Ramifications of Georgia’s New Peace-making Mission in Mali

More Dangerous Dead than Alive: Boris Berezovsky Unexpectedly Dies in London

Russian intelligence services may have murdered the Russian business oligarch, Boris Berezovsky, who had been granted political asylum in the United Kingdom after the Russian government issued warrants for his arrest for corruption and tax evasion.

Integration into Euro-Atlantic structures is seen in Georgia as the only way to ensure the country’s security. In spite of the strong will of Georgians to join NATO and the EU, the new government is willing to restore relations with Russia, which considers the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the main threat to its own security.

Alex Petriashvili: Georgia Pays a Very High Price for Joining NATO

Tragic Death of One-Year-Old Shocks Entire Nation

Constitutional Amendment Comes into Effect

Bombings: GRU Terrorist Plot or Sinister Ploy?
More Dangerous Dead than Alive: Boris Berezovsky unexpectedly Dies in London

BY HYMAN KAMENOVSKY AND TIM BYRNES, GT

Russian intelligence services may have mur- dered the Russian business oligarch, Boris Berezovsky, who had been granted political asylum in the United Kingdom after the Russian government issued warrants for his arrest over corruption and tax evasion.

Nikolai Glushkov, one of Be- rezovsky’s oldest friends, told the British newspaper, the Guardian, that a close friend of Berezovsky had emerged from his house believing he may have been mur- dered.

The Russian Financial Federal Service (FSB) had accused the billionaire of providing financial support to Chechen militants during their conflicts with the Russian government, to destabil- ize the leadership of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had ridden to power on a wave of popular support for his ‘Han- dels,’ and become an outspoken critic of the Russian government’s conduct of the Chechen war.

Speaking in confidence to Tim Byrnes, an Australian jour- nalist now in Moscow, a FSB colonel claimed that Berezovsky had provided financial backing to the Chechen militants in order to help wage war against the Putin regime.

“After the Beslan massacre, in North Ossetia, Berezovsky hoped to provoke the North Caucasus and potentially lead to a war between the Republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan, to avenge the murder of more than 300 innocent ci- tizens, mostly children, who were taken hostage by Chechen soldiers,” the FSB colonel claimed.

According to the colonel, a bigger war in Russia would invite a larger military response by the Russian federal government. It was thought that once the Republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia are completely defeated and the turbulent Northern Caucasian region will be set ablaze then other Russian regions would fall in similar fashion so that in the event of the cabinet resigning or being dismissed by the President, as Georgia’s next president, the United National Movement will need to take another political hostage.

The amendment stripped the President of his right to appoint a new government without Parliament’s approval has entered into force after recently being signed into law by Presi- dent Saakashvili. The Georgian Parliament ratified the amendment after its third and final reading by 114 votes on March 25. It is expected to put an end to the tense power struggle between Georgia’s two main political parties, the Georgian Dream coalition and United National Movement.

The amendment stipulates that in the event of the cabinet resigning or being dismissed by the President the latter will have no right to call for a new government. Meanwhile the sitting government will continue working until a new cabinet is formed by Parliament. “I was never going to dismiss the government after the Parlia- ment. But this vote was impor- tant for democratic dialogue in our country and to demonstrate that the United National Move- ment is still very strong,” Presi- dent Saakashvili stated after the vote.

The amendment also adds a clause of the Constitution which prohibits the President from dis- solving Parliament within the six months prior to the presidential elections. Thus, the President will have no right to dissolve Parliament from May 1 until the inauguration of the new Presi- dent, as Georgia’s national parlamentary election is set for October, with the exact date to be announced by Saakashvili.

With this constitutional amendment, Parliament has re- stored its power,” Parliament- ary Chairman Davit Usupashvili commented after the vote. “I want to congratulate the Georgian people and Parliament,” he said.

Usupashvili noted that the approval of the amendment would allow Saakashvili to deliv- er his annual state of the nation address to Parliament. This was supposed to have taken place on February 8, but the Georgian Dream, which won an over- whelming majority in last Octo- ber’s highly contested parlia- mentary elections, postponed his speech, saying that it would be better if the President waited un- til after the constitutional amendments had been adopted. “With the new coalition government in power, we will have a government that will work for the good of the people,” Usupashvili said.

The US State Department congratulated the leadership of Georgia and the parliamentarians for a “majority and minority on pas- sing the important landmark law.”

“We paved the way for the consolidation of Georgian de- mocracy and removed focus on the many issues facing the gov- ernment today,” the Department of State commented.

Co-reports from the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Michael Aastrup Jensen and Boris Clinevets also welcomed the adoption of the constitutional amendment in a statement released on March 26.

“This amendment removes an important source of misun- derstanding and tension. We therefore welcome it, and espe- cially the fact that it was adopt- ed with broad bi-partisan support following an agreement between the ruling majority and opposition,” the statement reads.

The US National Security Advisor to the President, Gary Cohn, welcomed the adoption of the amendment.

“We support the adoption of the constitutional amendment. The rule of law and freedom of expression are central to our values and interests. We are encouraged by the adoption of this amendment,” Cohn said.

Co-reports from the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)
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Alex Petriashvili: Georgia Pays a Very High Price for Joining NATO

By LISA TONAKANYAN, GT

Integration into Euro-Atlantic structures is seen in Georgia as the only way to ensure the country’s security. The Georgian government, which is strongly pursuing membership in the European Union, is working to ensure all signs of elite corruption. This is not the case with the judiciary system – what are its failures?

What progress has Georgia made on its way to EU integration since the Parliamentary Elections in 2012?

We can point out three major directions we succeeded in: First of all, the Association Agreement – we held a very successful round of negotiations on it, then it is the deep and comprehensive free trade agreement, and finally reaching the action plan on visa liberalization. Besides, we started working on food safety and energy issues; the Ministry of Justice has revised the Labor Code, making very serious efforts, in cooperation with experts from the International Labor Organization and European states. Very soon the government will establish an anti-monopoly body, which will eliminate all signs of elite corruption.

You named the achievements of the new government. What are its failures?

We still need dramatic reforms of the judiciary system – the courts and penitentiary systems. We are working on these issues very hard. We want to have a truly independent court, and penitentiary system in accordance with international standards.

What is the difference in approach towards Euro-Atlantic integration between the current government and the previous one?

The difference is in the way we illustrate the situation. We show society the real picture. What the previous government was saying is that in 2013 our citizens will be able to travel visa-free to the European Union or Georgia will be given member state candidacy. This is not true. So we have changed the rhetoric.

Do you mean the main difference between your government and the previous one was only in the rhetoric and the results would be the same if the government had not changed?

