

WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND THE MEETING OF KERRY AND JANELIDZE?

SALOME KHVEDELIDZE

“We believe that an independent, unified and prosperous Georgia is essential to the peace and stability of the Caucasus”, stated the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at the meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze on March 15.

During the meeting John Kerry highlighted the importance of Georgia in the region. He also underlined the contribution of the Georgian army to the efforts in Afghanistan in the frames of the NATO mission and said that Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations are welcomed. Accordingly, it is important to maintain close relations with both Europe and the United States.

Special attention was paid to occupied territories. The United States traditionally expresses its strong support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and wished to see Georgia unified and independent.

“We hope that those problems will be solved in a peaceful manner and we will find a solution together with our international partners – the United States and our other allies”, - stressed the Foreign Minister.

The U.S. Secretary of State expressed his readiness to come to Tbilisi in June. John Kerry was in Georgia in August of 2008, while being a Senator. The visit of summer 2016 is to be his first visit as Secretary of State.

The associate professor of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Tornike Turmanidze thinks that the meeting of our Foreign Minister with Secretary of State for the US, is always a positive and important event. “This time it was the first official visit of the newly appointed Minister to the United States and, therefore, his first meeting with John Kerry holding such status. Judging by the comments that were made after the meeting, it can be concluded that the two countries discussed traditional priorities”, - he said.

It must be noted, since 2008, within the Obama Administration, despite still maintaining strategic relationship, Georgia dropped to a lower level on his administration’s list of foreign affairs priorities. Such result can be explained by several reasons.

The TSU Associate Professor, Tornike Turmanidze states

that these days the US clearly sees that on the one hand, Georgian integration to Euro-Atlantic structures increases at a relatively slow pace, and on

not believe, for instance, that the meeting can bring some noticeable changes regarding Georgia’s sped up accession to NATO”, noted Turmanidze.

hand, because of the Reset Policy with Russia (which appeared to be unsuccessful) and then because of its internationalist outlook, restrains from open con-



the other, within the “Georgian Dream” administration, a rise of pro-Russian attitudes can be indicated, which, of course, worries officials in Washington.

“Georgian society should not and probably do not hold excessive expectations behind traditional statements made at the bilateral meeting by our strategic partner. We should not believe, for instance, that the meeting can bring some

According to him, the Obama Administration underlined on multiple occasions that for accession in regards to the Euro-Atlantic Alliance Georgia needs consent from European members, including those, such as Germany and France, who are quite skeptical concerning our membership. “Considering this, the fact that John Kerry will be visiting Georgia probably in June, right before the 2016 Warsaw Summit, is a political step, which most likely holds a symbolic meaning and is also some kind of compensation for disappointment as Georgia will be denied Membership Action Plan (MAP) again”, said Tornike Turmanidze.

There are certainly no excessive expectations in Georgia. According to the Minister of Defense, Georgian delegations serve one goal of achieving success at the NATO Warsaw Summit and enhancing defense capabilities after the Summit. Senior officials munificently noted it would be wrong to expect MAP at the upcoming Summit. Deputy Foreign Minister, David Dondua, said, that the right rhetoric is essential and they do not want the society to create false expectations on MAP, because it will then only cause frustrations, which will be used by the Russian propagandists in Georgia.

As for current U.S. Administration, according to Turmanidze, it had a certain impact on the dynamics of Georgia-United States relations.

“It is certain that the Obama Administration, one the one

frontation with Russia and is not as active supporter of its neighbors (for instance, Georgia and Ukraine) to join NATO as was Bush’s Administration”, notes Turmanidze.

At the same time, of course, the government is also responsible for its policies that were not enough for Georgia to be on the United States agenda more often.

As Turmanidze says, the approach of the ruling coalition that Georgia should not be the apple of discord between the West and Russia was wrong; as was the idea that it is possible to regulate relations with Russia independently, without the West. “Instead of constantly taking action so that we keep Georgia’s issues such as NATO integration and reoccupation of our territories on the foreign policy agenda within the Obama Administration, or instead of reacting to the U.S.’s comparatively passive efforts with their own passive approach, current Georgian government is encouraging the United States to be ever more relaxed”, says international relations specialist.

It is true that the above-mentioned reasons created the situation, where the interest of the U.S. in Georgia somewhat decreased and Georgia-United States relations were not elevated to a new level. But, at the same time, it must be said that the two countries still remain strategic partners. The results of upcoming Presidential elections in the U.S. and Parliamentary elections in Georgia will determine the dynamics of these relations in the future.

Georgian First Deputy Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze has summed up results of the visit to the United States of America

Georgian First Deputy Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze highlighted results of the meetings of the U.S.-Georgia Strategic Partnership Commission’s (SPC) Democracy and Governance Working Group and People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Working Group held on 12 and 13 November in Washington.

Within the framework of the Democracy and Governance Working Group, the United States commended Georgia’s implemented reforms towards the strengthening of democracy and governance, as well as Georgia’s achievements in reforming the judiciary, law enforcement and security services, administrative and pre-trial detention, and the corrections system; Georgia’s efforts to improve the civil service, to include civil society in decision making bodies, to ensure respect for the rights of all, including members of minority populations, empowerment of women

The sides reaffirmed the importance of the aforesaid reforms in terms of Georgia’s democratic development and European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The United States pledged its continued support and assistance in achieving these goals.

Within the framework of the People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Working Group, the sides highlighted Georgia’s progress in the areas of education, culture, sport and health as well as prospects for the further strengthening of bilateral co-operation.

According to Mikheil Janelidze, the sides discussed within the framework of the two working groups indicate how deep and comprehensive the U.S.-Georgia strategic partnership is and how important a role the United States plays in Georgia’s democratic transformation and in ensuring the welfare of Georgian population.

At the meetings held in Washington on 12 and 13 November, the Georgian delegation was led by co-chairs First Deputy Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze, First Deputy Minister of Justice Alexander Baramidze and First Deputy State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality Ketevan Tsikhelashvili.

The U.S. delegation was led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs the USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia, and the Department of Justice Regional Director for Eurasia. The delegation included broad U.S. government representation.

DUE TO THE EURO ATLANTIC ASPIRATIONS GEORGIA HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN PUNISHED

EKA PKHOVELISHVILI

The representatives of the occupation authority forces cut down apple plants in the village Jariasheni and started the construction of a new road last week.

“They are constructing a new road directly in our land. Moreover, this construction is being carried out near the village stadium and pastures. According to them, this area is a border zone. There must be a line of occupation, and therefore, the road needs to be in every day patrol. Our territory is fully under their zone of occupation. About thirty to forty hectares of land are unable to be accessed,” the resident of the village, Jariasheni David Gogiashvili, told IPN.

According to the same information agency, another local from the village, Eldar Gogiashvili, asked armed occupants to use his cutaway trees as a firewood and this issue request was accepted.

“I asked them to take my cutaway apple trees with them. I looked after them for so many years and now two areas are occupied. One of them is thirty meters and another, fifty. We lost a total of eighty hundredths of land and now there are Russians and Ossetians,” explained Eldar Gogiashvili.

Currently, more than twenty percent of Georgian territory is occupied by Russia with creeping occupation and illegal arrests. Russia’s occupied terri-

ories so-called “administrative border” is changing from time to time and more and more territory remains beyond the barbed wire.

In 2008, during the Russia’s military aggression against Georgia, Georgian authorities and the population had been driven out of the former South Ossetia Autonomous District and the whole area fell under the rule of occupants. The villages, which were inhabited mostly by Georgians, are almost fully destroyed. Georgians were also driven out of mixed villages.

Overall, since 2008, Georgia has lost control of the 151 settlements, but creeping occupation is still ongoing. The village of Jariasheni is laced with barbed wires (not completely sure what this sentence was meant to say). At first, the divided Jariasheni fell almost entirely under the control of occupants. Local residents cannot move to the area safely. They cannot use their own land and they are unable to even go to the cemetery. In this the village of Gori district (it is either a village or a district, not both) barbed wire appeared after Russian aggression. At that time, the village was divided in two parts. Now, with the creeping occupation, residents worry they will lose their entire village.

The European Union Monitoring Mission arrived in the village, which is the only mission that monitors and reports on the

further development of Russian-Georgian conflict. However, none of them are allowed to patrol in the occupied territory.

First Deputy Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani said that the international society is fully informed about the ongoing processes? in the occupied territories.

“The foreign Ministry immediately brought into force every tool. In particular, three chairmen of the Geneva are informed – the EU, OSCE and the EU representatives. Moreover, we have constant contact with the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, and, in particular, with its head, who is in the place and observing the processes in detail. In addition, our delegation in Geneva has added this issue to their agenda,” David Zalkaliani pointed out.

In parallel with creeping occupation, on March 16, the Prime Minister’s special representative in relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin in Prague. Before the meeting, Karasin made a critical remark. According to him, it is difficult to talk about the abolition of the visa regime, and this is because of the statements made by the President of Georgia and other Prime Ministers. The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister was talking about the necessity of changing the philos-



ophy of two countries relations and reminding them of upcoming elections.

As Abashidze pointed out, despite the fact that the format does not include one of the main issues of the meeting which was the occupation line and started commencement of construction of new the road near the village Jariasheni.

“Everything that was happening in the occupational line, or in the region, takes place in our area, it is our approach to this problem. This is not the border; the border is in a different area. Such action is a violation of our sovereignty and territorial integrity,” said Zurab Abashidze.

Despite the tense background, Zurab Abashidze said that the tone of the meeting in Prague meeting was fruitful; it is almost predetermined to that it will keep make some Georgians free from

Russian jails.

Despite the opposition of Georgian authorities and the intervention of the international community, Russia is impudently continuing creeping annexation to invade Georgian territories. The existence of the international organizations’ monitoring missions is not a hindering factor for Russia’s continuing occupation. That is why Post-Soviet space is unique as it is the only region, where, in fact, the cold war has not ended yet.

So as to bring its national interests into force, Russia does its best to increase creeping occupation in Georgian regions. In this case, real pragmatic policy from the Georgian government is to strengthen its institutions and maintains its Western course. Active meetings and communications with the international society must be proceeded.

Mikheil Janelidze has delivered a speech at the Atlantic Council

As part of his visit to the United States of America, Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze delivered a speech at the Atlantic Council where he spoke about the necessity of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration, Russian aggression, ongoing reforms in Georgia and prospects for Georgia’s economic development.

