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BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

Kelly Degnan, the US ambassador to Georgia, stated that the Georgian government and Georgian people have acted quickly and efficiently to manage the crisis and reduce the spread of the

#stayhome Stay home, Stay safe #staysafe

Georgia to receive 2,000 rapid tests from the US



Kelly Degnan promising Georgia 2,000 rapid tests.

virus. According to Degnan, the Embassy's Defense Threat Reduction Agency is planning to purchase 100,000 GEL worth of personal protective equipment and hand it over to the Georgian Ministry of Health.

"Today, when we are facing the COVID-19, I am especially proud of the

achievements of the United States and Georgia in improving the public health system in Georgia," stated Degnan.

The US has donated \$140 million to the development of Georgia's strong flexible and high-quality national healthcare system. Also, The US Centers for Disease Control, the Defense Threat Reduc-

tion Agency, and the Walter Reed Military Research Institute, in partnership with senior officials from the Georgian Ministry of Health contribute to the development of the diagnostic testing capability of the virus at the Lugar Public Health Research Center.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which continues to implement broad-based assistance programs in agriculture, education, business development, democracy and justice, has just announced the emergency program in which \$1,1 million was invested.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that, according to the ambassador, it is not only the US embassy that wants to help. Several American companies operating in Georgia have expressed readiness to help the country in this difficult situation. The members of the American Chamber of Commerce transferred GEL 3 million to the StopCoV fund. In addition, several American brand hotels, such as Marriott Hotel Mox, Radisson Park Hotel and Sheraton Grand, have offered the Georgian government to use the hotels for quarantine.

An ability to rapidly diagnose the virus is of invaluable help in curbing the exponential spread of the virus in many countries. Bosch's new, fully automated rapid test can help medical facilities such as doctors' offices, hospitals, laboratories, and health centers provide fast diagnoses.



The equipment to be purchased for the fight against the pandemic.

The Church to hold Easter liturgies across the country



The metropolitan of Akhalkalaki and Kumurdo, bishop Nikolozhi hopes the congregation shows up on Easter liturgy.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgia has been under a curfew since March 31st, banning anyone from going outside between 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM. The government has been actively fining citizens for violating the rules, however, the upcoming celebration of the most important holiday for the orthodox church- Easter, seems to be the cause of a mass violation of the restrictions, as the majority of congregation refuses to remain home at the Easter Eve and plans to attend the liturgy in local churches. The celebratory service usually starts in the evening of Easter and lasts until the early morning of the next day. The govern-

ment has urged people not to violate the rules and pray at home. The dedication of the churchgoers has caused controversy throughout the country; some consider the commitment of the worshipers relevant, as the holy communion of Easter is the greatest grace for a Christian, with others strongly believing that it would be more reasonable to beware of the rules to prevent a new wave of the infection. The metropolitan of Akhalkalaki and Kumurdo, bishop Nikolozhi (Fachuashvili), while talking to the press, noted that the curfew should not be considered as the event against the community and he can not imagine the government confronting the church or the

people. "The curfew was declared by the government that manages to work flawlessly during this hard period. The curfew restricts free movement, but it is not against the people, it is just a preventive tool. Therefore, if there is a necessity for the people to attend the liturgy, I do not think the government will act against the people or the church. The government defends us and they do it wonderfully," said bishop Nikolozhi.

The bishop explains that it will not be possible to arrive at the churches before 9 PM and stay there until 6 in the morning. As he said, the Church is still determined to have consultations with the ruling party.

The bishop claims that the safety measurements will be maximally abided by observing the distance between worshipers.

The metropolitan of Poti and

Khobi, the bishop Grigoli estimates the situation as very harsh and finds it extremely unpleasant to look at the empty churches, however, he is strictly against encouraging anyone to break the law.

"I, personally, can not encourage anyone to violate the law unless it aims to seize the church deliberately. If the law is focused on well-being, there is nothing I have against.

We can recall many martyrs from history who died whilst defending their religion from ideological attacks as well as the ones, who were seeking martyrdom themselves. We are given free will from God and we are entitled to behave as we wish," said the bishop Grigol.

Orthodox Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus on April 19th this year and it is yet not determined whether the violation of safety measures will be allowed or not.



The bishop Nikolozhi claims that the distance between worshipers will be observed at the liturgy.

ADB Triples COVID-19 Response Package to \$20 Billion

13 April 2020
MANILA, PHILIPPINES (13 April 2020) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) today tripled the size of its response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to \$20 billion and approved measures to streamline its operations for quicker and more flexible delivery of assistance.

