

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Prime Minister of Georgia meets President of Swiss Confederation

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili met with the President of the Swiss Confederation, Alain Berset. At the meeting, the close cooperation and friendly relations between the two countries in both bilateral and multilateral formats were emphasized, as well as the importance of Switzerland's long-term contribution to the development of various directions of Georgia's reform agenda.

"At the meeting with the president of the Swiss confederation, we talked about the successful cooperation between Georgia and Switzerland and the prospects of deepening relations," the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili wrote on Twitter.

"In Davos, within the framework of the World Economic Forum, I had a fruitful meeting with the President of the Swiss Confederation, Alain Berset. The conversation touched on the successful cooperation between Georgia and Switzerland, the prospects for deepening economic and trade relations. The emphasis was placed on the role of Georgia in the Black Sea region. I thanked the President of the Swiss Confederation for playing the role of a mediator between Georgia and Russia," Gharibashvili wrote.

As the Prime Minister noted, it is welcome that a number of Swiss companies have been successfully operating in Georgia for



many years, and it is important to make trade and investment cooperation between the countries even more attractive for

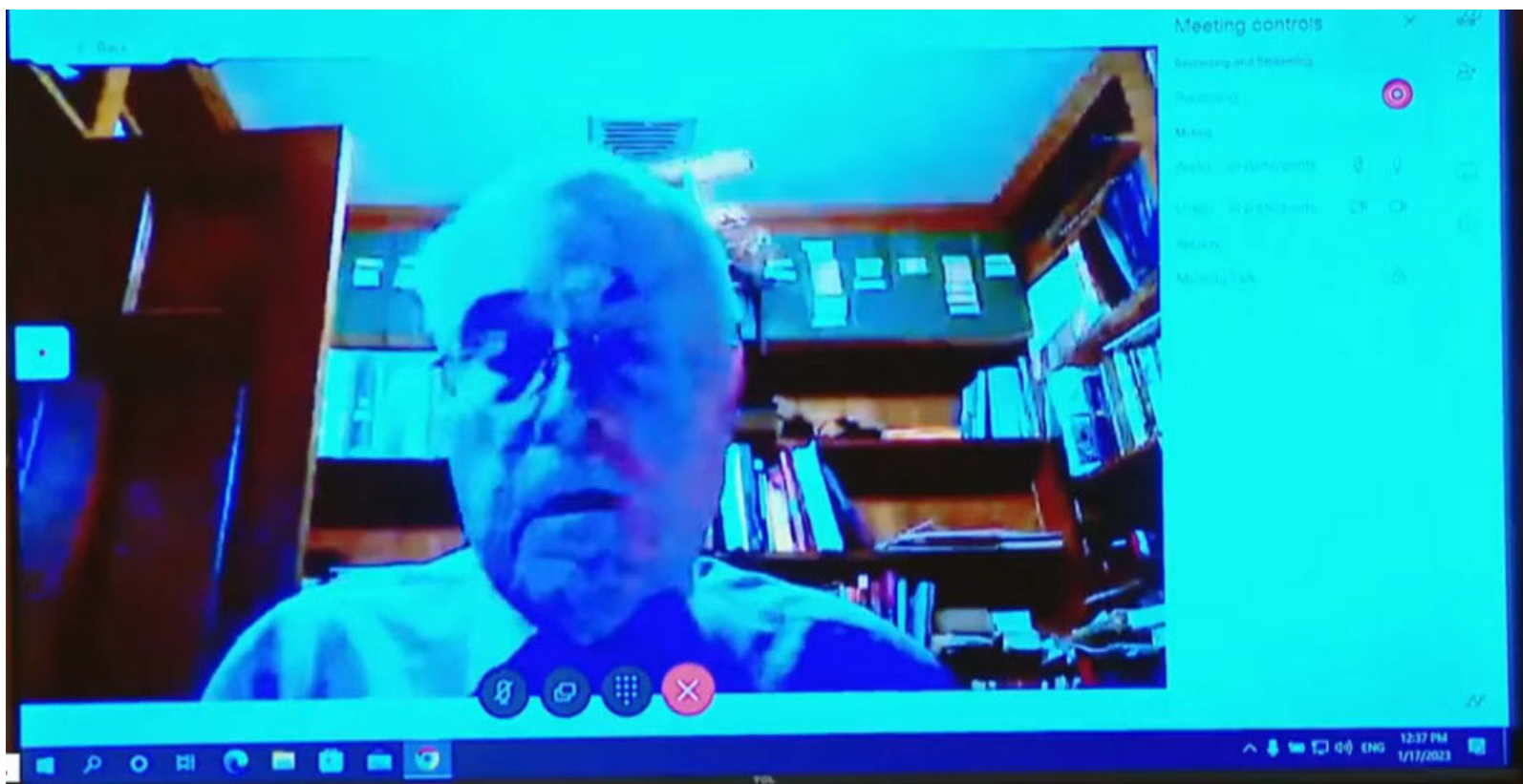
Swiss entrepreneurs. The Head of the Government thanked the President of the Swiss Confederation for his sup-

port of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The importance of Switzerland's role as a mediator

between Georgia and the Russian Federation after the 2008 conflict was also noted.

Doctor says Mikheil Saakashvili requires immediate surgeries, Empathy Center demands his release at ongoing trial

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



The American doctor, James Kobe, was questioned at the ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili's ongoing trial in the Tbilisi City Court.

According to Kobe, as a result of the MRI study, it was determined that Saakashvili has arthritis in both hip joints, which causes severe pain.

