

## New Vardenis-Martakert highway Inaugurated



***Nagorno-Karabakh - Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and other officials inaugurate a new highway connecting Karabakh to Armenia, 1Sep2017.***

A newly built second highway connecting Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh was inaugurated in the presence of President Serzh Sargsyan and other senior officials on September 1.

Work on the 115-kilometer -long road began in 2011 and was essentially com-

pleted months before the inauguration ceremony, costing 17 billion drams (\$36 million) in funding. The Armenian and Karabakh governments footed 56 percent of the bill.

The rest of the sum was raised by the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund in annual tele-

thons broadcast from Los Angeles in 2013 and 2014. In a statement on the ceremony, the pan-Armenian charity headquartered in Yerevan noted the “strategic significance” of the project.

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## President Sargsyan's message on Artsakh Independence Day

President Serzh Sargsyan has issued a message on Artsakh Independence Day:

**Dear Compatriots,**

*I congratulate you on the Independence Day of the Republic of Artsakh. This very day twenty-six years ago, the Armenians of Artsakh proclaimed their independent statehood.*

*They were able to rise like a phoenix from the ashes and ruins of the war and present themselves to the world with a heroic army, functional state institutions, serious economic progress, exemplary educational and cultural institutions, and finally, a well-organized society, which holds on to its national traditions, but at the same time is modern and capable of localizing all the good that mankind boasts in science and culture, economy, politics, and other areas.*

*Over the past twenty-six years, Artsakh has evolved successfully to become a solid, free and democratic State. The peace-loving Artsakh has not only*



*the necessary fighting capacity, but it is also viable and competitive. The defenders of Artsakh are good at fighting and they know what they are fighting for. The armed forces of Artsakh are defending the safety of not only Artsakh, but also Armenia and, at large, the entire Armenian nation.*

*Last April's hostilities, which were initiated by Azerbaijan, demonstrated once again the impossibility of a mili-*

*tary solution to the Artsakh issue. That shady enterprise was doomed to failure as the Defense Army is strong with Armenia and the whole Armenian nation at its back.*

*On this glorious day, we bow to the memory of those who perished for the sake of Artsakh's freedom.*

*Long live the free and independent Artsakh!*

*Long live the Republic of Artsakh!*

## Bako Sahakyan: Progressive world will sooner or later recognize the will of Artsakh people



Congratulatory Address of President Bako Sahakyan on the Artsakh Republic Day

**Dear compatriots,**

*On behalf of the Artsakh authorities and myself personally I extend to all of us the warmest congratulations on the September 2, the Day of the Artsakh Republic.*

*Twenty-six years ago our people took the historical decision to determine their own destiny and build a free, independent, democratic, legal and social state.*

*During those years together with our sisters and brothers from Mother Armenia and the Diaspora we have managed to realize numerous strategic programs, which day*

*by day bring us closer to attaining our cherished national goals, further strengthen and develop our country.*

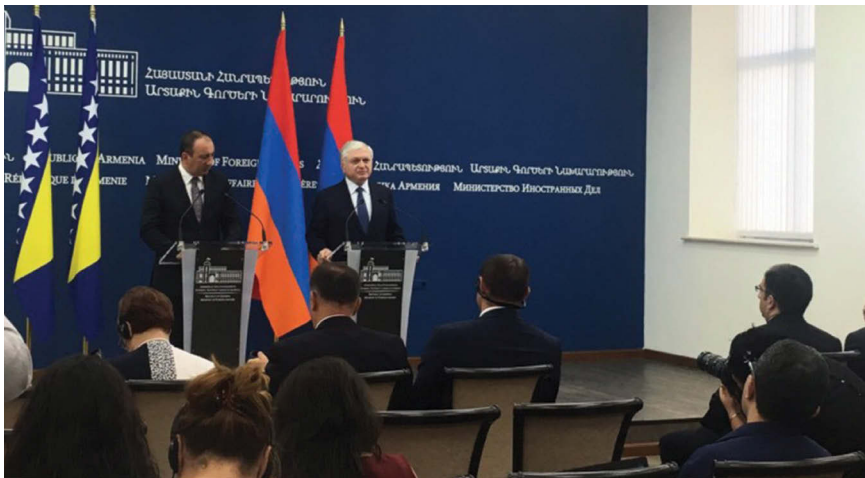
*I am confident the civilized and progressive world will sooner or later recognize this equitable and lawful resolution of the Artsakh people, will not hesitate to admit the prevailing realities that demonstrate our adherence to universal human values and commitment to international norms and principles.*

*I am confident since our people have proved through their painstaking work and dedicated service of their brave sons that they are able to build, make prosperous and safeguard their ancestral Fatherland, their independent statehood.*

*Dear compatriots,*

*I once again congratulate you on this memorable day and wish peace, good health and all the best to you, welfare and prosperity to our people and Homeland.*

## Azerbaijan should prove its commitment to Co-Chairs' proposals – Armenian FM



If Azerbaijan really wants to join efforts towards peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict, it should prove commitment to solve the issue on the basis of the three principles proposed by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian has said.

“If Azerbaijan accepts the proposals of

the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, it should prove in practice it is ready to solve the Karabakh issue on the basis of the three principles proposed by the mediators, – non use of force or the threat of force, territorial integrity and the right of peoples to self-determination,” Minister Nalbandian said at a joint press conference with the Foreign Minister of Bos-

nia & Herzegovina Igor Crnadak.

Second, Mr. Nalbandian said Azerbaijan should remain committed to the 1994-1995 ceasefire agreements. Third, he added, Azerbaijan should prove commitment to the agreements reached in Vienna and St. Petersburg.

“If Azerbaijan is ready to continue negotiations on the basis of the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group, it should stop referring to elements it likes. The five statements made by the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries note the three principles and several elements, which should serve as a basis for the settlement of the conflict. The Co-Chairs have said on many occasions that none of the principles should be given privilege over others, as giving preference to one of them will make it impossible to solve the conflict. Armenia agrees with the mediators, unlike Azerbaijan, which constantly refers to one or two of the principles and even distorts them,” Minister Nalbandian said.

## New Vardenis-Martakert highway Inaugurated



Passenger and cargo traffic between Armenia and Karabakh has until now been mainly carried out through a highway passing through Lachin, one of the seven districts in Azerbaijan proper that were partly or fully occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces during the 1991-1994 war.

The Lachin road stretches for more than 80 kilometers from the Karabakh capital Stepanakert to the southeastern Armenian town of Goris. It was built in 1997 with the financial assistance of the Armenian Diaspora and the late U.S.-Armenian billionaire Kirk Kerkorian in particular.

The second highway runs from the northern Karabakh town of Martakert to Vardenis in eastern Armenia through the Kel-

bajar district that has been under Karabakh Armenian control since 1993.