The package expands ADB's \$6.5 billion initial response announced on 18

March, adding \$13.5 billion in resources to help ADB's developing member countries counter the severe macroeconomic and health impacts caused by COVID-19. The \$20 billion pack-

age includes about \$2.5 billion in concessional and grant resources.

"This pandemic threatens to severely set back economic, social, and development gains in

Asia and the Pacific, reverse progress on poverty reduction, and throw economies into recession," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "Our expanded and comprehensive package of assistance, made possible with the strong support of our Board, will be delivered more quickly, flexibly, and forcefully to the governments and the private sector in our developing member countries to help them address the urgent challenges in tackling the pandemic and economic downturn."

ADB's most recent assessment, released on 3 April, estimates the global impact of the pandemic at between 2.3% and 4.8% of gross domestic product. Regional growth is forecast to decline from 5.2% last year to 2.2% in 2020.

The new package includes the establishment of a COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option under ADB's Countercyclical Support Facility. Up to \$13 billion will be provided through this new option to help governments of developing member countries implement effective countercyclical expenditure programs to mitigate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on the poor and the vulnerable. Grant resources will continue to be deployed quickly for providing medical and personal protective equipment and supplies from expanded procurement sources.

Some \$2 billion from the \$20 billion package will be made available for the private sector.

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Weather

Tuesday, April 14

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 17°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 6°C

Wednesday, April 15

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 21°C
Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

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Parliament Speaker on the economic challenges



MPs have decided to donate one-third of their salaries to the anti-COVID-19 fund for three months straight.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

At the bureau meeting of April 13th, held at the Parliament of Georgia, the Parliament Chairman Archil Talakvadze discussed a few issues in the current economic situation. He stated that the parliament had been working actively in various directions, saying that the parliament is engaged with works of the coordination council.

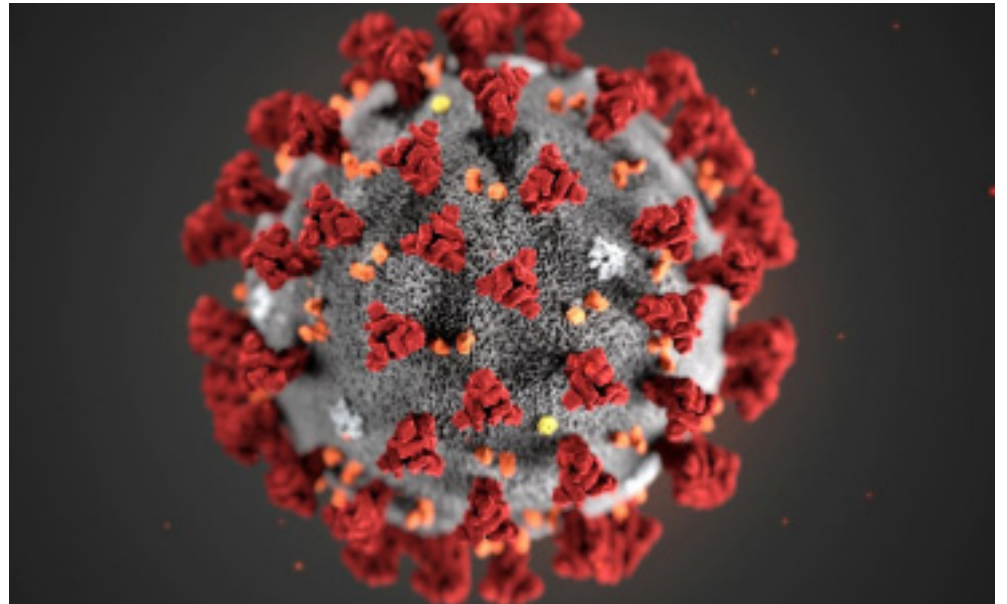
Talakvadze emphasised the importance of the parliament's involvement in preparing economic packages and plans. As he informed the attendants, the parliament works in coordination with 'Budget and Finance' and 'Economic Policy' committees to develop two packages- 'Crisis Package,' which defines activities carried out for the citizens and the business sector at the moment, and 'Post-pandemic' package, the plan for reviving the

economy.

