

# The Georgian Times

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## Mentality change starts in the schools and continues in the universities

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## Presidential election date finally set

The nomination of candidates for the 2013 Presidential election is almost complete but the election itself has been rescheduled several times. The election date has now been set for Sunday, October 27, the date initially announced before it was changed to October 31 (a Thursday).The revised date had caused concern amongst experts and non-governmental organizations, who maintained that according to Georgian legislation a presidential election must be held on a day of rest and that overseas based Georgians would find it hard to vote on a working day.



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# Presidential election date finally set

By LIKA MOSHIASHVILI, GT

The nomination of candidates for the 2013 Presidential election is almost complete but the election itself has been rescheduled several times. The election date has now been set for Sunday, October 27, the date initially announced before it was changed to October 31 (a Thursday). The revised date had caused concern amongst experts and non-governmental organizations, who maintained that according to Georgian legislation a presidential election must be held on a day of rest and that overseas based Georgians would find it hard to vote on a working day.

The first one to criticize the October 31 election date, set by outgoing President Saakashvili, was Parliament Speaker Davit Usupashvili. During his visit to Turkey, Usupashvili accused President Saakashvili of being irresponsible.

"Unfortunately the President has managed to create a misunderstanding. First one date was announced, which seemed to have been set in stone, but then it was changed. There are several issues and small details which have been affected by this," said Usupa-

shvili, adding that as a result he may return to Georgia one day early to "deal with the issues."

Prime Minister Ivanishvili also criticized the president for changing the date and accused him of maniacally striving for power. "To me, it was infuriating that Saakashvili chose the last day of the month, a Thursday, as the election date. All this achieves is to make him President for three more days," Ivanishvili said at the monthly press conference on July 4. Several hours later Saakashvili re-



sponded by saying that "Today the Prime Minister revealed a total ignorance of Georgian law. He said that I had chosen the 31st of October instead of the 27th to prolong my presidency by three days. I would like to tell him, as seems to be too lazy to read the law, that the law defines when the end



of the presidency shall be. The end of the term is defined by

new President in 2013 a series of constitutional amendments passed by the Parliament of Georgia between 2010 and 2013 will come into effect. These significantly reduce the President's powers and increase those of the Prime Minister. However PM Ivanishvili, founder of the ruling Georgian Dream coalition, has said in an interview with an Estonian newspaper that he intends to leave politics a few days after Saakashvili steps down and new presidential elections are held.

"I do not want to stay, and it would be bad for politics in Georgia to pin all your hopes on one person. The three most important posts will, I believe, go to conscientious people, democrats. There is a need for an independent judiciary and free media. We need fresh blood," the PM declared.

According to a recent IRI (International Republican Insti-



tute) poll none of the declared presidential candidates will receive over 50% of the vote in the first round of the elections and therefore a second round will be required. How reliable this poll is considered to be depends on who you ask. According to the Georgian Dream its candidate, Education Minister Giorgi Margvelashvili, will win on the first ballot with a solid majority. Leader of the Democratic Movement-United Georgia Nino Burjanadze, claims that "it makes no difference, because whether it is in the first round or the second I am sure I will win." Salome Zourabishvili, Paata Burchuladze and Shalva Natelashvili are among the other possible candidates, and nominations will close 50 days prior to the elections, which is at the beginning of September. The United National Movement (UNM) presidential candidate

is not yet known as the team is holding primaries but it is considered most likely that former Parliament Speaker Davit Bakradze will be nominated as the UNM candidate.

According to the IRI poll Giorgi Margvelashvili will obtain 41% of the vote. 11% of respondents will vote for the nominated UNM candidate and 7% for Salome Zourabishvili. Nino Burjanadze and Christian Democratic Movement leader Giorgi Targamadze will obtain 5% of the vote and 9% of poll respondents said all possible candidates are unacceptable.

The 2013 Presidential election will be the 6th since the country declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The last one, held on January 5, 2008, resulted in the election of Mikheil Saakashvili for his second and final presidential term.

## New Phase of Labour Relationship Begins as New Labour Code Comes Into Force

By LIKA MOSHIASHVILI, GT

The New Labour Code has come into force, as confirmed by the "Sakartvelos Sakanonmdeblo Matsne". According to the Ministry of Justice, which initiated the amendments to the previous code, it fully meets European Standards. Alexandre Baramidze, the Deputy Minister of Justice said that the new code was the product of eight months' very interesting and hard work and ensures that the interests of both the employer and employee are ultimately protected.

The Deputy Minister stated that the Labour Code will

support and ensure that there is a culture of healthy labour relations in Georgia and will protect the interests of each employer and employee. "Nobody will now be able to dismiss somebody without any grounds or justification; nobody will be able to make others work overtime without compensation or work more hours than are considered part of the standard working week on a regular basis. There are also new regulations regarding labour agreements with and without time limit and individual and group labour disputes," said Alexandre Baramidze.

Irakli Petriashvili, head of the Georgian Trade Unions, has told

*The Georgian Times* that many amendments have been made in the code but he is still not satisfied with certain ones. He hopes that various gaps left in the Code will be filled gradually.

"Generally, the amendments made are positive. There are no negative amendments, but we are not fully satisfied. Night working hours are still unrestricted, and these should be paid for at a higher rate, meaning the Code still risks provoking discrimination. The positive changes are that an employer will not be able to dismiss an employee without justification and that overtime labour will be compensated, etc. However some people have a 40 hour working week and others a 48 hour. What will they say to those who have to

work 48 hours, that they have chosen the wrong professions? Or what are we dealing with here?" said Irakli Petriashvili.

Dimitri Khundadze, the head of Healthcare Committee, says that the Labour Code will institute a new phase in labour relations, as the previous code was discriminatory and employees were dismissed without any justification.

"I think we will be able to protect the interest of the employee, as an employee may only now be dismissed if they do not do their job properly," said Khundadze. "We were able to find consensus and have adopted a Labour Code, ultimately protecting the interests of parties, employee and employer."

Demur Giorkhelidze, an expert in economic issues, thinks the code is an improvement on the previous one but some paragraphs require serious alteration.

"It was not true that the previous Labour Code sought to keep a balance between employer and employee, it was a monster and this is an attempt to make the monster look nicer. It is necessary to have a legally binding Code in which the interests of the employers are balanced with the employee feeling protected. Compared to the previous one it is better, but it still needs improvement," said Giorkhelidze.