Officials say that the new highway will not only shorten travel time between Yerevan and northern Karabakh but also stimulate economic activity in nearby rural communities and bring more tourists to the Armenian-populated territory. In particular, it will significantly facilitate visitors' access to two medieval Armenian monasteries located in the area.

The Vartenis-Martakert road should also benefit an Armenian company mining gold and copper in northern Karabakh. It is Karabakh's single largest corporate employer and taxpayer.



## Recent News from Emergency Situations Ministry

### Armenia Helps Georgia to Fight Wildfire in Borjomi Gorge

**President, Prime Minister of Georgia Expressed Gratitude to Armenian Firefighter-rescuers**

On August 22, responding to a help request of the Georgian authorities to neighbor countries, the RA MES Rescue Service personnel of 8 firefighter- rescue vehicles and 1 rescue vehicle, a vehicle of the Center of Disaster Medical Treatment and a mobile management headquarters-unit left for Georgia to support the major fire extinguishing works in the Borjomi Gorge.

RA MES Rescue Forces carried out wildfire extinguishing activities in the Borjomi Gorge, starting from August 23, extinguishing fire

vent the spread of fire and isolate all hearths of fire. Post-extinguishing activities were being carried out.

There were numerous fire hearths in the depths of the forest at the territory of the third site.

The Armenian firefighter-rescuers also managed to isolate the fire hearths herein and pass on extinguishing operations, using a three-lane main line for reaching the depth of the forest.



ter **Giorgi Kvirikashvili** visited the RA MES tent city deployed near Tsaghveri to express gratitude to the Armenian firefighter-rescuers.

*-The Armenians arrived in Georgia in difficult days and make a significant contribution in the fight against the disaster. You along with us exerted joint efforts and successfully fought against fire. I would like to thank the Armenian people, the President of Armenia, the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Emergency Situations for lending a helping hand to the brotherly country. We highly appreciate what you did here,-* stated Giorgi Kvirikashvili.

To note, President of Georgia **G. Margvelashvili** and Minister of Internal Affairs **G. Mgebrishvili** also visited the scene and personally thanked the employees of the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.



in 3 inaccessible areas and preventing the spread of fire to the nearby settlements of Daba and Tsaghveri.

In total, 4 fire brigades with 23 firefighter-rescuers were implementing service at three areas of their responsibility.

The all-terrain vehicle was used at the first - highest and inaccessible area.

At the second district, the fire has got the edge of the forest threatened to the nearby village of Tsaghveri. Armenian firefighter-rescuers who fought fire from early morning, managed to pre-



Armenian firefighter-rescuers have completely fulfilled tasks set before them, isolating and extinguishing the wildfire in all areas.

On August 25, Georgian Prime Minis-

### “ArmSecurity-2017” International Exhibition: New Solid Platform for Cooperation

A three-day International High-Tech Security Exhibition “ArmSecurity-2017” entitled “Secure Armenia” kicked off at the Exhibition Complex “Yerevan-Expo” on September 2, under the aegis of the RA Ministry of Emergency Situations.

The Exhibition solemn opening was attended by Defence Minister **Vigen Sargsyan**,

other members of the RA Government, reps of a number of Embassies and international organizations in Armenia, experts and other guests. It was covered by the most of TV channels and other media.

RA ES Minister **Davit Tonoyan** delivered opening remarks, noting that one of the goals

*further cooperation*, - noted Davit Tonoyan.

Nearly two dozen international and Armenian companies presented systems and technologies for prevention of emergencies and elimination of their consequences as well as special equipment for rescue and fire safety and healthcare services from main producers

Within the framework of the Exhibition ES Minister held separate meetings with dozens of companies representing Japan, Germany, the United States and the Russian Federation, during which they discussed possible ways of cooperation.

On the first day of the event a plenary ses-



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of the exhibition was to support modernization and technical upgrading of the Armenian Rescue Service which would contribute to enhancing rapid response efficiency.

*- I hope that the favorable business environment of the Exhibition will be the best platform for expanding the geography of cooperation at the rescue arena, sharing valuable experience and establishing new and promising ties, putting the beginning of*

in the pavilions provided for them.

Minister Tonoyan and other members of the Government toured all pavilions, got familiarized with the products and services presented. ES Minister gave instructions on the spot to establish new cooperation ties between the companies for the technical re-equipment of the Ministry and to discuss the possibilities of investing their products in the system.

sion on “Operation of State Unified System of Warning and Elimination of Emergency Situations and its Development Perspectives” was held, which was followed by a round table discussion on “Protection of Special Purpose Objects”.

“ArmSecurity-2017” International High-Tech Security Exhibition continued its work until September 4. Several thousand visitors were there.

## Karen Karapetyan, Microsoft delegation discuss issues of Armenia's digital agenda

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan received a delegation from Microsoft Corporation headed by CIS Regional Office Director Ronald Binkofsky. The meeting discussed possibilities for co-operation between the Government of Armenia and Microsoft in formulating Armenia's digital agenda.

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said that Government's digital agenda features development of a digital strategy for central and local self-government authorities, sharp increase in the number of electronic services, development of an integrated public administration system, etc. The Premier advised that the Digital Armenia Fund was established to that effect, and the Government is prepared to cooperate with Microsoft Corporation in the aforementioned areas.

In turn, Ronald Binkofsky assured of Microsoft's willingness to help Armenia implement these programs, adding



that effective talks to this end had been held with the representatives of different government departments. He noted that Microsoft boasts long experience in these area and has the needed capac-

ity to help materialize Armenia's digital agenda.

The meeting also discussed a number of other issues related to bilateral cooperation.

## Six Armenian companies represented at Textilelegprom expo in Moscow



Six light industry companies represent Armenia with the joint pavilion at the 49th "Textilelegprom" exhibition that opened in Moscow on August 30, the Development Foundation of Armenia (DFA) reports.

"The Armenian companies attracted export orders worth 400 million USD after the previous exhibition held in February; moreover, the number of orders considerably increases after every exhibition," noted Marcus Azadian, head of the DFA event management team.

"Significant growth of export of Armenian products, particularly to Russia, is conditioned by the effective policy, production and ex-

port promotion projects of the Government, the Ministry of Economic Development," Armenia's Trade Representative in Russia Karen Asoyan said.

The largest Russian exhibition of textile and light industry products and equipment is being conducted twice a year in nine halls occupying an area of 40 000 sq. meters. More than 200 companies from 28 countries of the world attend the 49th "Textilelegprom" Expo, and about 35,000 visitors, including wholesale buyers, industry experts, representatives of trade chains and importers, are expected to visit the expo.