Parliament Speaker also mentioned that the majoritarians are being provided with parliament's assistance to subsidise the financially disadvantaged, who live in regions, with food supply, utility payments and provision of internet access for the students attending video lessons remotely. Talakvadze highlighted a few steps the government has taken recently: "Masks are being produced with a 24-hour schedule by 9 factories. Supporting those factories is one of the considerable

steps the government has made during this period. Organising quarantine zones in the hotel chains is another example of the government and private sector's coordination. Indeed, this mode is not exactly relevant for the business or private sector, but due to the pandemic, everyone has to adapt to the circumstances."

Talakvadze believes that if, during the peak period, the citizens obey the safety rules, the government will be able to gradually lift off restrictions by the beginning of May.



The chairmen of the parliament of Georgia, hopes the restrictions will be removed by the beginning of May.

Media struggling to get information during the pandemic

BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

Nana Sajaia, Fox News' producer of political news, spoke about the struggles Fox News has to face in order to deliver reliable information.

"The stories will be aired at 18:00 o'clock, hosted by the host from Washington, DC, from his

home. At this time, the senior producers of the program will be in different rooms in the office of Fox News," stated Sajaia.

Even a month ago, it was unimaginable to prepare the most rated political program from home with a homemade 'studio.'

Since staying at home and reducing the contact circle has

become a necessity, everyone who can work remotely is urged to work from home. Even television editions are divided into independent groups - when one group is in the office, the other stays at home. Teams change places at the beginning of each week.

It's needless to say that Georgia took an example and went for the same strategy as the rest of the world.

"This strategy allows the editorial office of Rustavi 2," stated Guram Rogava, a news anchor, in an interview with FE / RL.

However, it is still impossible to entirely practice social distancing as a journalist. Even though most of the editorial offices work



The real price of information

remotely, journalists have to do the 'fieldwork' regardless. Rubber gloves have become mandatory attributes, however, it is usually still impossible to maintain physi-

cal distance at press conferences as journalists have to stand close to doctors who are in charge of treating the COVID-19 patients.



Reports from balconies

ADB Triples COVID-19 Response Package to \$20 Billion

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Loans and guarantees will be provided to financial institutions to rejuvenate trade and supply chains. Enhanced microfinance loan and guarantee support and a facility to help liquidity-starved small and medium-sized enterprises, including those run by female entrepreneurs, will be implemented alongside direct financing of companies responding to, or impacted by, COVID-19.

The response package includes a number of adjustments to policies and business processes that will allow ADB to respond more rapidly and flexibly to the crisis. These include measures to streamline internal

business processes, widen the eligibility and scope of various support facilities, and make the terms and conditions of lending more tailored.

All support under the expanded package will be provided in close collaboration with international organizations, including the International Monetary Fund; World Bank Group; World Health Organization, UNICEF, and other UN agencies; and the broader global community.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Achille Murat - Country of Liquid Sun



recalled to St-Petersburg Samegrelo, as a principedom, was abolished.

Ekaterine lived in St-Petersburg for 25 years. She also lived in other places in Russia as well as in France and Germany before she finally returned to Samegrelo where she died in 1882 at the age of 66 in the village Gordi. She was buried in Martvili, next to her husband, the last Ruler of Samegrelo, David Dadiani.

Achille, the grandson of Joachim Murat, the King of Naples, set close relations with Ekaterine's family whilst living in Paris. In 1868, he married Salome, the daughter of David Dadiani and Ekaterine Chavchavadze.

Achille Charles Louis Napoleon Murat belonged to a royal family. He was mainly in military service and participated in battles. He was highly esteemed by the French Royal court, more so than was his grandfather, the King of Naples, Joachim Murat, who was married to the sister of Napoleon I. The wedding ceremony and reception of Achille and Salome took place in the church of the Tuilleries Palace and was attended by Napoleon III and the Queen of France which was very emotionally and in great detail described by Salome Murat Shaladon, the daughter of Achille Lusiane's son, in a letter (the letter is now kept in the Zugdidi Historical Museum).

After her marriage, Salome Dadiani was called Princess Salome Murat and was so designated in all written documents. After the death of Napoleon III in 1883, Achille and Salome moved to Georgia and settled in Samegrelo although maintained contacts with France. In addition to Zugdidi, they possessed residences in Salkhino and Chkaduashi, Samegrelo region, where they had large vineyards, also in the side of and in Rikhe in the village of Ramie. After Ekaterine's death, several villages-basically, the left bank of the River Tekhura-came



Prince Achille Murat and Salome Dadiani

into the property of Salome. Salkhino was its centre and where the palace was located.

Grapes were the family's leading crop in Salkhino and Chkaduashi. They grew foreign-mainly French-as well as local varieties such as Cabernet and Fortuget from amongst the non-native vines and mainly Ojaleshi from those local.

