The Georgian Times Media Holding Hosts First Industrial Forum

Malkhaz Gulashvili stated that the Industrial Forum will be held next year too and become a tradition, as the Georgian Business Awards have. It was important because it was devoted to the creation of business and job opportunities and the growth of Georgia’s Gross Domestic Product.
Yesterday’s Nowhere Man on the Threshold of Total Victory

By: LELA TONAKANYAN, GT

Georgia’s Prime Minister had this opportunity to promote his candidacy for the presidency by organising another meeting with journalists – this time newspaper and radio station editors. This time he encouraged them to pay more critical attention to the opinions and statements, as these media outlets often criticise the government anyway.

After seeking and giving journalism lessons to TV anchors and talk shows about his previous meeting with the media, Bidzina Ivanishvili began this one by acclamating his European dimension and taking bribes for lobbying for President Saakashvili’s interests in Europe. He then said that certain political parties of former three, particularly, some candidates for the presidency Ivanishvili has been involved, have been accused of certain types of crimes, such as those involved in Kezerashvili’s case, where they were not extradited, so it is most likely that Ivanishvili is returned to Georgia again, where they are applied. The French legal system will comply with the request of the French side, as it is requested by the European Union and has been extradited, and if the person has been taken for the extradition of Kezerashvili, which it has now done.

Also, if the person has already been sentenced to the same crime in the country they are in, or has served this sentence, they cannot be extradited, if the crime is political, or related to politics, or is military in nature in which they cannot be extradited, and if the person has been granted political asylum in the country they cannot be extradited.

According to the French prosecutor’s office, the legal provisions regarding the extradition of Kezerashvili to Georgian jurisdiction are to be submitted to the request presented by the French side. The current request for extradition is under consideration, and the subsequent extradition to their country is still being discussed by Interpol.

The French legal system will send documents concerning their guilt or innocence. These documents will be submitted to the competent authorities of the countries holding the individual concerned within 18 days of that person’s detention. Since the request of the French side has been made to be detained for 40 days, we are still waiting for the delivery of these materials within this timeframe. It must be submitted through diplomatic channels to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the competent authority of the person concerned.

According to Ivanishvili, Georgia has no obstacles to extradition, because the French will not extradite him. Shota Mchedeli, Kezerashvili’s lawyer, confirmed to The Georgian Times that his client had been arrested and that he could only be extradited within the 40-day period he has been detained for. But he explained that what happens on the French prosecutor’s office, and whether the person is already served or the sentence they have served, cannot be extradited, if the crime is political, or related to politics, or is military in nature they cannot be extradited, and if the person has been granted political asylum in the country they cannot be extradited.

According to the French prosecutor’s office, the legal provisions regarding the extradition of Kezerashvili to Georgian jurisdiction are to be submitted to the request presented by the French side. The current request for extradition is under consideration, and the subsequent extradition to their country is still being discussed by Interpol. The current request for extradition is under consideration, and the subsequent extradition to their country is still being discussed by Interpol.

“I will explain that there is no obstacle to Kezerashvili’s extradition,” Chilingarashvili told us. It is also notable that being wanted by Interpol, or appearing on a list of persons wanted by Interpol, is not a necessary prerequisite for that person’s subsequent extradition to their country of citizenship. When a country requests another country to extradite it sends documents confirming that a warrant has been issued for that person’s arrest, or that they have already been arrested or detained on the same charge.

“When Kezerashvili was charged in Georgia, we approached the Georgian courts seeking his imprisonment as a preventive measure. We applied simultaneously to the Interpol Bureau in Tbilisi, because they refer such applications to the General Secretariat, which can declare an international search for this person by including their name on a red circular,” Chilingarashvili explained. It is also notable that being wanted by Interpol, or appearing on a list of persons wanted by Interpol, is not a necessary prerequisite for that person’s subsequent extradition to their country of citizenship. When a country requests another country to extradite it sends documents confirming that a warrant has been issued for that person’s arrest, or that they have already been arrested or detained on the same charge.

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“If you want the elections to be balanced, I do not want to make any critical statements. The public know Burjandjieva’s past and present – she has 10 percent support, according to the polls, in third place behind Bakradze, who has 1-2 percent more,” the PM emphasized, adding that if there is a second round of elections, which will happen if no candidate obtains over 50% of the votes on the first ballot, he will advise his candidate not to take part. He will not choose either Bakradze or Burjandjieva.
THE BUILDING OF TEA HOUSE SITUATING IN MARNEULI WON IN INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

At the end of September of the current year, international architectural competition „EUROPEAN PROPERTY AWARDS ARCHITECTURE 2013-2014” was held in London, which was participated by almost all countries of East and West Europe. The jury was completed by well-known architects, journalists, exterior and interior designers. Lord Bates supervised the jury. The culture centre Tea House was presented from Georgia, which won in the nomination „The best public architecture.”