## Government sees strong growth in Armenian Brandy industry



Armenia's wine and brandy companies will likely increase grape purchases from local farmers by 28 percent this year after posting sharp production gains in the last 18 months, Agriculture Minister Ignati Arakelyan said on September 1.

Arakelyan spoke at a meeting with senior executives of those companies held by Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan. It focused on government support for a major sector of the Armenian economy providing income to tens of thousands of grape farmers.

According to Agriculture Ministry projections cited by Arakelyan, the country's 2017 grape harvest is on track to shrink by 10 percent due to an unusually cold winter that severely damaged many vineyards. Nevertheless, the ministry expects wholesale grape purchases by Armenian distilleries to rise to 141,000 metric tons from 110,000 tons in 2016.

Arakelyan implicitly attributed that to a nearly 30 percent rise in

exports of Armenian brandy which he said was registered so far this year. Russia is the main export market for the alcoholic beverage.

According to the National Statistical Service (NSS), brandy and wine production in Armenia soared, in physical terms, by 61 percent and 30 percent respectively in the first half of 2017. The NSS reported less drastic but still double-digit production increases in 2016.

Output in the sector contracted in 2015 primarily because of a sharp depreciation of the Russian ruble. Many local firms struggled to pay grape farmers as a result. Some small manufactures also delayed payments for grapes purchased from mostly subsistence farmers last fall. Hundreds of such villagers staged angry protests this winter and spring.

Arakelyan, who managed Armenia's largest brandy producer until being named agriculture minister last October, was reported to urge all liquor firms to sign contracts with their grape suppliers "in order to avoid problems."

Karapetyan, for his part, promised continued government support for the winemaking industry. He said his government is already subsidizing loans extended to brandy and wine companies for grape purchases. It also engineered late last year a significant cut in the price of natural gas used by them, the premier said.

"I don't know of many other governments that provide so much financial and other assistance to the agriculture sector," Karapetyan added, according to the government statement.

The statement said the industry executives presented their "problems, proposals and observations" during the meeting.

## Director of George Marshall Center Keith W. Dayton visits the Armenian National Defense Research University

The delegation headed by Lieutenant General Keith W. Dayton (ret.), Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, paid a visit to the National Defense Research University (NDRU), MoD, RA, on the eve of the "Armenia's Security Challenges" Outreach Event of the George C. Marshall Center Alumni Association of Armenia held in Yerevan on 1 September.

The guests were hosted by Lieutenant General Hayk Kotanjian, Doctor of Political Science, Professor, NDRU Head, Marshall Center Alumnus (1998).

The meeting was attended by Colonel Gevorg Sarukhanyan, Deputy Head, NDRU, MoD, RA, Marshall Center Alumnus; Benyamin Poghosyan, PhD in History, Deputy Head for Research, NDRU, MoD, RA-Head, Institute for National Strategic Studies, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Alum-

nus; Colonel Suren Davtyan, Deputy Head for Education, NDRU, MOD RA-Head, National Institute for Strategic Defense Security Education, who was present at the G. Marshall Center opening ceremony; Davit Manasyan, PhD in History, Head, Center for Regional Strategic Analysis, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), NDRU, MoD, RA; Arman Grigoryan, Head, Center for Information-Communication Technologies and National Security Policy, INSS, NDRU, MoD, RA, and Azat Davtyan, PhD in Economics, Research Fellow, INSS, NDRU, MOD, RA.

At the meeting the participants exchanged views on the prospects of academic-educational cooperation. The guests highly emphasized the NDRU research-fellows' academic fellowships at the world leading schools and professional centers (the US NDU, George C.

Marshall Center, the Harvard University, RAND Corporation, etc.), aimed at their attempts to adapt the innovative methods of mastering the security knowledge from the perspective of theoretical-methodological understanding of Armenia's national strategic guidelines, and elaborating Armenia's defense policy issues.

Getting acquainted with the NDRU's achievements and development-oriented programs, the guests highly estimated the University's professional capabilities and quality. The University's elaborations along with the US state center of excellence—the College of Information and Cyberspace (iCollege), NDU – via partnership in the sphere of cybersecurity, namely "The Draft National Cybersecurity Strategy of the Republic of Armenia", were of great interest to them.

## Yerevan in August: Non-Stop Events

As The Highlights has announced in July, we've started new heading entitled The Yerevan News (See The Highlights 17 July and 24 July issues).

After summer vacation The Highlights continues to publish most interesting news from the City Hall – naturally, in cooperation with its Information and Public Relations Department (headed by experienced journalist Arthur Gevorgyan).

In spite of summer vacation period, August was full of events and so work for Mayor Taron A. Margaryan and his staff.

Below The Highlights readers could find the most essential of them:

holding “Yerevan TARAZfest” annually as a component aimed at the development of event tourism. “Yerevan TARAZfest” is one of the three festivals within “Yerevan Summer” program aimed at boosting tourism in the capital. *“This year, for the first time national and culture communities as well as diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia are taking part in the festival”*, said Mrs Baraghamyan.

“Yerevan TARAZfest” held by Yerevan Municipality tourism division consists of two parts: The first part is the exhibition-fair. The second part includes shows of fashion collections by Armenia design-

as representatives of the Union of Poles of Armenia “Polonia”, of the German Culture NGO “Teutonia” and the Federation of the Ukrainians of Armenia “Ukraine”.

During the Festival the national ensemble of traditional dance and song “Kar-in” also performed, and dance groups “Milen” and “Sasun” as well.

### It has been instructed to form a working group for preparations for “Erebuni-Yerevan 2799” celebration

14.08.2017

During the weekly working meeting Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan instructed Deputy Mayor *Aram Sukiasyan* to form a working group for preparations for “Erebuni-Yerevan 2799” celebration. Mayor’s Assistant Maria Baraghamyan was assigned jointly with the Department of Social Welfare of the Municipality and corresponding services of administrative districts of the capital to form a working group for the organization and realization of the social program which is an indivisible component of “Erebuni-Yerevan” celebrations. Within the frames of the program of events of “Erebuni-Yerevan 2799” this year 2799 families will be included in the program of social assistance and get presents.



### “Yerevan summer 2017”: 3rd “Yerevan TARAZfest” held in Yerevan

05.08.2017

Within the frames of “Yerevan Summer 2017” three-month program of events, the fair-exhibition which is the first part of the 3rd festival of national costumes “Yerevan TARAZfest” has started in Northern Avenue. Numerous townspeople and guests of the capital took part in the event.

Yerevan Mayor’s Assistant *Maria Baraghamyan*, the Head of Yerevan Municipality Culture Department Ruben Hovhannisyan and the Head of Tourism Unit *Gevorg Orbelyan* were present at the opening ceremony.

M.Baraghamyan attached importance to

ers.