A famous French traveller of the seventeenth century, who knew the varieties and quality of his native wine varieties, praised Samegrelo wines in his records, saying: "Samegrelo wine is beautiful. It's strong and viscous, very pleasant to drink and good for the stomach. You can drink nothing better throughout Asia."

Murats made a great deal of efforts to plant vineyards in the village Chkaduashi. According to stories, the isolated location, where they were planted, was covered with forests and thick thorn bushes. G. Chihua, who visited these vineyards in Chkaduasi and spoke to Prince Achille Murat, communicated his impressions about this expedition trip in the newspaper Iveria of 25 January 1894.

It should be mentioned that Ojaleshi grapes grew at their best in Salkhino and produced wine of the best quality Murats made wine for local sales as well as for sending to Russia and Europe. There are tens of labels intended for sending to France, written with French inscriptions, in the archives of the Zugdidi Historical Museum. Unfortunately, however, these materials do not show the quantity of wine which was sent to France. The fact that Murats made high-quality wine is also proved by the fact that the wines were regularly invited to exhibitions of agricultural products held in Russian and European cities.

In addition to agriculture, the Murats family was actively involved in many other fields with their interest in natural resources, for example, attracting special attention. It was Achille Murat himself who provided a study on lead ore in the laboratory of pharmacist Shavgulidze in Kutaisi. Furthermore, they concluded an agreement which resulted in with Mr Khaburzania the discoverer of an agreement on the ores and their chalk centres in Samurzakhano, together with their discoverer, Khaburzania. Finally, additionally, an agreement between the Princess Antoinette Murat and a researcher by the surname of Alshibaia in regard to lead and silver exploration activities in Svaneti is also preserved in the archives of the Museum in Zugdidi. Murats also conducted lead and silver explorations in Lechkhumi.

Murats were as engaged in financial-economical relations with Russia and Europe including the settlement of accounts and export-import related transactions through the Volga-Kama and Azov-Don Commercial Banks whose centres also operated in St-Petersburg with

branches in Tbilisi and agencies in Kutaisi.

Salome Murat's interest in horsemanship is also worthy of note. The hippodrome project, of 1910 and developed by the Tver Horsemanship Society, is preserved in the Museum archives in Zugdidi. In addition to the plan, the project contains sketches and drawings related to the types of taking barriers which still meet many present-day norms and standards.

Salome Murat did not belong to the type of landlords whose activities are restricted only to the control of income-expense statements. She herself led vigorous activities as well as taking on physical work. In fact, the whole family worked as is evidenced from the documents preserved in the archives as well as in periodical publications of the time and including oral history.

The residents of the village of



Andro Dadiani

Chkaduashi recall the story which was told by their ancestors about Princess Salome and how she took great care of the vineyard plantations. She used to have vine fastening cords around her waist and as soon as she saw any branch which fell down, she fastened them to the right place. One time, on a Monday as the story goes, a high official from the province of Kutaisi who wanted to meet Salome, visited her at her palace in Chkaduashi. Salome, who was in the vineyard, announced her guest through a servant, saying: "Monday is a work day. Please choose another day for your visit."

Princess Salome knew how to appreciate service and she was gracious, as well. She had granted lands free-of-charge to many peasants and documented their ownership.

Achille Murat is also remembered fondly and with warm feelings. He was known for his diligence, a high level of cul-



Salome Dadiani with her grandchild

ture and for the benevolent way in which he treated people. The fact that he brought a unique bronze mask from France, which was once owned by Napoleon Bonapart and which is preserved in the Museum in Zugdidi, is invaluable alongside other items, such as rare European publications, opera claviers and music notes, which he also brought by with him and which remaining as true treasures of the Museum. Whilst Murats and his family introduced European culture to the regions they also did not refrain from adopting local habits and ways.

Owing to serious illness and infirmity, Achille Murat took his own life with a hunting gun on 15 February 1895. His tragic death was followed by rumour and speculation about the true causes of his death but which remain without full explanation to this day.

Princess Salome Murat survived her husband by eight years. After her death, her daughter, Princess Antoinette, took over the administration of the estates in a right which she obtained from her mother in her last will and testament. The Princess Antoinette lived in Kutaisi in 1917-1918, renting a house there as is evidenced by archival materials.

Princess Salome Murat, died on 10 July 1913 whilst in Paris for medical treatment. Her final resting place is in France. Her husband Achille's is in Georgia.

