

Georgia celebrates Independence Day



The ceremony was attended by government officials and invited guests, among them, Polish President Andrzej Duda and Ukrainian Defense Minister Andriy Taran. Top Georgian figures as well as the president of Poland addressed the army and the people, praising the country's past, the merit of the Georgian armed forces and the country's Euro-Atlantic future.

President Salome Zurbishvili, Supreme Commander of the Defense Forces, opened the official part of the ceremony and said that it is symbolic that after 100 years the remains of Georgia's national hero and commander-in-chief of the first Democratic Republic of Georgia, General Giorgi Kvinitadze, have been returned home from France. The funeral ceremony of General Kvinitadze took place in Holy Trinity Cathedral, he was later buried in Mtatsminda Pantheon.

Zurbishvili said the remains were to be buried "next to those of honourable children of the country," adding the occasion marked a honouring of Kvinitadze's "uncompromising struggle and military valour," and extended the date to mark historical struggles of the Georgian army for independence.

President said that Georgia needs to create its own approach and plan to integrate in the EU, into NATO and to overcome the occupation. In her address, the president said that when the EU interest and involvement in the stability of the

"We hope that the June 14 NATO summit will open the prospect of taking a new step on the path to integration into the Alliance," said the president in her speech.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

May 26 is Georgia's Independence Day, commemorating May 26, 1918 – the day when the Act of Independence was adopted and which established the First Democratic Republic of Georgia.

The first republic of Georgia, independent of Russia, ceased to exist in February 1921 as a result of Soviet Russian military aggression and occupation. Georgia regained its independence on April 9, 1991.

The celebration of the national holiday started with the raising of the Georgian state flag on Freedom Square, which was brought by the military servicemen of the National Guard Ritual Squadron. The main celebration of the national holiday was held at Freedom Square in Tbilisi. Due to the restrictions caused by the coronavirus epidemic, traditional public walks and exhibitions were not held.

Newly modernized Su-25 fighter jets of the Defense Forces flew over Freedom Square and congratulated the citizens on Independence Day by launching smoke in the colors of the Georgian flag.



Politics

Supreme Council of Justice elects 4 member Judges

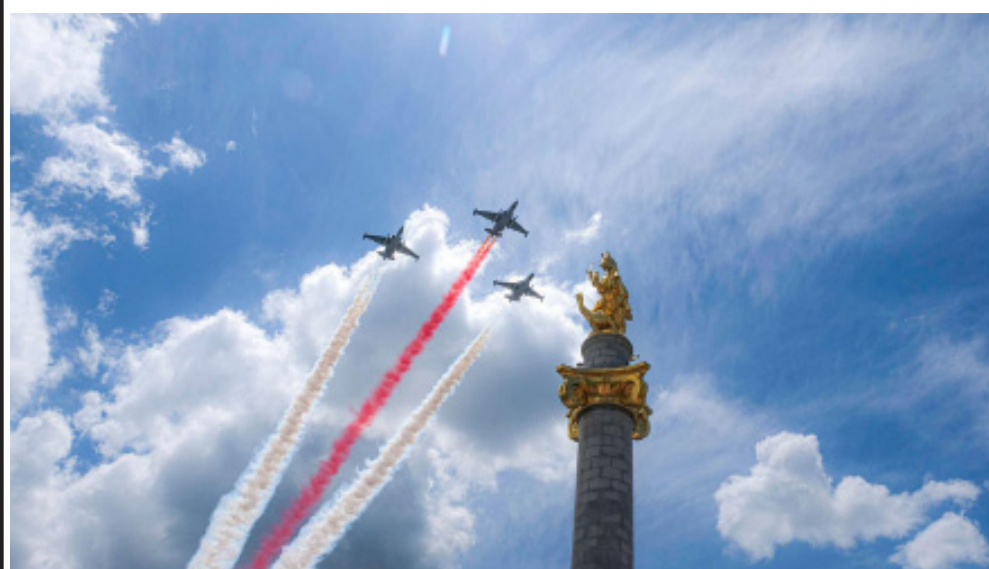
FULL STORY ON Page 2

Politics / Economics

Vardzia cave monastery complex receives European Cultural Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Prize

Turkish specialists to assist the development of transplanted in Georgia

FULL STORY ON Page 3



region and Georgia is clearly increased, new opportunities arise that require more training, organization, consistency, professionalism and putting the interests of the country above all else.