This year 21 pavilions represent museums, folk craftsmen, companies producing Armenian brands. Yerevan History Museum, “Teryan” Cultural Center, “Gallery of Dolls”, “HayTiknik” (The Armenian Dolls), “PreGomesh” company producing Armenian jewellery, “Armenian Brands” platform, “Anahit Simonyan” Fashion House, “Kenats Tun” Cultural Organization, “Megeryan Carpet” company, photo-atelier “Marashlean” and folk craftsmen which presented traditional Armenian national costumes (taraz), jewellery, dolls, pictures.

Within the frames of “Yerevan TARAZfest” in separate pavilions the national garments and culture were presented by the representatives of the Embassies of Kuwait, Belarus and Kazakhstan as well

### 1215 children spend their summer holidays in sport and health camps

17.08.2017

In accordance with the RA Government program and with the assistance of Yerevan Municipality, since June 19, 1215 children from needy families, children without parents, children of the fallen or injured servicemen spent their summer holidays in the sport and health camps of Hanqavan and Tsaghkadzor.

By the instruction of Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan the heads of administrative districts and persons in charge of Yerevan Municipality regularly visited the children in the camps and familiarized themselves with the conditions of their rest.

It should be noted that the children were provided with sportswear and other appliances.

## 78 letters were received last week through social media network pages of Yerevan Municipality and administrative districts

18.08.2017

From 7 to 12 of August, through social media web-pages and e-mail of Yerevan Municipality and administrative districts 78 letters were received, 68 of which got appropriate solution, 11 ones are being processed.

The majority of the issues related to the sphere of communal services, to the activity of Municipality staff including "hot lines", citizens' participation in receptions, the format of applying to the Municipality.

Social media network users were interested in the activities carried out within the frames of "Clean Yerevan" program. 30 letters were received in this regard. We'd like to remind

that our co-citizens can send their e-mails to Yerevan Municipality web-pages on Facebook/FB/Yerevanmunicipality/ and Twitter/@evnmunicipality/, and on e-mail pressyerevan@am or phone on hot line telephone number 011-514-000.

## It has been instructed to get ready for RA Independence Day

21.08.2017

During the working meeting in Yerevan City Hall Mayor Taron Margaryan instructed the Department of Culture, the Department of External Design and Advertising as well as the heads of administrative districts to get ready for the RA Independence Day on September 21 to ensure proper festive organization and appropriate external decoration of the capital.

## "Yerevan Days" will be held in Saint Petersburg on September 6-8

21.08.2017

During the weekly meeting in the City Hall Mayor Taron Margaryan, referring to the agreements and working schedules with sister and partner cities, instructed the Department of Foreign Relations and Department of Culture to get ready for "Yerevan Days in Saint Petersburg" program to be held in Saint Petersburg on September 6-8 to ensure proper implementation of the program during which are planned official meetings, round tables on the tour-



ism, general education, health, investment themes as well as a number of cultural events representing Yerevan.

## Buses equipped with special elevators will serve routes N14, N20, N22, N28

24.08.2017

Dear co-citizens,

Yerevan Municipality Transport Department informs that from September 1 of the current year 17 buses equipped with special elevators for people with locomotor disabilities will serve 4 routes N14, N20, N22 and N28.

The routes of the buses are worked out in the principle so that people with special need could reach the City center and go back without waiting long.

It should be noted that at the side and front parts of the buses corresponding stickers with the telephone numbers of dispatching offices serving the routes are stuck so as it will be possible to get all necessary information (011.674428, 011.674466).

## Yerevan "Green City" action plan has been worked out

25.08.2017

The action plan of "Green City" program of Yerevan worked out in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was

presented during the working meeting in Yerevan City Hall. Deputy Mayor **Vahe Nikoyan**, stressing the importance of the program for the capital and its residents, expressed confidence that its implementation will be of great significance for urban economy development.

The head of the working group of "Green City" program, the representa-

tative of the international consulting company Ernst and Young **Andrea Chirlichova** noted that the main task of "Green City" is to promote economic and social development of the City by means of solving ecological problems of the capital.

During the meeting the persons in charge for the program presented in details the main provisions and strategy of the program, the ecological challenges of the capital as well as the problems and tasks to be solved by the implementation of the project. In particular, within the frames of research they assessed the condition of the air, water resources, ecosystem of the capital, the factors having negative impact on them, and the existing legal solution based on internationally recognized standards.

It was noted that the action plan got the Strategic Environmental Assessment within the frames of which public hear-

## Yerevan in August: Non-Stop Events

ings were organized.

Yerevan Deputy Mayor Vahe Nikoyan presented his remarks and proposals related to the program. Taking into account that systematic improvement of the ecological situation in Yerevan is one of the main priorities of the program of development of the capital, Deputy Mayor stressed that "Green city" will be involved in Yerevan development programs.

It should be noted that "Green City" is to fulfilled with the assistance of local partners and international organizations as well as in collaboration with the financial establishments.

*expansion and its strengthening with partner cities and international companies which contributed to updating and development of infrastructures in various spheres of urban economy as well as to significant improvement of the quality of servicing. So, due to experience exchange it becomes possible to find maximally effective variants which are practically used",* said the Mayor and expressed confidence that the cooperation between Yerevan and Qingdao will be effective too.

Taron Margaryan outlined the particular importance of signing the Memorandum of Intentions between the two cities

cooperation and to assist in their implementation.

Expressing gratitude for warm welcome, the Vice Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Municipal People's Congress of Qingdao (China) Liu Shengzhen in her turn noted that there were diverse possibilities for cooperation in the spheres of mutual interest.

*"Mister Mayor, your willingness for cooperation is highly important for us because our cities really have similar problems and by means of experience exchange it is possible to find appropriate solutions. Qingdao is one of the largest industrial centers of China, and I am sure that in various spheres of urban economy management mutually beneficial cooperation will be established for the welfare of the two cities",* said Liu Shengzhen.

During the meeting the First Deputy Mayor **Kamo Areyan** and Mrs Liu Shengzhen signed the Memorandum on Intentions. The parties arranged to form a working group that will work out proposals for cooperation between the two cities.

### August meeting prior to new academic year

30.08.2017

Prior to the new academic year a number of issues related to the sphere of education were discussed during the annual August meeting at which were presented Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan, the RA Minister of Education and Science **Levon Mkrtchyan**, the heads of administrative districts of the capital as well as headmasters of secondary and high schools.

Greeting the participants, Mayor Taron Margaryan presented the main views which can play an important role for effective activity of educational establishments and improvement of the quality of education. Yerevan Mayor attached particular importance to active cooperation between basic and high schools of Yerevan noting that it would benefit improvement of high schools.

Referring to the problem of quality of education provided in schools Mayor



### Mayor Taron Margaryan meets with the delegation of Qingdao (China)

30.08.2017

Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan met with the delegation headed by the Vice Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Municipal People's Congress of Qingdao **Liu Shengzhen**.

