

Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, Meets with President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, met with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, in Azerbaijan.

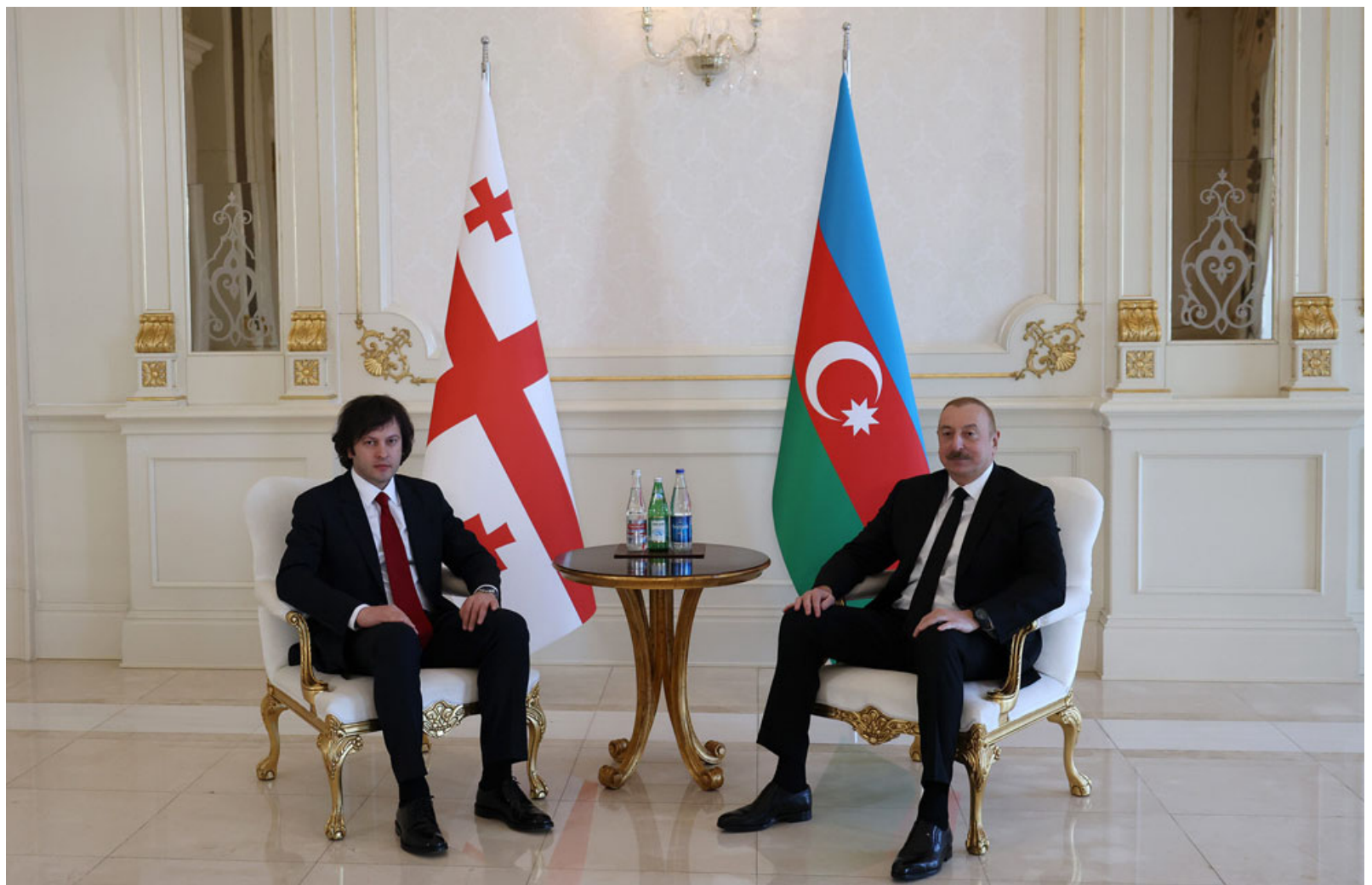
According to the press service of the Prime Minister, during the face-to-face meeting at Zagulba Palace, the leaders emphasized the high level of strategic partnership between the two countries. They noted close cooperation in various areas, particularly in trade and economics.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

The importance of peace and stability in the region was emphasized, with the head of the government affirming Georgia's commitment to contributing to this process in the future.