"I had the opportunity to see Mikheil Saakashvili's X-ray images, and this was an important part of my expert report. I examined the patient on October 8. It was noticed that the neck was stiff. There was severe pain, because of which he could not bend his head to the left. Practically, he could not support his left hand and "There was pain as well. An MRI showed arthritis. I saw an x-ray of his hip joint and an MRI scan. These scans

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6726; Euro - 2.8904; GBP - 3.2614; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.8847; Swiss Franc - 2.8946

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showed arthritis in both hip joints," Kobe said.

According to the doctor, Saakashvili needs a surgical operation and if this operation is not performed in time, the situation will become even more complicated and he will not be able to stand up and walk at all.

"The arthritis found may be

the result of toxic exposure. Mercury is an element that causes joint damage. He has a damaged intervertebral disc. I think the neck problem, left shoulder and joint problem are the most serious. He needs surgery on the neck and also on the left shoulder joint. If the operations are not performed in time, his movements will be complicated, it will become even more difficult, and

he will not be able to stand or walk at all," the doctor said.

According to Mariam Jishkariani, the head of Empathy Center, the neurological and psychiatric diagnoses of Mikheil Saakashvili are the basis for serving the sentence and releasing him in accordance with the order of the Minister of Health. She stated this during the interrogation at the trial.

"The main diagnosis made by us, even at this stage, remains unspecified dementia. According to the order of the Minister of Health of Georgia, this diagnosis is the basis for serving the sentence and releasing him. According to this order, psychiatry is included in this list. This is the most severe diagnosis that has been made and at this point, despite the toxicologist's report, we

remain within that code. Dementia caused by intoxication also remains in this order. We will probably have time to talk about intoxication as well, it is necessary to conduct other studies and specify neurotoxic agents. As for the second diagnosis, which was also made by us, it is post-traumatic stress disorder, a victim of torture and inhuman treatment," Jishkariani said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, meets with CEO of the Swedish shipping line company Stena Line



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, met

with Niclas Mårtensson, CEO of the Swedish shipping line company Stena Line, one of the largest ferry operators in the world.

"I had a very good conversation with Niclas Mårtensson, the general director of the Stena Line company. Through Georgia, the middle corridor connecting East-West is becoming more

and more attractive for international logistics shipments. At the

meeting, we discussed the prospects of future cooperation to facilitate international sea transportation of goods through the ports of Georgia," Gharibashvili wrote.

Irakli Gharibashvili informed Niclas Mårtensson about the favorable business environment in Georgia. It was noted that the strategic location of Georgia provides an opportunity to connect Europe, the Caspian region, Central Asia and China. According to the Prime Minister, Georgia occupies a leading position in the rankings of a number of influential international analytical organizations.

The head of the government invited the executive director of Stena Line to Georgia to familiarize himself with the business environment in the country.

Media coalition calls appeal court's decision on July 5 case 'alarming'

Media Advocacy Coalition

negatively assessed the decision of the Tbilisi Court of Appeal to reduce the sentence for those convicted of violence against

countable the organizers and participants of the group attack on the media on July 5, 2021," the statement reads.



journalists on July 5, 2021. According to their assessment, the said verdict is another step taken against journalists, freedom of expression and democratic processes.

"It is alarming that, despite publicly available evidence, so far no one has been held accountable for the organization of the group violence... The Media Advocacy Coalition once again calls on the authorities to ensure the effective protection of journalists' rights, including holding ac-

The Democracy Research Institute believes that the judgment of the appeal court was an incitement to hate-motivated violence.

"In both the first and second instance courts, the prosecution's failure to present relevant evidence gave the court the opportunity to reclassify the charges against the defendants from heavy charges to light charges. Judge Tetrauli fully used this opportunity," the organization's statement reads.

Ukraine War: Zelensky adviser resigns over Dnipro remarks

BY OLIVER SLOW, BBC NEWS

Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovych

has offered his resignation after suggesting a Russian missile which hit a building in Dnipro, killing 44 people, was shot down by Kyiv.

Mr Arestovych apologised and said he had made a "fundamental error".

The original remark caused widespread anger in the country, and was used by Russian officials to blame Ukraine.

The adviser is a well-known figure because of his daily updates on YouTube, watched by millions.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has not yet commented on Mr Arestovych's decision to resign.

Hours after Saturday's missile strike hit an apartment

building in Dnipro, Mr Arestovych initially said it appeared that the Russian missile had fallen on the building after it was shot down by Ukrainian air defences.

Ukraine said the building was hit by a Russian Kh-22 missile, which it does not have the capability to shoot down and is reportedly extremely inaccurate.

Ukrainians reacted angrily to Mr Arestovych's initial comments, with some accusing him of strengthening the position of Russian propagandists. Some Ukrainian parliamentarians signed a petition calling for Mr Arestovych to be dismissed as a government official.

He later posted a letter tending his resignation and said he

had made a "fundamental error".

"I offer my sincere apologies to the victims and their relatives, the residents of Dnipro and everyone who was deeply hurt by my prematurely erroneous version of the reason for the Russian missile striking a residential building," he wrote in a longer post on Telegram.

Mr Arestovych is one of the most public Ukrainian faces of the war, using his YouTube channel to hold daily discussions on issues related to the conflict. The channel has more than 1.6 million subscribers, and his videos often have more than 200,000 views. Unusually for Ukrainian officials, he speaks in Russian rather than Ukrainian.

Before his resignation offer,

his comments had been used by Russian officials to blame Kyiv for the strike.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian attacks "do not strike residential buildings" and suggested it was caused by Ukrainian air defences, a conclusion he said had also been reached by "some representatives of the Ukrainian side".

Ukrainian officials have so far said that at least 44 people died in Saturday's strikes with several others missing, and that there is "minimal" chance of finding others alive.

Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa were also hit on Saturday in attacks which Moscow said were targeted at Ukraine's military and energy infrastructure.

Weather

Wednesday, January 18

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 9°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: -2°C

Thursday, January 19

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 9°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: -1°C

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