Presenting the guests the main development strategies of the capital and the programs of cooperation with international organizations, Mayor Taron Margaryan noted that Yerevan annually expands the frames of cooperation and currently it interacts with 50 cities worldwide and 10 international organizations.

*"We attach importance to cooperation*

*dum of Intentions between the two cities which will actually serve a basis for further mutually beneficial cooperation.*

Taking into account that among the members of the delegation were heads of large companies, Mayor Taron Margaryan referred to the programs and proposals of investment interest.

*"Yerevan Municipality presents the investment proposals and programs which might be interesting for the private sector. We attach importance to the implementation of concrete programs and projects, and I have to point out that currently serious steps are being taken in Yerevan towards investment attraction and business environment improvement",* said Taron Margaryan, adding that Yerevan Municipality is open and ready to discuss concrete programs of

Taron Margaryan noted that achievements of the pupils of those schools at various school Olympiads prove it best of all.

*"Being a good school shouldn't only mean a big number of pupils. Both the location and comfortable facilities can promote it too. In my opinion, the number of participants and winners from these educational centers at subject Olympiads should be taken into account as it will best of all show the effectiveness of the work of the teaching staff. Therefore, carry out everyday consistent activity in this regard as the success of your pupils is the best result of your work",* said Taron Margaryan.

Referring to "Help Your School" program, Mayor Taron Margaryan stressed that from the very beginning the aim of this initiative was to ensure transparency of the assistance shown to educational establishments on the voluntary basis.

Yerevan Mayor attached particular importance to active cooperation of the local schools with partner and sister cities of Yerevan.

The RA Minister of Education and

cational establishments will go on active cooperation which will make it possible to find solutions to all the problems to all the problems rooted in the system. During the conversation held within the frames of the meeting, the headmasters of the schools had the opportunity to address their questions and suggestions to the persons in charge for the sphere.



*this wonderful September holiday, the Day of Knowledge. This day is really a holiday for all of us as it is an evidence of existence of the generation creating our new Armenia, it is an occasion to evaluate knowledge.*

*The deep respect for book and knowledge and striving for education have always been characteristic for our nation*



Science Levon Mkrtchyan, presenting the priorities of the sphere development, noted that the reforms of the field of education are starting a new stage which means radical reformation of the education system.

Summarizing the results of the meeting, Mayor Taron Margaryan outlined that that Yerevan Municipality, RA Ministry of Education and Science and edu-

## Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan's address on the Day of Knowledge

01.09.2017

*Dear schoolchildren and students, teachers and parents and first grade pupils!*

*I cordially congratulate everyone on*

*and it is not a coincidence that September 1 is so inspirational for children and young people, particularly for those who go to school for the first time. Wishing to keep the festive mood throughout the year, we will carry on implementation of our programs.*

*High quality education is the main guarantee of our country development and the efforts made in this sphere are the guarantee of our worthy tomorrow. So I believe that the future years of study will become for our pupils an important and responsible period of development of abilities and talents, gaining knowledge and skills and as a result our country will have more patriotic, educated and responsible citizens.*

*My best wishes and congratulations on the beginning of the new academic year.*

**TARON MARGARYAN**  
Yerevan Mayor

*Compiled by Gourgen James  
Khazhakian  
Chief Correspondent*

## Armenia's Leading Telecom Operator: Non-Stop Support to Armenian Countryside

### Outdoor lighting system in Vardahovit community

Most of the residents of Vardahovit community of Vayots Dzor region are refugees and families that have relocated there from

*menia, including Vardahovit, construction of LED outdoor lighting systems due to its long term positive impact, influences the improvement of life quality of the residents and sustainable development of village communities. The joy and enthusiasm of*



different adjacent villages. Until this year, there had been no outdoor lighting infrastructure in the community.

From now on, the streets of Vardahovit will be illuminated in the evenings owing to the installation of a 1.6 km-long system of 45 LED lights. The construction of the new external illumination infrastructures became a reality in the result of the co-operation of the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) and VivaCell-MTS for the implementation of "Alternative Energy" project.

VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian** and FPWC founder **Ruben Khachatryan**, head of Vardahovit community **Samvel Gevorgyan** and community residents attended the launching ceremony of the newly built energy-efficient system.

*"One of the priorities of VivaCell-MTS is supporting the development of rural communities as a precondition of resolving social and environmental problems in the country. In lots of communities of Ar-*

*menia, including Vardahovit, construction of LED outdoor lighting systems due to its long term positive impact, influences the improvement of life quality of the residents and sustainable development of village communities. The joy and enthusiasm of*

*menia, including Vardahovit, construction of LED outdoor lighting systems due to its long term positive impact, influences the improvement of life quality of the residents and sustainable development of village communities. The joy and enthusiasm of*

energy consumption by up to 80%. Due to the installation of energy-efficient outdoor lighting systems, village communities significantly reduce their financial expenses. The economy of community resources makes the life in communities more vibrant.

Outdoor lighting will be provided from 21:00 to 00:00 in summer, and from 18:00 to 23:00 in winter. On holidays, street lighting will be provided all night long.

### From a dilapidated building into a renovated house

It is already the fifth family in Shirak region and the 149th family in Armenia that feels the result of the six-year-partnership between VivaCell-MTS and Fuller Center for Housing. The **Simonyans** from Saralanj village are one the beneficiaries of the housing project. By the end of the year, instead of the half-damaged three-room house built in 1960s, the family will have a stone house with increased housing space, including a kitchen and a bathroom. VivaCell-MTS and Fuller Center for



Housing Armenia volunteers participated in the construction of the Simonyan family house.

For many years, with strict winters typical to the region, the Simonyans had to live under the deteriorated, leaking roof, in

a-three-room old house with wooden windows and deteriorated, damp floors. The beneficiary family is sure that the difficulties will stay in the past; the sad memories will be replaced with the belief in a bright future.

The housing project implemented in different parts of Armenia would not be so successful if not for the direct involvement of the partners in construction works. The family not only feels the physical support in finishing the construction of the house in the shortest time possible, but also starts looking to the future with hope and optimism.

