

Giorgi Gakharia presents new political party 'For Georgia'



The party's presentation was held at Expo Georgia.

"Gakharia will never be able to sit at the same table that all the opposition parties are gathered against one main enemy," said one of the activists.

One of the leaders of the United Nation Movement of Georgia Khatia Dekanoidze said that Gakharia should answer the questions that people have. According to her, if he refuses to answer those questions, he won't be part of the opposition.

On February 18, Giorgi Gakharia resigned from his position as a prime minister. He talked about it at a special briefing and connected this decision with the case of Nika Melia, adding reiterating that there were differences of opinion regarding the issue in the team.

On March 22, Gakharia made his first public appearance since leaving office, saying he hadn't left politics. On April 14, Gakharia team's new member Giorgi Khojevanishvili announced that they would begin preparations for the next election and participate in it.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

On Saturday, Former Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia presented a new political party 'For Georgia'. During the presentation, the former Prime Minister talked about the current political climate in the country, including his resignation and the reasons be-

hind the decision.

Among the main reasons for his resignation, the former Prime Minister noted, is that the Georgian Dream put party interests above those of the country.

He also noted that simply comparing the situation of the country to the past is not enough anymore, as it "takes away from the chance of the country's future development". He added that everyone should agree that the only way for the successful development of the country is 'systemic reforms'.

"I was a member of the ruling political party and resigned because the party has drifted away from the problems of Georgian people," said Gakharia.

During the presentation of the party, Gakharia said that one of the main aims of his political party is to put the end to the radical conflicts in the country.

"Our main goal is to put the end to the radical conflict in the country; We will not team up with any side, where radical people are involved," added the former PM.

Gakharia also talked about the biggest challenges of the country. According to the former PM's statement, one of the biggest problems Georgia faces today is corruption. He also added that the country needs rapid economic development.

While Gakharia was presenting his party, activists gathered near Expo Georgia to protest the presentation. Activists had prepared special banners and were talking about the dispersal of rallies under Gakharia's rule.



Gakharia talked about the challenges of Georgia and the ways to overcome them



People gathered near Expo Georgia to protest the presentation of Gakharia's party

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Protesters block the way for Enka staff.

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Protests against Managese mines continue outside the US Embassy in Tbilisi



By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Hunger-strikers from the village of Chiatura have taken to the capital and gathered outside the US Embassy in Tbilisi to protest against the Georgian Managese mine, which produces and exports ferroalloys and manganese ore in Western Georgia.

“The government and the company did not pay any attention to us, and we came here. Maybe we can somehow make our voice heard at the embassy. We are going to spend the night here and will be staying here until our demands are heard,” one of the eight pro-

testers told On.ge.

Earlier this month, three residents of the Shukruti village in Chiatura of the Imereti region of Western Georgia saw their mouths shut to protest against the environmental damage caused by the Georgian Manganese mine.

On May 20, Georgian Manganese announced that their contractor, Shukruti + Ltd., was ready to meet the demands of several residents of the village of Shukruti by involving the Samkharauli National Bureau of Expertise in the housing appraisal process. However, the company denies that its activities are causing damage to the nearby villages and

refuse to pay compensation that the protesters demand stating that all the damage was caused by the mining carried out during the Soviet period and has already been compensated.

Georgia’s Public Defender’s Office has also responded to the Chiatura protests and called for then called on the relevant state agencies to ensure the protection of the local residents’ right to housing and

a healthy environment.

Protesters in Chiatura believe that as a result of improper ore processing and extraction, the river Kvirila, air, and drinking water are polluted and the soil in the nearby areas becomes useless for harvesting foods. The protesters claim that the activity of the mine causes landslides and damages to the roads and houses located in its vicinity.

