Renovation works have been completed on Grigol Orbeliani Square, near 9 April Garden, in central Tbilisi. A re-opening ceremony took place on Monday evening to celebrate the completion of the two-year rehabilitation project. The works were supported by the Tbilisi Development Fund within the framework of the New Tbilisi project. The rehabilitation includes the restoration of 20 buildings and the construction of an underground parking lot for 150 vehicles.

Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze, President Salome Zurabishvili, Parliament Speaker Irakli Kobakhidze, Tbilisi Chairman Giorgi Tskhovrebatu and Tbilisi Mayor Kacha Kaladze addressed guests at the opening ceremony.

“We have proven that when there is unanimity and motivation, we can implement large-scale projects in a short time,” said Bakhtadze on Monday.

“Today it is a very important day for us. During the local self-government elections, I promised the population that Orbeliani Square and its adjacent streets would be rehabilitated. We have fulfilled this promise...Our main goal and objective is that the whole city will be like this – environmentally clean, well organized, with many green spaces. I’m sure we will be able to do it with unified effort,” Kaladze added.

Image source: Tbilisi City Hall

“Since it is one of the most important goals for us in the pre-election period, and as soon as we had the authority, we started to implement it. Around 65 million GEL ($25.1 mln) is being spent on the reconstruction of the square...with the aim of making it one of the best places in the capital,” Kaladze said last August.

Continued on page 3
UN General Assembly Passes Resolution on Georgian IDPs

BY KETEVAN KVARATSKHELIYA

On June 4, within the framework of the 73rd session, the UN General Assembly adopted the Resolution “Status of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia,” initiated by Georgia and, for the first time, co-sponsored by 44 states. The Resolution also has a practical significance, as it instructs the UN Secretary-General to prepare an annual report on the situation of IDPs residing in Georgia as well as on the implementation of this Resolution. In addition, the document calls upon the participants of the Geneva International Discussions to strengthen their efforts to ensure security and human rights protection in the occupied regions, which in turn will facilitate the return of IDPs and refugees to their homes.

At the presentation of the Resolution, the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations, H.E. Kakha Imandze, spoke about the current situation in the occupied territories of Georgia and outlined the challenges the residents of the regions have to face. "The Ambassador also stressed that it is heartbreaking to see the Secretary-General's latest report referring to the 'tragic loss of life' of the Georgian IDPs while in the detention of the occupying power. Such cases are far too often and far too many: Basharuli, Orkhozoria, Tatunashvili, Kvaratskhelia," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia reported.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia expressed its sincere gratitude to all states that supported and co-sponsored the Resolution on the right of return of the IDPs and refugees, and once again expressed their solidarity to each and every forcibly displaced person. The resolution was passed by a vote of 79 in favor, 15 against, and 57 abstentions.

Helicopter Crashes in Kazbegi, 3 Dead

BY KETEVAN KVARATSKHELIYA

On June 6, a helicopter, owned by the Adjara Group Company crashed in Kazbegi, Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, causing the deaths of all three individuals onboard – one pilot and two employees of the company. Expert crash investigators, rescue teams and emergency medical staff have been working on site. An investigation has already been launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, under Paragraph 4, Article 275 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, involving the violation of safety regulations or procedures for operating air way transport traffic that results in the death of two or more persons. The Adjara Group company sent its deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and is cooperating with the investigation.
Seven Georgian Governors Used Enough Fuel to Drive Around the Earth 14 Times

BY THEA MORRISON

Georgia based non-governmental organization Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) studied vehicles owned by regional governor administrations and the fuel they used, and found that in 2017-2018, the distance covered by governor vehicles on average was twice the circumference of Earth, which means that every governor’s car could be enough to circle the Earth 14 times. The report says the analysis of vehicles owned by governor administrations and related fuel consumption points to challenges related to rational and efficient use of resources.

“The high overall number of vehicles owned by governor administrations, prevalence of expensive luxury models, and high fuel expenses demonstrate a necessity for optimization and stricter oversight mechanisms,” IDFI stated. Further, the NGO said that one serious concern is the practice of free-of-charge gifting of vehicles to governors by municipalities in the respective region, adding “this practice raises questions about the proper use of municipal assets, contradicts the principles of governance and undermines the independence of local government.”

