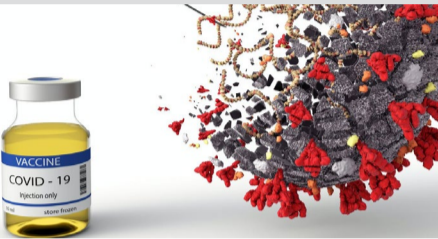


POLITICS

Health Minister: Georgia is expected to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine this week



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ECONOMICS/POLITICS

Austrian company to extract oil in Georgia



FULL STORY ON Page 3

Month of Francophonie in Georgia



FULL STORY ON Page 2-3

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The court granted the Prosecutor's Office to extract material related to Bera Ivanishvili's audio recordings from TV Pirveli.

According to TV Pirveli, the only aim of the investigation is to find the person who sent the television the recordings which reveal Irakli Garibashvili, Bera Ivanishvili, and Anzor Chubinidze discussing the ways to deal with individuals who wrote negative posts about Bera Ivanishvili online.

TV Pirveli representatives believe this is a direct attack on them.

On the other hand, the Prosecutor's Office published a statement claiming that TV Pirveli has the right to refrain from providing them with the material. The statement also notes that the Prosecutor's Office does not plan to use any force to extract materials from TV Pirveli.

The Public Defender of Georgia issued a special statement saying that the decision of the court is alarming and goes against the Georgian legislature and European Human Rights Law. Nino Lomjaria called on the Prosecutor Gen-

Court allows Prosecutor's Office to extract materials from TV Pirveli

THE MATERIAL IS ABOUT THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN BERA IVANISHVILI AND IRAKLI GARIBASHVILI



Representatives of TV Pirveli say this is a direct attack on them.

eral's Office of Georgia not to take a step that would seriously undermine freedom of expression and journalistic activity.

Transparency International Georgia also issued a statement regarding the Court's decision saying that the ruling of the Tbilisi City Court is a "dangerous precedent to allow the Prosecutor's Office to seize the material provided by a confidential source."

TI's statement also reads that the ruling fails to meet the criteria of sub-

stantiation. "We call on the authorities to act in accordance with the law. The authorities should recognize the serious risks arising from the Court ruling and its possible enforcement that threatens the freedom of expression in the country," reads TI's statement.

Quickly after the decision of the court was announced, a group of people decided to gather near the building of TV Pirveli and support the channel.

The Prosecutor's Office launched

an investigation into the case under illegally listening to, recording, and disseminating a private conversation. The agency does not say whether it was interested in the alleged act of violence mentioned in the record.

According to the Prosecutor's Office, as part of the ongoing investigation into the case, all necessary investigative and procedural actions will be carried out to determine the legality of obtaining and distributing the record.



After the Court's decision people decided to gather at the TV Pirveli office and support the channel

Health Minister: Georgia is expected to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine this week

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

On March 11, Georgian Minister of Health Ekaterine Tikaridze announced that the country will receive the first batch of AstraZeneca vaccines as 43,200 doses are expected to arrive over the weekend. Tikaridze noted that the first on the list of the recipients of the newly arriving vaccine are high-risk groups, starting from health workers.

Georgia's Health Minister also reiterated that the country will receive 29,250 doses of the Pfizer vaccine by the end of March. Head of the Center for Infectious Diseases and AIDS Tengiz Tsertsavadze stated that once the initial doses of the vaccines expected to arrive later this month are administered, the rest of the vaccine will be issued gradually. According to Tsertsavadze, by the end of the year, Georgia will have received 3,5 million doses.

According to Tikaridze, Georgia is also negotiating with Israel, China, and other partner states "to receive additional doses of a Chinese vaccine, as



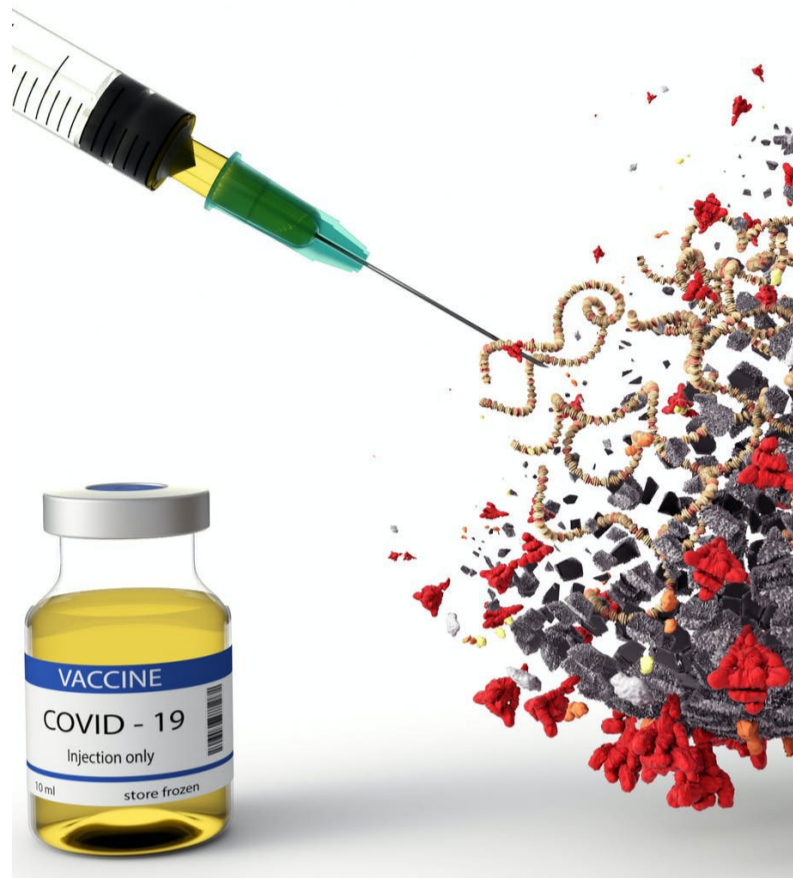
well as AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines" soon. Georgia has already ordered 100,000 doses of a Chinese vaccine which is currently awaiting approval from the World Health Organization.