“We are moving towards the EU and NATO and we are progressing on that path. We are strengthening our importance as a key player in the region” – Mikheil Janelidze said.

According to the Minister, the biggest emotional achievement for the Georgian people is

the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU - the agreement which provides for the long-awaited prospect for Georgia to become a full-fledged member of the European Community.

In this light, Mikheil Janelidze spoke about the success Georgia has achieved in terms of implementing the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan saying that Georgia has fulfilled all requirements and recommendations under the VLAP, which means that “Georgia is a reliable and trusted partner to which the EU can open its borders”.

While on the theme of Geor-

gia’s integration with NATO, the Minister emphasised the irreversibility of this process highlighting the Government’s efforts towards strengthening Georgia’s defense capabilities and interoperability with NATO.

“We are working hard together with our partners to fix the progress in our integration with NATO during the Warsaw Summit” – the Minister said.

The Georgian Foreign Minister paid special attention to the gravest challenge facing Georgia – occupation of the Georgian territories by Russia.

According to Mikheil Janelidze, despite provocations,

Georgia tries to be careful and pragmatic and works with the international community to find peaceful solution to the conflict. “We try to do more to engage with the people living on the occupied territories to provide them with all the benefits we are providing to people living in the Georgian-controlled territories” – Mikheil Janelidze said.

In his presentation, the Georgian Foreign Minister spoke extensively about the reforms carried out by the Georgian Government, including about the four-point reform plan initiated by Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and the steps taken

towards strengthening the rule of law, inclusive government, fundamental rights and freedoms and engagement of civil society.

Georgia’s economic development, including the improvement of investment environment, attraction of investments, liberalization of the tax system, economic growth and reduction of unemployment were also the key highlights of the Minister’s speech.

The Minister underlined the importance of such projects as the New Silk Road, Anaklia Deep Sea Port, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway and Southern Gas Corridor construction.

WHO STANDS BEHIND THE SURVEILLANCE VIDEOS WHICH AIMED TO BLACKMAIL THE SOCIETY?

NINI JAPARIDZE

Surveillance videos recently spread on social media, immediately becoming the current subject of discussion. Despite high interests, the society media made the right decision and did its best in hindering the videos. The Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, said that investigations had to be on high level as it was directly connected to the dignity of the state. According to him, all the offenders had to be strictly punished.

The following day, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia arrested five people. One of them was a woman and another was a highly ranked official. Unfortunately, investigators still do not have an answer to who did this crime and why. Was it a personal attack, or was it the predetermined attempt to cause chaos before the elections? Georgian politicians and public figures expressed different ideas over the issue.

Public defender Ucha Nanuashvili immediately commented on the happenstance. As he said, it was destructing that the videos were spread against oppositional politicians just six months before the elections. He applied to the prosecutor and asked to investigate the case as soon as possible.

"It is also worrying that half a year is left before the elections and the spread of illegal secret videos about opposition politicians have again become active. Unfortunately, the public has

not seen any results regarding the investigation of a number of similar cases. I hope that the Prosecutor's Office will promptly investigate these crimes; the guilty persons will be revealed and duly punished", he said in his statement.

The leader of the oppositional party "Free Democrats", Irakli Alasania, also gave the case a political meaning. He said that those people who play this kind of dirty games always lose the elections.

Expert Mamuka Areshidze, expressed a different opinion. According to him, the only force who could benefit from the videos and their consequences could be the opposition.

"That was beneficial to those part of the opposition who wanted to cause chaos, destabilization and discredit to the government. Reasons could be to stress the main attention of the society from important issues to the less important issues. It also might be the interest of a "foreign country". Currently, I am working on it. I am trying to find out what could be the thing that was left beyond the societies attention," said Areshidze.

Leader of the Young Reformers, Irakli Glonti, has a similar opinion about the issue. He accepts the idea that the surveillance videos could have been spread by a "foreign country" such as Russia.

"I also consider this version. In



my opinion this is a long chain and we should not separate it. I do think that Russian intelligence forces stand behind the videos. Georgian government should not be provoked by this trick. Now, they should be even stronger. Regarding the purpose of the surveillance videos, I do not know. I am always very sincere and I can't speak without arguments," said Glonti.

The Young Reformers leader thinks that the issue could not be beneficial for the government. According to him, there is a high possibility that Russian intelligence services are behind this.

"They possibly bought the tapes, they would do this with pleasure, as these kind of tapes for the society like us, who are very emotional would work very well. Government should ponder over this issue and think whether the Russian forces stand behind us or not," said Glonti.

While speaking about the surveillance videos, it should be mentioned that the situation in Georgia has really strained since then. It was said that the main purpose of the videos was to reveal the hidden negotiations between political forces. In the following video, it was said that the

main idea was to reveal all the traitors. Public figures and journalists were on the list.

In addition to this happenstance, deputy chair of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Gregory Karasin, made extremely negative statements towards Georgia. He even asked to abolish the law regarding the occupation.

If one will follow the idea that the videos were spread by Russian forces, it becomes clear that this is how Russia is trying to disrupt people and cause a dissonance in Georgian politics before the elections.

MIA PREVENTED THE FACT OF ROBBERY AT BAKU-SUPSA PIPELINE



The officers of the Special Tasks Department of the Special and Emergency Measures Center during patrolling in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region at the 82nd km. of Baku-Supsa Pipeline in the vicinity of Tsilkani and Mukhrani on one of the irrigation channels found generator, welding equipment, bags, tubes and variety of suspicious items. As a result of a detailed examination of the main pipeline it was detected the hole dug with a newly commenced illegal connection in it for misappropriation of oil. The mentioned items were seized as material evidences.

The officers of Mtskheta-Mti-

aneti Special Tasks Division of the Special Tasks Department forwarded the case for further investigation to Mukhrani Police. The investigation is in process on the fact of attempted robbery (Article 19-177 of the Criminal Code of Georgia).

The officers of the Special Tasks Department constantly patrol the strategically important targets, ensure safety of the mentioned territories and security of the population.

Mr. Chris Shliter, the General Manager of "BP- Georgia" thanked the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The representative of "BP- Georgia" awarded with

letters of gratitude Mr. Zurab Chabashvili, the Director of the Strategic Pipelines Protection Department of the Special and Emergency Measures Center, his Deputy and 19 officers of the same Department for their contribution to the maintenance security of strategic pipelines, excellent performance of service duties and deepening of relations with civil society.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs actively cooperates with the representation of "BP- Georgia" that contributes to the effectiveness of the security system of the trunk pipelines on the territory of Georgia.

WHAT IS BEHIND RUSSIA'S PARTIAL SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL?

GURAM PTSKIALADZE

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced last Monday that he has ordered Russian forces to begin withdrawing from Syria, saying they have achieved their goals in the country. The withdrawal process started on Tuesday.

As the Kremlin officials and Putin said, the decision was made after having discussed it with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in a telephone call.

"The two leaders noted that the operations conducted by Russia's Aerospace Forces have brought about a real turnabout in the fight against the terrorists in Syria, throwing their infrastructure into disarray and causing them substantial damage," the Kremlin said.

Putin gave an explanation for this decision: "I think that the task that was assigned to the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces as a whole has achieved their goal, and so I order the defence minister to start tomorrow withdrawing the main part of our military factions from the Syrian Arab Republic," Putin said.

Meanwhile, that White House said that Putin had a conversation about Syria with Barack Obama on Monday: "They discussed President Putin's announcement today of a partial withdrawal of Russian forces from Syria and the next steps required to fully implement the cessation of hostilities with the goal of advancing the political negotiations on resolution of the conflict. President Obama welcomed the much-needed reduction in violence since the beginning of the cessation, but stressed that continuing offensive actions by Syrian regime forces risk undermining both the Cessation of Hostilities and the UN-led political process".

Speaking on the side-line of the talks Tuesday, Syria's main opposition group, the High Negotiations Committee, said it welcomed the Russian draw-down.

"What really keep(s) Assad in power now, what keep(s) crimes at high levels up until this moment, is the presence of the Russian forces there," opposition group spokesman Salim al-Muslet told reporters.

"I believe if they (are) serious about pulling out ... it will be an end to crimes in Syria and will help us to put an end to terrorism there in Syria."

Whereas Russia decided to withdraw its militaries from Syria, Geneva Peace Talks sponsored by the U.N. have been held between the Syrian government and their opposition. The talks focus on some key and tough issues such as how to govern Syria, a new constitution and presidential elections. The U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 2254 aimed at establishing "a credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance" in Syria. But the regime and opposition will not face each other directly. Instead, the U.N. special envoy Staffan de Mistura will speak with each side separately.

But while the Russian campaign is winding down, it will not be a complete withdrawal. Russia will maintain an aviation support center in Syria to monitor compliance with the on-going cessation of hostilities, the Kremlin said. So, Russia will maintain its existing military bases in Syria, but will remove the "main air grouping" of the country's air force, according to a statement from the Kremlin.

The declared Russian withdrawal follows two weeks of relative calm in Syria under a ceasefire announced in February by Russia and the U.S., one that, in spite of numerous reported violations, has remained in place, dramatically reducing the overall level of lethal violence.

Russia started taking part and engaging in operations on September 30, 2015. The Russian military embarked on a series of operations in Syria that have been prepared from the begin-

ning of September onwards with the establishment of a south base of Latakia and the deployment of the relevant forces. While the goal should have been to support the US-led coalition against Assad and particularly ISIS, Russia engaged in a military campaign in Syria in support of embattled President Bashar al-Assad.

At that time, Moscow said its operation aimed at defeating "terrorist targets" there, but while the presence of Russian military forces remained in Syria, civilians appeared to be the victims of Russian airstrikes, not ISIS. What else did Russia want in Syria? Putin's decision looked like a campaign to make Russia a major military power in the entire Middle East.

Russia has always avoided joining the US-led coalition of 50 states and international organizations that was formed to counter ISIS. Instead, the Russian government began early on to forge an alliance with Syria, Iran, Iraq and the Lebanese Hezbollah, even though these actors are pursuing different interests.

Syria is considered Russia's ally in the Middle East: President Assad asked Moscow for help, and Russia has stood by its ally in very difficult circumstances. American politicians often mentioned that the Russian military campaign represented Moscow's return to the Middle East. According to these statements, Moscow has been absent in the area since Anwar Sadat switched Egypt's loyalty from the Soviet Union to the United States.

