

POLITICS

Georgia celebrates 30 anniversary of referendum day on the restoration of independence

FULL STORY ON Page 2

Citizens over 55 to register for vaccination starting April 5

FULL STORY ON Page 2

ECONOMICS/POLITICS

Finance Minister Ivane Matchavariani resigns



FULL STORY ON Page 3

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The meeting between the opposition and the government mediated by Christian Danielsson, the Personal Representative of the President of the Council of Europe, began at 5 pm yesterday and lasted for 7 hours. The meeting at the EU Office was attended by EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzel and US Ambassador Kelly Degnan.

After the meeting, Danielsson noted that he offered the parties a solution to all the issues, although, unfortunately, none of the parties signed the document he proposed. He stressed that there is a solution to this crisis. "This decision includes electoral and justice reforms. This is the decision that involves the redistribution of power in Parliament. I have submitted a proposal for such a decision and it will now be a public document; This is the decision that puts the interests of the country first. It is unfortunate that no political party has agreed," underscored the personal representative of the president of the European Council.

A detailed proposal made by the EU mediator reads: "We, the undersigned parties, take into account our shared interest to:

- End the current political dispute and advance Georgia's democratic and rule of law agenda through political, judicial, and anti-corruption reforms;
- Enable our country to stay strong and united in meeting the health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Ensure Georgia's security and stability interests amid regional challenges;
- Act with further determination to fulfill Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations;

Second mediation mission ends without an agreement



► Following 9 days of talks with political stakeholders, Danielsson made a detailed proposal for a way ahead for Georgia, to the representatives of Georgian political parties.

Recognizing the support from President of the European Council Charles Michel, we agree:

- To enter Parliament to fully participate in parliamentary business upon signing this agreement;
- To conduct our duties until the next parliamentary elections with mutual respect and in recognition of the importance of unity in the interest of Georgia's stability."

The elements of the agreement were addressing 5 main topics:

Within one week of signature of the agreement, a party represented in Parliament shall initiate an amnesty law for all violations and convictions stemming from the 19-21 June 2019 protests.

Parliament shall address the perception of politicized justice through legislation and amending the Rules of Procedure as necessary to require a higher than simple majority threshold for the lifting of parliamentary immunity.

Another element was the electoral reform with 11 topics, such as all future elections being fully proportional, changing the rule of electing the head of CEC, adopting the law concerning party financing to the Venice Commission recommendations, and such.

The judicial reform paragraph read that "Parliament shall adopt ambitious judicial reform in this Parliamentary term as the first step in a broad, inclusive and cross-party reform process."

The proposal also suggested increasing power-sharing in the parliament through enabling opposition parties to head 5 committees. Opposition MPs shall also be assigned the position of 1 chairmanship among the following Parliament delegations to international fora: Euronest PA,

EU-Georgia Parliamentary Association Committee, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the OSCE PA.

As for the future elections, the European Council's version of the agreement recalled that international organizations have declared 2020 parliamentary elections as legitimate, thus suggesting the parties acknowledge their differing assessment of the 2020 elections and agree to take up their parliamentary mandates and participate in future elections based on the electoral reform agreed here above, in the interest of Georgia's political stability and to implement this agreement. An International Observation Mission shall be requested by the Georgian authorities for the October 2021 local elections.

Recall that Danielsson also met with party representatives the previous day to prepare for the joint meeting. After the

meeting, Danielsson said that on March 30, he would put on the table a text aimed at establishing a sustainable framework for the future as well as increasing confidence in the electoral process and the judiciary.

After the failure of the talks between the Georgian Dream and the opposition, Irakli Kobakhidze, the leader of the ruling party, said that "the real leader of the opposition forces, Mikheil Saakashvili, aimed at breaking the agreement from the very beginning."

Kobakhidze said that the Georgian Dream will implement the fundamental electoral reform on its responsibility, even without an agreement with the radical part of the opposition. Regarding the court, he said that Danielsson's document reflected suggestions that the Georgian Dream was taking responsibility for revising the Organic Law on Common Courts, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission, before submitting Supreme Court nominees to parliament for approval.

Speaker of Parliament Archil Talakvadze tweeted: "Even though the opposition bloc was not ready to sign, we'll keep the judicial & electoral reforms from Danielsson's proposal. We are leaving doors open for parties to join Parliament."