*ed one. It is so hard to look after an ill person, to raise children without basic housing conditions. It is true that the construction will soon be completed, but still I do not believe that all this is happening with us. It is like a dream; without your help my family would never know what a decent home is," said Diana, the family mother.*

*"Every time we participate in construction works, I try to feel the mood of the family. We see the results of our efforts; we see how the house is being built. What I am concerned about, is the changes in the spirit of the people, their feelings that*

*and hope in as many families as possible. This is the reason why we are here," said VivaCell-MTS Founding General Manager **Ralph Yirikian**.*

*"Especially in villages, the hard times in social situation of the families becomes even harder because of the lack of basic housing conditions. The problem of raising children in a dull environment is added to the problem of earning a living. This program helps the families to build not only safe walls, but also optimism for the future. Overcoming the heaviest problem, the families try to find a means of income in the village and not leave it," said Full-*



*"Last year, when you built a house in our village, I started dreaming, but couldn't believe that one day we, too, would be included in the housing program. Sometimes it is easier to build a house from the ground up, than to renovate a dilapidat-*

*are often expressed with reservation, by just a modest smile or by the sparkle in their eyes. It is these changes in the spirit that help people regain confidence in themselves and in their future. I would like to see this reawakened confidence*

*er Center for Housing President **Ashot Yeghiazaryan**.*

For the implementation of the housing project, VivaCell-MTS invested AMD 25mln in 2017; totally more than AMD 333 mln has been invested.

## The Goshavank Monastery: "Admire a Pearl of Armenian Medieval Architecture with Exquisite Stone Carvings..."



By  
**Gourgen  
Khazhakian**

**Chief  
Correspondent**

Goshavank Monastery is located 75 kilometers north-east of Yerevan, in Tavush Marz of Armenia. It is above the City of Dilijan, 10-15 minutes by a cab from Dilijan. It was named after one of the most prominent Armenian thinkers, scientists and public figures **Mkhitar Gosh**. It is one of the richest and legendary Armenian monasteries that includes a number of beautiful churches, chapels, a bell tower, libraries, school, fantastic khachqars (cross-stones).

### History

Goshavank was built in 1188, with support from Prince **Ivaneh Zaqarian** to replace the Monastery of Getik that was some 20km further east that had been destroyed in an earthquake. Built by Mkhitar Gosh, it was firstly named Nor Getik (New Getik), and after his death (1213), it was re-named Goshavank, i.e. after Mkhitar Gosh.

Some words about Mkhitar Gosh.

Born in 1130s, Mkhitar Gosh was an Armenian scientist, essayist, public figure, thinker and a clergyman. His name has always been a synonym of wisdom, therefore many and many desired to be his students. Vardapet (doctor of theology, i.e. Archimandrite) Mkhitar Gosh has written a number of works, and among them most probably the most famous one, - very first Codification of Armenian Law (*Datastanagirq*) that is at present at the Matenadaran Museum-Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, fables, prayers and sharakans (spiritual songs). He was greatly honored by both people and the rulers of the time such as Prince **Zakareh II the Great** who appointed Gosh his advisor and confessor. However, Mkhitar Gosh spent the last years of his life in ascetic way in a retreat at some distance from Nor Getik. Despite a long tradition to bury founders at the monastery, he requested to bury himself away from the site. And so he found his last asylum in

a chapel-mausoleum of Holy Ascension he himself built when alive. There is also a big sculpture of sitting Mkhitar Gosh at the yard of the Monastery.

At present the Monastery is not a functioning as a religious entity, but it is a must-see tourist destination that has recently undergone a restoration due to generosity of a Prince (Sheikh) from the United Arab Emirates.

The Mausoleum is located to the west of Saint Gevorg Church, in which nearby area Mkhitar Gosh also built the Church of Holy Spirit that unfortunately has not been preserved.

In his fundamental work "The History of Armenia" **Kirakos Gandzaketsi**, one of Gosh's students wrote that *"until today Mkhitar Gosh's grave helps those sick people who take refuge in his prayers; soil from there is taken to cure sick people and animals because God glorifies those who glorify Him, in life and in death."*

Reportedly, at first the small wooden Church of St. Hovhannes Karapet was built, and after St. Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother) - in 1191-1196.

Notably, the Monastery used to be one of the leading religious and educational-cultural centers of medieval Armenia where Mkhitar Gosh lived, worked and taught for the whole 25 years.

The Monastery was erected thanks to efforts of a number of gifted architects, carpenters, masons. Unfortunately, the annals of the history have kept only few names – architect **Mkhitar**, his student **Hovhannes** and sculptor, author of

unique khachqars **Poghos**. The sources mention also the architects **Grigor** and **Zakios**.

The Monastery was built between the Turkish and Mongolian invasions of Armenia, and that time was called the Silver Age - the Armenian Renaissance in architecture. Goshavank was often attacked by enemies, but its architects came up with a way out for this case too: on the walls of the churches of Goshavank masters carved images of the sacred signs of all possible religions that existed at that time - from the star of David to the eight-pointed stars of eternity.

### Surb Grigor Lusavorich Church

Surb Grigor Lusavorich (Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Founder of Christianity in Armenia (301) Church was erected in 1237-1241 due to order by Prince **Grigor Tgha** ("tgha" means "boy" in English), the grandson of the Prince **Vakhtang** of Haterk (Karabakh - Artsakh). Grigor was adopted by the Zaqaryan family when still a kid. So he was nicknamed Tgha (boy).

Despite its small sizes, Surb Grigor Lusavorich Church stands out with it's being a single nave church with unique windows on eastern and western walls. It's arches make the church seem a larger and a taller one than in reality. Interestingly, it's altar is decorated with arches and geometric patterns.



## Khachkars (Cross-Stones)

Goshavank is famous due to its legendary khachqars as well. There are several khachqars by *Momik*, famous master of medieval Armenia. Those carved by master Poghos have their unique place in khachqar art. Two of his best works were placed at both sides of the western entrance of the Grigor Lusavorich Church. Poghos, their sculptor, carved those two identical khachqars for his parents' graves. Due to delicate filigree of his khachqars he deserved nickname *Poghos the Embroiderer*.

One of the khachqars was transferred to Armenian State History Museum in 1935 and was included in the Museum's permanent exhibition. The remaining khachqar was erected in 1291. It's a real masterpiece worth every admiration. The lace patterns on the surface of the khachkar do not repeat. Above the base-stone the *Tree of Life* can be found while at the bottom the author's name is carved. The famous khachqar at Goshavank known as "Aseghnagorts" (The Needlecarved). Another khachqar is placed at Mkhitar Gosh's crypt.

**Robert V. Dashtoyan**, a prominent engineer, public and cultural figure and a real devotee of the Armenian architecture told your author an interesting story about this khachqar as well as Goshavank.

In far 1970s when he and friends visited the monastic complex for the very first time, he noticed a gully at the roof of the church that was set by inhabitants of the Village of Gosh. In Mr Dashtoyan's words, water from that gully was falling right on the famous Poghos' khachqar. Careful citizens of Gosh kept their promise to improve the situation, and in his next visit to Goshavank a role model citizen, patriot and intellectual R.V. Dashtoyan was happy to see that the villagers changed direction of the gully.