The Assad regime has been Moscow's most dependable ally in the Middle East for more than forty years. Assad's father, President Hafez Assad, asked the Soviet Union for military aid and gave the Soviet Navy a base in Tartus, on the Mediterranean coast, in 1971, when Bashar Assad was six years old.

The Russian government has never hidden its willingness to act against all forces fighting the Damascus regime and, therefore, Russia's initial airstrikes were clearly designed to help Assad defend his home territory in western Syria against a growing rebel threat. That's why the first targets included units of the U.S.-backed rebel coalition instead of Islamic State, which is concentrated in eastern Syria.

Russia intended to pursue several different goals with its

military intervention in Syria. First, Moscow was pursuing the goal of protecting the Assad regime from opposition members of all stripes, and not just from ISIS. A glance at the regions of Syria where Russian air attacks took place makes clear that the purpose was to crush opposition groups in the north of the country and on the periphery of areas controlled by Assad's troops, as well as rebel enclaves. Thus, the fight against ISIS appeared to be of secondary importance.

Furthermore, President Putin declared that the goal of the intervention was to stabilize what he deemed to be the legally recognized government in Damascus, and create the preconditions for a political compromise in Syria. Until further notice, the strategic goal was therefore to preserve an Alawite "core Syria". This has been achieved by the creation of an undeclared, de-facto no-fly zone for the western anti-ISIS coalition over parts of Syria, whose effect was barely lessened by the Russian-American Memorandum on Air Safety in Syria of October 20.

Second, following the Ukraine crisis, Russia seemed to link its military intervention with efforts to make the international community see it as a central actor in containing or even solving the Syria conflict. At the same time, Moscow was anxious to demonstrate, by building a counter-alliance with Syria, Iran and Iraq, that this alliance was more effective than the US-led coalition and that, moreover, it had greater potential legitimacy since it was based on initiatives by the respective governments and includes local partners.

The advantage of the Russian position became evident on October 9, when the US government announced that it would discontinue its program to train and equip Syrian rebels, which had only started in December 2014. In September, Washington had been forced to admit that it had trained fewer than fifty fighters to date, and announced that it would concentrate instead on providing support for existing groups already fighting ISIS in Syria. Thus, while Moscow had a military partner "on the ground" in Syria, the international coalition – some parts of which were committed to fighting ISIS, others the Assad regime – had to forewent backing almost entire-

ly. While agreeing to participate in military intervention in Syria, Russia had offered its cooperation in the fight against ISIS in Syria, but it came at a price: President Assad must have remained in office for the time being. For Moscow, this appeared to be less about the President's person than about positioning itself against regime change brought about by the West.

Speaking of Putin's motivation on taking back its militaries from Syria, one should mention several factors. One reason might be as follows: the benefits of Russia staying in Syria no longer outweighed the costs. If one was to take into consideration the current circumstances concerning prices of oil and sanctions upon Russia, this reason seems to be a relevant one.

By such a decision, Putin conceivably pointed out that it is time to solve the problem out on the table without military intervention. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Russia's decision occurred while Geneva negotiations has been taking place between Syrian government and the opposition. The Kremlin might have assumed that whereas their presence in Syria costs a lot (and, at least, Russia helped Bashar regime to stay in power), there is a high possibility that Geneva talks will bring positive outcomes for Russia that includes maintaining Assad's regime, first and foremost.

After securing Assad's regime, we may see the partial withdrawal as a message to the Assad government to not take Russia's military aid for granted and to be more flexible in the upcoming peace negotiations. Putin may be trying to press Assad into accepting a political settlement to the war. We might see Putin's decision as a part of negotiations between US and Russia to solve Syria's civil war with the help of negotiations.

Russia's warming relations with Saudi Arabia has helped to bring about an OPEC-Russian sponsored freeze in oil production, with only Iran refusing to comply. With the Syrian withdrawal, Russia has tempered a major political feud with the Saudis over Russia's support for Assad, a move that at once increases the prospects for a Russian-Saudi agreement on oil production cutbacks.



NORTH KOREA ADVANCES ITS NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES – THREATS TO THE WORLD

GIORGI CHAPIDZE

North Korea tested two short-range ballistic missiles on March 17, according to the South Korean military and United States defense officials. Joint Chiefs of Staff of South Korea stated that one ballistic missile have covered 800 kilometers towards the east coast of the NK (from Pyongyang 800 kilometers is enough to reach Japanese islands) and another disappeared at the height of seventeen kilometers. Even though South Korean militants have declared that they had been monitoring the situation and would have taken necessary measurement in case of violation of the county's airspace, Kim Jong-un's war rhetoric is becoming more convincing as North Korea steadily refines its missile warheads and delivery systems.

North Korea has been threatening to launch pre-emptive and offensive nuclear strike in parallel to the joint military exercises of 17,000 American and 300,000 South Korean troops that is considered to be the largest training in recent history. South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman declared that there are no direct signs of provocation from the northern border but Seoul plans to continuously strengthen surveillance. Kim has stated that, considering the United States growing imperialism and influence on the countries, North Korea should improve the quality of its nuclear power in order to protect the independence of its citizens.

In recent years, North Korea has been claiming to possess enough nuclear capabilities to

cope with the US (if Washington instigates the war) also its officials believe that having the H-bomb in their arsenal is the right of all sovereign states. These statements are neglected by international society since Kim Jong-un has failed to test North Korean nuclear bombs several times but there is no doubt that Pyongyang has nuclear bomb capability. The problem with its nuclear missile is the delivery system that is not as far-reaching as Kim is willing to be but it is gradually becoming more severe and dangerous.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) negotiated in 1968 creates a framework for monitoring the spread of the nuclear materials that is supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of United Nations. North Korea during the membership of the treaty had been bargaining with IAEA and western state leaders since 1993 to get economic assistance and promised to terminate its nuclear program in return.

In 1999 NK admitted international inspection for the sake of lifting US trade sanctions but in 2002 its ongoing nuclear program was detected. After that occurrence, Pyongyang opted out of the IAEA and tested its first nuclear bomb in 2006. North Korea also tested its nuclear rockets in 2009 and 2013 using plutonium or uranium as a raw material but, as its officials stated in 2016, they have launched more advanced Hydrogen bombs. Furthermore, in the past month, the US intelligence service specified that North Korea would soon have enough



plutonium for an austere nuclear bomb and will acquire medium or long range delivery system in contrast with the current short-range ballistics.

On February 25, the USA and China negotiated an agreement to impose tougher sanctions against NK. This cooperation is seen to be a change in Beijing's stance, since its government had been opposing such a restrictions. Recently proposed sanctions bans trade of conventional weapons, luxury goods, jets, and aviation fuel with North Korea and also prohibits companies and individuals that have been trading with the Pyongyang illegally. Additionally, the parties concluded to introduce mandatory cargo inspection on the border of NK. However, several gaps still remain. For example, Pyongyang would be able to buy and sell oil, coal and iron since these materials are not used for the nuclear program that is a contested assumption.

Presumably North Korean regime is aware that both conventional and missile strike against South Korea or Japan means that Seoul and Washington would combine forces and intervene to topple the dictator and annihilate its nuclear program. A retaliatory attack would destroy NK's current government while its first strike is not capable of triggering serious damages to the neighboring states. Considering these realities, one may suppose that Kim Jong-un uses war rhetoric and coercive wording only with the intention to appear as a young tough leader and a commander in chief; but we can never be sure. Also, North Korean missile arsenals areas direct threat to US citizens residing within the coverage zone of the possible nuclear attack. This premise can be used to justify USA's increased deterrence tactics by means of disposing antiballistic systems in South Korea, Japan or on Pacific islands.

From today's perspective, the only way to tackle with the North Korean issue is believed to be imposing more severe economic sanctions but not everyone shares such an approach. Chinese government still states that sanctions either strong or soft ones would not change the dictator's outlook on nuclear programs and only harm civilians' welfare. North Korea spends almost a quarter of its GDP on military while a big part of its 22 million populations are starving. North Korean population would have been affected by famine to a greater extent if there was no foreign economic aid. In this light, increasing economic sanctions do not seem to be a very humanitarian resolution to the North Korean problem.

Free world leaders should coordinate their actions and apply the measures that would bring a real change to one of the most hazardous security challenges in modern world.

Implementation Report of the 2015 National Action Plan of the Association Agreement was discussed at the European Parliament

On March 17, the Implementation Report of the 2015 National Action Plan of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU was discussed at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, David Bakradze, Deputy Minister of Justice, Alexander Baramidze and Deputy

Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Genadi Arveladze informed the Members of the European Parliament on implemented reforms and associated activities.

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, Tedo Japaridze addressed the Members of the European Parliament. Head of the Center for the EU Studies

and chairman of the Georgian National Platform of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership, Kakha Gogolashvili reported on the engagement of the civil society in the implementation process of the Association Agreement.

The discussion participants deliberated over the implementation of the Association Agreement, including the Deep and

Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement, as well as, over the importance of the process monitoring and existing mechanisms in this respect.

At the end of the report, the representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament, on their side, underscored the demonstrated progress by Georgia and shared their recommendations. Mem-

bers of the European Parliament stressed the importance of timely decision making in respect of the visa liberalization.

Within the framework of the working visit to the Kingdom of Belgium, the State Minister David Bakradze also held meetings with the Members of the European Parliament and researchers and media representatives accredited in Brussels.

MELANO – A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF A MUSHROOM BUSINESS FROM KURDGELAURI

TAMAR UMPRIANI

EXCLUSIVE

Twenty-five Years old Melano Dadalauri is working on her Master's degree in Public Administration Politics at Ilia State University. Before beginning her Master's degree, received her Bachelor's diploma in International Relations. However, her current activity is completely different from her profession and studies. Melano is cultivating mushrooms in her homeland of Kurdgelauri. "Observer" has talked to her about her small business and future plans about involving her role in developing the agricultural sector.

Hello Melano, what was the main reason you first got involved in the agricultural sector?

Despite the fact that the development of the agricultural sector should be an important issue for Georgia, it still has a lot of problems to work on. Young businessmen do not consider the agricultural sector as a profitable profession. With my success, I aim to prove that they are wrong and that the agricultural sector is a good opportunity chance for a successful business.

When did you decide to start your business and why did you choose mushrooms as a business identity?

Many people are not aware of how useful tree mushrooms are. They are healthy, biologically clean and they do not contain chemicals.