Well, I’d like to mention that the previous government did go through all those legislative procedures. These are the realistic expectations based on the current state of affairs.

In conditions of deepening economic and political crisis in Georgia, how will Georgia follow-up on its peacekeeping missions after the ISAF mission is accomplished and how will it affect prospects of integration with NATO?

There is a political decision to continue participating in international missions after ISAF has been made already, and now our Defense Ministry is discussing the nature of post-ISAF cooperation with NATO. I’m really proud to say without exaggeration that the Georgian military is one of the best in Afghanistan – this is the evaluation of our allies in NATO and the Afghan leadership. Georgian forces will most likely be training and consulting Afghan national forces as well as participating in particular combat operations. There are some negotiations regarding the Mali peacekeeping mission. For the first stage we might send a small group of liaison officers. Georgia’s participation in NATO’s missions is one of the most integral parts of our strategy of joining the bloc. NATO realizes that Georgia pays a very high price for its wish to become a member of the organization. I don’t think it is a right decision in this case but we are indeed paying a very high price to achieve this goal.

How do you perceive Georgia’s foreign policy goal of integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures from perspectives of nine-year presidency of Mikhail Saakashvili?

Eduard Shevardnadze was the first president of the officially started Georgian aspiration to join NATO and EU in 2002. Saakashvili succeeded him and continued the work. The process is the same, and we expect cooperation with our allies in NATO and EU in 2014. The main objective is to improve our relations with our partners. We are very close to an escalation of the military conflict. This is not our strategy. We changed the rhetoric and we try to solve the issues that are solvable. However, there are red-line issues in our relations that we do not touch.

Greetings,

It has only been for a few months that I got address you as the director of JSC “Georgian Steel,” and as a lawful representative of the JSC “Georgian Steel.” Since the July 6, 2011 a sequence of criminal and forceful actions were performed against JSC “Georgian Steel,” by means of this and other unlawful acts, persons of two JSC “Georgian Steel,” and “Tuji XXI” were given to Ltd. “Rustavis Polabi” (J.D. 40441908). On the basis of our request, court has sequestered Ltd. “Rustavis Polabi” assets and “Tuji XXI” shares! Law enforcing organizations have started investigation of suspicious facts and circumstances. But most importantly, these people have destroyed Rustavi metallurgical factory as a brand name, because of their incompetent and unqualified management. The story is very complicated and hard to continue. I will not bore you with this, it is the obligation of judicial and investigative bodies.

Based on what is mentioned above, I address you to stop any kind of relationship with Ltd. “Rustavis Polabi” and any legal or physical person/body associated with it.

I inform you, that if done otherwise, your actions will be considered as the acknowledged action of violation of “Georgian Steel” and other rights and interests.

After the restoration of justice, JSC “Georgian Steel,” and Ltd. “Tuji XXI” do not intend to fulfill any foreignering agreements.

We are open to meetings and joint discussions!

Sincerely,

Director
Nata Jakeli

Contact information:
Chechavadze Avenue 021, Tbilisi, Georgia. ZIP code 0179. Post Office Box #2.
Tel: +995 577 12 13 11. E-mail: n.jakeli@georgiansteel.com

To the Partners of “Rustavis Polabi” and Commercial Banks

By LISA TONAKANYAN

Greetings,

At the request of the Georgian government, which is determined on its way to EU integration, we held a successful round of negotiations on visa liberalization. Besides, we started working on food safety and energy issues; the Ministry of Justice has revised the Labor Code, making very serious efforts, in cooperation with experts from the International Labor Organization and European states. Very soon the government will establish an anti-monopoly body, which will eliminate all signs of elite corruption.

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The Georgian government is seeking an innovative way to integrate into EU structures by contributing to peacemaking, training and crisis management operations in the western African country of Mali. Officially Georgia is willing to join French and other governments in countering the country’s separatist Tuareg ethnic group in the northern part of the country, as confirmed by Irakli Alasania, Georgian Minister of Defense in mid March. However, in spite of the nature of the conflict, Alasania claimed that Georgian troops will only act in a training capacity.

At least 200 trainers will be involved in assisting Mali forces deal with Islamist rebels and back-stopping the local army in bringing about peace and stability. The EU has found itself in what may prove a difficult struggle, peopled under the banner of anti-terrorism, given the Islamic origin of the separatist movement in Mali (declaration of a separate state). It was feared that if the movement were to become successful there could be serious regional and international geopolitical implications. Mali is located in the Maghreb region and borders Algeria and Mauritania among other countries, and the consequences of the NATO-backed regime change in Libya in 2011 are still being felt in the region.

However, others consider this to be a thinly disguised for French energy security and neo colonialism. France has deep tracks in the region, and it is no surprise that the country spearheaded the mission. Georgians will also find themselves working alongside forces from Nige- ria, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo and Senegal as part of their first African mission.

The EU military mission envisages the provision of a train-and-equip program to butresses the Malian military to successfully quell the Islamist insurgency. Sources claim that the duration of the training mission is to be 15 months with 250 military instructors and 200 soldiers to protect the trainers as they carry out the support role.

The Georgian side has agreed to such a mission out of political expediency. It is understandable that the Georgian government wants to be able to fast track the process of integration with the EU by contributing to the EU-led security and defense goals, as earlier endorsed at the Helsinki summit decision in 1999. Concluding its own European Rapid Reaction Forces with a command and control HQ in Strasbourg, France. It is already positioned for such foreign missions with the creation of the EU-led peacekeeping forces and the capacity to provide peacemaking monitoring. This is the kind of operational task involvement proposed by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Georgian government and acuerdo.

Georgia will not be the only country to have already provided its preliminary commitment has as feedback. The Georgian government’s foreign policy vision and goals are to reinforce not only its NATO orientation but also to speed up its membership processes. It is not a coincidence that the NATO Information Center under the aegis of the US-Georgian Ministry of Georgia was recent- ly established in Tbilisi and the EU Information Center. Such symbolic actions demonstrate how important it is for the Georgian government to speed up the process of membership into Euro- pean structures. It is clear that Georgian soldiers and officers may soon be in harm’s way, not for the sake of the mission but in order to reinforce the country into NATO and the EU.

By taking part in the mission, Georgia can reconfirm its commitment to the EU following the deployment of the EU monitoring mission in Georgia in the wake of the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. The country is considered to have political pay- offs and will contribute to Georgia’s political stability, and even territorial integrity in the longer term.
The wave of demonstrations which began in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2010 brought to- tal chaos to some Arab countries. The Arab Spring led to the resignations of the presidents of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Ye- men. Protests in Syria against President Bashar Al-Assad escala- ted into a civil war in 2011 that continues to worsen. Many refugees have fled their homes, partly because the Syrian lea- der is not willing to allow them to return to their country. This has forced many Egyptians to set their eyes on small developing countries. I am now exporting some medicines and metals from Georgia to Iran and importing some goods from Iran to Tbilisi. I deal with Egyptians and Georgians. I told GT, confessing that he plans to stay in Tbilisi as his busi- ness is flourishing. Arefaiah even many euros.