The IDFI noted that there is a need to consider the option of establishing a list of official vehicles and to introduce technological systems for stricter monitoring of state-level vehicle use and their fuel consumption.

During the study, the organization requested data from Regional governor administrations, asking for public information about the state vehicles and fuel expenses in 2017-2018. The report reads that as of January 2019, the state vehicles and official vehicles own a total of 78 vehicles, of which 49% are high-performance, and 46% are assigned to specific officials or employees. All regional governors use Toyota Land Cruisers, most of which were gifted to governor administrations free of charge.

Further, 79% of vehicles owned by governors are used in a state of emergency,” Kaladze said on the meeting, which increases the distance traveled,” he explained. The NGO added that the governors have a lot of work, thus they drive a lot. “The average amount of fuel used by governors a day is 25 liters. In addition, every governor must come to the city once a week and attend the government meeting, which increases the distance of travel,” he added.

The Head of the Department of Regions noted high fuel expenses mean the governors really work actively. Regarding the IDFI recommendation about inserting special chips in the governors’ vehicles to better control their fuel expenses, Sabari explained each car already has chips and the use of every liter of fuel is strictly controlled by the government.

“Urges the governors to continue working very actively and to have daily communication with the IDFI,” he said, “regarding the remote areas and villages,” he added.

Newly renovated Orbeliani reopened

Continued from page 1

Work on historic buildings included the removal of irreparably damaged sections of constructive reinforcement, removal of unregulated structures from facades, such as air conditioning units, removal of unregulated structures from sections, constructive reinforcement, repairing damaged roo

The renovation of Orbeliani Square began in mid-2017 and was initially scheduled to be completed by the end of that year. When discussing the project in December 2017, then-Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili said of Orbeliani, “This place instills a special feeling of harmony which sets Tbilisi apart from every other city; a place where the past and present come together. New Tbilisi is what unites the old and the new...Given new developmental requirements and the pace of growth, we are obliged to ensure that every ornament in Tbilisi, every building - each worth a whole city - is preserved, restored, cherished, and rejuvenated. This project will put into place a new investment platform in Tbilisi, and the resources invested by the state will be complementary in new development. However, there must be a place for everyone in reno

In a January announcement of the infrastructure plans, Kaladze said, “The everyday routine of our work is a step-by-step approach to building a European, modern, orderly, comfortable and safe city...These are the issues we have accumulated over three decades, and each of us must solve them in order to solve all the problems with one hand, but I am sure that we will solve everything.”

Now that the Orbeliani Square renovation is completed, some of the major project remaining on the plan through 2020 includes the recently initiated renovation of Piazza Niccolini, an ongoing renovation of the Dry Bridge and Saarbruecken Square area, renovation of Piroziani, Gudishvili, and Purtseladze streets, and a 110 million George Chkhenkeli Foundation project for the development of the Mtikvari River area.

“Every house on [Pirsoniana] street is in a state of emergency,” Kaladze said in January. “Within the framework of the project, all this will be sorted, start-

In the 2015 interview, when Badaradze was asked what his ideals would look like, he responded, “It would be a city loved by people, in which each street, house, garden, square, entrance or elevator is an object that is handled with care...a place where people care for their city.” Looking at the already chipping paint, stained and gritted facades, and broken sidewalk on streets renovated just a few years ago, such as Aghmashenebeli Ave., the question of city maintenance and public respect and care for infrastructure is still as relevant as ever.

Minister of Education Visits San Francisco

BY SAMANTHA GUTHRIE

Georgian Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Technology Irakli Gvasalia is currently on a trip to the United States. Specifically, he is visiting Silicon Valley, in California’s San Francisco Bay area, meeting with representatives from the World Economic Forum, Stanford University, and Silicon Valley companies.

On Tuesday, Minister Gvasalia met with Murat Sönmez from the World Economic Forum. Sönmez is a member of the Managing Board of the World Economic Forum, and Head of the C4IR Global Network. C4IR is the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, an affiliated institution of the World Economic Forum. Its mission is to bring together science, technology, and policy for society. C4IR is a self-organizing institution. Fellows act as a bridge between the academic, corporate, and government sectors.