This kind of edible mushrooms contains proteins, minerals and

vitamins. Around 200 species are used in medicine. It is useful as a medication against cancer, Hepatitis and Alzheimer's disease.

It feels nice to know that I produce ecologically clean and useful products, which necessary for people's health. I am able to supply people with healthy food and also earn a profit from it.

How much initial capital did you need to start the business?

In the beginning, I just bought the most necessary items like mushroom seeds and other details. Then, I made a hothouse to produce mushrooms and just started the business. This year, the program "Produce in Georgia" financed us. It encouraged me a lot to think and start making the business bigger.

What are the challenges for starting an agricultural business in our country? I mean special technologies, climate, difficulties to get mycelium and other details.

This year has started with a lot of good changes. I have become a member of YPARD (Young Professionals for Agricultural Development). I want to thank Mr. Davit Gogialishvili, the YPARD representative in Georgia, once again for giving me this great opportunity. Being part of YPARD let me contact colleagues from abroad who have been working in this field for years. Staying in touch with them is one more step to achieving success.

In regards to the conditions in Georgia for producing mush-

rooms, I would say that it is pretty unproblematic. The climate is great for growing mushrooms and the cost of mycelium is cheap enough as well. Of course, it's difficult to make start a business, but if you have a strong desire and work hard anything is possible.

How many employees do you have and what kind of skills should they have for producing mushrooms?

We are registered as micro-entrepreneurs, so we cannot hire any employees for now. My family members and I are producing mushrooms by ourselves. It is hard work, especially the seeding process, but after that is finished you just need to pay attention and be careful, physical labor isn't necessary after seeding. The person who is responsible for mushrooms should know how to take care of them properly, he or she needs a deep knowledge of their business and needs to attain a lot of information.

Where is the main market for your production?

The only one is currently is the local Telavi market. Here, the price is higher too compared to other parts of the country. One kilogram is sold at around three to seven Laris, deepens on the season.

How high is the competition on the market? Are you in contact with other entrepreneurs?

The competition in this field is only in Tbilisi, where several big corporations produce mushrooms. We do not have any competitors in Telavi. Of course, we communicate with other entrepreneurs. I really appreciate them because they are always ready to help and teach me. They are motivated to help newcomers in this field.

What's your activity outside of the hothouse?

Producing mushrooms takes a lot time and energy. I am studying in Tbilisi and have my hothouse in Telavi, so I often have to travel between these two destinations. Honestly, it is tiring, but it is what I want to do. I always find time for friends, travel and myself, but at the cost of some sleepless nights. Sometimes, my restless routine is very tough but I am happy I make it work.

Is the government interested in supporting the new agricul-

tural sector initiations?

Since 2015 supportive programs for micro- and macro-entrepreneurs have been developing in every region of Georgia "Produce in Georgia" helps newcomers to the agricultural sector make their ideas a reality. For example, the program financed my business, which helped me improve the heating and cooling system in the hothouse.

You are participating in the International Business Forum where your business idea is one of the best. Why did you decide to take part in it and what are your future plans if you succeed?

The first qualifying round of Business Forum has ended. My business idea was selected for second place out of 428 applicants by a number of social media supporters. Unfortunately, I wasn't one of the winners chosen by the judges. Still, this was a positive experience in my life, the forum increased awareness

of my business inside and outside of Georgia. I have met many potential partners with whom I would collaborate with in the future.

What is your advice to young people who have an idea but no funds to make it a reality?

I started my business with a minimum amount of money. You just need to have a goal and find the most convenient way to make it come true. There are many donors in the agricultural sector nowadays, you can try to apply for their support and prove to them that your idea is the right one.

Also, before starting any business, you must realize that it will take all your free time and energy. If you do not love the idea of your business it is impossible to achieve success because only thinking about the profit cannot guarantee your success. So, choose the right field you want to work in, try your best, and forget laziness, and you will achieve it.

FRENCH BILLIONAIRE TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH GEORGIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

"World Entrepreneur of the Year 2015", founder of French company "Altrad Group" - one of the leaders of the construction business, writer and President of French elite rugby club "Montpellier" Mohed Altrad is visiting Georgia.

French billionaire, who arrived in Tbilisi pursuant to invitation of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, "Entrepreneurship Development Agency" and EY Georgia conducted a meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili.

The sides discussed the favorable investment environment. The Prime Minister noted that the Georgian government welcomes

French investments. Mohed Altrad is interested in Georgian culture and history.

During his visit in Georgia, Mohed Altrad will conduct a lecture on the spirit of entrepreneurship for Georgian students.

Subsidiary companies of "Altrad Group" are present in more than 100 countries. Last year, 17 000 people were employed in these companies. Annual turnover of company was around 1.6 billion Euros.

The meeting was attended by representatives of "Altrad Group", Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Dimitry Kumsishvili and Deputy Minister Ketevan Bochorishvili.



PRISONERS RELEASED ON ENGURI BRIDGE HAS A LOT TO SAY

NINI JAPARIDZE

EXCLUSIVE

Gela Iluridze is one of the prisoners who were released as a result of the peace negotiations between Georgian, Ossetian and Abkhazian sides. De facto governments of Abkhazia and Ossetia gave Georgia thirteen prisoners, in exchange for that Georgians released four prisoners. They were sentenced for participating in the terrorist attack, which took place in the city of Georgia, Gori in 2005. Ossetians were sentenced without the right to parole.

The Georgian prisoner, who accepted the exclusive interview with Observer, was born in the Akhgori region. He is married and has two children. During his imprisonment, his family was living in Tbilisi. Before going behind bars, he had his own business running the canteen. As he said, his imprisonment was very unexpected for him. Local police of Tskhinvali blamed him for being a spy for the Georgian Intelligence Service.

"I was detained on April 21, 2015 that was the moment when I was on my way to my home from Tbilisi. Those who captured me were well armed. They did not listen to my explanation and took me to the police. All the accusations against me were nonsense and they blamed me for the spy job. Court did not have any evidence, though despite that, they imprisoned me and sentenced me to twelve years.

When asked he endured any kind of physical violations towards him, on origin basis, Iluridze said that nothing like that has ever happened to him in prison. The only physical abuse he went through was when he was captured. Police were trying to persuade him to confess to the crime which he refused to do.

"Since my imprisonment, I spent ten months in isolation, and the last two in prison. I can say

that the conditions were awful. At least the personnel were feeding me and there was electricity so I was not cold. No Ossetians or Russians have ever insulted me. The biggest problem was fighting against the police. They wanted me to confess to a crime that I never did. They never took my testimony into consideration and imprisoned me to twelve years without any evidence or proof.

According to Iluridze, the negotiations regarding his liberation were discussed several times; he even hoped to meet the new year with his family, though he is thankful for the results.

"I knew that I was innocent. I believed that God would save. I heard about negotiations in November, local human rights workers visited me and asked if I wanted to be exchanged for Ossetian prisoners. I accepted their offer. According to my information, there are currently no prisoners in the Ossetian prison. All of them, including me, were released", said Iluridze.

Nowadays he lives in Vazisubani along with his family. He does not plan to go to Tskhinvali again, though he told us that he is extremely thankful to the Office of the State Minister of Georgia of Reconciliation and Civic Equality. "If not for the negotiations and the effort of Minister Paata Zakareishvili I would be in the prison for a long time," he said. Mikheil Kristesashvili, 18, was also detained in so-called South Ossetia. According to him, police arrested him for nothing. Kristesashvili wanted to collect wood for the winter, but officers told him that he illegally crossed the border and broke the law. In his interview with us, Kristesashvili said he had no idea about the border, as there was no sign at all.

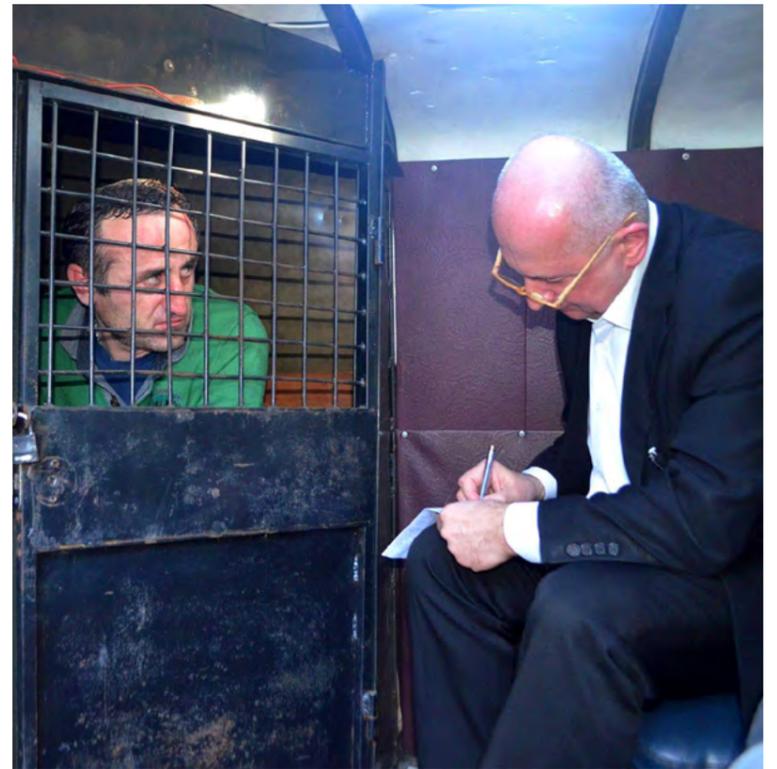
"I was detained on November

20 2015, the judge accused me of crossing the border illegally. I spent almost six months behind bars. All the Georgians who were with me in the prison were released. Regarding the conflict, yes, I experience physical abuse. I had my head cut as a result of the confrontation with other prisoners. Frankly speaking, locals do not like Georgians. All of them were speaking about our faults in the war that took place many years ago. I have no idea why this is happening. Youth should be friendly but they do not care about it. It is clear that they do not like Georgians and all the fighting in the prison were because of that. Before being arrested, I served as a soldier and I plan to continue my career after my release", said Kristesashvili.

Observer spoke to another Georgian prisoner who asked us not to identify his name. As he said, he is not afraid but he prefers to be careful as his parents and many of his relatives live in South Ossetia. According to him, local police are doing their best to detain Georgians no matter what. As he said, the more Georgians there are, the more Ossetians have chances to be released in Georgian prison.