As for the case of Nika Melia, Kobakhidze says that in exchange for bail, the Georgian Dream was ready to pass an amnesty law on the June 20 case, but the opposition rejected the offer.

According to Salome Samadashvili, one of the leaders of the United National Movement, the agreement couldn't be reached on two out of five topics, which were political prisoners and early elections. European Georgia leader Giga Bokeria and Zurab Japaridze, the leader of Girchi-More Freedom underlined that their position was principal on these issues. Samadashvili said the opposition bloc proposed to raise the issue of adopting a new constitution and holding early elections on its basis, however, GD didn't accept it. As for another problematic issue, she commented that the amnesty, presented in the draft agreement, 'should have referred to both political prisoners, namely Nika Melia and Giorgi Rurua'.



► According to the EU mediator there were some elements in the proposal that were agreed upon, such as electoral reform, justice reform, and redistribution of power.

Georgia celebrates 30 anniversary of referendum day on the restoration of independence

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The referendum of March 31, 1991, is one of the most important events in Georgia's history, based on which on April 9, 1991, the Supreme Council of Georgia declared the restoration of Georgia's state independence. On this day, 99.08% of Georgian people voted for gaining independence from the Soviet Union rule of 70 years. The independence restoration was announced by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the chairman of the Supreme Council of Georgia, later chosen as the first president of Georgia.

"We consider it expedient that the Supreme Council of Georgia, taking into account the will of Georgian people expressed in the referendum, declares the restoration of Georgia's independence before the civilized nations of the world... The will of Georgian people has come true, long live independent Georgia!" said Gamsakhurdia on April 9th, 1991.

March 31 is also Gamsakhurdia's birthday, who would have



► On March 31, 1991, the vast majority of Georgians unanimously supported the country's independence based on the Independence Act of 26 May 1918.

turned 82 yesterday. Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and the Speaker of the Parliament Archil Talakvadze paid tribute to the memory of the first President and laid flowers at his grave at the Mtatsminda Pantheon of Writers and Public Figures. In his statement, Garibashvili stressed the

Gamsakhurdia's immeasurable contribution to the restoration of state independence.

Ex-Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia also made a statement on the 30th anniversary of the historical referendum, which he called the turning point in the recent history of the country. According to him, March



► Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first democratically elected President, who passed away on December 31, 1993, would have turned 82 yesterday.

31, 1991, was the beginning of the construction of a modern Georgian state. According to Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, March 31 is a day of greatest importance as 30 years ago, Georgian people chose a path leading towards Europe and development. "This day marks the inception of new, liberated

Georgia," reads FM's statement. The restoration of state independence in 1991 was based on the 26 May 1918 Act of Independence, resulting in the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Unfortunately, the short-lived republic was re-invaded by the Russian Army in 1921, which led to Georgia's forceful sovietization.

Citizens over 55 to register for vaccination starting April 5



► Tikaadze says the country has received remarks from international partners due to different attitudes towards coronavirus vaccines.

Starting April 5, citizens of Georgia over 55 can register for the vaccine against coronavirus. Minister of Health Ekaterine Tikaadze explained that this decision was based on observations of interest and activity of citizens aged 65 or more,

as well as great demand of the 55-65 age group.

In addition, the Vaccination Council decided to include patients on dialysis and organ transplants in the vaccination as well, since they are considered as one of the highest risk carriers' groups involved in social activities. As the minister clarified, windows opened for them will be provided by the National Health Agency to the Centers for Disease Control to make everything transparent. "They are also attached to specific



► At this stage, 29,500 doses of the Pfizer vaccine have been imported to Georgia. It is sufficient for 14,750 people as double vaccination is necessary to produce immunity.

institutions and therefore will be vaccinated on the spot in the institutions where they undergo dialysis therapy," Tikaadze announced.

Until now, vaccinations could be given to members of the medical field or persons over 65.

As Tikaadze reported, spare lists are being created in Georgia to avoid wasting vaccines. Police and the army will be included in these lists. In the case of the Pfizer vaccine, there is a dose for 6 people in one pack, and the case of AstraZeneca 10. If the doses

are not consumed on the same day, it goes bad. The minister said the waste at this stage is about 3%.