During their meeting, Batiashvili introduced the directions of the Georgia’s complex education reform plan. The discussion focused on the ongoing transformation of Georgia’s education system, in particular, the introduction of technological and innovative approaches to the learning process and the importance of quality education for the country’s economy, the ‘new school’ model, and changes in higher education. The sides discussed opportunities for future cooperation on technology.

Sönmez told the Georgian delegation, “I am excited about your reforms. In the direction of education, Georgia will become a success story for the rest of the world. As a citizen of this world, I am motivated by the fact that Georgia is a leader in rapidly developing reforms. That’s why we believe in the success of education reform in Georgia and we will support it as much as possible...our door is open for Georgia’s government, for Georgian people and we have strong cooperation.”

The meeting was accompanied by Mikheil Chkhenkeli, former Minister of Education and Sport, and current Advisor to the Prime Minister of Georgia on Education.

Ingram-Cauchi explained that the ongoing reforms in Georgia allow for effective transformation of the whole education system. “Here at Silicon Valley, we are learning about the key drivers for effective transformation. Based on what I have learned, you have a huge opportunity to effectively transform the entire education ecosystem in the country. Georgia you start your pilots, and after their success, they will spread, and become a strategic model, and then Ingram-Cauchi concluded, “the government is investing in education technology, it’s a guarantee of a successful future for accuracy,” said Ingram-Cauchi.
School Killing Main Witness Sentenced to Imprisonment on Murder Charges

BY THEA MORRISON

Mikheil Kalandia, the main witness of the so-called Khorava Street case, was sentenced to imprisonment as a prisoner in Georgia on June 5. On June 6, the detainee was charged with the murder of 16-year-old Davit Saralidze. He was charged by the Prosecutor's Office under Subparagraphs “B” and “F” of Paragraph 2 of Article 109 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, involving intentional murder of a minor committed by a group of persons in aggravating circumstances.

The decision of imprisonment was announced by Judge Khakatune Kalashvili on Thursday. Kalandia was a minor on December 1, 2017 when the incident took place in central Tbilisi, seeing two teenagers, Davit Saralidze and Levan Dadunashvili, who were stabbed to death in a street brawl.

THE CASE TO DATE.

On May 31, 2018, Tbilisi City Court charged two minors; one for the premeditated murder of Dadunashvili and the second for the attempted murder of Saralidze; however, Kalandia could not say who had killed Saralidze, which sparked mass protests in the capital organized by his father, Zaza Saralidze. Georgia’s Chief Prosecutor Irakli Shatozeli giámаt had already denied the protest rallies, while then-Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirelidze had ordered a re-investigation of the case to answer the many unanswered questions.

The police also detained former high-ranking officials of the Prosecutor’s Office, Mirza Subeliani and Merab Morechadze, on charges of failure to report a crime and exertion of influence on a witness, respectively. In June 2018, a fact-finding commission was set up in Parliament to investigate the so-called Khorava Street case, which delivered its conclusion in September 2018. Although the opposition and majority MPs have diverged in their vision of the case, the final resolution requested the Interior Ministry launch a criminal investigation against Mikheil Kalandia. The Ministry said then that the commission recommendations had no obligatory character but stressed that investigation was indeed underway.

In total, 10 people have been charged for various offenses connected to the case, among them for giving false testimony and failure to report a crime. On June 3, 2019, the Court of Appeals announced that the sentence of one of the convicts (G.B.), who was found guilty of the premeditated murder of Levan Dadunashvili, had been reclassified as “aggravated” and that he would remain in prison for 11 years and three months. Second convict G.J., saw the Court partially taking into consideration the prosecution’s arguments and re-qualifying the initial charges of the attempted murder of Davit Saralidze to a charge of “partaking in group murder.” He was sentenced to eight and three months in jail. The next day, Georgia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), arrested the key witness of the case, Mikheil Kalandia. On June 5th he was officially charged for the murder of Saralidze.