While speaking about the released prisoners, it must be mentioned that there is still one prisoner, Giorgi Lukava, who stays in Abkhazian prison. Abkhazians rejected his release which left him behind bars. As the Office of the State Minister of Georgia of Reconciliation and Civic Equality said in its official statement, it not the end and the office will do its best to free Georgian prisoners. Minister Paata Zakareishvili said that the liberation of Georgian prisoners was the result of a hard job that lasted for a long time.

"As a result of the peace agreement, Georgia took back its



citizens who were arrested in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the last six to seven years. For me, it is extremely important to leave the old politics in the past. Three years should be necessary for Abkhazia and Ossetia to see out peaceful approaches. This certain case, which took place March 10, is the result of that. We started our negotiations in May 2015. There were many troubles, though I am content with the result. It is better than I could ever imagine", said Minister.

Freed Georgian prisoners was the news of the day, though there were also a lot of questions. How could Abkhazia and South Ossetia release Georgian prisoners when the relationship between us is not as good as it might be? Some thought that Russia was behind these negotiations. Zakareishvili said that none of is believed to be true.

"I want to highlight that Russians never participated in the peace agreement as I never had contact with Russians regarding this issue. Moreover this case

has never been discussed on Abashidze-Karasin format", implied Zakareishvili.

Regarding the Russian authorities and the representatives of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, they said that the Geneva discussions played a huge role. While speaking about the Geneva negotiations it must be said that the issue regarding the occupied territories of Georgia was really discussed under the format. All the representative of the conflict, Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian and Russian attended the discussions. Representatives of the European Union and the UN even guided the negotiations as Co-Chairmen. Since the release of the prisoners, they released a statement saying the decision has to be profitable for all sides. And it was the sign of future perspectives.

"Coming to a mutual understanding about the release of detainees opens good prospects for further engagement," EU, OSCE and UN envoys said in their joint statement.

FEMALES TO STUDY AT CADETS' MILITARY LYCEUM

General Giorgi Kvinitadze Cadets' Military Lyceum will meet a new academic year with innovation. Girls will also have opportunity to study at the Lyceum from September.

Deputy Defence Minister Ana Dolidze delivered the above mentioned information to the Head of President's Administration Giorgi Abashishvili today while visiting the military educational institution. "This year

we have novelty. In September the Cadets' Military Lyceum will admit girls. With this direction Georgia will be a leader in the region. This educational institution will be a unique place which prepares males and females for military career", outlined Ana Dolidze.

Director of Cadets' Military Lyceum, Colonel Alekski Kekelesia hosted the guests and viewed them the infrastructure of the in-

stitution. Later on Ana Dolidze and Giorgi Abashishvili met with the tutors of the Lyceum and observed the studying process on the ground.

"Cadets' Military Lyceum is a high level secondary educational institution. The MoD spends approximately 10 000 GEL on each cadet. The Lyceum is one of the best institutions in Georgia. Therefore, we pay a great attention to attract motivated youth

to become successful military in the future" - stated Ana Dolidze.

Giorgi Abashishvili talked about the future cooperation between the President's Administration and Cadets' Military Lyceum. He also highlighted the priorities of the Lyceum. "It's very essential that the Lyceum meets a new academic year with novelty. The President's Administration tries to take part in the improvement process of the in-

stitution. At the very first stage, we will render assistance to the library. We also discuss all possibilities with the Lyceum administration how to improve conditions here" - said Giorgi Abashishvili. As he outlined, the Lyceum is the best institution in Georgia with its infrastructure, educational quality, order and perspectives which will compete with any other private and public schools.

“THIRTEENTH MONTH POETS” – THE BRIDGE BETWEEN POETRY AND YOUTH

 GVANTSA SILIKASHVILI **EXCLUSIVE**

World Poetry Day is celebrated on March 21. To celebrate this day, the “Biblus” gallery was treated to “thirteenth month poets”. Adolescents from Rustavi who are interested in poetry have been holding this event for three years. Amiran Janjgava, Bacho Zaqaidze, Guram Latsabidze came together in remembrance of Oto Gurgenshvili, who sacrificed himself to save a child’s life two years ago and with his heroism he etched himself in their memories. Poetry joined these four people to each other. “Observer” talked with Amiran Janjgava about poetry, their goals and future plans.

Introduce to us your group members and what do you do with poetry?

Every of our meetings started with Oto. He created the biggest poetry with his action that no writer could fabricate. That day is probably the clearest example of our character and idea. Bacho Zakaidze works, Guram Latsabidze studies and I also study and work.

When did you formed your group and how acquainted were you with each other?

Three years ago, in January 2013, Bacho communicated with me by social network. All of us had different life styles, tempers and ideologies. But we had a common inclination for writing, love of poetry and a desire to invent an ideal place where only we would be. We called our month a symbol name; “Boga”. According to Sul Khan-saba’s dictionary “Boga” is a little bridge and we wanted to be the bridge between poetry and youth. On the other hand, it has a symbolical meaning in that it consists of the first letters of our names.

Why were you named “Thirteenth Month Poets”?

Anyone who knows Georgian poetry might possibly feel awkward to consider themselves as a poet among such great poets. To eradicate this complex we have found a way to create a world where there is nobody. It helps us to have more courage and ambitious in our poetry.

Have you independently written poetry before the group formed?

Yes, furtively by ourselves. We gathered on Bacho’s initiative and went out on the field of ac-

tion.

What was the purpose of creating this group?

School is a place where a child’s psychology is formed. In this important period, we should give them a qualitative product. From here, they should probably begin their love of poetry. So, we tried to introduce to them poetry and poets who most of the youth do not know: Lasha Gakharia, Archil Pirtskhalava, Otar Chiladze and etc. it was and will continue to be our purpose to kindle the flame of love for poetry among adolescents. In addition to this, we wanted to paint our city Rustavi in grey colours, which is well known as a worker’s city enclosed in grey walls.

Have youths taken an interest in the event?

At the beginning, we were pessimistic and did not think they could have such a positive attitude. When we still had a soviet mentality, it was not accepted to write or read aloud poetry. Today, there is no such problem and society is interested in poetry.

What is your opinion about modern Georgian poetry?

Therein is good condition. Poetry is a live organism, it needs development and quality control. Nowadays, there are only several tasteful writers and readers. We try to offer readers as tasteful of product as we can find. I would like to say I am tasteful reader and from this point of view I can say there are many talented youth authors.

Last year, you turned out the collected poetry “Thirteenth Month Poets – Boga”. How do you estimate it for yourself?

It does not have literary value. But, it is full of symbolisms, as far as where it reverberated the period, which is created with Oto.

What is the main conception of your poetry, do have you specific themes?

There are no borders for themes, it contains everything: subjects common to all mankind, poetry itself, the world through the eyes of writers, etc.

What kind of actions do you do to immortalize Oto?

Our collected poetry is dedicated to Oto. September 13 became a traditional date and we made our event for reminding Oto in Georgian University every year,



because he studied there.

What is planned in “Biblus” on March 21?

“Biblus” invited us to make an event relative to World Poetry Day. There will be poetry in the evening with music and red wine.

There are often musical group in your actions. Have the members of “Thirteenth Month Poets” increased?

We always try to make our evenings anything but banal or boring.

So, we add background music. A song is poetry. We sometimes invite various singers and groups, though they are not members of our group.

Do you have plans for the future?

We plan to permanently continue meeting with youth. We

would like to meet adolescents from different regions as well. They need poetry more there. Unfortunately, Tbilisi is an epicenter for actualizing talent.

The most important thing is that, as far as it sounds, we remind everyone, as they can see from our country and the historical foundation Georgia, that Georgians could withstand difficulties.

20 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN GEORGIA AND IRELAND

On March 17, 2 years of friendship between Tbilisi and Dublin and 20 years of diplomatic relations between Georgia and Ireland has been marked.

“Tbilisi Event Hall” hosted a joint concert of the famous Irish and Georgian groups - “Jack Lukeman” - and “Newton”. Irish group on its first visit offered the well-known musical works and the Irish culture to the audience. The concert was attended by the diplomatic corps.

The Tbilisi Mayor David Narmania together with the Deputy Foreign Min-

ister David Dondua attended the anniversary. Before the concert, the mayor and the deputy minister addressed the audience and talked about the diplomatic relations between the two countries and cultural relations between the two cities. At the anniversary of the two countries’ friendship, Tbilisi is still involved in the international campaign “Global Greening”, under which, the TV tower lit up in green.

“Today, the city has been lit up in green in different places. The new lighting conditions of the TV tower allows us to do, therefore, we have lighted in green to honor one of our most important partners in their national holiday “, - said Narmania.

Every year on March 17, the world’s capitals landmarks lit up in green. Georgia joined the campaign for the first time last year, after which, Ireland’s tourism agency included Georgia into the list of countries recommended for travel. The relations between two countries intensified significantly, which contributes to the Georgian embassy in Dublin.



YOUNG AMBASSADOR'S PROGRAM RAISES QUESTIONS

GURANDA DZAMELASHVILI **EXCLUSIVE**

The project “Be Your Country’s Young Ambassador”, which was initiated by the Ministry of the Sports and Youth affairs of Georgia in 2014 and later on carried out by “International Education Center” continues in 2016. This time, “The Office of the

son why the number of “Young Ambassadors” has decreased from fifteen to eight compare to last year is that the “International Education Centre” provided funds only for eighty young ambassadors.

“We have got this project as

tion, filled out an application and passed an interview. Apparently, they had liked my plan because a few days ago I had got a reply that I was chosen,” she says.

Katie is currently preparing for the implementation of her plan for which the government has allo-

“I’ve organized more than forty events in Poland and its real cost is much higher than the allocated budget from the Georgian government. The point is that when the state gives you the status of ‘Young Ambassador’ and a certain budget, co-funding is not hard to get. The project is really very interesting and very important. The budget should be distributed very reasonably. Otherwise, the whole budget might not be enough for one dinner,” says the Young Ambassador of Poland.

There are different points of views regarding the projects from “The World Union of Georgian Students” members: “We do not see the point to have Young Ambassadors program

when Georgia has a diplomatic service. In addition, we have youth organizations and various cultural centers who serve the country to make its culture more popular and they do it for free”.

They also say that from the beginning they had discussed the matter with the organizers of the project, but their recommendations had not been taken into account. However, WUGS supports Young Ambassadors when they need advice or help.