Some left their homes at the first sign of trouble. Maher Younes, a hotel and tourism manager, moved from Georgia to Syria in 2010. Since then he has visited his home country only once in order to move his sister to a safer place – Dubai, UAE, where she had herself lived for two years.

I didn’t like that. There are many reasons why one might choose not to return to his home country today. I am willing to live in the same block as you right now and never know who your neighbour is. When I came to Georgia I felt like I was at home, the same climate, the same friendly, smiling people. I liked Georgians and I mar- ried a local girl. I’m thankful to my friend, who told me about this country. But not many Syr- ians can come to Georgia due to a lack of money. They mainly migrate to neighbouring coun- tries as refugees,” Younes told the Georgian Times.

Younes initially started his own business in Georgia but to- day manages some Arab night clubs and restaurants. He de- scribes that running a business in Georgia is more difficult now than in previous years due to a drop in the number of tourists. However, the Georgian Ministry of Interior Affairs says that dur- ing the last two months the number of tourists increased 53 percent in comparison with the same period in 2012 and accord- ing to the National Agency of Public Registry and Revenue Ser- vice no changes in business reg- istration or taxation procedures have taken place in 2013.

Iranian citizen Kiarash Alfa- siah also came to Georgia in search of a better life a year ago and started an import-export busi- ness. “It was a choice between returning to Iran and Turkey and finally I decided to come to Tbilisi, as it’s easier and less trou- ble to start a business here. I am now exporting some medi- cines and metals from Georgia to Iran and importing some goods from Iran to Tbilisi. I deal with Egyptians and Georgians. I told GT, confessing that he plans to stay in Tbilisi as his busi- ness is flourishing. Arefaiah even

European People’s Party
Criticism to Georgia

On March 26 Georgia’s Prime Minister made a public letter addressed to the European People’s Party Ambassador Guenther Ambrosch who criticized members of European People’s Party for their role in a concerted black PR campaign directed against the Georgian government.

“Is it interesting to see how much some members of the EPP adopted from ancient Soviet- style propagandistic methods – methods, they would probably deny of course,” the Swiss amb- bassador’s open letter reads. Guenther Ambrosch acknow- ledged that the United National Party (UNM) had received much money after coming to power in 2003. However, he noted that the UNM government’s successes in eradi- cating the country’s old system of corruption had been overshadow- ed by the ever-increasing lev- el of elite corruption which de- veloped throughout the period. Baechtler considers this to be a key challenge for Georgia’s new government as it seeks to broad- en and deepen democratization processes.

The Ambassador underlines a strong will of the current govern- ment to respect democratic values as has been demonstrated by the involvement of many well-known and international pro- fessionals, including Thomas Hummelsberg, Special Advisor of

The European Union on legal is- sues concerning relations with Georgia. The Ambassador men- tioned his appreciation of the fact that Georgia indicates that government is serious about the pledges it made prior to the last general elections. The Umbrella of the opposition political forces, infringement of indepen- dence, human rights, lack of competitive level of the principle of independence and impartiality; and that media must be free and freedom of expres- sion must be fully guaran- teed. EPP published a letter on its website in which Mr. Robertino Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili had addressed to the authors of the declaration. Minister Iva- nishvili called the declaration signed by EPP unbalanced and shortsighted. The officials of Georgian government claimed that the EPP declaration moves against the political position of the UNM.

The Georgian government dismissed the declaration, saying “it is not supported by any European standards and lacks any kind of substantia- tion. It only reflects the politi- cal position of Georgian opposi- tion party – UNM instead of pro- viding a proper analysis and bal- anced evaluation of the situation that now exists in Georgia.”

“Georgia’s Parliamentarian Chairwoman Davita Usupashvili un- derlined that Georgia’s new govern- ment is ready to listen to criti- cism and recommendations from the West. “I have asked many of you more than once, and I repeat now: set European standards for us and judge us based on them. We are very much in need of such a mechanism to free ourselves from post-com- munism. However, please do not negative Georgian President’s re- former regime as a standard, as it would be an insult to Europe.”

Usupashvili wrote in his open let- ter to “European People’s Par- ty”.

Usupashvili advises signers of the declaration to protect the values of Europe. He also notes that Georgia’s European choice will not be strengthened by a groundless criticism towards the Prime-Minister. “Your letter of October 7 to Prime-Minister Ivanishvili, leader of the Georgian Dream party – UNM which you claim to be trying to save Georgia’s Eu- ropean choice, actually distanc- es you from Europe and it is the vertex of in- dictments, which is popular even in the United Arab Emirates where I prepare our national cui- sine, which is popular even among locals. I visit my home town not very often. But some- day I will return to Samos to see how things work out. My Greek friends have told me which are more interesting and those citizens for which I am responsible. If it pays my costs I will settle here, if not I’ll go back to Egypt,” he said.

Turkish citizens in Georgia however have a different men- tality. They do not intend to leave their country behind for- ever – Turks come here for work or business. Zeki Dokun, a Turk from Samos, is one of them. A Turkish-speaking Turk who ar- rived in 2007, he said: “I want to stay here for as long as he can. I like Georgia, so I am here. I work for Turkish restaurants where I prepare our national cui- sine, which is popular even among locals. I visit my home town not very often. But some- day I will return to Samos to see how things work out. My Turkish friends have told me which are more interesting and those citizens for which I am responsible. If it pays my costs I will settle here, if not I’ll go back to Egypt,” he said.

The political reality certain- ly has been changed in Georgia as the European Parliament elec- tions in October 2012. Criticism of his Hooshka coffee is situated and active on issues frequently em- phasized by the opposition government. Regardless, West- ern support of UNM is still most readily seen in the case of the March 13 Brussels sum- mit of the EU and the critical dilemma will continue to last for a long time, and those issues which are important for citizens will be concealed.
by LIKA MOSHASHIVIL G. T.

Tragic Death of One-Year-Old Shock Entire Nation

Gogita Abashidze, a one year old infant starved to death in the village of Makho in a Georgia’s western region of Adjara. Although the five-member family lived in extreme poverty, they were unable to obtain social assistance. The weakness of the child was visible. Gogita Abashidze’s body was so exhausted that the one-year-old child was wrinkled like an old man. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 77,000 children are living in poverty and 300 are made sick each year due to malnutrition and lack of food in Georgia.