Head of National Centre for Disease Control: Indian strain has not yet been detected in Georgia

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Head of Georgia’s National Centre for Disease Control Amiran Gamkrelidze has stated earlier that the Indian strain of Covid-19 has not yet been detected in Georgia, adding that the ongoing research has not determined anything suspicious either. Gamkrelidze added that three individuals with the confirmed Indian strain of coronavirus have already left the country, and their overall condition is reportedly satisfactory:

“New cases of the Indian strain of COVID-19 have not been confirmed in Georgia, beyond the three cases out of five that we have already informed the public about,” Gamkrelidze

stated.

Amiran Gamkrelidze also told the reports that partial lifting of some regulations may lead to the growing number of confirmed COVID-19, referring to Georgia reopening its land borders on June 1, noting that it is crucial that everyone follows healthcare regulations carefully:

“We cannot have people without a negative PCR test crossing the border, including those who received both shots of the vaccine. On top of that, they [visitors] will be offered to undergo period check-ups throughout their stay in the country.

We have to be careful because a lot more people will be enter-

ing the country via the land borders.

We must walk on the edge of the knife. On the one hand, the summer is approaching, and the number of tourists will increase, but we must follow all the existing regulations”, said Gamkrelidze.

As of May 30, a total of 23 cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in Georgia, as well as 18 deaths and 1,407 recoveries. The total number of Covid-19 cases in Georgia since February last year has now reached 343,603, with a total of 326,423 recoveries and 4,757 deaths.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

UNM enters Parliament, refuses to sign Charles Michel document

The National Movement enters Parliament. The decision was made by the party and announced by UNM chairman Nika Melia.

Melia said the council decided that the party would not sign the proposed document by Charles Michel. According to Melia, one point is categorically unacceptable for the party - it is about the amnesty of the June 20 cases.

“We will fight him everywhere, be it parliamentary halls, committee halls, halls of the Supreme Council of Adjara, squares, streets, in the village, district, mountains, bar, every-

where Bidzina Ivanishvili will have the greatest resistance because this year Bidzina Ivanishvili should be an oligarchic regime,” said Nika Melia.

Georgian Dream says UNM acknowledges failure by entering Parliament

According to the Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia, the National Movement has in fact acknowledged the failure of their destructive political agenda.

“The radical ‘National Movement’ has, in fact, acknowledged the failure of its destructive political agenda and is taking seats in the Georgian parliament. At the same time, the United National Movement refuses to sign an EU-mediated political agreement, which is the basis for a consensus to end the political crisis,” the Georgian Dream said in a statement posted on Twitter.



Weather

Monday, May 31

Day Clear
High: 30°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 17°C

Tuesday, June 1

Day Clear
High: 30°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

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Protest against Namakhvani HPP continues in Rioni Gorge



The protesters tried to push the police to move beyond the barricades.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

In the Rioni gorge, near the village of Gumati, people against the construction of Namakhvani HPP gathered and tried to go beyond the barricades.

The protesters were trying to push the police to move beyond the barricades. The organizers of the protest were calling on the protesters to not confront the police. One of the leaders of the movement Varlam Goletiani said that people have the right to cross the barricades.

Over the past few days, the activists

have blocked the road to Rioni Gorge in three different spots, stopping Enka's equipment from passing through. The movement on the road is free for public transport and citizens.

Goletiani said that every road which can be used by Enka to get to Namakhvani HPP is closed by activists, who have also opened tents in different villages.

On May 27, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has published a statement saying that they have launched an investigation into the damage to the bar-

ricades in Gumati. According to them, the investigation was launched under Article 187 of the Criminal Code which stipulates damage or destruction of someone else's property.

Late at night on May 26, the activists arrived in Gumati and blocked the entrance to the valley for Enka vehicles. Police were also mobilized near Gumati throughout the night. Opponents of Namakhvani HPP returned to Gumati after four days of rallies in Tbilisi.

The activists protesting the construction of Namakhvani HPP had a massive rally in Tbilisi on May 23. Thousands of people from all around Georgia came to Tbilisi to protest the construction of the

HPP cascade in Namakhvani. The activists who have gathered in Tbilisi talked about the dialogues that they had with the government and said that they had no other choice but to take drastic measures.