The architecture and design company „M Studio” built the social-cultural centre Tea House. The project initiator and client is SOCAR.

The idea of Tea House establishment in the region aims to develop education, cultural and sport spheres. The house attracts the youth living in the region, promoting their development.

The main dignity of the building is harmonious synthesis of traditional and modern architectural elements. The three-floor building situates on 530 sq. m. and each floor is 430 sq. m. The national ornaments and colors brighten the building view. The oval mosaic poles in the entrance are hand-made creating the effect of Eastern carpet.

The garden bas-relief reflects historical prose of Azerbaijan in front of the building. There is a fountain in the garden centre, consisting of national jugs and mosaic carpets, fell on natural stones.

The parking place behind Tea House contains 20 cars.

The building frontage blends marble floor and traditional elements.

Except educational and cognitive rooms, there is an elegant restaurant in Tea House” having its own entrance side.

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Iuliana Manegarashvili: The stronger party will win the war of nerves

BY MAKA DEKANOSIDZE, GT

“The relationship with Russia is a war of nerves. The party with the stronger nerves will be the winner. The party which gets hysterical is doomed to fail,” – states foreign affairs expert Iuliana Manegarashvili.

The former Foreign Minister says in this interview with GT that the main task of the government is to unify and become more effective in the international arena so far. It will only be working satisfactorily if it resolves substantial part of the problems it has been doing this in this respect. Iuliana Manegarashvili believes that the UNM is still critical to making progress, because the party is destroying itself.

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SOCAR's multi-functional building officially recognized as one of the world's most popular

Amazing SOCAR-McDonalds on the black sea coast in Batumi
On October 18 the Georgian Times Media Holding hosted the first industrial forum, a gathering of Georgia’s leading manufacturers, in the Courtyard Marriot hotel in Tbilisi.

President of The Georgian Times Media Holding Malkaz Gulashvili noted that the forum was an important development. The Georgian Times has been running the Georgian Business Awards, which honour the best businessman and businesswoman of the year, since 1995 but this was the first time a business forum of this sort was being held.

“We businessmen, the politicians and the media reckon that The Georgian Times has played a great role in creating the Georgian business sector. But following the events of the last nine years, our economy is in a bad position. For example, imports exceed exports, there is mass unemployment and no cheap credit is available,” Malkaz Gulashvili stated. He added that the government should support industry to help it develop export production and provide jobs, and that debates and discussions should be held over ways to move the country forward from here and no longer live as we did during the United National Movement’s rule.

The forum aimed to focus the attention of the Georgian government, parliament, the media, businessmen and investors on the main strengths and the important problems of Georgian entrepreneurship. In the main body of the meeting The Georgian Times outlined all the obstacles to the fast and dynamic development of entrepreneurship: legislative regulations, tax and excise policies, transparency, the investment climate, the labour code and the system of allowances and preferences on traded goods.

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“Our product corresponds to American, British and Turkish standards. Our basic aim has always been to produce high quality steel. We are oriented towards making our production high quality and at the same time available for the consumer. Consumer satisfaction is important for us,” Sajiv stated. He added that the company also focuses on retraining Georgian specialists in order to improve the quality of its products and export them, because exports are very important for the development of Georgian economy.

GeoSteel has received Turkish and British product certificates. “Several years ago there was an earthquake in Turkey and it helped us construct impregnable buildings in Georgia too,” stated Sajiv. “Georgia has a long and proud steelmaking tradition which GeoSteel seeks to maintain.

Continued on p. 7
The Minister added that he was under no illusions that the new government would be able to sort everything out straight away and address every issue right now because Georgia has a low rating in many components of its business culture, but what it can do, which is to cease to pressurise businesses with demands for support of various kinds, it has done.

“Our government has already taken the decision to ensure that people’s property is protected. If anyone tries to seize it, they will be strictly punished,” stated Nazrunia. As regards unjust tax demands, individual issues are being resolved step by step. Furthermore, “A very important dialogue is going on between entrepreneurs’ unions and the Finance Ministry of Georgia about participating in tenders and state purchases. We have improved the environment in this area, making tendering processes transparent and fair, and the number of participants of tenders has now significantly increased. Competition in purchasing state assets promotes improvements in offer and delivery and stimulates the production of more quality goods and services.