The Labour Code is coming into force after several months of discussion and debate. One

area it addresses it contracts. The three month contracts often offered before, which were frequently subject of dispute, have now been replaced by unlimited contract, though with certain conditions. These will be offered if the employee works in one organisation for 30 months. There are two types of regulation concerning notice, specifically, that if one month's notice is given the employee will receive 1 month's salary as severance but in only three days' prior notice is given, the employee will receive two months' salary.

For more details of the amendments to the Labour Code please refer to the website of Sakartvelos Sakanonmdeblo Matsne, matsne.gov.ge.

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# Ortwin Hennig: Mentality change starts in the schools and continues in the universities

By EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to Georgia Ortwin Hennig here talks about his impressions of Georgia and the centuries-old cultural and economic relations between Germany and Georgia.**

**How easily have you adapted to living and working in Georgia?**

Very easily indeed, as I like this country very much. I had been in Georgia for three years already, so when my minister offered me this job I jumped at the chance because I thought it would be interesting. Georgia is a welcoming country, with hospitable people, breathtaking landscapes and a vibrant and dynamic cultural and political scene. It is an open-minded country, containing many young, educated, smart people, and this is the main resource Georgia has for addressing the challenges of the 21st century. Georgia is on its way to Europe. When you walk through the streets of any Georgian city you come across Georgia's rich cultural and religious heritage, which is reminiscent of Europe and what I would call European culture.

**Do you think Georgians are more European or Asian?**

I like Georgians. I think they are neither European nor Asian, Georgians are Georgians. I like the Georgian character very much indeed. It is always difficult, and probably not fair, to generalize but although Georgians and Germans do not share the same mentality I think we are both very much European minded. What I have noticed during the last three years is that Georgians and Germans are pretty close in terms of cultural mentality, by which I mean that Georgians love music, science and literature.

**Can you tell us anything about the cultural exchange programmes between the two countries?**

Our countries enjoy a relationship based on a shared history which goes back to the days of the Georgian Kingdom. Long before our countries had official diplomatic relations we had very vivid exchanges and relations in culture and literature, science and other spheres. Germany is Georgia's longstanding and reliable partner and friend. We are always ready to listen to each other; the dialogue between us has always been very respectful and open. In September 2017 we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the first German colonists in Georgia. Throughout the last 200 years Germans have con-

tributed to the cultural and political development of Georgia. Since I have been here I have presented over one hundred scholarships which enable young Georgian students to study at German Universities. This is quite an impressive figure, and is proof of very solid foundation to our countries' relations. Unfortunately this is exchange is sometimes considered a little bit unbalanced because more students go from Georgia to Germany than the other way round. German students do come here to study at Georgian universities, but it is still considered a one-way street and we are working on this.

**You also provide German language courses for Georgian students, do you not?**

We have German teachers who teach the German language at Georgian schools. We also have the Goethe Institute which offers German language courses on a professional basis and the German academic exchange service DAAD, *Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst* (the largest funding organization in the world supporting the international exchange of students and scholars) is also active in this country. Furthermore, three years ago we founded the German International School in Tbilisi, which operates according to a German curriculum and enables German and Georgian pupils to pass the school leaving examinations and immediately enter any German or international university, as the German baccalaureate is internationally recognized. Its curriculum includes classes in German language, culture and history but these are taught in Georgian by Georgians. So we are actively engaged in maintaining the tradition of Georgians learning German. Currently we are seeing a negative trend to this as fewer Georgians are learning German because they prefer to focus on English. That's OK, but I think Georgian schools and universities could provide more facilities than they actually do which give young Georgians the opportunity of learning other languages besides English. It is in the long-term interests of Georgia itself to have bright young people who can obtain international jobs, in business, politics and the United Nations, because if you want to integrate with the European Union and Euro-Atlantic structures you will need people who speak not only English. That's a must, that's a basic requirement. You will need the Georgians who can speak other languages, like for example German. Over 20% of Europeans speak German, i.e. 1 in every 5



Europeans regards it as their mother tongue, so English is a must but German a plus. Any young Georgian deciding to learn German is also making a political choice for Europe.

Concerning the cultural dimensions of our countries, I can tell you that in 2017 Georgia will be the partner country of the Frankfurt Book Fair, which is an internationally renowned trade fair known through the literary world. Georgia will present itself to a cultured and educated international audience and being the partner country of this book fair also has political significance. Something else which might be of interest is that at the beginning of May a group of Georgians and Germans founded a body we call the Association for the Preservation of German Cultural Values and Heritage in Georgia. We have taken this step because we need to register an association legally in order to attract potential German sponsors who might be interested in contributing to preserving the traces of Germans in the Khevsureti and Bolnisi regions and other parts of Georgia, and I am really very happy that we have the support of the Georgian authorities and Ministry of Culture in this, as they understand the German culture forms part of Georgia's cultural heritage.

**What can you tell us about economic relations between the two countries?**

A few Georgians have asked me why not many German investors have entered Georgia and I answer that there is room for development here, we could have more German investment in this country, but Georgia is competing with two hundred other countries for German or any other foreign direct investment so it's up to the Georgian Government to do more to attract direct investment. We have the German Business Association Georgia, which consists of 80 member companies. (*The German Business Association Georgia*

*(DWVG), a non-commercial corporate body, aims to extend bilateral German-Georgian economic relations. It is comprised of companies from various Georgian and German industrial sectors. Its board members are ProCredit Bank, Hipp, Caparol, Lufthansa and the German Embassy Tbilisi. At this point, the DWVG provides insight into the variety of German-based investments.*) So we are actively engaged with private investors and this is on an upward curve. Why is German investment so important for Georgia? Because it is not always of a material character. German investors don't usually go for the quick euro or the quick dollar, they reinvest their profits in this country. This creates jobs and increases incomes, which in turn decreases the level of poverty in Georgia and contributes to sustainable economic growth. German investors not only provide Georgia with investments but jobs and technology and know how they cannot get here. German companies train Georgian staff in Germany so that they have the skills required in the modern economy.