“The child was in a shock when it was brought here. The situation was difficult from the very beginning. He was put on artificial breathing machine. He had a low weight - he was born 4 kg but his weight was only 2.2 kg by this time,” commented Tea Ivanadze, doctor at Batumi Healthcare Center for Mothers and Children.

Neighbors from the village say that the stage administration should be ashamed of themselves; this family lives in the house with holes in the floor, broken windows, a damaged roof and dilapidated walls. They had been unable to obtain social assistance from the government.

The death of an innocent child leaves many questions unanswered. Why were the Abashidzes not included in the database of socially disabled families? Was the state’s social agent, who visited the family indifferent to their plight? Badri Mamuladze, head of Khelvachauri staff in Social Service Agency states that a social agent visited the Abashidze family on March 15, 2012 and that Gogita Abashidze was born four days later.

“The social welfare service asked for the children’s private numbers. My wife gave birth to the children at home and we had no personal numbers,” explained Levan Abashidze, Gogita’s father. “They told us to go to the Public Registry to receive them, but I couldn’t. A photo of the child was required and I had no money for it,” he continued.

Besides Gogita, the family has two more minor children. “I used to feed Gogita with the porridge of fried wheat flour because I had no other choice. As for the elderly, they mostly eat potatoes or somebody assists us with food,” said Inga Abashidze, the mother of the deceased child.

People from the Social Agency are now claiming that Gogi- ta Abashidze’s parents might be deprived of the parental rights and the children might be appointed guardians as they were not fit to raise a child and are responsible for whatever happened.

According to research conducted by UNICEF, 77,000 children are living in extreme poverty in Georgia, which means that 9.6% of children under the age of 16 live on just 2 GEL a day. Moreover, 25,000 children live in relative poverty with 3.6 GEL per day in Georgia.

“Thirty three hundred children die in Georgia each year because of food shortages. The total mortality data is 800 children a year, which is also a quite disastrous data. Georgia comes in 42nd among 84 countries in terms of child mortality,” stated Maia Kurtsikidze, head of UNICEF’s Communication Program.

The tragic death of Gogita Abashidze sent shock waves throughout Georgia. On March 23, youth held a protest rally outside the Parliament building in Kutaisi. They protested against the complicated procedure for receiving social assistance and demanded that the procedure be simplified to avoid further such tragedies from ever happening again.

A demonstration was also organized in Tbilisi under the name ‘All children are children of all’, which was held in order to protest poverty, terrible living conditions and hunger in the country. People organized a march starting from in the center of Tbilisi to the office of the Public Broadcaster, in order to raise TV day air time to discuss this problem.

Georgia’s Public Defender Ucha Namashvili said this story will turn into a becoming point for defending the rights of the child.

At the president’s palace, the Georgian flag was lowered to half-mast on March 24. President Mikheil Saakashvili said no-one should die from hunger in the twenty-first century. He called on the government not just to look at its capacity, but to go to families and study problems of the poor.

“This is a huge tragedy – the death of Gogita Abashidze. Today I gave the order to lower the flag as a sign of condolence, but it also should be a lesson for everyone, for each of us,” Saakashvili stated.

He called poverty one of the biggest enemies of Georgia and said the country should fight against it together.

The leaders of ruling Georgian Dream coalition, as well as the local government of Adjara region expressed their condolences for the death of the child.

“It is a complicated case and after investigation we will know which institution was responsible for Gogita’s death,” noted Davit Sergeenko, Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

Transportation Minister and Health and Social Affairs Committee Goguli Magradze explained that the Committee will discuss the new initiative to eliminate child poverty and food shortages in the near future.

“I think we should provide them with essential products because when you give money to a family, they may choose not spend it on their children but rather for other purposes. So it’s better to give them certain products, which are necessary for a child,” explained Magradze. “This issue will be simplified to how to improve the situation. We are working with them in this continuous process and things are going in the right direction,” she concluded.

8

LOCAL ISSUES

Monday, April 1, 2013

By LIKA MOSHASHIVIL G. T.

Strong Winds and Storm Sweep across Georgia

Cost of losses caused by bad weather in Georgia reached 6 million GEL. Strong winds lasting for several days tore off tin roofs of some buildings, ripped down advertisements, billboards and smashed windows. Georgia’s western regions of Adjara and Guria were the most heavily hit by the storm. Electricity and water supply have already been restored throughout the country after wide-spread disruptions.

According to the special HQ set up on the orders of Geor- gia’s Prime Minister, the strong wind destroyed the roofs of 38 houses in Gori, 110 houses in nearby villages, 125 houses in Ozurgeti, 63 in Kobuleti, 102 in Khelvachauri, 30 houses in Batumi and several houses in Mtskheta, Tbilisi. The storm inflicted significant coastal damage in Kobuleti and Batumi, where a 55-year-old fisher died and several people were slightly injured.

Archil Khabadze, chairman of the Adjarian autonomous public informed that the total damage in Adjara caused by the storm is estimated at 3 million GEL.

“The government of Georgia will pay for the [losses of the] disaster-affected people,” the head of the HQ, Minister of Energy Kakhab Kaladze told journalists. As he explained, the money will be allocated from the PM’s reserve fund. “We must roof buildings as soon as possible, as it is spring and rainy weather is expected. This process is already underway and I think the rehabilitation work will be completed in about a week,” he added.

“All the local municipalities are provided with wood and other necessary construction materials,” stated Magda Pop- iashvili, PR manager of the Ministry of Regional Develop- ment and Infrastructure of Georgia.

The Prime Minister of Georgia Bidzina Ivanishvili, along with the Minister of Fi- nance Nodar Khiuri arrived in the central Georgian town of Gori and visited those areas most affected by the strong wind.

The Prime Minister stated that the government is fully mobilized to deal with the con- sequences of the disaster and can respond in a short notice during the pre-election peri- od, with very thin and bad qual- ity construction materials,” Popiashvili told the Georgian Times.

Ivanishvili explained that the dates of when the roofs will be replaced will be decided and that the procedure will be simplified to avoid further such tragedies from ever happening again.

A demonstration was also organized in Tbilisi under the name ‘All children are children of all’, which was held in order to protest poverty, terrible living conditions and hunger in the country. People organized a march starting from in the center of Tbilisi to the office of the Public Broadcaster, in order to raise TV day air time to discuss this problem.

Georgia’s Public Defender Ucha Namashvili said this story will turn into a becoming point for defending the rights of the child.

At the president’s palace, the Georgian flag was lowered to half-mast on March 24. President Mikheil Saakashvili said no-one should die from hunger in the twenty-first century. He called on the government not just to look at its capacity, but to go to families and study problems of the poor.