Minister also announced that 1 million doses of the final communication with Pfizer had been agreed on the vaccine and that Georgia is waiting for specific details and confirmation from Pfizer.

Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia said that the registration for Pfizer vaccination will be resumed from April 15 and communication is underway

with mobile clinics to add places before April 15 if possible. More than 10 thousand doses are reserved for Pfizer doses at this stage. There have been slightly more than 14 thousand doses.

Recall that recently, Pfizer has shared the results of the study, which showed that the vaccine is safe for children aged 12 to 15 years. In terms of efficacy, however, it showed higher, 100% efficacy than adults in this age group in terms of disease prevention. The company plans to undergo an accelerated authorization with the US regulator in the coming weeks. The results of this study have not yet been reviewed. More than 2,000 adolescents participated in the study.

According to the company, the side effects in adults are pin-prick pain, irritability, and headache.

The U.S. regulator issued a Pfizer distribution permit in the country on December 12, 2020, to vaccinate citizens aged 16 and older. According to the latest information, 616 new cases of coronavirus infection have been identified in the last 24 hours. 268 people recovered and 5 patients died. A total of 3,778 people have died from the virus since the pandemic spread.

THURSDAY		APRIL 1	
Day		Cloudy	
		High: 14°C	
Night		Rain	
		Low: 5°C	
FRIDAY		APRIL 2	
Day		Mostly sunny	
		High: 16°C	
Night		Partly cloudy	
		Low: 6°C	

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Finance Minister Ivane Matchavariani resigns



► Ivane Matchavariani was appointed as a Minister of Finance of Georgia on July 12, 2018.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Ivane Matchavariani, after serving as the Finance Minister of Georgia for almost three years, has announced his resignation. Matchavariani published a statement on social media noting that he was planning to resign at the end of the last year, however, he postponed his plans for several months due to the 2021 crisis budget approval

procedure and important negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Matchavariani has not specified the reasons for the resignation.

“It was a great honor and at the same time a huge responsibility for me to work with the political team of Georgian Dream, alongside government leaders, my colleagues in the Cabinet of Ministers, and MPs,” said Matchavariani in his Face-

book post.

According to him, negotiations had been completed with the International Monetary Fund over the program on the Expanded Finance Mechanism. He added that once the program is approved by the fund, Georgia will receive additional financial resources.

Matchavariani stressed that Georgia is one of the first countries to have received significant



► According to Matchavariani, as negotiations with the International Monetary Fund have ended successfully, Georgia will be able to receive additional financial support once the program is approved.

support from partners, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and EU, shortly after the global pandemic started. “I am especially proud that I had the opportunity to be actively engaged in the negotiations,” he said.

Matchavariani wished success to the Prime Minister and the political union Georgian Dream in solving all the challenges facing the country. He

also thanked the heads of international financial institutions, donor organizations, their regional offices, and the diplomatic corps operating in Georgia, and stressed that their support has been crucial for Georgia during the pandemic.

Ivane Matchavariani was appointed as the Finance Minister on July 12, 2018. He also held the post of Deputy PM under Prime Minister Garibashvili.

1821-2021

200 YEARS
of Greek Freedom

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Promoting Greece in Europe and the world

A great gift of Georgia to Greece for the 200th Anniversary

On the occasion of the National Day of Greece and the celebration of the 200 year Anniversary, the National Archives of Georgia have launched the Exhibition “Greeks in Georgia” at the Exposition Hall of the archival venue (National Archives of Georgia, 40 Pekini Ave.).

Historical documents, photographs, maps, building plans dating back to the 19th century as well as to the 1918-1921 First Democratic Republic of Georgia period are put on display, illustrating the close relations between the two nations and people and their common struggle for Freedom and Independence.

On this occasion the Embassy of Greece warmly thanks Mr. Soso Giorgadze – Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Ms. Teona Iashvili – General Director of the National Archives of Georgia and Ms. Nino Badashvili - Main

Specialist of the Scientific Department of the National Archives of Georgia, for making this unique Exhibition possible, a great gift for our Anniversary.

The Exhibition can be visited during the month of April daily (except Mondays) from 11:00 till 19:00.