“You should not think that we will be able to resolve every problem this year. Frankly speaking, this is not possible. But we are working step by step to make the tax environment in our country attractive,” stated Davit Narmania.

The next speaker was Deputy Minister of Economy Mark Narmania. He also spoke about the importance of the industrial forum. “I would like to emphasize that it is important for a media holding to organise such a forum, arrange a meeting of entrepreneurs and give them the opportunity to discuss things, exchange ideas and develop partnerships. All this will be reflected in more intensive work and the continuing economic development of our country,” he said.

Another speaker was Deputy Minister of Energy Mariam Valishvili, who spoke about ongoing construction projects, some of which have provoked controversy. “There is a debate over some of our construction work, but no country has been able to develop when it only has a small energy generation capacity. We need a strong infrastructure to meet the challenges our country faces. This is not only our opinion, it is the point of view of financial institutions, as reflected by reports from the World Bank. Constructing big barrages is not a caprice,” she stated. She added that government policy was to use local resources to provide local people with energy.

“The energy sector is politically attractive, as it involves bringing in foreign investment, but we cannot afford to slacken up on the pace of these projects as we are only at the beginning. Investments have been flowing in for the last 2-3 years but they have not been satisfactory in themselves. During the first six months of this year investments increased by 21%, because we have continued to further our infrastructure projects. Hydro energy plant construction is continuing, and the more we build the more other government and the ministry will have to do.

“Georgia is an energy exporting country, but we also import energy, especially in winter. We do not have a satisfactory energy independence situation. 75% of our energy is imported, for example natural gas and oil products. The sector’s task is simple: to ensure that energy is available at an acceptable price, which will satisfy both our economy and our population,” stated the Deputy Minister.

Valishvili bemoaned the fact that the size of the Georgian market has proved unable to motivate the private sector to invest in energy. “It is good that we now have achievements to our name in respect of regulation, and our sector is no exception. We have international obligations to fulfil, but our main task is to ensure the availability of our resources on the European market. This will create more private initiatives of interest in energy, because our domestic energy market cannot maintain it to make investments in energy generation, as the local returns are not sufficient,” she told the forum.

Mikheil Janelidze, the Deputy Minister of Economy, told the forum that the government was developing strategies which would form an action plan of development for 2014-2020. He said that the main task of government policy was to ensure long-term inclusive growth, the profits of which would be available to the broad masses. He also stated that the government is not focusing on providing social support but on creating opportunities for income generation. “To achieve this we are working on creating a strategy document, which will reflect the views of the whole Georgian Government on the development of the economy. Within this strategy we will focus not only on separate sectors, but on identifying the main factors preventing growth and taking measures to eliminate them,” stated Mikheil Janelidze. He said that the initial draft of this strategy was already ready, and was being discussed by government bodies and ministries in the relevant areas. He said that the main issues identified were: improving Georgia’s low competitive advantage, developing human resources and improving the availability of finance.

“To improve our competitiveness it is necessary to improve the industrial and investment climate and create better conditions for the introduction of new technology, the growth of exports, the maximising of our transport potential and the development of our energy resources. All this is needed to develop our private sector. We think that ultimately we will be able to draft laws acceptable to business which will promote free competition in the market. This year we have concluded negotiations with the European Union concerning our Association Agreement and this will be the main document determining the nature of the reforms we will introduce in Georgia. Maybe these reforms will not be easy to implement, but they will promote the modernisation of the public sector, introduce new technology and attract investments,” stated Janelidze.

Nino Tsilosani, Chair of the Wagon-building Company, explained that this enterprise is in fact a group of three companies - the long established Wagon-building Company, the Metallurgical Plant and the Electro-building Company - and its main activities are railway carriage construction and major overhauls.

“Our holding mainly serves the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani railway systems and other private companies. Since 2005 we have increased production and introduced new technologies. We began at that time to work seriously on introducing international standards of quality control,” Tsilosani stated. She told the forum that the Wagon-building Company is the only carriage builder in the Transcaucasian region and Georgia is the third country in the Post-Soviet space in terms of wagon building. She added that the geopolitical situation of Georgia can be improved and the development of carriage-building will give the country a competitive advantage in this important sphere of logistics.