Another interesting detail from Mr Dashtoyan: until 1988-89 (beginning of the Karabakh National-Liberation Movement led, among others, to the crumbling of Soviet Union and liberation Artsakh (Karabakh) several villages of this fruitful land adjacent to Gosh were of mixed Armenian-Azeri population, and due to permanent tension with their Turkic neighbors many inhabitants of those vil-

lages were forced to get upper villages like Gosh. A "side effect" of such reality was strengthening of Gosh resilience (in the name of the beautiful Goshavank protection, among others) in case of possible aggressive actions from Azeris.

There are two main reasons due to which the Goshavank complex has remained in a relatively good condition within many centuries: after Mongol invasion in the early Middle Ages there were no more or less noticeable aggressive actions from foreigners;

As it was mentioned above, the local population has always been careful to this

penter), according to an inscription on the gavit.

## Goshavank Monastery: Saint Astvatsatsin Church

Being the Monastery's main church, Saint Astvatsatsin church was built in 1191-1196 upon the financial assistance of Prince Vakhtang of Haterk and his wife Arzukhatun. A description of Goshavank and the Monastery's benefactors was made by Kirakos Gandzaketsi:

*"A smaller church was also built at Nor Getik. It was built in the name of Saint John the Baptist who ordained Jesus Christ, the greatest born of a woman... It was built by Vardapet Mkhitar with his religious community and with the aid of Prince Vakhtang of Haterk and his brothers Grigor, Grigoris, Hoydan, Vaskak and pious Prince Kurd's sons David and Sasun, their sister Arzukhatun (the wife of Vakhtang)... A dense crowd of people attended the opening of the church. The Bishop of Haghpas Hovhannes was also present there with a number of priests and clericals. The church was consecrated in the name of Saint Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother)."*

The main entrance was added in 1197. Crosses and inscriptions are carved on the church walls. Also, on the western facade there is a sun dial.

## Chapel-Auditorium

Since the 13th century a school used to function in Goshavank that was mentioned as a school, university and seminary in various historical sources. The school is thought to operate in the building that served as both a chapel and an auditorium. Armenian and foreign languages, grammar, philosophy, writing skills and other subjects were taught at the School. A number of prominent scientists and intellectuals studied and worked there. Among them, as was mentioned above already, were Kirakos Gandzaketsi and *Vardan Areveltsi*.

## Scriptorium-Belfry

The Monastery's scriptorium-belfry is at the north from gavit. According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, the belfry was built



masterpiece.

...The two small rooms to the south of the gavit were used as studies by religious students. There is again a walnut tree, at the north of the site, and of similar age to the Monastery.

## Gavit

A four column gavit (entrance hall) was added in 1197-1203. In the center of the roof an eight-sided dome was erected. The gavit's construction was funded by Zaqaryan brothers. The architect was the above-mentioned Mkhitar Hyusn (Car-

## The Goshavank Monastery: "Admire a Pearl of Armenian Medieval Architecture with Exquisite Stone Carvings..."

until 1241. In 1291, the second floor was added to the belfry; the architects were Grigor and Zakios. The scriptorium served as a library where manuscripts were being kept. It was also a scriptorium where manuscripts were being copied and new ones being created. The belfry later collapsed and the building is now protected by a conical transparent dome. At its peak the library held 1,600 volumes until Mongol invaders set fire to it in 1375. It was at Nor Getik that Mkhitar Gosh first formally codified Armenian

### Chapels

The chapels of Saint Hripsime and Saint Arakelots (Apostles) were built by Mkhitar Gosh in 1208. They are located between Saint Grigor Lusavorich and Saint Grigor churches. The two chapels share the same roof. The chapel windows are made in a way as to let direct sunlight in.

### Saint Gevorg Church

Saint Gevorg is a small domed church

built by Vardapets *Khachatur* and *Barsegh* in 1254 at the mausoleum of Mkhitar Gosh. According to a legend, the church was built in the place where Mkhitar Gosh spent the last days of his life, where, notably, he continued teaching and writing until his death in 1203.

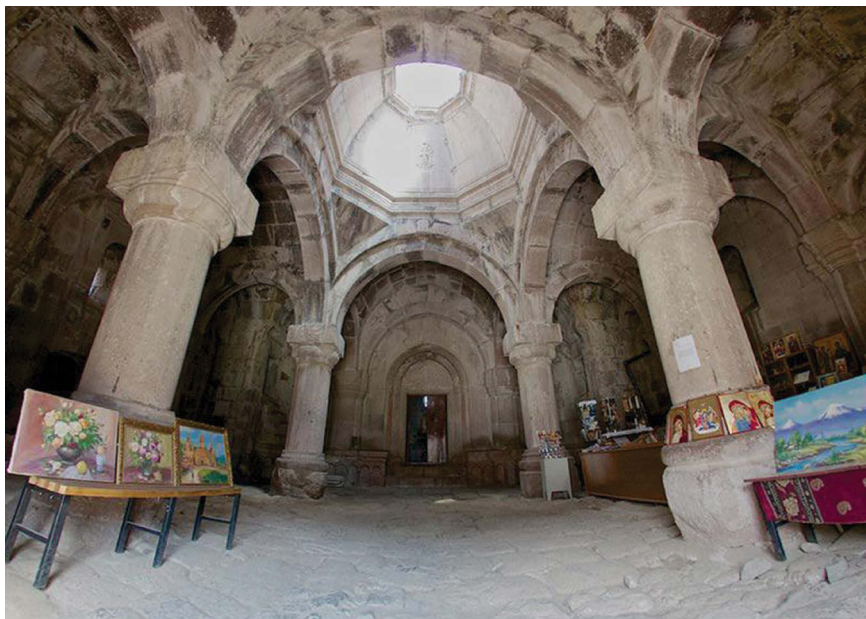
The Goshavank monastic complex includes also the school building that lies in ruins.

And the gallery is a passage between the gavit and the bell tower.

Goshavank does not have outer walls, and is surrounded by village homes. All of the buildings are attached to each other except for St. Hripsime Chapel that is located on the opposite hillside and within view. Goshavank was organically entered in the landscape by the builders. They made it so skillfully that it seems that the stone monastery just grew out of these forested mountains itself, like the trees around.

Numerous religious and monumental civil buildings show that in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries the Monastery was full of life.

The churches are decorated in accordance with the traditions of the time. As a rule, the door portals and windows are framed in rectangular or arched platbands some of which are profiled. The facade niches have multifoil or scalloped tops like those of the niches of the main church at Geghard. The unusual and artistically



law (according to some sources, partly as a defence against the imposition of Islamic sharia law) and also wrote his fables which make moral points using birds as the protagonists.