**Is Georgia an interesting country for tourists? How can we persuade more German tourists to come to Georgia?**

Georgia is great country for tourists. It is not without reason that both the old and new governments have been trying to promote tourism. But the Government of Georgia and the Department of Tourism have to decide what sort of tourists you want here: do you want to attract the mass of ordinary tourists, who want gambling, and casinos, or more educated tourists who are more interested in this country? To attract mass tourists here you will have to invest millions of GEL in infrastructure, but as I see it Georgia is not well suited to mass tourism. I think this is a country for discerning individual tourists. Educated people will travel to this part of the world in order to experience the histori-

cal and cultural heritage of Georgia, but these are not the sort of tourists who will come to enjoy the sun on the rocky beaches of the Black Sea. European tourists are not used to spending their holidays on stones. For mass tourism you also need a developed infrastructure, which is still lacking despite all the efforts which have been made. You will not have six million tourists coming here from Europe, and if you build five star hotels next to others that will destroy the Georgian landscape. If you remain more modest in your ambitions, your capital and marvelous nature are great assets and within these you will receive and accommodate tourists who want to trace the rich Georgian cultural, religious and historical heritage. These are people who travel from one monastery to another to follow the route of the Argonauts.

More and more German tourists are coming to Georgia. I cannot give you exact numbers, but I have noticed this because we are located in this hotel (the German Embassy is in the Sheraton Metekhi Palace) and when I come to my office in the morning I sometimes run into roomfuls of foreign tourists, including many Georgians. But they come here to experience Georgia's history and culture with a Georgian guide, not go to the casino.

**Do you think there is a lack of democracy in Georgia? What do we have to learn from Europe in this respect?**

Democracy is a mental and cultural disposition held by all members of society, and building this is not an easy process. It is more than just putting a vote in a ballot box every 4 years, and is not the state of affairs at a given moment, as democracy is not something static. Democracy is not achieved, and then set in stone for evermore. Democracy needs to be regained by the people again and again, on a daily basis. I would not dare to say that in Germany we have absolute democracy or that there is any country which has a perfect democracy. There is always room for improvement. Georgia used to have something of an authoritarian regime, which modernized the country through political centralism and selective justice, and this sort of system needs to transform into a real democratic one.

You have to build your own democratic state according to your own historical, cultural, political, religious and traditional features. The objective criteria according to which one can measure the democratic quality of any given society are different. How you will meet these and how you will create your own society and

institutions depends on you. I do not think that you have to take examples from other European political systems and impose them on your own. You are Georgia, and you have your own way, your own values. I think you are in a phase of transition to real democracy, which is a difficult and never ending process.

Georgia comes from its own thousand years old traditions. In democratic countries political opponents sit together, discuss together and find a compromise which is in the interests of the country. This is a very positive quality in our societies, but in Georgia, as I understand it, this is not seen as a positive quality, as here if somebody compromises he loses. This means that if somebody does not share one person's opinion they are considered an enemy of the Georgian people, and this is not right. Of course, this is not democracy, but looking at your past, the 70 years of Soviet Communism, you are trying to transform your society into a democratic one and this takes time.

I am convinced that a democratic society can be successfully built only on the basis of a certain level of economic development, a certain educational standard, and a civil society which has a sense of the public welfare and stands up for social tolerance. There are other basics to be accepted and then lived up to in a democratic society: take the "independence of the judiciary", for example. It can be easily said, as of now, the judges are independent, but it is difficult to implement the concept of the independence of the judiciary in a country whose very existence dates back less than 20 years, to the 90s of the last century. You also need a certain change in the mentality and minds of people. This mentality change starts in the schools and continues in the universities. The education of judges needs to instill in them the notion that they are independent and should be proud of it, and important pillars of society which will not take orders from the government.

**Is it possible to maintain good relations with Russia and at the same time aspire to join NATO and the European Union?**

You have to pursue a foreign policy strategy which guarantees your survival as a smaller country living next to a big one. Georgia has to understand that integration with NATO involves both domestic and geostrategic reforms, as the allies are bound by Article Five of the NATO treaty and need to know that they are not going to be asked to get involved in defending Georgia unless this is absolutely necessary.



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# Bijan Mougouee: We are 100% better than European competitors

By EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

**“FlyGeorgia” as a national airline of Georgia is a new, privately owned and well-established airline, offering full-service flights to various destinations in Europe, Middle East and the CIS. Mr. Bijan Mougouee, the CEO, states that “FlyGeorgia” aims to connect Georgia to the world and the world to Georgia, to support tourism, economic growth and popularisation**

nice democracy. I really enjoyed my first day in Tbilisi. The first night I was walking from Freedom Square to my hotel and you would not believe what my feelings were. I saw a very beautiful city with a lot of nice buildings. You have a very unique combination of modern and ancient civilization. That is why I have decided to spend all my time promoting Georgia as a tourist destination. Yesterday I was in Mtskheta, a very lovely city, lovely sights... the



**of the country: “Our main priority is safety and highest quality to satisfy requirements of any customer”.**

**Mr. Mougouee, why did you decide to come to Georgia?**

I came to Georgia in March 2013 due to what I had seen in mass media and internet, but everything I saw here exceeded my expectations. I knew that it was a unique country, but when I came here I really fell in love with Georgia. It is a beautiful country, with good people and

nature in this country is really inimitable. Positive changes and what you have received from Europe over the last 10 years make you unique and very different from any other former soviet country. Of course, first I wanted to see the country and then I decided to work here having seen business opportunities. But this is not only for my personal interest: I aim to develop “FlyGeorgia” into a national carrier of Georgia. This development would generate mutual benefit for us and for Georgia.

**How did you like business climate here?**

It is also unique. There are a lot of opportunities in Georgia to be explored by foreign investors. I can say it about airline industry in particular. There are great opportunities to develop a lot of hotels and aviation schools and to work in different sectors such as the construction sector.

ing Georgian mentality and Georgian services to the rest of the world.

**What are your future plans here in Georgia?**

Our projects are still expanding within Europe. We are now flying to Dusseldorf and by August we will be flying to Frankfurt, London and Stockholm. That will enable us to operate flights to almost all

dants will be recruited. So we are creating very nice job opportunities for the people. The more we expand the bigger share of the Georgian market we take. We are making our staff more internationally oriented, not teaching them just one discipline but other international disciplines to give them better opportunities of work in other countries. “FlyGeorgia” is

in kiosk service at the airport, which will create a different image and improve standards for Georgia’s airports.