PM Irakli Gharibashvili, speaking at the solemn event, said that May 26 is an expression of Georgia's national identity, centuries-old culture and striving for freedom. According to him, today is a day of celebration for all citizens of Georgia, which expresses unity and aspiration for a better future of Georgia.

"I am confident that we will be able to make our Abkhaz and Ossetian compatriots a worthy member of a strong family in Georgia," said Gharibashvili, who also stressed the role of Georgia's foreign partners in strengthening the country's

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Supreme Council of Justice elects 4 member Judges



The newly-elected members of the High Council of Justice are Badri Shonia, Temur Gogokhia, Gocha Abuseridze and Levan Mikaberidze.

points judges in the country, is currently composed of 'biased judges' and lacks public trust.

As the deputy head of Georgia's Supreme Court Giorgi Mikautadze stated on Wednesday, the moratorium on the election of new members of the High Council of Justice would have 'caused the collapse' of the country's court system. According to him, currently, the High Council of Justice lacks one member, while the terms of nine other members are expiring in the coming months.

The newly-elected members of the council do not agree with the allegations of the protesters that they were elected only because they enjoy the protection of influential groups of judges. According to them, the balloting process was transparent.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Supreme Council of Justice Selected 4 member Judges during the 29th Extraordinary Conference of Judges yesterday. The elected members are Abuseridze Gocha (274 votes), Levan Mikaberidze (283 votes), Badri Shonia (281 votes), Temur Gogokhia (278 votes). All four were elected judges of the High Council of Justice for a four-year term and will replace Dimitri Gvritishvili, Vasil Mshvenieradze, Irakli Shengelia and Irakli Bondarenko, the members of the Council whose term of office expires on June 24.

The conference of judges took place against the background of a protest rally held at the Supreme School of Justice. Protesters were demanding the postponement of the voting as they claim the government intends to 'strengthen the clan'. Opposition MPs, as well as Ambassadors, have urged to halt the election of High Council of Justice members and judges of the Supreme Court before the implementation of large-scale judicial reforms as considered with the EU-mediated agreement signed in April 2021. Opposition MPs have stated that the High Council of Justice, which selects and ap-



The conference of judges took place against the background of a protest demanding the postponement of the voting. "The clan must leave," reads the banner.

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

independence. Garibashvili spoke of the current government's contribution to the development of Georgia and emphasized that in 2024, Georgia will apply for EU membership, thus taking an important step towards realizing 'our ancestors'

European dream.' 247 recruits took the military oath before God and the nation. In parallel with Tbilisi, the swearing-in ceremony was held in 5 locations in different regions of Georgia: in Svaneti, Adjara, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti and the holy city of Mtskheta.

Boxes of Georgian Defense Forces commands and military schools, as well as a box of US Army and Marine instructors were presented in on Freedom Square. The guests especially welcomed the Georgian soldiers who had just completed their

mission in Afghanistan and returned to their homeland.

At 20:00, a concert dedicated to the Independence Day of Georgia was held at the Opera and Ballet Theater which was broadcasted live.

Dozens of foreign states and leaders have congratulated Georgia on its 30th anniversary of independence. The list includes the US and European top leaders, France, China, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the United Arab Emirates and other foreign states.



Kvinitadze's remains were laid to rest at the cemetery next to those of Kakutsa Cholokashvili - Deputy Defence Minister of the 1918-1921 Georgian republic - after a public funeral ceremony was held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and a ceremonial flyover by Georgian Defence Forces' aircraft over the Freedom Square.

Weather

Thursday, May 27

Day Partly Cloudy High: 25°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 16°C

Friday, May 28

Day Partly Cloudy High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 17°C

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Vardzia cave monastery complex receives European Cultural Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Prize



The creation of the Vardzia Rock-Cut Complex was initiated in the second half of the 12th century by King George III and was completed under the reign of his daughter, Queen Tamar.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The European Cultural Heritage Award / Europe Nostra Prize, funded under the Creative Europe Program, was awarded to the project for conservation of the Vardzia Cave Complex, a 12th-13th centuries monument in Southern Georgia. The nomination application submitted by Georgia to the European Commission and the organization Europa Nostra became one of the winners along with eight other nominees, who were named as exemplary achievements in the conservation category. In 2021, the European Leading Award was received by 24 projects from 18 European countries in seven different nominations.

According to the National Agency for

Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, the Vardzia Cave Monastery is located in the most active seismic region of Georgia, thereby it has suffered serious damage. In addition, considering a rise in visitor numbers over the recent years, there was a need to urgently launch works at the site. The Government of Georgia, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs and the Cartu Foundation funded the monitoring system of the Vardzia rock complex. The project was led by the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation in close collaboration with ISPRA (Geological Survey of Italy).