### Saint Grigor Church

Saint Grigor Church (1208-1231) is to south from the Saint Astvatsatsin Church. It was built after Mkhitar Gosh's death by Abbot *Martiros* and his brother *Grigor*. Possibly, Saint Grigor Church was built in the place of an older church, wooden-built John Baptist Church. According to historical sources, the construction of Saint Grigor Church was stopped because of the raids by Jalal-al-Din.

The church represents a domed hall. The initial building was ruined, and the current dome was erected in the 20th century emulating the original form.



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framed sun dial on the southern facade is an eye-catching decorative element.

In 1950-1960-ies Goshavank were restored. In 1972, a historical - architectural museum was established.

**Eventually, Goshavank Monastery is truly a sacred place where you should step with a strong faith in God; that's how people living and working there spent their life there, and that's why the Monastery has always been in the center of attention of not only Armenian people, but also foreigners.**

A quote from [www.inspirock.com](http://www.inspirock.com): "Admire a pearl of Armenian medieval architecture with exquisite stone carvings at Goshavank Monastery, a huge 12th-century orthodox monastery complex on the hillside above Lake Gosh. Explore some of the world's finest examples of Armenian cross-tones, or "khachkars" (memorial steles with a cross), a craft protected by UNESCO. Visit two churches within the complex, as well as admiring a bell tower with a book depository, elegant vaults, and pointed arches. Light a candle for lost souls and admire the carved, lacy ornaments decorating the numerous steles. A shrine to the monastery's founder, Mkhitar Gosh, sits nearby, providing a scenic view of this marvelous stone structure nestled at the bottom of the hills. Put Goshavank Monastery into our Gosh tour planner to see other points of interest to visit during your vacation in Gosh..."

And another travel site, [www.bradtguides.com](http://www.bradtguides.com) says: "...In the grounds of the Monastery is a small museum (open: 09.00-17.00 Tue-Sun; AMD500). By far the most interesting items there are large pottery bell-shaped objects which were hung from the dome with the open end downward to try to improve the acoustics by reflecting sound back downward into the church. The solution to the problems of some more recent concert halls such as the Royal Albert Hall, London, was clearly anticipated at Goshavank! After the Monastery has been explored a variety of refreshing herbal teas, made with local mountain herbs, can be enjoyed on the veranda of the village's hotel".

And, as usual, the last, but not the least: TripAdvisor reviews:

saronic  
Zurich,

## Switzerland

### Not to be left out

A good day trip out of Yerevan goes to the churches at Lake Sevan and to the former monastery complexes of Haghartsin and Goshavank. The last one is the furthest away and the driver might ask, if one still feels like driving out there. One definite-



ly should, even for the trip alone through a beautiful forested area. And while Haghartsin lies in the middle of nowhere, the monastery of Goshavank is just next to the small settlement of Gosh, where there is shopping, eating and drinking available.

But even by itself the Goshavank monastery (currently under renovation in parts - May 2017) is definitely worth visiting. All of the Armenian churches and former monasteries have their particular architectonic fascination.

As usual, there is more than one church in the monastery complex, and very often the main church is dedicated to St. Astvatsatsin (the Mother of God). In front of it one can admire here a Gavit, that typical Armenian kind of narthex.

Besides smaller chapels and a bell tower are also two churches dedicated to St. Greg-

ory. All in all there are beautiful portals to be seen, impressive masonry (especially in the gallery between the belltower and the gavit) and some exquisite Khachkar (Armenian stone crosses).

On the opposite hill, high above the Gosh settlement one can discern the chapel of St. Hripsime. All buildings here go back to the 12th and 13th century.

Katrien S  
Ghent,  
Belgium

*12th century monastery home to Gosh, who wrote the first codex*

As most monasteries, this one is nicely located. It has a nicely carved portal and a very nice 13th century needlework katchkar. Inside the main church most walls are covered with text, even the wall behind the altar. As in many other monasteries in Armenia, also here there are 2 mini churches inside the main church. The monastery once housed a scriptorium and large library. The latter was burned by the invading Mongols, and the scriptorium/library is still blackened supposedly from that fire. On top of the scriptorium/library is a small bell tower. Part of the complex is still underrenovation, and in another part swallows like to create their nests. One of the altars of the smaller churches has nice carved decorations, somewhat unusual in Armenia.

There is a nice 2 hour, walk through the Dilijan national park from Parz Lake to the monastery.

BuRaiR  
Muscat Governorate,  
Oman

The road to Goshavank is very beautiful. Like the other Monasteries around Armenia, Goshvank is an old monastery referred back to the 12th-13th centuries. It surrounded by a small village and there is good place for hiking around Lake Gosh. I visited this place last year and it was under renovation. Hope it's done by now. Recommended.

*Materials from [traveltoarmenia.com](http://traveltoarmenia.com) and Wikipedia used in this publication.  
Photos by David Pin, from Wikipedia and [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)*

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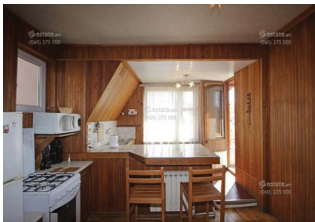
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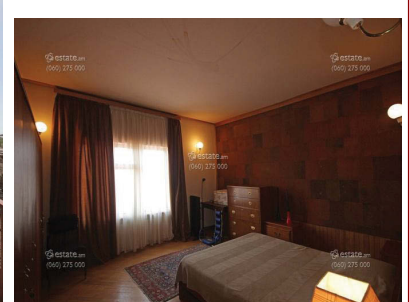
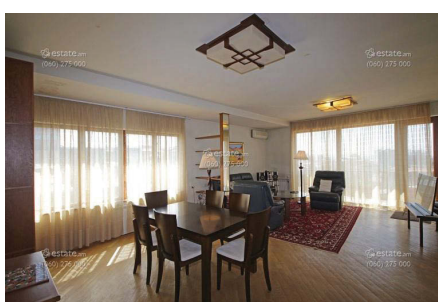
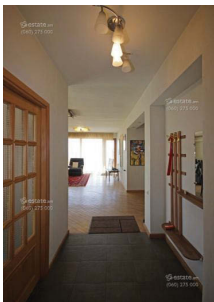
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**E-mail: contact@nt.am**  
**URL: www.nt.am**  
 Address in Armenia: 28 Isahakian Str., Yerevan, 0009, RA.  
 Tel.: (+374 60) 35-11-23  
 (+374 60) 35-11-22  
 Address in France: Masion De L' Armenie, Paris 17e - 95  
 Bld. Gouvion, France.  
 Tel.: (+33) 01 43 59 66 72  
 Address in USA: 1146 E. Lexington Dr., #112, Glendale,  
 CA, USA, 91206.  
 Tel.: (+1 818) 646 10 72  
 Հասցի՝ Բասիկյան 28, Երևան, ՀՀ, 0009