WHAT DO THE SIDES SAY?

Kalandia’s lawyer, Nestan Londaridze, said his client had been detained when the crime was committed. He also accuses police of physical abusing he and his son, adding they made Kalandia write the testimony under pressure and threat of violence.

Tengiz Kalandia spoke about the time he was detained on charges of concealing the crime and noted that he was forced to give testimony under pressure. “Police officers physically abused me. They wrote the testimony themselves and forced my children and I to sign it. They threatened my children by saying they would kidnap their mother and younger sister. They ate me and my children. Our testimonies were not written by us. They are fabricated by high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs so they can keep their posts,” he said.

The father of the detainee says he and his elder son might have been arrested to “silence them.”

Kalandia’s lawyer, Ana Koterishvili, says the information that was spread claiming her defendant was planning to leave the country is not true. “We have not seen anything on the list of evidence so far that would confirm Mikheil Kalandia committed the crime. He does not plead guilty,” the lawyer says.

Zaza Saralidze, who had been holding protests since May 2018, welcomed Kalandia’s arrest, however, he noted there are more people involved in the case. He said justice has “been partially restored” but added “the struggle for justice goes on.”

“If we will see how everything develops… I always knew the police would arrest him because the participation in the crime was obvious from the beginning,” the man said.

Saakashvili’s lawyer, Nestor Londaridze, claims there are still many unanswered questions which need to be dealt with. “We cannot say this case is over, because we have many questions, including a civil-offense - why this case was brought so far and who is responsible?” she said.

The NGO POSITION.

Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria believes the investigation “failed to reveal all allegedly responsible individuals for the murder of a juvenile on Khorava Street.” Lomjaria said that a year ago, she examined the mentioned case materials and discovered that the murder of David Saralidze had not been fully or effectively investigated, adding that the recent developments, including the verdict of the Court of Appeals, also showed the case was not fully and effectively investigated.

The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Prosecutor’s Office to identify and institute criminal proceedings against all individuals who were involved in the gang murder of Davit Saralidze, and for an investigation to be launched regarding facts of civil offense, in particular against the employees of investigative bodies responsible for the collection of evidence and delay to the investigation. NGOs also say investigation should show those whose investigative actions went in the wrong direction and led to them being unable to discover the truth. Sulfian Saladze from the NGO Georgian Young lawyers Association says it is obvious the investigation was undertaken with flaws.

“It is important that society knows who is responsible for what and a half by investigators, and if it will be followed by the responsibility of these individuals,” he said.

MP COMMENTS.

President’s Spokesperson Khatia Motshurishvili said at a briefing that the President of Georgia believes restoration of justice is of utmost importance. “The President believes families must have answers to all their questions and there should be no doubt regarding injustice. Let’s wait and see. The main thing is restoration of justice - this is the position of the President of Georgia,” she said.

Parliament Speaker Irakli Kobakhidze noted the Georgian Dream (GD) always believed the situation would change when the case went to the second instance court.

“When discussions were launched in different formats, we always said we should wait for an investigation and resultant decisions. This case was discussed at the first instance and you see that there is a change at the second instance. Of course, the changes result from additional information that the court received in relation to the case,” he noted.

The position of the opposition party Euro-Georgian and member of the parlia-

ment’s fact-finding commission Eleni Khoshastia said during the investigation that MPs had found II people responsible.

“It is sad that it took eight months to do what was clear from the work of the police and investigators… However, this is a very important step...The decent developments show that people were run-

ning for the guilty persons for specific interests. This also needs to be investiga-

ted,” she said.
Church vs Church

OPED BY ZAIA JGARKAVA

Once again, after a 6-month break, the Church becomes again a major puzzle in Georgian politics. The events surrounding the Davit Gareja monastery complex were still hot when a religious hassle developed in occupied Abkhazia, seeing supporters of Russian Patriarch Kirill confronting those of Bartholomew I of Constantinople. Most important in the whole story is that the Davit Gareja problem is more or less resolvable, the dispute in the breakaway region goes beyond the capabilities of Georgian political officials and the clergy. Nevertheless, in order to discharge the current situation, Moscow is demanding a sacrifice from the Georgian Church.