“This is a huge tragedy – the death of Gogita Abashidze. Today I gave the order to lower the flag as a sign of condolence, but it also should be a lesson for everyone, for each of us,” Saakashvili stated.

He called poverty one of the biggest enemies of Georgia and said the country should fight against it together.

The leaders of ruling Georgian Dream coalition, as well as the local government of Adjara region expressed their condolences for the death of the child.

“It is a complicated case and after investigation we will know which institution was responsible for Gogita’s death,” noted Davit Sergeenko, Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

Transportation Minister and Health and Social Affairs Committee Goguli Magradze emphasized that the Committee will discuss the new initiative to eliminate child poverty and food shortages in the near future.

“I think we should provide them with essential products because when you give money to a family, they may choose not spend it on their children but rather for other purposes. So it’s better to give them certain products, which are necessary for a child,” explained Magradze. “This issue will be simplified to how to improve the situation. We are working with them in this continuous process and things are going in the right direction,” she concluded.
Lady Farmer’s Courage Promises Better Future for Rural Georgian Region

By Nino Kalandadze

The village of Skhmeri, located in the reaches of Georgia’s northern Tusheti region, is difficult to reach even in spring, as it is still covered with thick snow. I went there to visit Malvkva Gagibzar, our project beneficiary, a female farmer who serves as a role model for others in the village. Skhmeri is 22 km from the Otsi municipality, and aside from the snow, the road itself is in really bad shape. While finding the way to her farm my driver and I got stuck in the snow, and found it necessary to walk the rest of the way, let alone try and free the vehicle from the snow. The condition of the road makes not only travel but getting additional feed to Malvkva’s farm difficult.

Like many villages in Georgia, Skhmeri has its share of social and economic problems. There is no school because there are not enough students, most of the families have left and more are still moving to the city for employment opportunities. Previously there were 400 families in the village but today only 100 now remain, and in winter time only 32 stay; the rest move to the city. Much of this exodus is related to the absence of schools, but this pattern is found in many rural communities throughout Georgia.

Fourteen families have recently been forced to leave Skhmeri in order to provide their children with an education. Dalì, one of Malvkva’s neighbours, explains how hard it is for young people to stay in the village, as they can’t find a job. They sit at home watching TV, and out of boredom turn to alcohol. “Malvkva deserves many plaudits for her work in trying to bring a positive dimension to this dying village and improve local living conditions. She motivates us to find a better life. We are inspired to be active and believe in ourselves. It is unfortunate that most people in our village are dependent on government social assistance. Such people don’t wish to be more active but Malvkva has destroyed such an illusion in the minds of many women. We are responsible for ourselves”, she reminds us of these wise words all the time. She is a perfect example of a determined woman who passed through the hard time and in the end she achieved her goals. Moreover, she created a chain of positive change in every woman’s mind in our village”, Dalì says.

Malvkva tries to motivate people to remain in their homes and keep their families in the village. For this reason she has set up a small farm with 22 cows. It is difficult, and she has to seek cover when the Russians bombed our village. I am scanning out to the workers to take cover and stop working,” she recalls.

Four years later Malvkva increased the number of her cattle and started to produce their own milk. With huge unemployment in the region she has begun to involve women in commercial agriculture by employing them on the farms, where their main duties include milking cows and producing cheese and other dairy products. She plans to increase the number of workers in the farm. She has acquired much experience and training which she can be develop without modern techniques and knowledge. The project “Rural Development in the Region of Racha-Lechkhumi” implemented by CARE International in the Caucasia and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) also provided her with a tractor, a mowing machine and hay balers. Now it is easier for me to process my 30 hectares of hay fields and improve my cattle feeding practice in all seasons” she says.

The farm produces 20 kg of cheese daily and sells it in Otsi’s, a market, which is only open during the winter months. The farm is too far from the village. For some farmers transport costs mean more than they can make selling their products, and therefore Malvkva helps other women by taking their dairy products to the Otsi market.

“In Racha people mostly work in agriculture. In Japan they call it the " internally" and “Sulugian”. That’s why I cannot propose to produce something new and exclusive. I was trained by the RDRL project to make artisan cheese. I experimented with different cheese making techniques and knowledge. The project, apart from the revolution in my cheese at both, and I completely sold out. Various customs asked me to work with them. I had made cheese. I recalled a girl from someone wanting to export my cheese to Switzerland" Malvkva says.

She hopes to open a milk collection and processing plant and employ additional people to improve the social conditions of people living in remote regions and prevent their depopulation. She is recking to borrow money at reasonable rates to do this. “If I get a low interest loan I will be able to invest 300,000 lari. I will produce other dairy products besides cheese: cottage cheese, boiled butter and cream. My biggest dream is to set up the Sakcherkha road opened, as immigrant people will then be able to reach Racha through Skhmeri and my village will start functioning, we just need to keep a strong community. We can give up and not run away in the hope of a better life somewhere far from home”, she says.

Lady Farmer’s Courage Promises Better Future for Rural Georgian Region

By Garry Crippin, the director of Guivy America Academy Technical Institute (GZAAT), in the past 6 years, the number of students who have enrolled in universities, rather than private schools, has increased in the U.S. and many more in Europe and the UK. This is the main reason for the growing popularity of private schools in students’ desires to continue an undergraduate education abroad and enroll in universities and colleges outside of Georgia. According to the “facts about Georgia” published by the Center of International Education, in the past 6 years, the number of enrolled students in the U.S. has increased by 36% - in 2007 this number was 353, compared to 481 in 2012. The growing trend is obtained in foreign education puts public and private sector in a tough spot, but most do not have enough resources to offer SAT preparation courses, college counseling, interviews with universities, and necessary facilities in order to attract more students. However, Georgia’s parents, who want to send their children abroad for higher education, do not consider private schools as an option. They believe, however, that the most important factors are the cost, which is lower for public schools and one can hope that the under- do not have the educational opportunities and high quality education to its students.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) character- ized the reform as “the new model that ensures selection of the best students for higher education and is based on the fair, transparent, standardized and meritocratic principles”. In 2005 the Georgian government decided to replace the old, Soviet-style system of en- trance examinations with a new one and, naturally, all public schools had to make necessary adjustments to prepare students for these changes. During the last 8 years, MoES has conducted numerous reforms in the system of K-12 education - experts distinguish two main areas: financial and academic.