During the face-to-face meeting, the leaders discussed joint large-scale strategic projects and the prospect of further deepening cooperation across various fields, including transport and energy.

"We have several important joint projects, strategic endeavors that economically tie our two countries together. These include large-scale, mega projects that have already been implemented, with significant plans for future development in this direction. Throughout our conversation today, we discussed various projects that can be implemented through collaborative efforts. There is a significant



potential for developing cooperation in all areas.

We have exceptional, high-level trade and economic relations. Azerbaijan ranks among the top five trade partners of Georgia in terms of volume. Therefore, it is crucial to further develop our partnership in this regard," Kobakhidze stated.

Azerbaijani President Aliyev stated that additional steps would be taken for cooperation in the field of transportation.

"New infrastructure initiatives in the field of transportation will be essential for connecting many countries, particularly through the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and its extension. This

is one of our most significant achievements. We have increased its capacity from 1 to 5 billion tons. This project will be completed in two months. As I mentioned, the operation of this railway will be attractive and interesting for many countries. Starting this month, we will have meetings with the Southern

Natural Gas Advisory Council, and high-level delegations from Georgia will be involved in this process. All participants see that Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey are the initiators of these projects, which play a very important role in the supply of natural gas to Azerbaijan through Georgia," said Aliyev.



Hakan Fidan Congratulates Georgia on EU Candidate Status and Reaffirms Support for Euro-Atlantic Integration

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Hakan Fidan, congratulated Georgia on attaining the status of a candidate for EU membership and affirmed Ankara's commitment to supporting Georgia's integration into Euro-Atlantic political and security structures. Hakan Fidan made this announcement following the tripartite meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey in Baku.

Hakan Fidan emphasized the importance of respecting Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty within internationally recognized borders.

According to him, during the tripartite meeting, the Turkish side reaffirmed its full support for the Georgian government's

policy aimed at Abkhazia and the peaceful settlement of conflicts in South Ossetia.

Fidan stated that the meeting discussed the new situation in the region and ways to expand cooperation. He mentioned that the parties agreed to deepen trilateral cooperation in the fields of energy and communications.

The diplomat noted that during the tripartite talks, there was emphasis on the need to launch the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway at full capacity as soon as possible.

"We discussed the strategic importance of the Black Sea for the entire region, particularly in the fields of security, economy, energy, and transport. We have reaffirmed our commitment to enhancing cooperation through specific projects in the region and beyond," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Foreign Ministry Investigates Whereabouts of Georgian Citizens with Mexican Immigration Service



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has announced that it is in contact with the Mexican immigration service and is currently investigating the potential whereabouts of Georgian citizens.

that the embassy maintains contact with the family members of the citizens who have reached out to inquire about their whereabouts.

"The embassy is in contact with the Mexican immigration service to obtain additional information and is investigating the possible whereabouts of the citizens. The embassy remains in contact with the family members of the citizens who have reached out to the embassy in order to determine the location of their family member," stated the MFA.

According to reports, a criminal group near the US-Mexico border has kidnapped approximately 30 citizens of Georgia who were attempting to reach the US border via Mexico.

Georgian Foreign Minister Iliia Darchiashvili Meets with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Iliia Darchiashvili, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Hakan Fidan.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the min-

isterial meeting took place in Baku as part of the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey tripartite framework.

As per their reports, Darchiashvili and Hakan Fidan gave a high evaluation to the tripartite format of cooperation and the ninth ministerial meeting.