The protesters believe that the construction of Namakhvani HPP is not safe and that there have not been enough studies done by the company that could ensure the safe construction of the HPP.

On the other hand, the representatives of the company, as well as the leaders of the country are saying that all necessary studies have been done and the construction of Namakhvani HPP is a step towards Georgia's energy independence.



A large rally was held in Tbilisi on May 23.

USAID Supports Building the Capacity of Tourism Workforce and Create Job Opportunities within the Tourism Sector

THE MESSENGER STAFF

On May 28, 2021, USAID/Georgia Mission Director Peter Wiebler joined Katy Tchumburidze, USAID/Zrda Chief of Party and Ekaterine Dgebuadze, the First Deputy Minister of Education and Science to handover the equipment and commodities to four regional VET colleges - Zugdidi, Akhaltsikhe, Gori and Kachreti for establishing the Regional Tour Guide Program. As well as to attend Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony between USAID/Zrda and two VET colleges - "Modusi" in Marneuli and Kaspi collage to introduce the same Regional Tour Guide Program and provide necessary equipment to get authorization and facilitate its implementation. That in long

run will build the capacity of tourism workforce and create job opportunities within the tourism sector.

"Today, USAID marks a new partnership between the Government of Georgia and the private sector. This is a very important event for several reasons, as we support the development of the tourism sector in Georgia through different activities including the training of professionals. Through these training programs, professional staff will be able to get high-paying, reliable jobs that will contribute to tourism sector development and finally will lead to the inclusive development of Georgia's economy. By supporting both skills development and a more modern tourism industry, USAID is contributing to high-value employment opportunities

and greater community resilience in rural areas," USAID/Georgia Mission Director Peter Wiebler told *The Messenger*.

In June 2019, Zrda signed MOU with four regional Vocational Education and Training (VET) Colleges - Kachreti VET "Aisi" (Akhmeta Branch), Gori VET "Gantiadi", Akhaltsikhe VET "Opizari" and the State Teaching University of Zugdidi to support sustainable implementation of the newly introduced Regional tour-guide short-term training program and for that purpose, kit the above VET colleges with the appropriate equipment and commodities required to get official authorization for Regional Tour-Guide Training Program, which was piloted in the fall 2019 through Zrda's financial support.

Overall, Zrda has allocated funds in the amount of up to USD 70,000 to ensure smooth delivery of the pilot training program to the partner regional VET colleges, i.e., through engagement of Zrda partner organization - Center for Training and Consultancy (CTC), elaboration of the training program, curriculums and learning materials, provision of Training of Trainers (ToT) to the VET college teacher-trainers delivered by the invited international field expert Iris Barry, development of Business Plans for each regional VET college, delivery of trainings and workshops.

"The Ministry of Education,

Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia really appreciates its partnership with USAID to promote valuable workforce development initiatives. Together, this cooperation will help create employment opportunities through capacity building to make strides towards greater economic development country-wide, starting at the local and regional levels," Ekaterine Dgebuadze, the First Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia said on Friday.

To ensure sustainable implementation of this training program independently by the VET colleges in the future, Zrda continued support and, within the budget of USD 20,000, provided all four VET colleges with the required camping equipment and classroom inventory.

In addition to these 4 partner regional colleges, Zrda intends to support other target regions and replicate the successfully piloted training program to "Modusi" in Marneuli and Kaspi VET college.

To this end, Zrda will allocate up to USD 15 000 and, under the respective MoU concluded during the event, provided "Modusi" in Marneuli and Kaspi VET college with the required equipment/items and training program/curriculum to get authorization for the regional tour-guide training program and facilitate its implementation. In addition, Zrda intends to support and provide "Modusi" in Marneuli and Kaspi VET college with the demonstration greenhouse (200 sq.m) on the colleges territory that will be used by Agriculture Training Program students for practical experience.

USAID/Zrda's holistic approach to tourism seeks to support regional sustainable tourism development through new tourism product development, promoting new tourism destinations and attractions, raising international quality standards, building the capacity of tourism workforce and creating job opportunities within the tourism sector.

