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Landslide alert in Vashlijvari, Tbilisi

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Machavariani Street and the nearby slopes in Tbilisi have been put on a landslide alert after a fissure appeared on slopes earlier this month. Landslide process has intensified on the slope connecting the Nutsbidze str and Vashlijvari. At the moment, the road connecting Nutsbidze and Vashlijvari is closed and specialists are working on the spot.

On March 16, the City Hall issued a statement saying that landslides had intensified due to certain actions taken on Machavariani Street and nearby slopes. For safety reasons, traffic in the area was restricted on both sides from the building of the Emergency Call Management Center to Vashlijvari settlement.

According to seismologist Tea Godoladze, the depth of the landslide is about 10 meters, and half a million cubic meters of land has cracked. Godoladze claims that it was all due to incorrect planning, and building construction on wrong geological spots; she recalled the case of Vere Valle. "It's similar here; we are dealing with identical problems."

Geomorphologist Lasha Sukhishvili, who was also on the ground, told Formula TV that due to the ongoing processes on the ground, the removal of the slope pillar caused the landslide. He explained that there is a danger in the vicinity of the excavated land, as well as other parts of the land, because they have also lost their base support. According to Sukhishvili, it's obvious that the bloc of the land will not stop there and what's important now is to observe the situation around the bloc, because their base is removed as well, explaining that



► "This process has been going on for years. As soon as we identified the danger, we took preventive measures. Machavariani Street was blocked on both sides," Mayor Kaladze said.

'we are waiting for domino effect'. According to him, it is unknown when or how fast the land might move. Thus, the construction must be stopped.

Geologist Giorgi Boychenko, who observed the landslide process yesterday morning, says that it is most likely related to the road construction activities. He also noted that about 10-15 meters of land was removed from the slope when the water pipes were laid in the ground, which facilitated gravitational processes. Boychenko said the most optimal option is to dismantle the landslide and slowly remove it from the area.

At the special briefing held by City Hall, Deputy Mayor Irakli Bendeliani explained that along the road connecting Nutsbidze and Vashlijvari, "landslides are observed in the upper part of Machavariani Street, and road works are in the lower part of that

Street." He also announced that German geotechnicians will arrive next week to be directly involved in the process. Bendeliani also noted that before the start of the work, a 'detailed' project was made and road repair work only started after the examination and conclusions of the geologists.

He also noted that the start of landslide processes did not happen due to one specific fact, but because of years of work, as well as natural factors. "We work 24 hours a day to fix the problem." The Iliia State University Earth Sciences Group continues to work on the ground. They plan to publish the report after the completion of the works. However, as Sukhishvili commented, the City Hall has no obligation to take the group's advice into account. He added that when their group arrived at the scene, it seemed like other professionals had been working there a few weeks ago.



► Experts suppose that about half a million cubic meters of land has cracked.

PM Garibashvili urges all sides to come to the agreement as soon as possible

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

In a concluding statement following his visit to Brussels, Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili urged all sides to come to an agreement as soon as possible and resolve the ongoing political crisis in the country:

"I would like to once again call for all sides to come to an agreement within the framework of the constructive dialogue in order to help the country return to normal political life, and in order to start focusing on the serious challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic issues, unemployment, occupation of Georgia's territories and so on. Especially since the security in the region is currently under a threat.

I hope that within the next few days, the constructive part of the opposition bloc will come to a sensible decision. On our side, we can once again reinstate our readiness to continue the constructive dialogue and come to an agreement as soon as possible."

PM Garibashvili also stated that the ongoing political crisis is completely 'artificial' as the top EU officials "reaffirmed Georgia's 2020 parliamentary elections were free and competitive and the demands of the Georgian



opposition parties for repeat elections have no grounds."

"I would like to once again summarize our visit to Brussels. As you all know, it has been a very successful visit, we held meetings with both the EU

and NATO. We have discussed all the reforms, as well as the progress that we have achieved together. I must also note, that both these reforms and this progress are fully recognized and praised in Brussels."

PM Garibashvili also noted that during one of the meetings with NATO, Georgia was praised for the progress that it has achieved over the past few years in the defence and the security sectors:

"We have managed to once again summarize the progress achieved over the past few years in the defence and security sectors. We would like to once again thank everyone who contributed to this progress", Georgian prime minister stated.

European Union and UNICEF join efforts to improve child protection systems and services in Georgia

The European Union and UNICEF are supporting children in Georgia to live in a protective and caring family environment and have better access to child-friendly justice.

A new project 'Strengthening Systems and Services for Child Protection in Georgia' aims to support the Government in the implementation of the newly adopted Code on the Rights of the Child including in decentralization of activities and working with communities to respect and

protect the rights of children.

The project will be implemented by UNICEF, in partnership with the Government of Georgia, with financial support from the European Union over the next three years with a total budget of over Euro 2 million.