“We have nothing against youngsters who take part in the program. The system itself is flawed: tailored to individual needs and not the union, which cannot bring long-term benefits,” say representatives of the organization.



State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues” controls the project.

The project has raised many questions and makes their topics unclear. Instead of choosing fifteen young ambassadors, the list of participants has decreased to eight and the Ministry of Diaspora is not sure what will happen to this project next year.

After the competition conducted by the “International Education Center” ended in December 2015, it was suddenly announced in March, 2016 that the “Young Ambassadors” program will be carried on by the “Ministry of Diaspora” with the help of “Ministry of Foreign Affairs”.

The winners in the “Young Ambassador’s Program” nowadays are appointed to the following countries: USA, Belgium, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Poland, France and Sweden. The program’s goal is to promote Georgian culture abroad and to create a network of young foreign friends.

“I want to confirm that the project first under the control of the ‘International Education Center’ was handed over to ‘Ministry of Diaspora’. We had talked about the consequences of the program being led by our ministry and we consented. Why we were given this project, I can not give you a competent answer,” said to “Observer” of the State Ministry of Diaspora Issues, Gela Dumbadze.

According to him, the rea-

son why the number of “Young Ambassadors” will increase in the future. I want this program to be more effective and we will do our best for this purpose. Whether this project continues or not under the “Ministry of Diaspora” depends on our cooperation, efficiency and funds from the country,” said Minister.

In regards to the question “Why was this project given so suddenly to the Ministry of Diaspora?” the “International Education Center” replied to the “Observer” that the “Young Ambassador’s” program is “closer” to the Ministry of Diaspora and within this year they will still cooperate and support this program financially.

However, the centre has a different answer as to why the amount of participants were reduced. According to them, the contest had been announced in fifteen countries. However, the scoring margin for winning the competition overcame only eight candidates. It should be mentioned that all winning candidates this year are female.

Keti Archaia became the “Young Ambassador” in France in 2016. She’s currently studying Politics and Management at the American University of Paris;

“I heard about the project the previous year, when it was first held, and I set the goal to represent my country in France. To do this, I had drawn up a plan of ac-

tioned a budget of 7000 GEL for the whole year.

“My plan includes the promotion of Georgian culture not only with French people but with other nationalities as well. More than 100 nationalities study at my university. So, I’ve decided to create the project “International University”, which means that every month we collect interested students and hold debates on the conflicts that are taking place between our countries. The money given for this project is quite sufficient for these events”.

According to the program, former ambassadors are also allowed to take part in the competition again after the completion of the project.

Keti Prangulaishvili is an example. She has been living in Poland for four years and is currently studying Marketing at the University of Krakow.

“I had been thinking about participating in the project for a second time so long. Not because I wasn’t satisfied about it but simply because being the Young Ambassador requires a lot of time and energy. I had been analysing it. Finally, I decided to participate because I have new ideas, and my project is more interesting now,” says Keti.

She also mentions that her project, which includes different activities such as Georgian dances and song lessons, Georgian cultural evenings, presentations and Georgian cuisine, drew a lot of attention in Poland.

TBILISI GOES DARK FOR ‘EARTH HOUR’



Georgia joins “Earth Hour 2016” with lights-off events all over the country. At 8:30 PM, 19 March, landmarks and public buildings in the main cities went dark for an hour followed by street actions and rallies in support of greener and safer future of the planet.

The Earth Hour sites in Tbilisi included Narikala Fortress, Peace Bridge, Presidential Palace, Parliament, Government

Chancellery, City Hall, Youth Palace, UN House, government offices and main avenues. Hundreds of Earth Hour supporters, including for the citizens, Government officials, representatives of civil society, international organizations and embassies, came to the Round Garden in front of the UN House for a traditional “Earth Hour” lights-off celebration with live music, candles and the Shadow Theatre show.

TEN TIPS FOR JOB SEEKERS FROM INFLUENTIAL HR MANAGERS

GVANTSA GUBELADZE

There are a lot of job seekers in Georgia, including those who are not satisfied with their current work and are searching for better opportunities. This problem is one of the most urgent issues facing the country. Non-governmental organizations are actively discussing the issue of nepotism, which is usually the norm in many institutions, but there are also jobs that are looking for professionals. To find out what is the secret of successful application, we asked influential HRs to give some helpful tips to avoid commonly made mistakes.

1. Mark the distinction between the desires and possibilities

Insurance company "Aldagi" HR Director, Ana Sitchinava:

First of all, the job seeker should take into account both the desire and his own abilities. He must have a clear idea - what he wants to do, and how the desire is adequate to his performance skills, or abilities. Very often, these two cannot concur. For example, I want to sing on the big stage, but I do not have vocal abilities. Therefore, people need to develop a good understanding of what is his future work related with.

The real estate development

company "Archi Group" HR Director, Nino Sukhiashvili:

First of all a candidate should know in which field he wants to work. He should be able to see how much he is in line with his experience in the required conditions of the job. It is important that before the interview candidate reads the information about the company, prepare answers to basic questions, etc.

2. Remember, CV is the first impression for an employer

Anna Sitchinava

CV Creates the first impression about the candidate. CV should attract the attention of the employer. So in the first place the CV should underline very important features and advantages of this candidate has for the announced job: it will be the experience, education, or other achievements. CV should not be excessive to the information, as the Recruiter does not have much time to read everything in detail. Moreover, if such a position, where hundreds of CV enters, job seekers should provide distinctive and important information.

Nino Sukhiashvili:

CVs, which are brought to the attention of the employer depends on the position. For exam-

ple: a lawyer, a financial manager and similar positions will be fit for business, sent resumes to certain standards. At the same time, designers, artists and professionals, with a candidate will be allowed to make up a relatively free style resume to show the creativeness.

3. CV - should not exceed two pages

Anna Sitchinava:

CV should not be more than two pages. In this case, if one thinks that he cannot fit complete information, then the important data goes in the CV and the rest of the description, such as, training, seminars, publications, competitions, etc. Can be attached as an appendix. The first two pages should be set for the main data: education, experience and achievements of the candidate.

4. Control your social network

Nino Sukhiashvili:

-Sometimes employers ask for the social network address, in some companies, this is a trend, some companies, the social networks have given great importance. Our company belongs to a number of other companies. Here, attention is given to regular education, experience, and

ar education, experience, and personality of the candidate.

5. Photo - Additional information for employers, but risky.

Anna GFF:

General, If we consider the labor code and the European standards, the employer asking for a photo could be interpreted as a kind of discrimination. The employer shall not require a photo, but if the person on their own initiative attaches a photo - it, of course, provides additional information. Be careful when selecting a photograph. It should be the business style and maximize the positive. The picture should attract positive emotions with a smile.

6. Prepare well for testing

Nino Sukhiashvili:

The most important milestones, job seekers will have to go through, it is a test and interview. Accordingly, these phases are solving staff recruitment.

As for the experience, in this regard, the importance depends on the company that announced a vacancy. In some cases a little experience is enough. However, on high-ranking positions, usually a great attention is paid to the experience. The list of companies where the candidate has worked also attracts the attention.

7. Clothing says a lot of people's attitudes towards the new job

Anna Sitchinava:

You need to imagine yourself in the place of the HR manager. It has many candidates for the interview. Accordingly, any of them should be distinguished for its quality and with the required data. Depending upon the position of a person, his clothes leave the impression. For example, if you go to an insurance sales manager, he should look solid, business-like, as he has to deal with the clients, who have to prove their competence and confidence in their cause. If it goes in sports instructor's job interview, you should be more sporty than the overly academic. Naturally, the clothing does not become a decisive factor in the selection process, but it may be inappropriate to cut its candidate from the frivolous attitude to leave an impression.

8. Before you go on a job interview, find out about the company and the vacancy.

Nino Sukhiashvili:

Carefully read the job descrip-



tion. Summary information to indicate what the employer is asking for it and try to present themselves thoroughly. When you're going for a job interview, you should remember that the employers do not know you, so in the short time that you have, as much as possible to try to introduce it to your personality, skills and demonstrate the positive aspects and emphasizing the qualities that you think is best. Also, very important, if not prepared Shot interview. This includes how much of an interest in the position, how to collect any information about the company and its activities, how orderly and punctual, etc.

I hasten to add that our company is open to high-potential employees, which can reveal much about long-term goals. good luck!

9. Be confident!

Anna Sukhiashvili:

One of the biggest mistakes that can spoil the first impression is unconfident behavior. For example, if the candidate does not make eye-contact with the employer. A positive attitude towards the employer very often leads to self-employment issue. "

10. Communicate with others

Anna Sukhiashvili:

Very often, when people do not have a job, usually they stay at home and avoid social environment. On the contrary, job seekers should have frequent contact with others, to become a member of various professional associations and clubs, attend public lectures and various presentations, which will give the opportunity to portray himself; Get to know new people and actively make contact with old acquaintances, who are employed in various companies. They will recommend you to their companies. If you study, be friendly with the lecturers, who will recommend you to certain companies, as the best student. In this way the work can be found within a short time that might lead to better results than sending CVs in different companies.

RIGA ZOO TO GIFT 7 ANIMALS TO THE TBILISI ZOO



The Riga Zoo will gift the Tbilisi Zoo, which last spring suffered substantial damage during the major flooding which hit the city, seven animals, LETA was informed by the Riga Zoo.

The zoo's camel Villijs, three alpacas Tomass, Karmen and Kamene, yak Pupols, and the blue-and-yellow macaw Cabulis and Filipina will all find new homes at the Tbilisi Zoo.

After the floods which caused major damage to the Tbilisi Zoo, the zoo's management has worked hard to rebuild and reconstruct it. The Tbilisi Zoo

also put together a list of animals which they would like to see at their zoo, and the Riga Zoo was keen to help out.

Thanks to financial support from the Riga City Council, the above mentioned animals will begin their seven to eight day journey to Tbilisi in the coming days. The total cost of transporting the animals is EUR 15,000.

Since the birds are more sensitive and stressful, they will be transported by plane to the Georgian capital, while the other animals will be transported by ferry across the Black Sea.

DMANISI SKULL 5 AND GEORGIA AS A SMALL AND STILL UNTOUCHED PARADISE

NINI MACHAVARIANI

Experts in different fields coming from all over the world gathered on March 3 in the spectacular space Lanterna Rome of Massimiliano Fuksas for the meeting about Georgia, the cradle of the European man and important bridge between Europe and Asia.