**What is the difference between you and other companies in this industry?**

We have combined our efforts with “Airzena” to bring Georgian aviation to a higher level and to compete with other foreign operators. Together we can definitely create a better and more competitive national carrier status in Georgia. “FlyGeorgia” offers full service comparable with very high level airlines like Lufthansa, KLM, etc. I can assure you that our business class seats are even better than any European carrier, as we offer passengers much more leg space and the best services.

If you once use our product you will see that we are completely different. You can check our services and compare them to others. Everything we offer is better: seats, services, schedules. I can proudly declare that we are 100% better than our European competitors operating to Georgia. If somebody wants to test this claim, they are welcome and I will leave it to their judgment.

**One day could we see you as a winner of the “Georgian Times Business Award”?**

Definitely! I will do my best to becoming the winner of not only this award, but any award available in Georgia!

**What charity and sponsorship programmes are you involved in?**

The concept of our Company is to share. We are involved in a number of charities in Georgia and abroad. We contribute to support Georgian sports, such as the wrestling and football. We offer all federation members 40% discount on our tickets. That’s the concept of “FlyGeorgia”. We are here to share, and our motto is - win the heart, win the game!



**For previous years foreign investors complained about unfavourable operational conditions created by the previous government, have you heard about it?**

No, I have not heard about such conditions existing, but I can see what is going on now. And I see that the Government of Georgia is spending a lot of time and energy encouraging foreign investors. This is what I see and what I like here. Everywhere we go in Europe we can see Georgian flags. Georgian ambassadors are promot-

northern and central Europe. Very soon we will also start scheduling flights to Yerevan. This summer we will attract more passengers and contribute even more to tourism development by increasing our Batumi services, which is very important for the economy of Georgia. If we develop Georgia as a destination together with governmental bodies, the tourism department and the United Airports we can achieve greater success. The more flights we add the more Georgian pilots, first officers and flight atten-

spending a lot of time and money making sure we conform to the European standards. We are EASA (the European Aviation Safety Agency) compliance and we are applying for the IOSA. So we are increasing FlyGeorgia’s standards to international level. We are also joining “Amadeus” which is a global distribution system. We have changed our web-booking system so that all the major credit cards are accepted and customers can easily book their flights. We have also added an online check-in service and plan to have check-







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# Caucasian Islamists Pose Threat of a Global Scale – Doku Ummarov vs. Sochi Olympics 2014

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA, GT

Doku Ummarov (Arabic nickname Doka Abu Osman), Amir of the “Caucasus Islamic Emirate”, issued a statement on 3 July 2013 on broadening the Jihad (holy war) it announced some time ago to the global level and making the “Caucasus Islamic Emirate” an indispensable part of a global Jihad. In one very important part of this statement the Caucasus Islamists acknowledge their long suspected alignment with Al-Qaida, as Al-Qaida has likewise declared that it is waging a Jihad at global level against Murtadds (apos-

tates, who either return to a former religion or deny Islam in either speech or action) and Kafirs (infidels).

Certainly, joining this global Jihad means affiliating with the international Islamic resistance front incorporating not only Al-Qaida but also the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas, Jamaat al-Islamiyyah, etc. Moreover Doku Ummarov lifted his previous ban on conducting clandestine operations within the Russian Federation. “We banned undertaking combat actions on Russian territory but this was considered by The Kremlin a weakness on our side, and due to it the Russians

increased their persecution of the Muslim population of the Caucasus region. Hence, we will retaliate to every cruel action by the Russians and aim to cause harm to the Kremlin regime and pro-Kremlin kafirs” Ummarov vowed to torpedo the holding of the Sochi Olympics in 2014 as Caucasians killed by the Russians are buried there and also declared an expansion of the existing Jihad to Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, including the Volga littoral and the Urals, in the heart of the Russian Federation, and hinted that the Student Olympics in Kazan could also be a target.

The statement itself is very serious message about the plans

of the Islamic warriors in the North Caucasus to enlarge their operational theatre and present very dangerous challenges to all the regional states (not only in the North Caucasus but also the South Caucasus). Islamists are already conducting combat operations in the North Caucasus, notably the serious military attacks of the Dagestan “Jamaats” (semi-autonomous military units equivalent to army brigades supervised by the military command of the Caucasus Islamic Emirate). This menace is being taken seriously by The Kremlin and steps are being taken to increase security in Kazan while the 2013 Student Olympics are held. The Russian Federation’s Air Force



and Air Defence forces will provide airborne security and a special Air Force group at Kazan Airport, comprising seven MI-8 transport-combat helicopters, three MI-24 combat helicopters and a pair of MiG-29 combat jets has been reinforced with locally produced Elerondrones and Ansat helicopters.

Doku Ummarov’s statement was driven by certain concrete military-political factors which could be quantified as follows:

- *The Increasing financial flow to the Caucasus Islamists from the international Islamic community, notably from Al-Qaida and other radical Islamic organizations*

- *The restoration of their operational capabilities in the North Caucasus, which is connected with the Taliban’s increasing military operations in Afghanistan*

- *The ongoing standoff in Syria and the increasing Is-*

*lamic resistance at regional levels. The Caucasus Islamists profess full solidarity with the Syrian Islamist opposition, and by restarting active military operations in the North Caucasus they will open a second front against the Kremlin regime, which supports incumbent Syrian President Assad.*

Ummarov’s statement should also be taken seriously by the incumbent Georgian government. There is a realistic possibility of terrorist acts occurring here, as the Islamic Emirate’s leadership is likely to want to take revenge for the special operation conducted against Islamic warriors in Lapankuri Gorge in August 2012 by Mikheil Saakashvili’s authoritarian regime.

Dr. Vakhtang Maisaia  
Military expert, Associate Professor at Sukhishvili Teaching University  
Director, the GT Azri Strategic Studies Centre

# Egypt politics – a good case for Georgia’s bad cohabitation...

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA, GT

Nowadays in world politics is being perceived interesting process of deposing dictatorial and authoritarian regimes whenever is possible amid of Georgia. Egypt became very perfect example how to battle for gaining true liberty and protect with proper means political pride.

