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The first steps on the way to implementing the agreement

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Audit report of the Mountain Resorts Company sent to Prosecutor's Office



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By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

On May 4, Georgia continued to implement the nationwide vaccination program, now using the Chinese-manufactured Sinopharm vaccine. According to the latest data of the Georgian Centre for the Disease Control, a total of 17,613 people aged over 18 have already registered to get a shot of the Sinopharm vaccine since April 27. The centre reported the vaccination with Sinopharm will be carried out in 33 medical centres and with the help of 33 specially trained brigades of professionals, and starting from May 5, vaccination will also be available in 44 additional medical centres. Earlier today, Head of the Georgia's Center for Disease Control Amiran Gamkrelidze received his shot of the Sinopharm vaccine at the University Hospital in Tbilisi while being broadcasted live on the national TV.

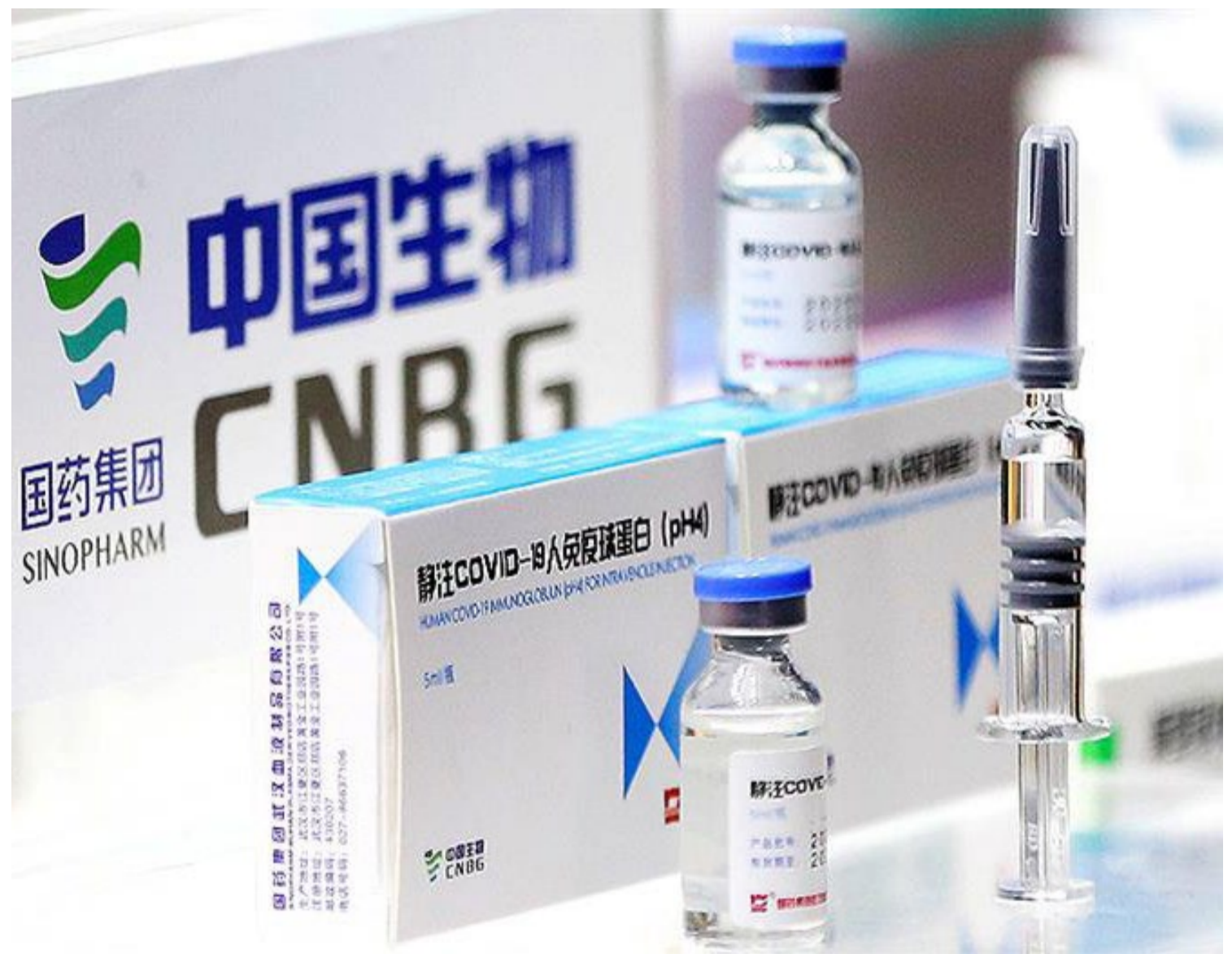
This Tuesday, during a briefing, Amiran Gamkrelidze called for Georgian citizens not to be agitated by the new Indian strain of the COVID-19, which, according to him, has not yet been detected in Georgia, although there is a chance that it has already entered the country:

"Please do not get anxious about this Indian strain. A powerful epidemic in India is not caused by the Indian strain only, it is a British strain – we call it double mutation. The Indian strain does, of course, exist, but the cases are much fewer. There is a chance that it is already present in Georgia, but we come across British strain much more often," Gamkrelidze explained.

## 17,613 people register to get vaccinated with Sinopharm

### Indian stamp of COVID-19 has not yet been detected

## COVID-19 UPDATE IN GEORGIA



In another briefing that took place earlier today, Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia announced that additional doses of AstraZeneca vaccine will be delivered to Georgia on May 6, and that Georgia is expecting to acquire additional doses of Pfizer vaccine via the Covax platform.

As of the last 24 hours, a total of 788 new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in the country, 1,206 have made a recovery and 20 people have died of coronavirus. The total number of confirmed cases in Georgia since February 2020 has not reached 313,742, out of which, 4,183 people have died and 313,742 have recovered.

As of right now, 14,075 people remain infected with the COVID-19 pandemic.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.4503 | EURO - 4.1818 | GBP - 4.8076 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.6439 | SWISS FRANC - 3.7940 |

## The first steps on the way to implementing the agreement

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

On April 16, the first tangible steps were taken to implement the agreement reached through the mediation of Charles Michel - opposition political parties that signed the agreement appeared in parliament, Giorgi Rurua was released from prison, but it is already clear from the fact that two bills on amnesty were adopted simultaneously, that the implementation of the agreement will have serious difficulties.

The April 16 agreement marked a new dividing line in Georgian politics. The opposition in the boycott mode was divided into two parts. Twelve lawmakers were added to the legislature, but the document was not signed by the largest opposition party, the National Movement, and several other smaller parties (Labor, Giga Bokeria's European Georgia).

The confrontation between these two parts of the opposition became quite heated. The opposition remaining in the boycott regime argues that much better conditions could have been achieved and thus, the signatory politicians rushed

into it and made a mistake. The signatories of the Charles Michel document also argued that it was impossible to get a better version of the agreed document and that refusing to sign would create problems in relations with Western friends. For its part, the Georgian Dream considers the split in the opposition as its victory and tries to oppose the "constructive opposition" that signed the agreement document and the "destructive forces" remaining in the boycott regime, which is the National Movement. According to them, Saakashvili's plan and the tactics of the 'National Movement' failed.

The main dispute between the two factions is over the 'amnesty law'. The draft law registered by the Georgian Dream envisages pardoning of persons, both protesters and police, charged for the 'Gavrilov Night' (June 19-21, 2019), as well as the pardoning of those who may be found guilty in the future.

Such an interpretation of the amnesty is unacceptable even to the opposition that signed the Charles Michel document. In their view, amnesty cannot be extended to offenders without

the consent of the victims, and even more so to those who have given orders that are not identified today.

Lelo is going to demand the establishment of an investigation commission in the parliament to study the 'Gavrilov Night'. Georgian Dream considers it absurd, the implementation of the Lelo initiative needs 50 votes and will only be considered if National Movement enters the parliament.

Now the main issue is how Nika Melia will leave prison. He considers it wrong to accept the amnesty and said that he is ready to be released from prison on bail paid by the European Union. However, the Georgian Dream will still receive its preferred version of the amnesty, with the reservation that if anyone does not want to receive the amnesty, they can refuse and remain in prison.

According to Western friends, Nika Melia should leave prison and the National Movement should enter the parliament to carry out the reforms outlined in the agreement document.