The meeting, chaired by the Vice-President of Scudo San Giorgio Association, Claudio Marianti di Pergola, consisted of three panels.

The first panel focused on the extraordinary scientific discovery, building a different and innovative vision of the theory of evolution: the earliest European man is Georgian! “In Dmanisi – explained world renowned Georgian archaeologist professor David Lordkipanidze – we have found humans skeletons dating back 1,8 million years, this means that the mankind left Africa approximately 1 million years sooner than we supposed

and this surprised the scientists; we are changing the view on our genre’s evolution: men were much more primitive when they started colonizing the world and we can assert that in different areas of the earth might exist different human races still with similar features”. David Lordkipanidze concluded affirming that the remains found at the Dmanisi site are the most ancient ever uncovered out of Africa.

“Dmanisi skull 5 – said the President of Scudo di San Giorgio Association, Lelio Orsinid’ Aragona – represents and sums up features related to four different homo species: habilis, ergaster, rudolfensis and erectus. Therefore the significance of this finding is that these hominids, previously placed in a time frame widely separated from one another found themselves gathered in the same species, in the same historical period and in the same society”.

Professor Lordkipanidze’s thesis was enriched by the famous paleoanthropologist Yves Coppens, (discoverer of hominid skeleton Lucy) whose clear and acute lecture has been highly appreciated. He asserted that “Man is man as soon as he is man; with him, are appearing his cognitive, technologic, intellectual, aesthetic, ethic, religious facets; homo religious is 3 million years old”. Not less profound and significant was the speech given by the Austrian scholar of anthropological philosophy Josef Seifert, and whose statements helped the public to understand the philosophical consequences of the discovery of the Georgian paleontologist:

“[...]”I nevertheless consider the data connected with the discovery of the so-called homo georgicus, a significant empirical confirmation of the fact that the so uncritically accepted theory of evolution is open to criticisms

not only from a philosophical, but also from empirical and scientific points of view.”

The second panel consisted of a presentation of Georgia as a marvelous country that is worth visiting and discovering: a small and still untouched paradise. Yet Georgia, with its reach cultural heritage, is a world-class destination for business investment too.

This important topic has been exhaustively explained by Davit Bakradze, State Minister of Georgia for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, giving a well balanced view, based on the agreements reached with the EU, on the country’s future.

Famous writer, journalist and war correspondent Owen Matthews reported about the several investment opportunities offered by Georgia, such as the deep water port of Anaklia, situated on the shortest geographical route connecting Europe

and China. The port of Anaklia, an example of the drive and the openness towards Europe and the world. “Nowadays the historical Silk Route – said Lelio Orsinid’ Aragona in his speech at the end of the meeting – has been re-established in its entire potential to the point the Chinese government decided to invest 40 billion dollars to make the movement of people and goods much easier from any point of view”.

The conference ended with a musical performance composed by Maestri Andrea Morricone and Jason Piccioni, created ad hoc for the Homo Georgicus interpreted by a contemporary dance company.

This rich and intense meeting was the result of many months of hard work carried out by the organizing team led by the energetic director Alessia Vitale, responsible for the creativity, organization, production and direction of GeorgiaOne.



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WOMEN IN WHEELCHAIRS

PHOTO SHOOT

BY GIORGI TSAAVA

NINI MACHAVARIANI

Landscapes photographer Giorgi Tsaava tried himself in a different project whilst taking photos of 9 beautiful women in wheelchair. The photographer started working on this project two months before.

“I want to thank all the people who actively helped to achieve these results. This project is a nine-woman’s kind of conversions in a wheelchair, the title of the project is “exhibition 9”. In fact, when you see the photos you cannot call them a disabled person, as they look like professionals on the photo and in my eyes that’s the beauty of the whole reality. I am glad that these ladies will always remember this day as a day of happiness, said Giorgi Tsaava to Observer.

Participants learned about the project via social network and responded to this initiative. It should be noted that all those who have expressed a desire to participate were accepted.

With this project the photographer wanted to say that there is no one disabled, in the case of women seated in the wheelchair can also look stunning and it is



not limited to their abilities. He also tried to show that the people with disabilities should be involved in as many projects as possible.

The First Lady, Maka Chichua also attended the exhibition, who viewed the photos and talked to the women participating in the project. First Lady said that this is an excellent example to say: “There are no disabilities!”

One of the participants Tinatin Revazishvili told to the TV reporters: “My photo session shows what we are doing on a daily basis and what we want. I wish all the buildings to be adapted, so that it was not a problem for us to enter. We need more adapted spaces, re-socialized environment and properly-minded society.”

The second participant, Maka responds to the fact to their social networking site and recalls the past two months with warmth and positive emotions. “When I saw the photos, I felt something that I have never felt before, that you can sit in a wheelchair, but do not lose feminine beauty. Thanks to this brilliant man (photographer), I was looking at the photographs, where disabled women were laid out, and it happened so that I forgot the wheelchair! I felt for a moment that I am a woman!”

Maka also notes that the project did give her an opportunity to see another self. “I think that now I will like mirror more and to look after my appearance. I wish that after this project the society could understand that the disabled people also need beauty salons and a city that will be adapted.

“Working with the girls was not so easy; we met a lot of difficulties. For example, because the buildings are not adapted we had to lift one girl up to the stairs with our hands. However, there was some stuff that came easily than we the organizers thought. I would like to point out that the girls were mobilized, during the outdoor shootings they were resistant to the cold and did everything just as I was telling. I enjoyed this working atmosphere”- said Tsaava.

The project is supported by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, the purpose of which is to integrate people with disabilities into society.

Photographer Giorgi Tsaava’s work environment is very comfortable, as Giorgi says he cannot work in an environment where he cannot feel comfortable and cozy.

Given that a photographer works for several TV stations his busy day starts from 12 pm. He does not have a studio work and is busy with outdoor shootings, and almost the whole week is about running from one place to another.

Photographer also said exclusively, that he is going to take part in the photo contest “Tbilisi Kolga”. As he noted in the last two years he was planning to present his work for this contest, but because of the busy schedule he forgot to send, Tsaava hopes that this year he will still be able to implement this plan. And added that he is going to continue to work in this sector and is planning more interesting projects, but so far he refrained from publicizing his future plans.



Series of cultural activities to be carried out throughout the country



Starting from April, series of cultural activities will be carried out all over the country, with the participation of top-class artists - Prime Minister stated during the Cabinet Session. Pursuant to Giorgi Kvirikashvili, the government will consider the issue of the allocation of resources for cultural activities.

“Today we will discuss allocation of resources aimed at promoting of tourism. Namely, funding will be allocated to implement series of na-

tionwide cultural activities, bringing the world’s top-class artists to Georgia, as well as providing funds for the cultural activities of Georgian artists. It will contribute to transformation of Georgia into an important cultural center of the region, “- the Prime Minister Stated.

The Prime Minister spoke about another novelty - after 22 years of forced displacement, apartments will be provided free of charge to 126 families.

THE UNIQUE GLASS INSTALLATION REVIVES AN ANCIENT PALACE OF GEGUTI

ენი ბაჭყალიანი **EXCLUSIVE**

The glass construction was installed at Tskaltubo Geguti palace complex, which allows to see the statue as it was before, when the ruins are still visible. The use of glass construction, with a length of 1 m and a width of 1.5 m, is planned to revive other cultural heritages too. As we were told at the Ministry of Culture, this is a unique technology used for the first time in Georgia.

“Miniature, mirror glass buildings gives the visitor the opportunity to absorb the primary face of the Establishment of the complex. In this project, I worked with my experts, and I think that it has to work. In theory it is impossible to comprehend a little bit, so I encourage everyone to visit and see it with their eyes,” said the director general of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia Nika Antidze.

It should be noted that in addition to the glass structure, the palace is lightened up and offers a possibility to explore it at night.

National Agency for Cultural Heritage is going to announce international contest to develop the agency further and to make rehabilitation project for the

abandoned and destroyed house of visitors, which will significantly contribute to the interest of tourists and promote Tskaltubo regional sights.

Geguti Palace is located near Kutaisi. The date of the construction is unknown, but in historical sources it appears in the 8th century for the first time. The palace served to King George III (1156 - 1184 years.) and his daughter Tamar. The palace has a square shape and crosslike Ceremonial Hall. In the middle of the square was found 14-meter-diameter dome, which could go on the corner of the square to the dome. The dome was in the center to get the outside light. Four were attached to the lancet arches closed quarters. Around him there were a variety of residential and ancillary rooms: bedroom, cash, cooking and more. Inside the palace walls were lined with beautiful and in some places with the room with most of the woman. But she also made some drawings and and paintings. As it turns out from the ruins, each room had a fireplace.

Interestingly, in the XVIII century, the palace was badly damaged and in XIX century the



monument fell in ruins.

In western Georgia, in Kutaisi and in its surroundings the recovery continues. Cultural Heritage Protection Agency underwent conservation works in 2014 of damaged parts of architecture of the palace, an almost ruined wall has been rebuilt, and rusty door switched off.

In 2015 at the end of the program, rehabilitation and archaeological field works were carried out at the complex. Archaeological works revealed new buildings.

The first, second and third layers of the building, these are cob-

ble-stone walls, which has been identified as a prison of IV-V century and the various buildings connected to that. It shows the completely new phenomenon of fixing and painting for medieval Georgian archaeology.

The fourth layer construction is a square-shaped fortress that should be reinforced by 8 half-circle towers. Next layer shows a room with a fireplace that is partially destroyed by the fire and military actions. Seventh and eighth layers are brick building, a complete plan of which will be revealed next year by the archaeological findings. According

to the preliminary conclusions, this building is equal to the size of the ninth layer grand brick palace. Considering the Bagrati cathedral, it is connected to the construction activity of the Abkhazian kings.

Thirteenth and fourteenth trench belong to the same epoch and identifies a fence that was along the palace.

In 2016, the state program of archaeological research and the work will continue. Also the Italian Institute of “Ferrara” will prepare the project on the reconstruction works of the Palace infrastructure.

TBILISI HOSTS AN EXHIBITION OF BRITISH ARTIST

Georgian National Museum Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts invites you at the opening of the exhibition “Steppe” by British artist Aigana Gali. The opening event will take place on 11th of March at 6 p.m.

The exposition will feature 26 large oil paintings by the artist incorporated in the fine art show Steppe on the Kazakhstan’s grasslands.

