman Empire.”

The commemoration arrives on the heels of the newly published book, *Killing Orders*, by Turkish historian Dr. Taner Akcam, who has pieced together documents from trials that emerged from the Armenian Genocide, which he refers to as the “smoking gun” and hopes it will “remove the last brick in the denialist wall.”

“My firm belief as a Turk is that democracy and human rights in Turkey can only be established by facing history and acknowledging historic wrongdoings,” said Dr. Akcam in a recent New York Times interview titled, “Sherlock Holmes of Armenian Genocide Uncovers Lost Evidence.”

The Astghikner Vocal Ensemble of the St. Gregory the Illuminator Mission Parish of Brooklyn, New York, will sing the Armenian and American anthems, kicking off a program that pays homage to the lives lost to genocide and invigorating efforts towards worldwide recognition.

“The international community needs to

not only recognize the Armenian Genocide but shine a light on its history for all to see,” said Beylerian. “Acknowledge it, study it, talk about it and emphasize to the world how easily the horrors repeat themselves over and over and over again.”

The 103rd Armenian Genocide Commemoration is organized by the Mid-Atlantic chapters of the Knights & Daughters of Vartan (www.kofv.org), an international Armenian fraternal organization headquartered in the United States, and co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (www.agbu.org), the Armenian Assembly of America (www.aaainc.org), the Armenian National Committee of America (www.anca.org), the Armenian Council of America and the Armenian Democratic League – Ramgavars.

Participating organizations include the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for U.S. and Canada, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA), the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF-YOARF), Armenian youth organizations and university Armenian clubs.



Celebration of the State of Lithuania' Restoration Centenary: the Fate Parallels with Armenia and an Amazing Concert

Compiled by Gourgen James Khazhikian
Chief Correspondent

...Coming to concert/reception on the occasion of the Centenary of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania, your author, IF FRANKLY, was intended to relax a bit after hours of a hard work, this time not thinking about writing a report...

But, after Ambassador **Ericas Petrikas'** remarks (The Highlights reader could find below) "...in May Armenia will also mark the Centenary of the First Republic" and "...we remember also the Armenian National Movement which inspired the National Movements in all Baltic countries", and especially after a WONDERFUL concert, my "intention" has changed...

Here you are, essential extract's from the Ambassador's speech:

"...The 16th of February 1918 serves as a bridge between the old and the new Lithuania as by the Independence Act a modern independent state restored the lost statehood of the historic Lithuania of 1253 to 1795.

The last centenary has seen various stages of state building: from more than two

ies of the Independence Act were signed on the 16th of February; but the whereabouts of the others still remain unknown. Hopefully, we will not need another century to find out about their fate...

...A centenary is a reason to celebrate and a duty to remember all those who dedicated their lives fighting for our state and to remain grateful to all those in emigration or inside the occupied Lithuania who played their important role in the resistance. Their determination, courage and self-sacrifice make it possible for us to celebrate

Kamo Seyranyan and other Armenian friends assisted us in the preparation of this concert for your love to my country and your contribution tonight.

Shatshmorhakaltsium!"

EVERY concert organized by the Lithuanian Embassy in Yerevan is interesting and exciting, but this one, by Lithuanian quartet "World Music Sounds" was a really unprecedented one – mostly thanks to its leader **Saulius Petreikis** – composer, professional wind instruments player and "one of the few people in Europe who has a unique collection of musical instruments from all over the world and uses them to create and perform his own music". During the concert Saulius The Multi-instrumentalist played trumpet, bansuri, Irish flute, whistle, duduk, classical flute, hulusi, goat horn, lumzdelis.

"Instrumental music of Saulius Petreikis is distinctively combined elements of folk, classic, pop, jazz and world music. Metaphoric roots of his sound – a sacred place from which mythical stem of the World Tree rises. Like the singing of birds on its branches, voices of various folk instru-



decades of peaceful building of a modern state, to 50 years of occupation, massive deportations to Siberia, partisan resistance for 10 years in woods, underground publishing of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania.

This last centenary has also witnessed the brightest moments of regaining the independence 28 years ago, on the 11th of March 1990, the comeback to the European family and joining the NATO alliance in 2004.

...But probably one of the most exciting things that happened to Lithuania last year was the discovery of the original of 1918 Lithuanian Independence Act. You might be surprised but throughout the whole centenary it was the most sought after Lithuanian document (a hand-written one) which quite unexpectedly was discovered in German Foreign Ministry's archives by a Lithuanian **Liudas Mažylis**, a professor from Vytautas Magnus University...

...Historians believe that several original cop-

ies this day.

...We always remember the creation of National movements in 3 Baltic countries and "Baltic Chain" of 2 million people from Vilnius to Tallinn.

We also remember the Armenian National Movement which inspired the National Movements in all Baltic countries. (! – The Highlights)

...The year 2018 is also significant for Armenia – in May Armenia will also mark the Centenary of the First Republic, and in October will host the World Summit of Francophonie, and Erebuni will mark its incredible 2800th anniversary...I wish every success.

...I do also thank our Armenian friends who prepared a surprise today – having learned that Lithuania celebrates centenary, they kindly offered their participation along with 4 Lithuanian musicians playing "Sounds of the World Music". Thank you, **Nikoghayos Vardanyan**,

ments from different countries are heard gracefully uniting all the roots of the world tree... this music... pulses in rhythms of Irish jig, blows a gust of unconstrained playfulness, which is later replaced by a lament of duduk. Many songs in this project have a characteristic of Celtic sounds that beautifully match with Lithuanian and Latvian traditional sounds, enriched with timbres of exotic instruments from all over the world".