The AstraZeneca vaccine, which Georgia is about to receive later this week, has been temporarily suspended in Denmark and Iceland, amid alleged reports of blood clotting in some people who have received it.

As of the last 24 hours, Geor-

gia reported 395 new cases of COVID-19 infection. 310 people have made a full recovery, while 9 died as a result of the virus. A total of 24,594 tests have been conducted across Georgia, 9,529 of which were PCR tests, and 15,065 were rapid tests.

Since February 26, 2020, the country has registered a total of COVID-19 274,045 cases with 267,421 recoveries and 3,622 deaths. As of today, 2,976 individuals remain infected with the COVID-19 in Georgia.



Month of Francophonie in Georgia

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM OFFERS A VARIETY OF EVENTS

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE la francophonie

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN GÉORGIE
Liberté
Egalité
Fraternité

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The French Institute of Georgia, the Embassies of France, Switzerland, Canada, and Belgium celebrate the French Language and Francophonie throughout the month of March together with Georgian schools and universities.

March 20, International Francophonie Day, is celebrated all over the world and in Georgia as an observer member of the International Organization of La Francophonie. The month of Francophonie will be held this year under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of Georgia.

At the opening ceremony, it was noted that this year too Francophonie and French-speaking culture will be promoted. The event was attended by the Deputy Minister of Edu-

Continued on page 3



March 20 is International Francophonie Day and is celebrated around the world

FRIDAY MARCH 12

Day Snow
High: 3°C

Night A few clouds
Low: -5°C

SATURDAY MARCH 13

Day Partly cloudy
High: 5°C

Night Overcast
Low: -1°C

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Austrian company to extract oil in Georgia

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Georgian government has signed an agreement with an Austrian company that will start extracting oil and gas in Georgia. An open international tender for the license was held on June 22, 2020, one of the winners of which was OMV PETROM SA, a member of the largest Austrian oil company OMV Group.

The contract was signed by Giorgi Tatishvili, Head of the State Oil and Gas Agency of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Jose Rafael Duc-Ramirez, Business Development and Commercial Director of OMV Petrom SA, and Bernhard Krainer, Director of Business Evaluation and Research of the same company.

After meeting the officials of the company, the head of the government announced that the interest of the Austrian company to start gas exploration works in Georgia indicates that the country has a good business environment.

Peter Zillinger, a member of the Executive Board of OMV Petrom, said in an interview with Globuc that the attractiveness of the business environment in Georgia is well known and is reflected in international rankings. According to him, the company is eager to enter the deep waters of Georgia, which is gradually opening up.

The project involves the extraction, acquisition, and processing of geological and geophysical data for oil and gas in the Black Sea Continental Shelf (area 5,282 sq. Km) for a period of 25 years. The company that won the tender will carry out 2 and 3-dimensional seismic exploration works, and at the last stage, drilling will begin. The cost of the drilling stage depends on the results of the studies. The cost of a similar project - the discovery of a domino field in Romanian territorial waters, which is con-



► OMV Petrom is the largest oil and gas company in Romania and the largest in Eastern Europe. In 2012, OMV PETROM, together with ExxonMobil, discovered DOMINO-1, one of the largest gas fields in Romania, on the Black Sea exploration block Neptun.

nected to the Austrian OMV - is \$1.5 billion.

Among the Black Sea countries, exploration operations are carried out in Turkey, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine. The search revealed large hydrocarbon deposits in Romania and Ukraine, close to the commercial discovery in Bulgaria, where the company operates. It should be noted that Georgia is the only country in the Black Sea basin where oil and gas exploration is not carried out on the shelf.

In Georgia, the average annual production during the last ten years is 43.6 thousand tons. In addition to the state-owned Oil and Gas Corporation, the oil will be extracted by 6 investor companies: Niotsminda Oil Company; Schlumberger Rustaveli Company (Georgia) Limited; Frontera Resources Georgia; VPI Georgia; Satskhenisi Georgia; Norio Gorge Georgia.



► JSC Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation, as a national oil company, partners with operator companies in planning operations and oversees and controls operations.

Month of Francophonie in Georgia

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM OFFERS A VARIETY OF EVENTS

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cation, Science, Culture, and Sports Nunu Mitskevich, the Ambassador of France to Georgia Diégo Colas, and the Ambassador of Switzerland to Georgia, Patric Franzen.

This year's program offers a variety of events that will be held mainly in an online format. Among others, these are some of the planned activities:

- Online conference on the

International Day of the Francophonie on the topic "French, a language that brings us closer".

- Presentation of translations of French literary works into Georgian.
- Online screenings of French-language films.
- Animations for children.

Francophonie 2021 traditionally hosts competitions for pupils and students with a variety of prizes for winners.



► The month of Francophonie allows encourages further discovery of the French culture