Moscow demanded a straightforward answer to the ecclesiastical wrangle last year, when Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk visited Tbilisi for a few hours. During his meeting with Ilia II, he made sharp statements against the so-called “ecclesiastical separatists” of Abkhazia. He said, “The group which has made sharp statements against the so-called ecclesiastical separatists” of Abkhazia backed Dorothei Dbar’s group, as their major goal is not the independence of Abkhazian Orthodox Church.” The meeting proved unfruitful for them as possible. Hence, the issue deserves a cautious approach: there aren’t many issues in which Tbilisi can place its own conditions to Moscow, and this threat is clear for the Abkhazian separatists too. Therefore, if we examine the most recent statements, we will see that their stakes lie on the “beneficial idiots,” who are busier puffing out futile emotions rather than taking a cynical and pragmatic political action.

Georgian Officials Join the Ramadan Bayram Celebration

BY KETEVAN KVARATSCHIKELIA

On June 4, the Muslim World closed the celebration of Ramadan Bayram, also known as Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of fasting from dawn to dusk for the Holy Month of Ramadan, which lasts either 29 or 30 days, according to the first sighting of the new moon.

Muslims have represented part of the population of Georgia for centuries and have lived with Orthodox Christians in peace. The tolerant attitude towards the religious minorities of the country also continues today. Therefore, a number of Georgian Officials joined this year’s celebration of Ramadan Bayram.

The Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze hosted the representatives of the Georgian Muslim community at the Iftar dinner – an evening meal, eaten after the sunset. The Head of the Government wished them spiritual peace and happiness.

Salome Zurabishvili, the President of Georgia, joined the special prayer at Juma Mosque in Tbilisi earlier today and congratulated the Muslim population of the country on this important religious holiday.

The President also posted a congratulatory message on her official Twitter page. “I want to wish a joyful and peaceful Eid al-Fitr to all Muslims celebrating in Georgia and around the world!” reads the President’s post.
Skills4Georgia - The Georgian-German TVET Days

On June 15 and 16, the biggest event on vocational education in Georgia will take place in Tbilisi, hosted by the representatives of the Georgian and German governments. The public event, Expert-to-Expert talks and Skills4Georgia talks, will focus on the future modernization of the Georgian TVET system. The Skills4Georgia Talks will happen on Sunday June 16, again in the Republic Event Space. The format of this event will be a talk-style: Open, fancy and engaging. Multiple Georgian experts and representatives of the German company Studio2B will put the focus on skills and their relevance for everyday work.

The Georgian-German TVET Days will not only celebrate the bilateral cooperation and long-standing partnership between the two countries, but it will also be a great opportunity to promote the relevance of TVET for employment and economic development.

The Expert-to-Expert talks will also bring together Georgian and foreign experts. The audience will hear from Georgia’s leading modernization experts from Germany and will get the opportunity to make a decisive impact on the future of TVET.

Proposed Changes Related to Ownership of Agricultural Lands by Foreigners

According to the Draft Law, agricultural land is a land parcel within a category of a pasture, a hayfield, arable land (including plot of land covered with perennial plants) and homesteads, which are used for may be used for agricultural purposes, with or without buildings and constructions located on it. As set out in the Draft Law, in addition to the persons/entities entitled to own agricultural land, the constitution, the foreigner may be entitled to own agricultural land in exceptional circumstances.

The Draft Law sets out the notion of a “dominant partner”, which is a partner or group of partners of a legal entity of private law registered in Georgia, which owns more than 50% of shares/stocks and/or represents the majority of partners (General Partnership (GP) and Limited Partnership (LP)) or majority of founders/members (Non-entrepreneurial Non-commercial Legal Entity) and simultaneously has a practical opportunity to make a decisive impact on the decision of a legal entity. The legal entities of private law registered in Georgia and associations/partnership not registered as legal entities, are authorized to own agricultural land if a foreigner does not represent such dominant partners of an entity. In addition to the above listed entities, natural persons who obtain agricultural land in Georgia as an inheritance, may also own such land without any restriction. The Draft Law does not allow foreign-registered legal entities to own agricultural land in Georgia.