In a country where two revolutions emerged in previous 3 years and most ridiculous dictators – secularian dictator Hosni Mubarak and radical religious leader Mohammed Morsi were ousted with peaceful protest rallies and democratic values have been protecting so far. The National Salvation Front, the most opposition democratic political movement opposed to both dictators in unfair political competition has managed to sustain justice and with militaries restored those fragile democratic features outgrown in short period of time after Mubarak ousting in Egypt. It is very relevant to underscore



that so-called “cohabitation” has been completed failed in Egypt and the Egyptian people demonstrated very low tol-

erance toward undemocratic rulership and to those politicians who broken any democratic values (in case of Mubar-

protection of rule of law, liberty and justice. It is clear that the Georgian society is in transition being in astride position “straddling” between authoritarian governance and tiny “breath” of democratic governance. A lot has been done during the transition period and some liberties have been restored however restoration of justice and rule of law are still unfulfilled missions yet to have implemented. Unlike to Egypt case-study in Georgia due to the harmful to future Georgian pol-

ity. What are main similarities and differences between revolutionary Egypt and post-revolutionary Georgia could be imagined in comparing the democracies undergone processes in the both countries with concrete political parameters comparisons and in demonstrating what and where both democracies are standing.

Above-mentioned chart is more hypothetical version of how the both countries are dealing with those challenges face

political parameters/patterns	Georgia in 2013	Egypt in 2013	Note
Restoration of Justice	N/A	Available	
Freedom of speech	Available	Available	
Balance of power	N/A	N/A	in Georgian case balance of power is non-available due to court power “death”; in case of Egypt due to military command involvement into internal political affairs
Political “integrity”	N/A	Available	jargon “integrity” means proper denounce of previous political authoritarian governance heredity and create “historic memory” for future generation
Human right protection	Available	Available	
Political stability	partially available	N/A	
Economic Development	more available	partially available	

ak for more than 30 years governance) and who promised to restore democratic privileges and values but forgot to fulfill the promise (in case of Morsi’s very short governance with religious rhetoric). Egyptian democracy unfortunately demonstrates its more sustainability rather than Georgian democracy that had supposed to be more prudent and eligible. Egypt vs. Georgia this is a political pattern in combatting for

politics, a strategy of “cohabitation” with killers, murders and political neo-Nazis politicians, including so-called “President” Mikhail Saakashvili and his puppet team members, in contemporary Georgia – restoration of justice, rehabilitation of political and illegal prisoners status, punishment of butchers, revelation of full truth about criminality of the previous regime are still unreachable dreams for the Georgian soci-

with endorsement of full democracy and it based on more subjective evaluation of the processes in the countries. Let’s see how the political processes will be developing in both countries in nearest future.

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# Georgia cancels visa-free regime with Iran amid claims of economic malfeasance

By EKA GAZDELIANI, GT

**Georgia has abolished its visa-free travel regime with Iran. The regulations concerning this became effective on July 1.**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that it is revisiting the previous government's immigration policy and as such has suspended visa-free movement with Iran temporarily until appropriate arrangements have been made by both sides.

Maia Panjikidze, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that this decision was made by the governmental committee on migration issues chaired by the Minister of Justice.

"We are elaborating our immigration policy now. There has been no such policy in Georgia before. There are new challenges which demand that we develop such a policy. We have to review the visa requirements cancelled unilaterally by Georgia as part of a complex of issues. Therefore the right for Iranian nationals to enter Georgia without a visa has been suspended temporarily," said Panjikidze. She recalled the case in 2012 when Iran prevented Georgians from entering it without a visa for several months, an action which brought no protest from Georgia.

The Wall Street Journal recently published an article entitled, "As Sanctions Bite, Iranians Invest Big in Georgia". This stated that economic sanc-

tions have made it difficult for Iranians to conduct business abroad but Iranian businessmen are now seeking to do business in Georgia, a longstanding US ally in the South Caucasus. It also that the number of Iranian companies in Georgia has increased from 84 to 1,500 over the last two years. Subsequently the influential magazine Forbes commented, "Tbilisi has allowed the infringing of US sanctions, which was impossible during Saakashvili's governance."

However the Foreign Minister has denied any connection between the alteration of the visa arrangements and the articles published in the Western media, says that the development of an immigration policy had begun much earlier. "There is no link between these two things, as we began working on this in March and it takes a long time to address each issue. The visa requirement is temporary. We are interested in having good relationships with our neighbours, including Iran, and nothing will threaten these," said Maia Panjikidze, though she did not specify for how long Iranian passport holders would require visas to enter Georgia.

Gia Khukhashvili, the Georgian Prime Minister's advisor on foreign economic issues, has told The Georgian Times that the US press articles ultimately derived from lobbyists working for the formerly governing UNM and its leader, President Mikheil Saakashvili. He said that visa-free entry for Iranians was established by the

Saakashvili government and now the UNM is trying to blame the resultant problems on the current government.

"These regulations were established during Saakashvili's period and any problem which has emerged with Iran has done so since his time in power. The current government has started regulating migration policy as everything was out of order," said Khukhashvili.

In response to the Wall Street Journal article the U.S. Embassy in Georgia released the following statement on its website:

"The U.S. Government is focused intently on eliminating any Iranian attempts to evade sanctions, including through possible business connections in Georgia. We are working closely with the Georgians on this issue. Contrary to certain statements in the article, we see undiminished interest on the part of Georgia's government in strong relations with the United States, and a continued strong desire for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration. U.S. concerns involving Iran sanctions evasion here have grown in recent years, and predate the current Georgian government."

The Wall Street Journal then stated that the Georgian government had frozen approximately 150 bank accounts tied to Iranian businesses and individuals in order to comply with United Nations sanctions aimed at curbing Tehran's nuclear programme. Georgia's Minister of Justice, Tea Tsulukiani, made a

statement concerning this on June 20, which said that her government is studying the evidence contained in the Journal article and Tbilisi remains committed to closely cooperating with the U.N. and U.S. to enforce the sanctions on Iran. Prime Minister Ivanishvili confirmed this at a recent press conference, saying that "We continue to have good neighbourly relations with Iran but at the same time we have to accept UN decisions, and no black money or any items subject to the US embargo will be permitted on our territory. We are meeting our obligations and at the same time maintaining a good neighbourly relationship."

Despite this move the Georgian-Iran Business Forum was recently held in Tbilisi, attended by about 87 Iranian business persons who were introduced to Georgia's trade-economic and investment environment. Zurab Tkemaladze, the chair of Parliament's economic policy committee who attended the forum, said that both Georgia and Iran wish to strengthen their economic relationship.