British artist Aigana Gali was born in Kazakhstan, where was held her first solo exhibition Aigana Gali’s first solo exhibition was held in 2003 at The Almaty Art Gallery - one of the largest contemporary galleries in Kazakhstan. Since then, she has been recognized as one of the brightest young talents of Kazakh modern art and has made numerous successful group and solo exhibitions. Gali currently works and exhibits in London, UK.

The Steppe is an all-encompassing experience that invites viewers through paintings and sound into an extraordinary, boundless world. Award-winning BBC composers Olivier Behzadi and Jimmy Green have created a hypnotizing mix of Turk and Central Asian contemporary music specifically written for

the exhibition.

Aigana Gali strips away superfluous human constructions and re-centers on a core element that has survived through time: the Kazakh steppe. Historically the domain of tribal nomads, the steppe is ingrained with traditions, legends, mystical shamanism, and breath-taking landscapes, all symbolically interpreted by the artist. Artist explains: “I’m a child of the steppe. When immersed within the barren lands, a deep feeling of nothingness washes over you, but it’s the perfect ‘nothing’. The knowledge of understanding one’s self is graciously met when immersed in such a place where only thoughts can fill the air around you, and you feel the true proportion of your personality against this enormous void. The paintings in this series depict neither a particular space nor a precise landscape. Each work is an open possibility; an attempt to make visible a cosmogony of the steppe richly embroidered with timelessness and infinity. The absence of contours can suggest form; colors and mood change constantly according to the light.” The exhibition will last until March 27, 2016.



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WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESULTS OF THE TEACHERS' SUBJECT TESTS?

MARI TABATADZE

“The results of teachers are not praiseworthy but there were no better expectations until now” announces the Minister of Education and Science, Tamar Sanikidze, in accordance with the results of teachers' exams. The subject tests were held in January 2016 and the results were published on March 10. As it is known, from the registered 10 552 teachers, the exam was taken by 6 477 of them. And seventeen percent of this quantity got more than sixty percent and approved their competence. It is also noteworthy that Russian Language Teachers have shown the best results and the lowest rate has been shown by the Primary School Teachers. People are dissatisfied with the outcomes and believe that with such unqualified teachers pupils will be unable to receive proper education. Part of society considers the evaluation system as the cause of the results, while the other part of them focuses on the level of teachers'

preparation and talks about the problem within the teachers.

The Minister of Education and Science announces that poor results are caused by the previous government's wrong educational policy. On the other hand, she notes that the new government has already created a new system that is customized to the needs of teachers and is designed to support them. According to Tamar Sanikidze, this year, the number of teachers who needed just half, one or two points to overcome, was increased. Respectively, as they were very close to passing the exams, the minister considers that they will improve their results in the not too distant future.

In connection with the above-mentioned issue, some people, working in the field of education, mention that for the first time, more motivated and more confident teachers take the exams. Theoretically, they expect improved results from those who want to be teachers. In other



words, they expect the potential teachers to improve. However, there are no exact statistics regarding the number of practicing teachers among the whole applicants versus how many were potential teachers during the exams of January. Therefore, to draw some conclusions about this issue is a bit difficult.

It should be noted that in July, only eighteen percent of

July, only eighteen percent of the teachers passed the test successfully. The percentage is given considering the amount of teachers who took the exams. Therefore, some estimators evaluate the situation and mention that the problem is inside the system itself and that is why there are no changes from year to year. Education experts consider that there are some other underlying factors of the poor performance. Among them, there is the faulty and flawed standard and the lack of high-quality training and useful compilations. In addition, according to them, teachers have to use a new technology during the examination and this is still a big problem for many of them because they do not possess the necessary skills. In addition, tests also include some matters, which are not used in practice by the teachers, because they are neither in a practical guide nor in school educational programs. Accordingly, in their opinion, the part of demanded issues is new and foreign or old and well-forgotten ones (do not understand sentence). Therefore, some educational experts believe that all the tests have to be preceded with a retraining. As for the retraining system, it is not fully formed yet. In September 2015, the new scheme in regards the teachers' professional activities and career advancement was put into operation. Accordingly, 2015-2016 is a piloting year which has reportedly provided solutions. However, evaluating the rate of efficiency will be available later. At this stage, after an approval of a new scheme, the test for teachers was conducted for the second time in January. The picture of last July is still repeated. Teach-

ers will have the chance to improve their competency during a three year period. The chance will be given twice each year. And finally, if the teacher fails in the exam, it will cause the termination of the contract between the teacher and the school. Until that, after the disclosing of the test results, the main object of the public criticism becomes the teacher. This, of course, prevents from the increase in prestige of the teachers' profession. At first glance, the conclusion that the system has a lack of professional staff should be evaluated as incorrect. It is also undoubted that bringing the accusation against one of the main guiding forces, the teacher cannot yield results in any circumstances of reform or change. Furthermore, any educational reform is long-term. Our educational system has not been finally established yet and teachers are constantly working during the reforming process. In turn, every innovation is a painful process and it causes the associated difficulties. The issue that the teaching profession is regulated and that they must improve their competence is no longer being disputed. So, teachers have some obligations. On the other hand, of course, they need support from the public, as well as from the state. As noted, it is possible to start reviewing of the tests, creating compilations of different sets of issues, providing access to the materials and retraining teachers. Besides, in accordance with the new personnel, it is necessary that the issue considered in a new scheme be put into operation and to create some state programs that will assist the process of training young personnel properly.



GIORGI KVIRIKASHVILI - I AM GLAD THAT THE ACADEMIC PROCESS AT TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY WILL BE RESUMED

Prime Minister of Georgia welcomes the renewal of the educational process at Tbilisi State University, - as Giorgi Kvirikashvili noted during the government session today, he is pleased that the students selected form of a peaceful protest and negotiations.

Pursuant to Prime Minister, opinions and objections of each student is essential and in the process of reforming the education system, their maximum engagement will be guaranteed.

“Education reform is one of the most important areas of our four-point reform plan. It involves fundamental changes in the education system, so we have to involve young people in this reform process and take into account their views,” - Prime Minister stated.

Giorgi Kvirikashvili discussed the necessi-

ty of reforming the students' self-government body. Head of Government considers that the government has created negative precedents of the past, when absolutely sincere protest was utilized by politicians for their own purposes.

“We condemn such vision and we consider that opinions of each student, including the members of self-government is important. Self-government itself needs a reform. We urge young people to get involved in the negotiations in the process of reform. We will achieve a progressive model, where there will be no reason for students to go out into the street at the expense of academic process. I am pleased that the academic process will resume and continue in an ordinary pace,” - Prime Minister stated.

“MORE THAN A SPORT” – GEORGIAN RUGBY TEAM WINS THE EUROPEAN NATIONS CUP

VAKO KIPIANI

Georgian national rugby team hosted Romania and defeated by 38: 9. European Nations Cup fifth round match proved once again that our team deserves to play with higher level teams.

After 4 minutes Peikrishvili scored the first try. The conversion was performed by Merab Kvirikashvili. (7: 0) in the 13th minute Florin Vlaicu scored penalty to his team. Six minutes later Romanians were attacked again by Today, but Kvirikashvili failed to score. The Romanians have stepped up and scored two fine. 29 th and 36 th minutes Florin Vlaicu played well. After 38 minutes Peikrishvili hit double. The first half of the game ended by the score of 19: 9.

In the second half there was three minutes, when Pruidze grounded the fourth try promised bonus points which we took. Merab kvirkashvili took the try and the score became 26: 9. On

59th minutes Giorgi Nemsadze gained the score. (31: 9) After the 80-minute Karlen Aseishvil madei Romanians suffering ended the sixth and scored a try for fueling. Final score caught Lasha Malaguradze - (38: 9).

Georgian national rugby team again won the European Nations Cup and the Anthimos Iberian Cup, that is played between us and Romania.

Rugby is our game and hopefully soon the time will come when we will be able to paint the door in the Six Nations.

Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Kvirikashvili supported “Lelos” from the stadium. “More than a sport“- this is how Kvirikashvili assessed the Match and Georgian players, the coach and the fans of the team victory.

“It was a truly heroic sacrifice, which is a great success. I want to congratulate all of our citizens, athletes, coaches, and I want to



thank them for so much heroism and devotion. This alone is no longer a sport, it is an expression of the national spirit, and I am very proud of this day,” said the Prime Minister.

SPORTS NEWS

RUGBY

In the European Nations Cup last round Georgia won against Romania (38: 9) Then, “Lelos” head coach Milton Haig, gave the advice to the football national team’s new head coach Vladimir Weiss as he has been newly appointed to this post.

The Rugby coach from New Zealand advises Slovakian coach of Georgian football to live and to get to know the country and its culture, in order to achieve results.

FOOTBALL

National football team will conduct a friendly international match against Kazakhstan on

March 29. National team head coach Vladimir Weiss made a list of footballers who will play in his debut game. He will add several players from the U-21 team after their match with San Marino on March 23.

Training process of our team will be held in Tbilisi Sea “Zestafoni” training pitch.

On March 23, the U-21 team will play the qualifying match at the European Championship against San Marino . The game will be carried at Mikheil Meskhi stadium at 21 o’clock.

Georgian U-21 national team’s new head coach Gia Geguchadze selected 24 players selected and gathered them at GFF technical

center “Basa”.

Because of the injuries German Legionaries player - “Freiburg” midfielder Lucas Hufnagel and “Werder” Offensive George Papunashvili cannot help Georgian team.

BASKETBALL

Georgian legionary Zaza Pachulia’s “Dallas” had a regular season of the great tempter. A League leader and the most dangerous team hosted a meeting previously on December 30 and won, but the “Golden State” was without any chance this time.

Clay Thompson scored 70 points and Kareem Step end and Dallas had an easy victory - 130: 112. The outcome of the causes is

that the reason the trauma center for the third time was not in the starting five. Pachulia was a sub-



stitute and played for 3 minutes appeared, during which he col-

lected 2 points and 1 rebounds.

Of the working visit of the head of the Department of FIBA competition. Ljubomir Mandic arrived for the to view local infrastructure for the coming game.

FIBA’s one of the senior management staff visited a renowned Sports Palace on March 16, and announced the new system, through which direction since 2018 FIBA moves.

At the Sports Palace and near the Basketball Hall, the European U-18 girls’ championship in Division C matches will be held. Ljubomir Mandic also visited the hotels in which the teams participating in this event live. FIBA’s spokesman hailed the sport as well as other infrastructure.