During the conversation, the importance of the format for the sustainable

development of the region was noted. The strategic partnership between Georgia and Turkey was positively evaluated, and information was exchanged on the current agenda of bilateral relations and the situation in the region. The ministers expressed readiness to continue the existing close coordination.



Germany and the EU via KfW support a modern water supply system and wastewater treatment in Ajara

With the EU's and German support, a ground-breaking event took place in Ochkhmuri, Kobuleti, to mark the beginning of the Ajara Rural Water and Wastewater Treatment Programme.

Tornike Rizhvadze, chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, inaugurated the event, which was attended by high-level officials from the Ajara Government, representatives from the EU Delegation to Georgia, the German Development Cooperation, members of the Ajara Water Alliance and local community representatives.

As part of the programme, contracts have been awarded to construct seven water reser-

voirs, three water intakes, and five wastewater treatment plants for selected territories in Kobuleti. Moreover, in the municipalities of Khulo, Shuakhevi, Keda and Khelvachauri, water supply systems, including several water intakes, water treatment plants, reservoirs, waste-

water treatment plants and septic tanks will be constructed.

"This project is another successful example for Team Europe. Through the support not only basic living conditions can be improved but it also provides new opportunities for tourism and jobs" stated Lidija

Christmann, Head of Development Cooperation at the German Embassy in Tbilisi.

In collaboration with the EU, the German Development Cooperation via the KfW Development Bank, and the Government of Ajara, this programme aims to improve access to clean and

sustainable drinking water and adequately discharged wastewater services. The undertaken measures elevate hygiene standards and enhance the overall quality of everyday life in the communities.

The Ajara Rural Water Supply and Wastewater Programme is organised in the framework of the Georgian cooperation with German (EUR 43 million) and the European Union financing (6.95 million) via KfW Development Bank and a local contribution of the government of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (EUR 54.6 million). Further financing from German Government via KfW Development Bank as a grant of EUR 10.3 million is under preparation and will be available in spring 2024.

The measures implemented will improve the level of hygiene and everyday life quality in the villages and stimulate tourism development. The Programme is implemented by the Ajara Water Alliance (AWA), a joint stock company (JSC) established by all Ajara municipalities and the government of Ajara.



Weather

Monday, March 18

Day Light Rain High: 11°C

Night Cloudy Low: 7°C

Tuesday, March 19

Day Showers High: 8°C

Night Rain Low: 6°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia Founded by Prof. Zaza Gachechiladze Tamar Gachechiladze Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000 E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili Layout Designer, Photographer

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Signing Ceremony of the Project Within the GGP Grassroots Human Security Grant Program Of the Embassy of Japan in Georgia

On March 15, the Project for the Provision of Secondhand Fire Engines in Sachkhere and Dedoplistskaro Municipalities has been signed by the Government of Japan, based on the goodwill of the Japanese people. The selected project covers 2 regions of Georgia and are united in one goal – strengthening

human security of local people. The total grant amount 67,274 USD.

The Signing Ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. **ISHIZUKA Hideki**; Mr. Teimuraz Mghebrishvili - Head of the Emergency Management Service; Mr. Giorgi Aladashvili – State representative in

Kakheti region; Mr. Arsena Baghashvili - Assemble member of Dedoplistskaro Municipality; Mr. Levan Ivanashvili - Mayor of Sachkhere Municipality; Mr. Malkhaz Merabishvili – Deputy Mayor of Dedoplistskaro Municipality.

Since the independence of Georgia, Japan has provided 216 grants within the

GGP Program, totaling over 20 million USD, in addition to other grant schemes. The GGP program aims to support human security in Georgia in the following priority fields: environment protection, agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, social care and education.



H.E. ISHIZUKA Hideki



Mr. Teimuraz Mghebrishvili



Mr. Giorgi Aladashvili



Mr. Levan Ivanashvili



Mr. Malkhaz Merabishvili