The visa free regime between Georgia and Iran was established on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Under the new regulations Georgian citizens still do not require a visa if they wish to visit Iran for 45 days or less. As Maia Panjikidze has confirmed, Iranian citizens will still not face any problems visiting Georgia as they can obtain visas from the Georgian consulate as well as at the border. Iranian citizens who crossed the



border before July 1 will still be able to remain in Georgia for 45 days without a visa, at which point they have to leave the country or apply for a residence permit stating the grounds. The Georgian Embassy in Iran is accepting visa applications, but none had been received as of July 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Iranian Embassy in Georgia has declared that the new visa requirement will not affect negatively business relationships between the two states. "It will not affect those who are interested in visiting Georgia, either as tourists or through interest in other spheres. We will have the same good relationship as before. We are not expecting anything to get worse. As for the question of whether Iran will take a similar decision, we have no information on this at the moment. Like other countries, Iran has the right to decide such matters for itself," the Embassy said. It also confirmed that the new regulations have not prevented or delayed any visit by an Iranian to Georgia and no notice, claim or phone call has been received concerning this.

The imposition of a visa requirement for Iranians is being seen by commentators as linked with the broader issue of Iranian investment in Georgia. Sara Ghazi, editor of Tbilisi's main Persian-language newspaper Ariana, says that "30 years ago Iranians went to the US seeking a new home, later they went

to European countries. Later on, when immigration became difficult, they went to Dubai, Malaysia and Turkey. For the last three-four years, due to the visa free regime to Georgia, they have been coming here, establishing companies and gaining the right of residence. However although many came here and brought much money with them their spouses were not allowed resident status. What will happen to their families? I think this is a violation of human rights. Furthermore, most Iranians do not feel themselves and their investments protected in Georgia. Lots of our visitors ask us every day, "Will our accounts be frozen as well, or what will happen to our businesses?" I am not talking about those who have problems with the law. Georgia has the right to control the flow of money on its territory. I am talking about Iranians doing clean, honest business." Georgian economist Paata Sheshelidze has told The Georgian Times that Georgia cannot afford to refuse Iranian investment and should not therefore be supporting the UN sanctions. "Georgia will not offend the West by doing this, as the West knows that this is our source of income and we do not have the luxury to say no," he says.

In recent months Iranian nationals have taken the reins of a private Georgian airline, a major trading bank and a scrap metal plant.

## SOCIETY

# Scandal at the Teachers Certificate Examinations

By LIKA MOSHIASHVILI, GT

**The Teachers Certificate Examinations began last week and were immediately embroiled in controversy. Not long after they began Director of the National Examinations Centre Maia Miminoshvili announced that a lot of teachers had been caught bringing cribs into the examinations.**

"Representatives of our centre, registrars, journalists and policemen responsible for security are present in the registration hall. In front of all these people teachers brought

in cheat sheets, some even written on their bodies," said Miminoshvili.

"I do not even know what to say. I have collected all the cheat sheets in one packet. They contain some terms and explanations which could have been used at a particular examination. I do not think teachers have to take such kind of steps," she declared.

Iva Mindadze, the Deputy Director of the National Examinations, says that all the teachers are checked before entering the examination room. "There is almost no chance to cheat during the examinations. If teachers are not caught cheating at

the entrance, two monitors who observe the process won't let anyone to rewrite things," he told The Georgian Times. However he acknowledged that cribs had been brought in previous years too, but this year more than 30 had been discovered, the highest number ever.

"We do not have these problems with prospective students. It's not clear to me why teachers behave so unprofessionally. They should teach their pupils not to use cribs and fight against this every day at school, instead they are doing it themselves," Iva Mindadze told GT.

Miminoshvili added that

"We can't give teachers a notice telling them not to use cribs because nobody will be allowed to enter the examination room with cheat sheet anyway." However she confirmed that on this occasion the teachers caught with the sheets were allowed to take part in the exams.

The results of the teacher certificate examinations will be known in August. "I'll tell you honestly that I do not expect better results this year than in previous years. However, I wish good luck to all teachers," said the Director of the NAEC. "I do not know why the examinations were difficult for teachers this year. All the in-

formation is on our website; most of the topics are discussed in detail. There was nothing new and surprising for them. With the help of our webpage they had a good opportunity to prepare properly," commented Miminoshvili. "These examinations enable us to check a teacher's academic ability in his/her professional field. We have to demand writing and reading skills from teachers first, then students," she added.

NAEC has been holding teacher certification examinations since 2010. Teachers are tested on professional abilities, mathematics, history, geography, civic education, biology, physics, chemistry, and Georgian and foreign languages. Every teacher has to pass the examination in professional abilities and the subject they wish to teach. Currently certification is voluntary and it is up to teachers' whether they choose

to participate in the exams or not. However it will become obligatory from 2014.

Mzia Uznadze, a biology teacher, commented that, "Teachers have to know everything which is part of the examination tests. A teacher should always know much more than his/her pupil. As for analytical writing, this needs some more thinking." She added that the examinations are stressful for teachers and their format should be changed. "It's stressful for us. You are called a professional and then you have to pass exams. It's very bad feeling, although teachers should realize that there are new technologies and new approaches out there and we have to develop our professional skills."

26,000 teachers were registered to take part in the Teachers Certificate Examinations this year, but thousands did not show up to take them.





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# A Festival to Unite Youth

By LISA TONAKANYAN, GT

**Hills, towers and peaks – this is the visiting card of the Dzheyrakhsky District of the Republic of Ingushetia, which has hosted more than 500 young people from different parts of Russia and Caucasus. The**

they were probably the only things reminding us that Georgia had been left behind, though Vladikavkaz, the administrative centre of Alania, surprised us with one more thing – trams, which are unusual to a Georgian. The departure from North

to Georgia as Azerbaijan's good friend and partner state.

The next day at Armkhi began with morning exercises led by Rakhim Chakhkiev, the professional heavyweight boxer who won a gold medal at the 2008 Summer Olympics, and continued with an excursion to the late medieval tower com-

plexes of many religious, national and ethnic groups, who found a common language between each other surprisingly well. "This is a good way to show the young how we can live next to each other in peace and with respect. This was a very useful trip and experience," he told GT.