According to Europa Nostra, the successful pilot project which has formed the basis of the Rock Cut Heritage Safeguard



In 2021, the European Leading Award was given to 24 projects from 18 European countries in seven different nominations.

State Program will support saving several similar sites in Georgia, such as the David Gareji Monasteries and Hermitage which was included on the 7 Most Endangered list 2018 by Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute.

The creation of the complex was initiated in the second half of the 12th century by King George III and was completed under the reign of his daughter, Queen Tamar. Stretching to a height of 50 metres and a length of approximately 800 metres, the complex is located along a cliff and consists of several hundred rooms.

The 2021 award winners were revealed by Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, and Hermann Parzinger, Executive President of Europa Nostra at a live online event. The President of the European Parliament David Sassoli addressed the winners with a statement. "Through your professional-

ism, your dedication, your artistic sensitivity, you have helped revitalise the Europe of today and to project it into the future," said Sassoli.

"This year's laureates powerfully demonstrate how heritage offers solutions and paths to recovery in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, as we take action for the climate, mobilise for sustainable urban and rural development and tackle the many threats to our core European values," states Europa Nostra's Executive President Hermann Parzinger in his remark.

Heritage supporters from all over the world can vote online for the winner of the Public Choice Award from the winning projects. The Public Choice Award winner will be announced during the European Heritage Awards Ceremony, which will take place on 23 September in Venice. The Grand Prix laureates will each receive a monetary award of €10,000.

On May 25, 2021, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs of Georgia signed a quadripartite memorandum with the Georgian Association of Transplantologists, the Turkish Transplantation Society, and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA).

The memorandum envisages promoting the development of transplantology in the country. In particular, with the support of TIKA, Turkish specialists will share their experience with their Georgian counterparts and improve their technical base.

At present, organ transplants in Georgia are performed only by family members and blood relatives. Determining tissue compatibility, especially during kid-

ney transplantation, is vital. That is why Gia Tomadze, Chairman of the Georgian Association of Transplantologists, raised the issue of transferring the special techniques necessary for the development of the field and training of specialists.

Among the planned training and workshops are:

- HLA and other training for laboratory workers
- Determining brain death

Turkish specialists to assist the development of transplantation in Georgia

- Donor management
- Organ removal, protection, and transportation
- Management of waitlists

Since 2017, the Georgian Association of Transplantologists has been cooperating with the Turkish Transplantation Society. Georgian specialists attend seminars and conferences in Turkey and have the opportunity to monitor the development of the field. After a dialogue with Turkish colleagues, Georgian transplantologists raised the issue of the need to establish an organ transplant

from the corpse and a tissue typification laboratory.

Turkey ranks fifth in the world in terms of the number and variety of organ transplants and the first in terms of transplant donations per live population per million inhabitants. Considering this, Turkey has the greatest experience, especially in the field of liver and kidney transplantation.

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, in cooperation with the Ministry and with the support of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), Turkish and Georgian colleagues will start working together on topics such as curriculum refinement, internships with specialist centers/clinics and other specialist organizations. Implementation of educational programs, the establishment of a national coordination system, and so on.



The memorandum was signed between the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, the Georgian Association of Transplantologists, and TIKA



There are numerous training and workshops planned

Day of Holy Brothers St. Cyril and St. Methodius celebrated on May 24

On the celebration of the Day of Holy Brothers St. Cyril and St. Methodius, Bulgarian Alphabet & Slavic Literature, H.E. Mrs. Dessislava Ivanova, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Georgia, held an event and delivered a special speech.

The Ambassador of Bulgaria talked about the importance of the day for Bulgaria, noting that the day has been celebrating in Bulgaria for almost 160 years now, which makes it the longest celebrated holiday in the country's late history. She also noted that the day is cher-

ished almost as the Second National Day.

"24th of May is a Day that has no analog in the rich pantheon of the Bulgarian festive calendar. For us Bulgarians, it is the Day of our letters. The day on which all first-grade students declare and celebrate the fact of their lit-

eracy. This is the professional day of all teachers, professors at Universities, of all people engaged in culture and education, of all of us that have ever been part of the school system! This means – literally everybody," noted the Ambassador.

A new Bulgarian-Georgian

and Georgian-Bulgarian dictionary was presented to the guests at the event.

The event was attended by Bulgarian Community, Minister of Culture Thea Tsulukiani, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