Nika Melia at the same time emphasizes the need to maintain the unity of the opposition, as there are local self-government

elections ahead, which also had the function of a kind of referendum on early elections. According to the agreement, if the Georgian Dream fails to get 43% of the vote in the proportional part of the elections, early parliamentary elections will be called in 2022.

According to opposition parties, the Georgian Dream will not be able to collect this amount of votes. Mikheil Saakashvili, who is in Ukraine, demanded that he be allowed to return to Georgia before the self-government elections. According to him, in any case, he will definitely return to Georgia and help defeat Bidzina Ivanishvili's party.

However, it is clear that the ruling party does not think so and will do everything to succeed in the elections. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili has already announced that €500 million will be allocated to finance self-government projects. It is clear that the government has a certain advantage over the opposition in self-government elections.

One of the main intrigues ahead of the upcoming local elections is who the Georgian Dream will nominate as a Tbilisi mayoral candidate. It seems that

Kakhi Kaladze's candidacy will no longer be supported.

Some also expect that Kaladze will leave the Georgian Dream altogether and may find himself in Giorgi Gakharia's new party with his team. The opinion was expressed that the ruling party would nominate Archil Talakvadze, who resigned from the post of the Speaker of the Parliament, as the Tbilisi mayoral candidate.

Talakvadze's resignation was one of the surprises of the last week. It has been suggested that Talakvadze was 'punished' for signing the Charles Michel document because it included a clause in disagreement with some parties, including the need for 43% support.

The signing of the Charles Michel document aimed at reducing the extreme polarization in Georgian politics and restoring trust between the government and the opposition. However, the controversy is so great that it is difficult to assume a reduction in polarization, a mere controversy, taking place within the walls of Parliament. However, the opposition does not rule out protests outside the parliament.

## Audit report of the Mountain Resorts Company sent to Prosecutor's Office

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

"Mountain Resorts Development Company", a company subordinated to the Ministry of Economy, manages the resorts of Bakuriani, Goderdzi, Tetnuldi and Gudauri. By the end of April, the State Audit Office released a report on compliance with the company, which revealed a number of violations and was eventually sent to the investigating agency.

According to the audit report, the company signed contracts for projects worth €159 million while there were no construction permits issued for these projects. The audit states it is problematic when a state-owned company carries out unauthorized construction. According to the conclusion, the construction



► Free seasonal tickets for mountain lifts issued to employees and their VIPs is problematic, according to the Audit Office.

started without a building permit may harm the environment or the population.

Unauthorized construction is not the only type of violation found by the State Audit Office in the company. Violations include unjustified spending on the budget for tons of fuel.

Among others, another violation found by the audit office was the question of free subscriptions issued by the company. Note, that the main income of the Mountain Resorts Development Company is a state subsidy of millions of GEL, which is received by the company for the construction of infrastructure. As an independent source of income, the company sells cable transport fees at resorts. The recently published report shows that the company distributes these seasonal tickets free of charge to its employees and their family members as well as "VIPs". According to the

report, in 2018-2019 alone, the company issued €261,000 worth of seasonal tickets to these individuals without even listing the identity of the owners of these seasonal passes. Furthermore, the report clarifies that there are no criteria by which the so-called Issuance of 'VIP' season tickets is regulated.

The Audit Office also found problematic that the director of a company increased salary for himself without any justification - as the agency estimates the director of the company is an 'unauthorized person' to increase his own salary. The report emphasized that the issuance of the order related to the increase of remuneration as a result of which from November 2016 to November 2018 the salary of the former director of the company was unjustifiably increased by a total of €109,021, violated the requirements of the current legislation.

WEDNESDAY MAY 5

Day Partly cloudy  
High: 17°C  
Night Rain  
Low: 11°C

THURSDAY MAY 6

Day Rain  
High: 17°C  
Night Cloudy  
Low: 11°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi,  
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Founded by Prof.

**Zaza Gachechiladze**

**Tamar Gachechiladze**  
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge

**Nino Metreveli**  
Commercial Director

**Mariam Mchedlidze**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Natalia Kochiashvili**  
Executive Editor

**Nino Kavelashvili**  
Design and Layout

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