Naria Turnava from the Partnership Fund also made a presentation about the projects being implemented by that fund. The new Georgian Co-Investment Fund told the forum that GCF may exit from its projects through Initial Public Offering on the local or international (London, Warsaw) stock exchanges. George Shengelia, Deputy Head of Research and International (London, Warsaw) stock exchanges. George Shengelia, Deputy Head of Research and Risk Analysis Department spoke about investment strategy of the Fund and noted that it will invest in projects with minimum size of 5 million dollars and fund’s equity participation will be in the range of 25-75%. “Our aim is to partner up with large international companies and successfully implement investment projects in Georgia. The fact that GCF will invest up to 10 billion dollars in the next five years in Georgia is very positive signal for potential investors,” said George Shengelia.

Another speaker, David Chanturia, representative of American Alloys, said that one of the main problems facing Georgia is still environmental degradation. He stated that his company was working well and producing good products, as it has produced significantly more during the last two years than the old Ferroalloys plant produced during the past 25 years. He also stated that a 20 million investment was about to be made in the construction of a new plant, such is current demand.

Bachi Zazashvili, General Director of Airzona told the forum that Tbilisi International Airport is facing a number of problems. He said that the aviation sector is one of the most important in the country and its issues should be addressed. He said that Georgian companies were uncompetitive even locally and that employment, revenue and salaries were continually under threat. “During the last 5-9 years our company has lost its previous importance in the local market.
We think this is partly the fault of the reckless airline policy which has been pursued during this time. There are a lot of airlines in Georgia, but 15 or more of them are foreign companies, and Airzena pays four times more in taxes than those 15 airlines put together and has employed 25 times more people than those other companies. The government must pay more attention to this issue and give us more opportunity to develop a national airline business, because our development means more job opportunities and more income to the state budget,” Zautashvili said.

“The Kara-Abhakala Railway creates interesting business opportunities for the processing industry,” Mamuka Bakhtadze, General Director of JSC Georgian Railway, told at the forum. He stated that the construction of this new railway link continues intensively, despite the fact that the Turkish and Georgian railway systems differ from each other in gauge and in other standards. He said that the construction of a Dry Port is also planned as part of this project.

Bakhtadze announced a new initiative to the forum. He said that Georgian Railway and Azerbaijan Railways have agreed to change the tariffs they charge for transporting raw materials from Central Asia, which should obviously stimulate more business.

Director of the Georgian National Investment Agency Giorgi Pertaia told the forum that the present political cohabitation between opposing forces diminishes the attraction of Georgia for investors.

“When we speak of the Georgian business environment - we have good products, low taxes, low levels of criminality, low bureaucracy. There are some segments of our economy which are competitive in comparison with other countries, and give us advantages; on the other hand we have a lot of problems, for example political instability and cohabitation, which may be good for democracy but very bad for attracting investment. We are not China or Russia, which have long queues of investors wanting to enter them; we have to go abroad and attract investors. It is very important to create long-term stability in the country,” said Pertaia. He added that low taxes were not enough to attract investors. He had information however that a lot of foreign investors are interested in extending hotel chains in Georgia, and that there is a real demand for this.

Head of GeoStat Zaza Chekidze made a presentation about GDP and FDI.

Liza Tavdumadze, representing the Ministry of Energy, made a presentation about the energy perspectives of Georgia and GEDF head George Bezhuashvili talked about the projects which his fund will be supporting. Liza Tavdumadze, representing the Ministry of Energy, made a presentation about the energy perspectives of Georgia. 

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and conducted criminal persecution should not be used to prevent companies from operating. “As a result of the attacks on our group, 7-8,000 thousand people are now unemployed. The budget does not receive an income from us. TBC Bank now has a toxic debt, as Berta is a dead asset on its lending portfolio. The same can be said about the rest of our companies, where 4,000 persons are employed,” Chocheli stated. However he added that "Zazazeni, one of the group’s companies, has seen a 40% increase in sales despite the economic downturn. This increase is reflected in additional income accruing to the state budget, more people being employed and more investments being made. Chocheli therefore reckons that Georgian business will develop if politics does not prevent it."

Farasq Sidiqov, Director of Rustavi Metallurgical Plant was also among the major speakers of the forum. As he stated, “the creation of industrial policy is very important for Georgia. Through the joint efforts of both government and the industrial sector the giants of the former Soviet Union, such as the big metallurgical plants, can revive, re-build and make a great contribution to the economy of our country. It is good that we now have an opportunity to communicate directly with the government and government structures. I think that, in the nearest future goods produced in Georgia will be able to compete even with those of Russia and Ukraine. I think we can do it.”