In 2005 the MoES passed legislation prohibiting the government from fund- ing public high schools, instead, offering vouchers for every stu- dent a voucher to enable them to study at their choice school. Prior to the reform, the most popular and trendy schools were getting unfair financial advan- tage, but the per capita voucher system allows each institution to receive as much funding as ne- cessary to sustain and provide quality education to its students. Simon Janashia, Director of the National Curriculum and Assessment Center at the MoES, ar- gues that this approach helps to increase competition among public schools, since their financial- welfare is directly propor- tional to the number of enrolled students. The MoES’s 2008 “Educational Reform in Georgia” docu- ment outlines 5 new ini- stallments, which prioritize acade- mic achievements, develop- ment of skills and attitude. Sim- ply put - the reforms focus more on quality, rather than quantity. The most recent change in the national curriculum was an addi- tion of the final examinations in every subject for the 12th grad- ers and re-certification of teach- ers and directors of high schools. Naturally, these reforms cannot produce tangible results in the first couple of years. It will take several years to change the edu- cational system and personnel, which were used to operating with obsolete methods left over from the Soviet times.

Consequently, the tendency is that more parents distrust public high schools and try to find the best fit for their children in the private sector. According to the MoES, there are up to 200 registered private schools and 2,000 public schools. These numbers indi- cate that there is an intense competition among K-12 insti- tutions and, unfortunately, public schools are the underequipped in the race against the diverse and well- funded private sector. One of the finest representa- tive of Georgia’s private education sector is GZAA. The Guivy American Academy (GZAAT) was one of the first insti- tutions to offer alternative ways of studying to Georgian students. Garry Crippin, the director of GZAAT says that the biggest-3 advantage of his school is the “curriculum and teaching methodology”. The method of “Hardness Table” is famous for discussion based classes around seminar table, which encourages students to think critically and be actively involved in the as- signed tasks. According to Crip- pin, there are alternatives in the revolution- ized methodology, GZAA “of- fers students options in Advanced Placement courses and an out- standing record in university ad- mission and the US and Europe.” Today, 130 GZAAT students are attending universities and college- es in the U.S. and many more in Europe and the UK.

The main reasons for the growing popularity of pri- vate schools in students’ desires to continue an undergraduate education abroad and enroll in universities and colleges outside of Georgia. According to the “facts about Georgia” published by the Center of International Education, in the past 6 years, the number of enrolled students in the U.S. has increased by 36% - in 2007 this number was 353, compared to 481 in 2012. The growing trend is obtained in foreign education puts public and private sector in a tough spot, but most do not have enough resources to offer SAT preparation courses, college counseling, interviews with uni- versities, and necessary facili- ties in order to attract more students. However, Georgia’s parents, who want to send their children abroad for higher education, do not consider private schools as an option. They believe, however, that the most important factors are the cost, which is lower for public schools and one can hope that the under-
Bombings: GRU Terrorist Plot or Sinister Ploy?

By Hyman KamienieSky, GT

Over 8,000 prisoners, including hundreds of political prisoners, have been released under the amnesty granted by the Georgian government of PM Bidzina Ivanishvili since January 2013. But despite the large numbers of released, many whose cases need review remain behind bars, with “conspirators” convicted for plotting acts of terrorism against national and foreign targets in Georgia during what appears to have been a black PR campaign against Abkhazia and its Russian backstoppers conducted by the previous government in the post 2008 war period.

One such prisoner is Koba Matkava, a Georgian national arrested on April 3, 2013 for attempting to plant a bomb on a central boulevard in the western Georgian town of Zugdidi. Matkava confessed to police that he had been offered 3,000 USD to carry out this attack by Yevgeni Borisov, who is a Georgian authorities of the time described as a Russian military intelligence officer member of the Main Directorate, or GRU, based in Russian-occupied Abkhazia, one of Georgia’s two breakaway regions.

Between 2009 and 2011 Georgia experienced a spate of bombings and uncovered various bomb plots, including the attempted bombing of the Khosti-Inglis Railway Bridge, the TV transmission tower, and the US Embassy and even a foiled plot to bomb the NATO Liaison Office in Tbilisi. The Georgian government was quick to lay the blame for each of these incidents on foreign intelligence services.

An American-based forum for intelligence news, GTNews, had reported that a classified US intelligence report indicated that these bombings had been coordinated by the GRU and listed Borisov as the main culprit for the wave of bombings and terrorist acts. However, those sitting in prison, and their families, have alternative stories to the official ones. Some parts of the previous government’s official story were not adding up, especially as they are reported in the West. It appears that in many instances the real story is that Georgian citizens have been killed and falsely imprisoned for the sake of political expediency and to continue portraying the Russian Federation as evil empire for outside consumption.

LARGER GEORGIAN GOVERNMENT PLOT

Matkava shared his cell with Giorgi Keburia, a businessman who was released on bail earlier this year after serving six months in pre-detention. In an interview with the Georgian Times following his release, Keburia claimed that Matkava was an innocent victim of a larger Georgian government plot, most likely intended for outside consumption. According to Keburia Matkava was tricked into coming to Tbilisi from Georgia’s Gal region, which is within the breakaway region of Abkhazia, and then detained and charged with terrorism. The so-called terrorist was then subjected to rushed and less than transparent court proceedings and sentenced to 10 years (later reduced to 10 under a plea bargain extracted under brutal torture and the threat of being raped or killed).

MATKHAVA’S ORDEAL

GT has been granted access to an interview Matkava gave to Keburia prior to his release. In this Matkava explains that his uncle, Eldar Kobalia, who also lived in the Gal district and had good contacts with the Russian joint staff representatives in Abkhazia, was detained by the Georgian Special Forces after they had failed to arrest Matkava himself.

“I suspect that the Georgian side thought that after some time my uncle would appear and start negotiating with the investigation service representatives. But there was no sense in doing that; I even passed a message to my mother asking her not to let my uncle accept any offers for my release. I knew the Georgian side would track him and both of us would certainly end up in Tbilisi prison”, said Matkava.

As Matkava explained, Kobalia was just a poor village man who had not been outside Gali and Zugdidi in his life; he would only go to Zugdidi when he needed to buy something in the market. But as he knew Matkava well, “The Georgian Special Forces captured him in Zugdidi and made him contact me. His call was so strange that I thought at first he was drunk. Furthermore, he said the following: “Koba, take our package and cross the border, I’ll be waiting for you there.” I was shocked, and replied: “Which package? And why do I have to cross the border?” After this Eldar called twice more, and I immediately guessed that he had been arrested,” Matkava explains.

Matkava was then taken to the Modzashi Building of Ministry of Interior Affairs in Tbilisi and questioned by Data Akhalklzaishev and Ioseb Topuridze. They advised him to confess to everything and to sign papers saying so, as there was no other way “that is your only salvation…otherwise I would be found hanging in a cell, they told me,” says Matkava.