On the morning of June 27

ing at plum-size fruit on his shelves, seeing our surprised faces. The fruit here was almost all imported and of huge size. "We have here everything one might ever need," said a proud Hizir Ozdoev, coordinator of the Azerbaijani delegation accompanying us. However we discovered this was not exactly so – you will never find alcohol in Ingushetia because Moslems don't drink it (this disappointed the Georgian representatives, for whom wine is almost a "holy" beverage).

After an excursion around the city and visit to the Monument of Memory and Glory we headed to Ingushetia's administrative centre, Magas, where Head of the Republic Yunus-bek Yevkurov met journalists. Before the press conference began one of the cameramen announced: "Don't shoot the girl in a hijab" (the veil which covers the head of a Moslem female beyond the age of puberty). Two Chechen journalists left the Magas TV building as a result of this. Yevkurov arrived and talked about the meaning of such events, which tighten the bonds between the youth of the region and bring young people up to show tolerance and respect towards each other. A journalist

he said.

About 15 minutes after the press conference Yevkurov appeared again – on the stage of summer amphitheatre, welcoming the participants to the gala concert. "This festival is very important to us as hosts. We are glad to see you all here. I do believe that an event like this helps youngsters integrate not only with South Caucasians but with the youth of the whole Russian Federation. The main idea of the forum is to learn more about the regions you live in and present your homelands and their traditions and culture to your new friends," Yevkurov emphasized.

The head of the republic then invited the Georgian and Azerbaijani delegations to a meal after the concert. "I have heard a legend that there's no corruption in Georgia," he said smiling. We assured him that this was not a legend – at least not in the lower echelons of government. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan's delegation invited Yevkurov to visit their country. "I've been to Azerbaijan twice, now it's time to visit Georgia," he said.

The Students' Spring in the Caucasus festival is the continuation of the broader Russian



**programme of this year's student festival included business meetings, sightseeing, sports events, presentations of national culture by the participating countries and a special Youth Media platform. A Georgian delegation of seven participated in the festival, which took place between 25 and 27 June.**

Ossetia also didn't go off swimmingly: our cars were detained at a checkpoint for more than half an hour. The officers told us we couldn't continue on to Nazran, the largest city in Ingushetia, but it turned out that the problem was solvable – it needed only money. At last we arrived in Nazran, from where, along with the students and journalists from Azerbaijan, we went to the Armkhi winter resort in the Dzheyrakhsky District, eating mutton barbeque and salads in a minibus.

On the first day of the festival the students presented their regions, republics and states by demonstrating examples of their traditional dances and songs, cuisine and art. In a few minutes the young people there struck up acquaintances with each other and many changed their opinions about the Caucasus.

"When we were about to leave our home city, Samara, people told us 'don't go there, it's dangerous, the people there are aggressive' but as soon as we arrived we discovered this sort of talk has no connection with reality. The people here are friendly and helpful, the nature is marvelous and the region is very calm. Now I don't have the stereotype that everything is bad in the Caucasus. I would love to come here again," third-year student Ekaterina Resh told the Georgian Times.

During the presentation the Azerbaijani delegation astonished all of the participants by declaring: "We have gifts for you". The organizers were the first to get their present – a picture of Baku painted in Caspian Oil, the black gold of the country. Gifts were also given

to the participants of Student Spring 2013 were taken to Nazran, where they started preparing for the closing gala concert

all the participants of Student Spring 2013 were taken to Nazran, where they started preparing for the closing gala concert



ed us all day long. A meal in the fresh air, the smell of barbecuing and traditional music and dance made everyone's day.

"Everything we have seen here is great and we are glad that we were invited to this event. The first student festival I attended was in Azerbaijan in 2011 and I also went to the next in Nalchik (the administrative centre of Kabardino-Balkaria). I discovered that the Ingush people are as hospitable as we Azerbaijanis are, and this was very pleasant for us," Elvin Aliev, a journalism student at Khazar University, told GT.

Head of the Georgian delegation Nika Metreveli said that the festival gathered the youth

in the newly built summer amphitheatre, while journalists were introduced to the city's sights and life. The first impression Nazran left on us was its appearance – its history goes back to 1781 but it seemed to be a brand new settlement, with its small cottage-like houses of red brick, mosques and good roads. It is a rather clean city where the majority of women cover their head fully or partially with kerchiefs as Islam demands and the men wear small caps called betting.

The bazaar (open market) had all sorts of fruit and vegetables on sale. "These are grapes. From Italy," an Azerbaijani salesman told us, point-

ing at plum-size fruit on his shelves, seeing our surprised faces. The fruit here was almost all imported and of huge size. "We have here everything one might ever need," said a proud Hizir Ozdoev, coordinator of the Azerbaijani delegation accompanying us. However we discovered this was not exactly so – you will never find alcohol in Ingushetia because Moslems don't drink it (this disappointed the Georgian representatives, for whom wine is almost a "holy" beverage).

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Student Spring founded in 1991. "For many years we attended the interregional festival of youth in the Caucasus, which hosted talented young people from the Russian Caucasus and South Caucasus; for a short while this stopped, and then in 2009 Kabardino-Balkaria restarted it. This year we had participants from all the republics of the North Caucasus, 15 other Russian regions, Georgia, Azerbaijan and South Ossetia," Anastasia Makhnakova, Director of the festival, told GT. She said that its main goals are to strengthen cultural ties between student groups and organizations in the Caucasus and CIS countries.



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# Limitless Talent – Uta Bekaia Talks to GT from New York

By TAKO AGARASHVILI, GT

There was this huge man in the room when I went to see my good old friend from NYC. He was sitting at the table making a really weird looking ‘hat’ with some sort of see-through horns. He was dark, bold and bearded. His outfit was of 4 different colours. But from the second he jumped into the conversation it was obvious that it was his soft, sweet, colourful, kind personality that was radiating that rainbow effect, not just his outfit.

Uta Bekaia was born and raised in Tbilisi but has been living and working in New York City since 1998. He is a costume designer. He has worked on theatre and movie projects like Shaw’s Don Juan in Hell, Genet’s The Balcony, Joyce’s Finnegans Wake and many others. He has worked with director Jim Milton on Michael McClure’s VKTMS and Allies in Wonderland at the Kaufman Center. He has also worked on SaintHollywood - a New York based multimedia art project involving sound and visual art.