"The EU is proud to partner again with UNICEF, this time to help bring Georgia's landmark Child Code into practice. Among other areas, this project will assist the final transition from institutionalised care for children and strengthen child friendly approaches in the justice system. It will also work intensively with local authorities and municipal social workers to ensure better access to

care for families and children in need. Child rights, like any rights, are non-negotiable. We look forward to working closely with Georgian partners towards a safe environment for children" said Carl Hartzell, EU Ambassador to Georgia.

"All children should benefit from living in a caring family environment and the new partnership project with the European Union will contribute to the development of the strong family support services", said Ghassan Khalil, UNICEF Representative in Georgia. "The project contributes significantly to the implementation of the new Code on the Rights of the Child of Georgia. We are grateful to

the European Union for their continued support to strengthening child rights, child protection and justice systems in Georgia, so that all children enjoy their rights", Khalil added.

The project will also support:

- Social welfare institutions and staff to provide quality services for children and families.
- Citizens, communities, professionals, and parents to use positive techniques to raise their children while also respecting their rights. This includes the rights of girls and boys to grow up in a family environment, free of violence, where children know their rights and can act on them.

- The justice system to use a child-friendly approach for all children in contact with the law including child victims, child witnesses of crime, and children separated from their families.
- The National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation to implement the crime prevention referral procedures and delivers quality programmes for children with difficult behaviours, children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and children who benefit from diversion programmes.

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FRIDAY		MARCH 19	
Day		Mostly sunny	High: 13°C
Night		A few clouds	Low: 2°C
SATURDAY		MARCH 20	
Day		Mostly cloudy	High: 12°C
Night		Partly cloudy	Low: 2°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Nino Kavelashvili
Design and Layout

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Akhaltsikhe nurse allegedly develops anaphylactic reaction after to Covid jab

GEORGIA IS JABBING THE POPULATION WITH THE ASTRAZENECA'S VACCINE

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

A nurse in Akhaltsikhe allegedly developed a anaphylactic reaction after receiving the Covid vaccine on March 18. The director of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC) Amiran Gamkrelidze talked about the incident noting that the 27-year-old nurse had previously received routine flu shots with no complications.

"We're not yet sure if this was an allergic or other type of reaction, but according to the initial information from doctors, it seemed like an anaphylactic reaction," said Gamkrelidze.

The nurse developed the reaction 30 minutes after getting the jab and went into a coma. Before getting sick, she talked with journalists about the importance of getting inoculated and informing the population that the vaccine is harmless.

Following the accident, the Deputy Minister of Health and the NCDC Director noted that the reaction could be a possible side effect of the vaccine, although research is underway to verify this. According to them, the nurse had to be transferred to an intensive care unit in Tbilisi.

The Deputy Health Minister also noted that the AstraZeneca vaccine that Georgia uses is known to have such side effect – according to the British data, out of 5 million inoculations, 41 people developed anaphylactic side effects. She added that the risk associated with the vaccine is minimal compared to the benefits of the vaccine.

Later yesterday, relevant officials held a meeting to discuss the accident and the future of the immunization program in Georgia. After the meeting, Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze announced that the process will continue as planned using the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili also got the vaccine yesterday. She received the jab publicly and addressed



► Georgia started vaccinating its population on Monday. Photo: RFE/RL



► After the meeting, officials decided to continue vaccination using AstraZeneca vaccine.

the population, speaking on the importance of being vaccinated. "If we want to get out of the dire economic situation that followed the global Covid pandemic, it is important to use the opportunity given to us," she noted.

Georgia received the first 43,200 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine on March 13. The immunization process started on March 15 with the healthcare professionals receiving the jab first. As of March 18, 3054 of them have been inoculated. There are over 71 thousand healthcare workers in the country. The Health Ministry estimates that 46 thousand of them will be immunized.

European Union and UNICEF join efforts to improve child protection systems and services in Georgia

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The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges for children and families. Pandemic-related restrictions and the expected loss of jobs increase family vulnerabilities and risks for children. This project will contribute to increased protection of the rights of children during and after the pandemic.

Additional Information

Since 2005, the Government of Georgia, with the support of the European Union, UNICEF, other donors and state and non-state partners, has been implementing the Child Welfare System reform, which significantly reduced the number of children in large-scale state-run institu-

tions from 4,100 in 2005 to 77 in 2020. More than 900 children remain in non-state institutions. Violence against children in families, residential care, foster care and educational institutions remain a significant problem with 69 per cent of children experiencing violent discipline, with many adults believing that the use of physical violence

against children is acceptable and that physical forms of punishment are more effective than non-violent parenting techniques.

Since 2009, significant progress has been made in reforming the juvenile justice system in Georgia with the support of the EU. The reform produced tangible results for children in conflict with the

law, but additional focus is needed to prevent juveniles becoming in conflict with the law. Since its introduction in 2010, the Diversion programme has helped more than 4,000 children and young people but there is a need to introduce a wide range of rehabilitation services for diverted juveniles and strengthen coordination between different professionals.