He added, “After being tortured for two weeks I was given the opportunity to talk to Eldar Kobalia. He told me that he had been raped and tortured and that life was horrible. I was completely confused by Eldar’s story. In Tbilisi prison they forced me to confess because I had no other way to avoid being raped or killed; I agreed to sign, and confessed to everything.”

Matkava was taken to court and formally sentenced to 30 years. But after ending up in hospital due to severe beatings, his sentence was reduced to ten years, as part of a plea agreement brokered by visiting police.

“Later on, I received information that Eldar had died under torture inside the prison, and later I heard the same from my mother, who had heard about it in Gali. Kobalia’s lawyer, Lekso Arkania, met Ko- ba’s family and told them the terrible story of how his client had died as a result of being tortured and raped with a police baton. His body was released to his relatives, Murtaz and Levan Kobalia, on condition that this story was never told; they were told they would be killed if they spoke about it.”

ONGOING INVESTIGATION

These cases and others are now under investigation by GT, and contacts in the Zugdidi region are coming forward. Representatives of the EUMM have confirmed off the record that many of those convicted of terrorism may in fact be innocent, citing the case of Gogita Abuladze, who is now being restudied by the Georgian Ministry of Justice. Many so-called terrorist cases in Zugdidi were never properly investigated, and torture was involved. GT is looking at several other dubious cases, which include but are not limited to those of terrorists sentenced to long terms: those of Mamuka (Nukri) Shonina; Mukhran Tkadaia; David Kekuria, Gocha Khurshtilava, etc.

As one source in the EUMM recently wrote to one of GT’s investigators, “most probably everything is faked and the Russian Borisov was mentioned just to blame Rus- sia for these crimes”. The source noted that, “exactly one year a man, Gogita Abu- ladze, disappeared after meet- ing an agent of the Georgian Secret Police in Anaklia (a town on the coast near the Georgian-Abkhazian border).

Several witnesses have con- firmed this to me. I know this man’s parents, who live in Anaklia, very well. They are in a desperate state and believe that the Georgian secret services have probably killed him. He was also an alleged acquaintance of Borisov.”

The ongoing investigation by the Georgian Times is re- vealing that it is highly likely that the so-called acts of ter- rorism many men have been convicted for committing were actually plotted by the former Georgian government as part of a larger political game. It does appear that many of these acts were not the random ac- tions of a few rogue and out of control elements in Georgian and foreign intelligence servic- es, as suggested by the previ- ous government, but part of a coordinated plot to undermine opposition of all kinds, includ- ing proactive efforts at conflict resolution.
Creating assessment for and as learning, as outlined last week, is about planning. Planning for classroom atmosphere as a place where students can be challenged, take risks, and learn the crucial steps to constructive criticism (feedback), self-evaluation, and modification based on those results to show improvement. The idea that assessment is a one-shot deal is what discourages our students not only through the stress of such a situation but also by labeling them and not allowing them to ever move from that cast once it’s been set. Assessment should never be solely a means of collecting statistical data on knowledge acquired. The challenge for most teachers should not be how to get that pre-assessment job-well-done in the testing milieu but how to use assessment effectively in spite of looming exams. So how does planning fit in?

Planning is less about covering objectives and more about tactics—style, and approach. Teachers are facilitators in the classroom—we don’t “teach” we facilitate the discovery and mastery of information and skills into the brains and active lives of our students. Much like a hostess facilitates the discussion, eating and dancing of her guests at a party. You would never tell your guests your hosts’ way of talking or who to talk to and about what, rather you provide the food, company, good atmosphere and encouragement for your friends to be able to have a good time successfully all by themselves. Who doesn’t want that in their classroom? However, in an ever more standardized and controlled educational atmosphere it is easier and easier to lose sight of that or to be unable to learn and achieve it in the first place. An excellent example of the plight of classroom teaching is Georgia’s recent experience with foreign English teachers working alongside Georgians to improve teaching technique.

Barring cultural differences and the difficulties of the program outside of the simple task of classroom teaching hours, TLG seemed to be making great strides in convincing local teachers of the importance of planning. Then, in an effort to improve the quality of ESL over-all, they destroyed all the progress they had achieved. It’s safe to say no one as in not a living soul would defend the quality of the variety of text-books on the market prior to the Ministry’s intervention. Furthermore it is—although not surprising—horrid to hear moans of them being discarded after all the funding and many hours that went into making the program work. Never the less, the English World textbooks from Macmillan only exacerbated the problem regarding lesson planning and use of new pedagogic techniques.

These books were made especially for the Ministry and were pedaled to teachers in that way, “everything we need is in the book; speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar. We just have to follow the book”… and learn it as fast as possible. Not only were students and schools unable to secure all the materials printed by Macmillan including flashcards and a number of small pamphlet-like books belonging to the student pack; teachers were not even using the teachers’ manual on how to teach the lessons because first they already knew English and don’t need to be told how to do it so they don’t need to be told how to teach it either and second, if they looked at the manual for the first lesson all the following lessons followed the same structure so they could just repeat the same process with the new information.

So how do we turn the table? How do we move from coverage of information in planning to planning for the learning, skills, and above all else the actions of our students? The answer is actually quite simple. Don’t start your planning from your perspective. Start from the students’ point of view. Not “what do they have to do” but “what will they be able to learn and do?” To frame it another way: “What is it that you want them to be able to do?” and let us use the students’ work from that cast once it’s been set. Assessment should not be how to get that pre-assessment job-well-done in the testing milieu but how to use assessment effectively in spite of looming exams. So how does planning fit in?

More Dangerous Dead than Alive: Boris Berezovsky Unexpectedly Dies in London

The person who was alleged to be the point man was Giorgi Bedinevishvili, a Salford Director. He worked both in Georgia and the UK. These allegations, dating back to Feb-ruary 2004, have been discussed in detail with the Financial Monitoring Service of Georgia.

What is more revealing, based on what is best described as ‘local knowledge’, is that the network of linkages clearly in- volved former Georgian PM Zurab Zhvania and his insight of what was going on both on the financial and political fronts. Moreover, there was a real link with Sistema, another financial operation which wished to promote the concept of a free economic zone in Georg-i a and much networking went on with those who were in fa-vor of such a project. The Prime Minister had left a number of key positions to his successor to key positions in government, both in Tbilisi and in the regions. He was just one of a growing list of now deceased people who knew too much about what was actually transpiring in Georgia and the extent of foreign in- volvement, not only in financial but covert operations, espe-cially during the years 1991-92 in neighboring Chechnya.