He is extremely talented; his head is full of new ideas. For Uta an idea is a constant, ongoing process. When it comes to creativity, he takes this concept to a whole different level. If you take just a glimpse at his art you will agree; the guy lives in a different, colourful, limitless, inexhaustible galaxy where wonders occur every day. He finds beauty in our surroundings and moulds it in order to bring it to our mind and perception. He is an artist who doesn’t just think that life would be more beautiful if we changed our attitude but actually brings different perspectives to us, giving us a



chance to follow him into his beautiful wonderland and make a habit of living in it.

I actually got in touch with the ‘Purple Jester’ when he was making a video for Fashion Beat (Art area). I was lucky enough to be around for “making of” (day 1). He is the most positive person I know. He brings art wear to fashion through collaborative projects which are a cross between media, fashion and performance art from the interdisciplinary art studio Ideal Glass in downtown New York. Most importantly, his creations are beautiful. The characters portrayed by his clothes are strong, romantic, convincing and confident. Here he talks about his life and work in the same way.

**Did you always know you were an artist or did you become one after finding yourself?**

I always knew I was an artist. As a matter of fact the first word I ever said was beautiful. As a teenager I went to art

school. That helped me develop as an artist.

**How did it go?**

My family was always very supportive. I never felt accepted by society just because of my personality. As a little kid I created a beautiful world around me to protect myself from ugliness. As a teenager it got hard, and that’s when the war began.

**Do you still live in that world? Did things get easier in NY?**

Now I’m a grown man and I can deal with reality. Place and country and even people have nothing to do with it, it’s a personal journey.

**How did you get to NY?**

New York was the first place which came up when I was trying to escape from Georgia. It happened by chance. It was not my choice, but I feel blessed.

**Name all the fields of art you are working in.**

Fashion, art wear, fine art, sculpture, installation art, per-

formance art.

**How do you feel about ‘Prêt-à-Porter’?**

I am not much of a Prêt-à-Porter person, I have always had a tendency towards avant-garde, theatrical shows; my fashion is always more performance art than regular clothing. It has been good.

**What is more fun – designing costumes for the theatre or ready to wear clothing?**

I like to do both, theatrical and ready to wear.

**What inspires you?**

Surroundings.

**What makes you money?**

Right now my art makes me money.

**Are you going to continue working with many forms of art, or do you think you will eventually tie yourself down to one with full dedication?**

I think I will continue for as long as I can find a way to express myself.

**Do you ever think that working with so many forms of art leaves less time and energy for maybe “the one form” that is closest to you?**

I don’t think so. Ultimately



been the Pheromonemultimedia show we did with Levan Mindiashvili in Buenos Aires. A pheromone is a secreted or excreted chemical factor which triggers a social response in members of the same species. Pheromones are chemicals capable of acting outside the body of the secreting individual to impact on the behaviour of the receiving individual. In that performance pheromone was a chemical substance which became a metaphor for love and its biological proof.

**‘Purple Jester’, your ongoing project, is not in a common form of art for Georgia. Do you think the Georgian audience is ready for it?**

We have already showed a little piece of ‘Purple Jester’ at Tbilisi Fashion Week and everyone loved it.

**What is ‘Purple Jester’, in your own words?**

Jester is a dark show about losing and finding love and travelling between worlds and universes. It’s based on an emotional roller coaster of human relationships.

**Has it achieved the outcome you wanted?**

Working on it.

**Which is your favourite stage character to dress?**

Would love to dress Marie Antoinette the queen of debt.

**Is art your “job” or “a moveable feast”?**

Art is my life.

**How do you embrace it?**

With all my heart and every cell.

**What more would you give to it if you could?**

I guess more time? Though art is all I do.

**What would you fix in the world?**

Understanding.

**What colour is your art?**

Red.

**What colour is your love?**

Pink.



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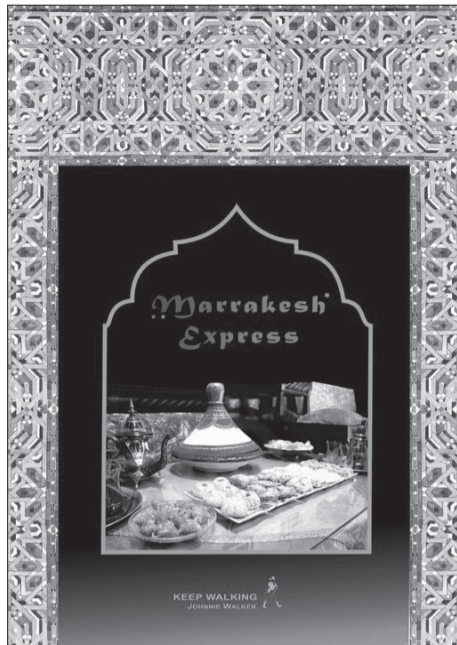
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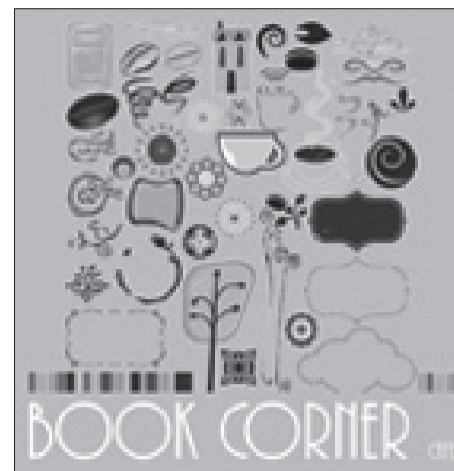
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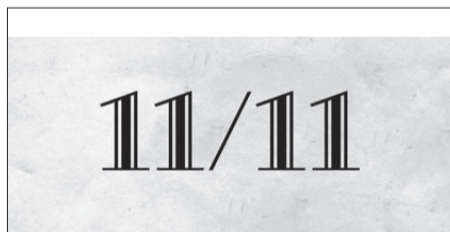
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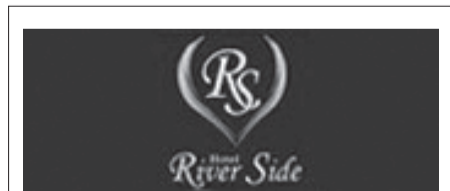
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