The Draft Law prohibits change of a partner of a legal entity, which holds the right to ownership of an agricultural land plot in a way that a foreigner, a legal entity registered abroad and/or a legal entity registered abroad becomes a dominant partner. The Draft Law does not in any manner impede the rights of the foreign owners who obtained ownership rights over the agricultural lands before its adoption.

OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS BY INVESTOR

Legal entities of private law registered in Georgia which are owned by a foreign dominant partners or the dominant partners of which may not be determined, may also own agricultural land on the basis of a decision of the Government of Georgia (the “GoG”) upon submission of a respective investment plan. An investment plan is a documentation reflecting the use of agricultural land, which considers relevant investments to make agricultural products, implement innovative activities, arranged relevant infrastructure, implement international projects and/or projects of state and local importance, which promote the protection of national security and the creation of new jobs.

A legal entity which owns agricultural land on the basis of an investment plan, shall be obliged to allocate such land within one year from the failure to comply with investment obligations. In case the foreigner is unable to sell the agricultural land, the State of Georgia shall acquire ownership.

Note: this article does not constitute legal advice. You are responsible for consulting with your own professional legal advisors concerning specific circumstances for your business.

MG Law is the first full-service law firm in Georgia to be founded by international partners. The firm advises a diverse group of Georgian and foreign companies, financial institutions, investment funds, governments and public enterprises. Among many other areas, the firm primarily focuses on the following sectors: Banking & Finance, Capital Markets, Arbitration & Litigation, Labor & Employment, Infrastructure and Project Finance, Energy Law, Real Estate, Tax and Customs, Investment Law, Corporate, Real Estate, Infrastructure & Finance Projects, and Cryptocurrency & Blockchain.

For more information, please visit www.mglaw.ge or contact Archi Giorgadze at archi.giorgadze@mglaw.ge and Nicola Mariani at Nicola.mariani@mglaw.ge
The presentation of the photo project ‘Life with Multiple Sclerosis’ was held at the Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel, marking the World Day of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). It was launched within the scope of the ‘Together for Each Other’ Campaign and aims to raise public awareness about MS and increase the spread of information about the illness. Photographer Goga Chanadiri is the author of the project, reflecting the feelings of MS patients in his images.

The presentation was attended by the representatives of the Union of Patients with Multiple Sclerosis and Lead Neurologists, who delivered speeches for the audience, pointing out the significance of the active involvement of the government, as well as the public in the project, and accessibility to the right treatment. Representatives of the Ministry of Healthcare, Tbilisi City Hall, Tbilisi Assembly and Parliamentary Committee on Health were also present at the event.

Goga Chanadiri spoke about the process of implementation of the project and expressed his support towards individuals suffering from MS. “With this project, we would like to deliver the most accurate information regarding the illness to the public and to tell them that multiple sclerosis is not a generally known type of sclerosis and it has absolutely different causes and symptoms. For example, a patient feels a feeling similar to the movement of many ants on the body. We have reflected it on our pictures and delivered it to the audience in an exaggerated form. Financial aid for the patients from the State is also vital, in order not to force them into a sedentary lifestyle all for our indifference,” noted Chanadiri.

Marina Janelidze, Neurologist, Professor of the State Medical University, Head of the Neurologic Department of the Simo Khechinashvili University Hospital, briefed the audience on the causes of the illness and its symptoms focusing on the differences between multiple sclerosis and atherosclerosis. She also noted that multiple sclerosis is a chronic, progressive disease, but early diagnosis and receipt of the relevant treatment may help in curing the patient.

“Multiple sclerosis is a disease which is mostly spread among individuals between the ages of 20-40, and even younger, when patients are mentally, physically and economically active and are in much need of help to be cured,” Janelidze noted. “It has been proven that it is possible to be fully cured through adequate medications and therapy courses at the early stage of the illness. We hope the government will launch programs for these individuals and finance them for treatments and further rehabilitation.”

The patients attending the event spoke about their cases and explained the importance of the disease. They stated that financial assistance from the government is vital for treatment, as it is impossible to forecast the quantity need and added that few can afford the cost of treatment.