In short, many players were and continue to be, involved in such business; these involved more than the Russian mafia and criminal structures, as well as those serving the foreign pol- icy aims of the Russian Feder-ation. What is necessary is to collect more background in order to look into these networks in greater detail, and with the latest death in mind, we work out where to ask the right questions and really in- vestigate.
Carriage Building Company aims to meet Growing Regional Demand

By: EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

The new company is a successor to the Railway Carriage-Building Factory, which had many years’ experience of both passenger and freight carriage building. Few Georgians are aware that Georgia is home to one of the largest carriage building companies in the world, and the only one in the Caucasus. The Carriage-Building Company was founded in 2005 and is located in Rustavi; it is located three km from the Georgian capital, Tbilisi.

The company is growing because of its innovation and technological sophistication, and has great potential for further development. Badri Tsilosani, the president of its successful parent company Georgian Carriage-Building Holding, is a planning engineer, Doctor of Economic Science and a very interesting person. He gained his present position by his own hard labour and hard management of three companies together with his family. In this exclusive interview he tells us his story.

Mr. Tsilosani, what can you tell us about your carriage building company?

The company has been operating in one form or another for 130 years and is one of the oldest establishments located in the Caucasus. Our business is the repair and construction of new carriages – we manufacture electric carriages, passenger carriages, all types of freight wagons, wheels, locomotive engines and repair locomotives, metro stations and metro engines. We also build new metro stations. We once imported our materials from Russia, Ukraine and China, but now we have purchased a metallurgical plant where we will manufacture the cast parts for our wagons ourselves. Georgian Railways is one of our customers, but only 20-30% of our production goes to Georgia, most of it being for customers in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine and Russia. We have large orders from these countries and also have customers in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and other post-Soviet countries. We repair old carriages and build new ones, produce mini-wagons, petroleum tanks, including wagons for grain transportation, and all types of freight wagons, wheels, cast components, etc., which are used by the Centre of Railway Friendship, which supplies all post-Soviet countries as well as China, Bulgaria, Poland and the Baltic states. There are large countries which have the potential for wagon-building but are still fighting to obtain a certificate.

In addition, we repair 3,000 wagons a year which have been “wasted” off after 15 years of service. The demand for such wagons is great in Russia, Ukraine and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Two thousand new wagons generate an income of 180 million GEL, and our work brings in a total of 300 million GEL. Today there is a very high demand for these parts, and no matter how many we produce we will sell them all.

We are also intending to extend our factory further. To create an average sized carriage building company 25-30 million dollars is needed. Russia and Ukraine have established huge enterprises, which produce 20,000 wagons a year, at a cost of 120-150 million dollars. We need a medium-sized enterprise, where we will make 5,000 to 10,000 wagons a year, and there we will make lots of repairs. I am already negotiating with investors. I am also working with banks on obtaining long-term credit on low interest.

The cast components project is very interesting. To us it is beneficial because when we have such an enterprise we will be able to recycle our construction waste. With no metallurgical enterprise we have to throw away our waste. For example, if you sell the waste metal generated by a refrigeration job, you get just 250 GEL, but if we turn this waste into new products by recycling it we can make a profit of 1,500-2,000 dollars. In general I will sell waste and cast parts.

In post-Soviet countries, carriage building faces one major problem – there is a lack of cast components. Russia makes these, but can meet only 60% of the demand of its own country. Ukraine meets 50% of its demand, but in Georgia such components are not made. Russia therefore buys in additional parts from China, and Ukraine buys from them China and India and sometimes Europe. We used to do the same, but now we’ve set up our own metallurgical plant with Italian, Polish and German assistance. This is a very important project, as the plant will supply not only us but neighbouring countries with cast parts.

Today there is a very high demand for these parts, and in post-Soviet countries. In Georgia we build 8,000 wagons a year, but can meet only 60% of the demand of CIS countries. The 20,000 wagons a year we produce will not solve the deficit problem, but they will all be sold.

Yes. We have renovated the Palace of Culture, which has existed since the 19th century and hosts cultural events, classes and clubs. 1,500 children study there. It has a big stage bigger than the one at the Marjanishvili Theatre, and now it is not much less. I’m already negotiating with investors. I am also working with banks on obtaining long-term credit on low interest.

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This time, “Aversi” offers you the forth grand lottery.

Every owner of the “Dove Card” will receive 1 lottery ticket by paying 20 GEL for the product at any “Aversi” drug store and 10% of the amount paid will be returned on the card.

For every 50 “Doves” 3 lottery tickets will be given as a present.

For 10 “Doves” you will receive 1 lottery ticket.

The prizes are:

The main prize 5000 GEL to 5 winners

20 000 GEL to 5 winners

“Aversi”- Health and Peace of Mind
WWW.AVERSLGE
SOCAR’S MULTIFUNCTIONAL BUILDING WAS RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE WORLD’S MOST POPULAR

The world’s leading architects have become interested in SOCAR’s multifunctional building located on the Gori superhighway. This piece of art is to be shown to everybody! The world’s leading countries granted the building the status of a best and most popular construction! SOCAR’s multifunctional building was opened officially on November 28, 2011.

Such multifunctional constructions are planned to be opened throughout all of Georgia. The project is implemented for the purpose of developing Georgia’s main international highway.

SOCAR Georgia Petroleum completed construction works of the building in only 9 months which can be considered a record. The building was designed by famous German architect Jurgen Mayer, who is the author of other modern buildings in Georgia, among them the Queen Tamar airport Mestia and the Sarpi Customs Check Point at the Georgian-Turkish border.

The multifunctional complex covers 4,000 square meters of space, which includes a SOCAR’s petrol station that fully complies with EU standards. The infrastructure is designed in a way to provide maximum comfort and convenience to customers.

Upwards of 100 people are employed in the complex, most of which are Gori residents. The multifunctional complex also hosts a Goodwill supermarket, fast food restaurants, a bank, tourism service centers, a children’s corner, a pharmacy and an internet café.

Mr. Mahir Mamedov, Director General of SOCAR Energy Georgia declared that the construction of the multifunctional complex cost 10 million USD.

“This is a unique building, in terms of design and high quality. Full comfort is provided to travelers and tourists can purchase Georgian souvenirs,” says Mr. Mamedov.

Foreigners are very interested in SOCAR’s multifunctional complex. The complex is often attended by representatives of international organizations accredited in Georgia, as well as foreign tourists.

The architectural webpage Architizer revealed the winners of the first annual competition “A+”. The aim of the competition was to reveal the best modern architectural constructions in the world.

The competition was divided into 52 categories – starting with the best memorial construction and ending with the best multi-storied office building. The best buildings were revealed through two methods – jurors’ decision and people’s choice. Two hundred international architects competed in the jurors’ choice.

“The best popular building” was chosen through people’s choice in 100 different countries. Among the winners was the SOCAR’s multifunctional complex in Gori. This building holds its own place among the most popular buildings of the world.

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