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BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Newly Launched Seaport in Poti to Employ 200 More People

The official opening ceremony of the Poti New Seaport was held in Poti on the 29th of January. Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili has named transforming the country into a regional hub as one of the 'main priorities' of his government while launching the Poti Seaport.

Garibashvili said his team was focusing on "the full realization of our potential, so from the very first day of this project we fully supported the PACE group and each employee." He noted that the company PACE has been operating successfully for 30 years and the average annual turnover of the existing berths is 3 million tons. The PM thanked the head of the company Soso Dolidze for the implementation of a large-scale project, congratulated him and his staff on the anniversary of the company, and wished them success.

The PM cited the country's 'largest transit and transport' potential in the region, calling the seaport project 'extremely important' for the region.

Tamar Ioseliani, the Head of the Georgian Maritime Transport Agency informed that New Poti Seaport will additionally employ approximately 200 people, adding that it is important for our corridor as it will redirect cargo to our corridor and increase port infrastructure.



PM launched New Poti Seaport on Saturday, naming the transformation of Georgia into a regional hub as a priority.

A total of \$93 million was invested in the construction of the port, large-scale hydraulic structures were built and modern port infrastructure was arranged. Further expansion of the

project, costing \$30 million, will include the construction of an additional 230-meter-long deep-water (13 m) berth.

According to the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development,

the construction of the new port was carried out by the joint efforts of the PACE Group and the United States Agency for International Development Finance (DFC). The agency says

that the new port is one of the largest projects ever implemented in the Georgian maritime sector and by the completion of two phases its cost will reach \$120 million. It should be noted that the DFC has financed the port construction project with \$50 million, which is the largest investment allocated by this organization to a single project in the region.

United States ambassador Kelly Degnan said the port was part of the physical infrastructure connecting Georgia with Europe, making it a symbol of the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the country.

"The \$50 million investment from the DFC is a demonstration of America's commitment to Georgia's prosperity and to the Georgian people. Infrastructure projects contribute to further economic development and growth in Georgia," Degnan said.

Note that the Poti Seaport is the largest port in Georgia, it handles liquid, dry bulk, passenger ferries and hosts 80% of Georgia's container traffic. The port serves as a European gateway for international trade in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

The berth and new port infrastructure allow it to service large tonnage vessels with a payload of up to 50,000 tonnes. After the completion of the project, the capacity of the unified port infrastructure of Georgia will increase by 3.5 million tons.



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0518; Euro - 3.4104; GBP - 4.1028; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.9312; Swiss Franc - 3.2727

1 Dead, 8 injured in Mine Explosion Accident in Tkibuli



The miners had been allegedly injured by a methane explosion.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

One person died and eight were injured during a coal mine explosion in Tkibuli, western Georgia, late at night on January 30.

The injured workers were admitted to Khechinashvili Uni-

versity Hospital in the capital of Tbilisi yesterday. According to Guga Kashibadze, the Head of the Burns Center at Khechinashvili University Hospital, the miners had been allegedly injured by a methane explosion. Three of the injured remain in the intensive care unit and

one of them has 60% burns and thermal damage.

Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched a probe under Article 240 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, involving a violation of safety regulations during mining and construction works. The Georgian Saknakhshiri mining

company, which owns the mine where the incident took place, has also launched a separate investigation to study the exact cause of the accident.

According to the Labour Inspection Service, as a result of the primary investigation, various types of violations have been revealed. In particular, according to the initial assessment, the blasting works were carried out in violation of safety rules as, during the explosion, the concentration of methane in the air exceeded the acceptable norm.

Under current regulations,

drilling and blasting are prohibited at concentrations of more than 1% of methane. The Labour Inspection Service also said that blasting operations must be carried out under the direct supervision of the technical supervisor, noting that the relevant person was not present at the time of the incident. According to them, as a result of revealing obvious violations, the Labor Inspection Service decided to close down the specific site where the incident took place. The Labour Inspection Group continues the investigation on the site.



At the decision of the Labour Inspection Service of Georgia, the site where the explosion took place will close down.

The President Welcomes the UNM's Decision to Join Parliament

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili welcomes the decision of another opposition party to join the parliamentary activities. We are talking about the National Movement.

“For a democratic process, it is essential that all political parties respect the will of their constituents and exercise the trust and mandate they have been granted on the basis of elections,” the president said in a statement.

“The process initiated by the president, aimed at overcoming polarization, also requires that the space for political debate, dialogue, and discussion be fully used in parliament. This is the way to develop our country,” the



statement said.

Today, the National Movement decided that the faction National Movement - Power in Unity will end the boycott and get involved in parliamentary activities.

Following the announcement of the results of the October 2020 parliamentary elections, the National Movement refused to enter parliament and demanded the abolition of mandates. They claimed that the ruling party had rigged the elections and that early elections should have been held.

Following a 7-month political crisis, MPs from the UNM bloc entered parliament in June. According to them, the goal was for the Georgian Dream to fail to cross the 43% threshold in the local elections, which would become a precondition for early elections. One month after entering parliament, the party again boycotted the July 5 violence.

Weather

Tuesday, February 1

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 12°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 0°C

Wednesday, February 2

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 13°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 1°C

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