...Venerable Ladies and Gentlemen –Ministers, MPs, Ambassadors, Clergy was applauding standing when Kamo Seyranyan and Saulius Petreikis, **duduk-to-duduk**, played wonderful duos...

And the Lithuanian beer and especially cheese – with no conservants (Germanta, if I'm not wrong) were really delicious that memorable evening...

Photos by Hayk Manukyan

Festival dedicated to Krzysztof Penderecki's 85th birthday kicks off in Armenia



will always remain in her memory thanks to the wonderful orchestra and a warm audience. She voiced hope that the cooperation with the Philharmonic Orchestra would continue. Marta Kowalczyk noted that Penderecki's compositions are complicated but at the same time very beautiful, and it's a great honor for her to perform his works.

The festival, dedicated to Penderecki's 85th anniversary, is held under the patronage of First Lady Rita Sargsyan. The feast is organized by the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, Yerevan Perspectives International Music Festival, with the support of the RA Ministry of Culture.

On February 13 a festival dedicated to Krzysztof Penderecki's 85th birth anniversary was launched at Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall.

The Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, headed by its Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Eduard Topchyan, presented Violin Concerto No.2 "Metamorphosen" for Violin and Orchestra (soloist: Marta Kowalczyk) and Symphony No.5 by Penderecki.

Topchyan noted that Penderecki was writing experimental, super new music in the 1960s, but later he returned to writing academic music.

"This music is so valuable! I do not know anyone similar to Penderecki. Today, it's hard to write music, and I do not even believe that someone as talented as Mozart will be born and will write good music, as everything seems to have been done with all the notes. But here we see Penderecki, the world's greatest composer. By not taking a cross on real music, he creates a wonderful art. I do not know anyone else like him. His symphonic perception and the sound of his compositions are very special," Eduard Topchyan noted.

Polish violinist, laureate of international competitions Marta Kowalczyk performed for the first time in Armenia. The violinist noted that the concert in Yerevan



Zodiac Weekly Forecast



Aries (March 20–April 19)

This is a powerful time to consider your spiritual purposes. It is all too easy for the maya, the things of the world, to overwhelm every waking minute, leaving no time for the high-

er goals. If you notice fatigue, disappointment, or depression at this time, stop.

Any of these represent a message to be still and listen for the Voice deep within your soul.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

There may be a minor skirmish with a partner, friend, or roommate over the sharing of resources. This is not the ultimate deal breaker and the moments of discomfort pass quickly. Mention the issue to prevent future resentment, but don't turn it into

a disaster. You may want to reorganize how you share.



Gemini (May 20–June 20)

It's important that you be aware your thinking is not as objective as you believe. Listen when others tell you their attitudes and opinions. You do not have to adopt them, but don't reject what they say out of hand. Try

to think carefully before assuming you are the only one who knows the right answers.



Cancer (June 21–July 21)

This time New Moon eclipse is occurring in the territory of money and resources that you share with others. A new perspective may come to you on things such as investments, joint purchases, or plans for your estate. It

is possible you need to reorganize one or more of these.



Leo (July 22–August 21)

This is a good time to focus on your primary relationships. Communicate openly and make plans that will create sunshine for both (or all) of you. Create an environment in which everyone has his/her time to speak and contribute so that no

one feels alienated from connection.



Virgo (August 22–September 22)

New autonomy and praise is occurring around your partner which may alter your environment for a while. Your focus is on the "others" in your life at this time. Virgo often is the power behind the throne, the

worker bee who gets things accomplished and keeps life orderly. Your time in the Sun will come.



Libra (Sep. 23–Oct. 22)

You may feel pressured into making one or more decisions. The territories have to do with your physical health as well as your job. There is a strong connection between how we feel with work (daily routines) and our health. If we are in a high stress producing life routine we are also prone to pick up more colds and viruses that are floating all around us.



Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Give close attention to where you put your money, purse, and other valuables. It is possible that you will be distracted while handling these things and leave them in vulnerable

places. A lover or a child may disappoint you this week. Whatever the disappointment is was unintentional.



Sagittarius (November 22–December 20)

Your attitude about yourself is not altogether accurate right now. You may think way too much of your ideas, or alternately, you may see yourself as lower than scum. Neither is accurate and you should probably not make decisions of any importance this week. Spiritual pursuits are given a "go" signal.



Capricorn (December 21–January 19)

The New Moon eclipse is in your 2nd house of money. (See the lead paragraph.) This suggests that you may be considering a change in how you save, spend, and store things of

value. Other planetary aspects favor education, short trips, and exchanges with siblings.



Aquarius (January 20–February 17)

Please read the opening paragraph. This New Moon eclipse is in your sign. It emphasizes your need to define your identity and likely will slowly lead toward changes in your behavior and appearance. The effects of an eclipse can begin early and may manifest months later. Don't pressure yourself into decisions before you are clear.



Pisces (February 18–March 19)

This is a week in which your physical cycle is "off". Don't press your body beyond what it wants to do, just because it could do the same thing last week. Pay special atten-

tion to your temporary boundaries right now and by next week things will return to your personal normal.

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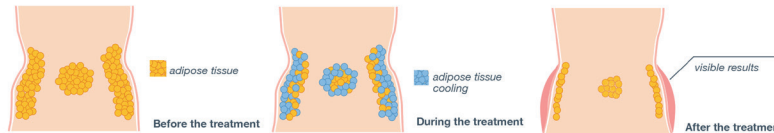
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