Closing the event, Malkhaz Gulashvili stated that the Industrial Forum will be held next year too and become a tradition, as the Georgian Business Awards have. It was important because it was devoted to the creation of business and job opportunities and the growth of Georgia’s Gross Domestic Product.

“During the Mikheil Saakashvili period the economy functioned by using other methods. Local and infrastructural projects were funded by dodgy loans, these were recorded as income rather than repayable loans and the economy effectively stopped functioning at all,” stated Malkhaz Gulashvili.

He insisted that new industrial concerns, such as metallurgical plants, cement and fertiliser production factories and others must be created in the country. All these will create jobs for the population, and unemployment is still the main problem facing Georgia.

“During the forum, all the companies have expressed their discontent with Porti Port. As we have all found, this company will not enter into any form of discussion with anyone. Porti Port has to change its position on this, and if it does not we have information resources we can use which will make it negotiate with entrepreneurs,” stated Malkhaz Gulashvili.

The President of the Georgian Times Media Holding stated that the forum has shown how important the energy sector is for the country and how much investment is being made, and should continue to be made, in this sphere. He added that the Georgian economy will not develop without the industrial sector developing accordingly and that is not true to say that we can achieve any success without this sphere. Gulashvili is sure that the foundations laid by the forum, amongst others, will facilitate the development of industry and that the Government of Georgia is following the right path of development.

He suggested that the next forum would be more thematic and time-limited in format, because it is not easy to persuade businessman to separate themselves from their work for 5-6 hours. The Georgian Times cares about Georgian industry and will continue to pursue this interest through its various outlets and events, in accordance with its established traditions and principles.
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Georgia and the United States - A Test of Democracies?

By STEVEN G. TRAYLOR, GT

Georgia and the United States are two countries that have seen significant political events occur – but no one is paying really close attention. The 2013 revolution has been attributed to the Western States of America, but democracy is not to be preserved in a free society.

The US Constitution, the basis for the existence of the American form of government, was adopted in 1787. It divided government into three separate branches, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial, which are designed as "equal", for the good and benefit of the American people. The Executive branch is responsible for the president of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama. The Legislative is made up of two chambers, the lower house, the House of Representatives, and the upper house, the Senate. All money bills are brought before the House of Representatives, whose members are the elected officials seeking to represent the American people, who stand for election every two years. This House of Representatives has now become the democratic, centralised government, ideological extremists known as the Tea Party Movement (a faction of the Republican Party) over a political issue on which they disagree with the Executive branch of government, namely the national health insurance programme.

The original novel was banned in Thailand's native country (South Africa), as it had been exiled during the apartheid period. It's more a fable embodied by the brilliant actress who performs it. Not only did the play touch us back to early fifties and apartheid period, but also the musical performed by the artists themselves.

Georgia Matilda (Nunhakha Kheswa) is the cheating wife of Philemon (Ivanano Jeranhu) who believes she is doing a good job by telling on a cheating wife. Cheating is a phenomenon which never goes quite unappreciated. It may seem like the betrayed party has let go, but can never be completely overcome. Philemon does not get over and keeps on prying his wife after she has been caught red handed.

The play addresses the very common problem of cheating and how to overcome it. Like everybody's story, but Peter Brook didn't choose a contemporary play, he chose one where the period is set in of the greatest importance. In the parallel circular situation of the story, Peter Brook found the intended and harassed husband very thoughtful and kind. He does not turn his back on the house, which at the time would have completely ruined her life, but chooses to punish her mentally by making her take care of the dead heart of her lover has left behind when running away from the unexpectedly arriving husband.

As tragically as the play you see that the actors are happy to be on stage, they are happy to be in the same show, they are talented, and they are doing it for the love of their craft, as they see in their charge of their daily choices. They live on the very edge of real and surreal. But most importantly, they are happy as a family.

The Music and Drama Theatre of StasNamin company presented their productions under the direction of young people who were experiencing tragedy, love, loss, rejection, betrayal, judgment, and yet managed to tell the story while simply floating on the stage. They have a certain freedom in their acting, they feel at home. They chime together and they know their art. You don’t see the hard work behind the characters, you listen to the music and you see the beautiful and directing.

A Russian graceful language, especially when you hear it from the stage from the mouths of the gifted actors of the StasNamin company. The play was precise, accessible and emotional. I was forward to the Georgian version Keti Dolidze is now working on it has much to live up to.
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