Giorgi Chikvania, Executive Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Fund Georgia, expressed his hope that such events will contribute to raising public awareness and helping patients overcome the stigmas and better integrate into society. “I hope such projects will help the public to change their attitude, and result in fewer patients suffering difficulties in socialization,” he noted.

“This photo project intends to inform the public about multiple sclerosis in the very best way,” said patient Mariak Busjala, a marketing specialist. “What we, the patients, feel is not just typical fatigue, headache or dizziness. This is an indescribable feeling, which Goga managed to reflect perfectly in his images. The photo project exactly displays our problems, which I believe will once again make the government think and make treatment more widely available.”

“The ‘Together for Each Other’ campaign, after Tbilisi, will be hosted in Batumi on June 7. The world MS Day is marked on May 30, which was joined by Georgia for the first time last year. A special video was prepared, seeing patients and public figures united to call upon the government to increase the availability of treatment for patients to help them improve their living conditions and decrease the progress of skills reduction. The patients are still waiting for financing a year later.

ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS:
Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, progressive neurological disease. 2.3 million people worldwide suffer from it. The first symptoms are predominantly observed among those 20 to 40 years and it is the main cause of non-traumatic disability in young people.
Environmental Reporting Can Help Protect Citizens in Emerging Democracies

BY ERIC FREEDMAN

Covering the environment is challenging in any country. But fostering environmental journalism in emerging democracies like Georgia is one way to hold government officials and powerful businesses accountable.

N

o, not H2O2, because that would be hydrogen peroxide: useful for other things with that extra oxygen atom, but not as a replacement for good old water, comprising most of the bodies of every living thing on earth and something we all just like to drink and can’t live without for more than a few days. Just part of last week’s dive into water renova-
tion at Hamner Guest House.

The two workers, actually come to stay for a few days, were greeted with 12 other guests and our wife and me as well, so, almost a full house. This, like nothing else, showed them the im-
portance of what they were to do: we were all using one bathroom, with an out-
house for overflow as required. True, five of the guests left the next morning after breakfast; but still, they could see how having several more bathrooms would be vital if the whole summer saw as many people coming through, which bookings indicate it might do.

Having established our policy of “Buy one, shut off as parts were installed. Once a pipe is fully assembled, which either didn’t work, resulting in frozen pipes and much teasing and frustration, or (unusually last winter) did save us but was far from ideal.

Another partial solution would be for stakeholders to offer the public more tools to double-check information, such as seeking independence, and vehemently opposes Georgia’s efforts to join NATO and the European Union.

Tabul’s Chergeolshvili asserted that Georgia’s media sector could not distinguish fake news from legitimate sources. As an example, Georgia’s Environmental Journalists Network, which founded a Facebook group called “Svaneti Renaissance,” now with nearly 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti has nearly 2000 members, and has been a key tool in holding the government accountable.

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The medical sphere is one of the most rapidly-developing fields in the busy and ever-changing modern world, enabling individuals to fight serious illnesses, live and enjoy a "full" life.

Georgia is on the list of those countries making major steps forward in the medical sector, with a number of modern clinics having been launched in the country in recent years, boasting teams of experienced professionals.

Innova In Vitro, a multidisciplinary and customer-oriented clinic, is one such medical institution, which with the hard work of the management team, professionalism of its experts, and comfortable and high-quality services offered to clientele, has already strongly established itself on the market. This is a clinic launched in partnership with IVI, the world’s largest network of assisted reproduction clinics, specialized in reproductive health, one of the fields of paramount importance in today’s world.

Innova In Vitro is equipped with the latest technologies, in accordance with internationally recognized standards, and offers services in various fields, thus representing a significant platform in terms of development of the medical field countrywide.

Prior to introducing the services offered by the Innova In Vitro clinic, which we will come back to in a moment, we’ll brief you about in vitro fertilization (IVF) itself.

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is a complex series of procedures used to treat fertility or genetic problems and assist with the conception of a child. During IVF, mature eggs are collected from a woman’s ovaries and fertilized by sperm in a lab. Then the fertilized egg (embryo) or eggs are implanted into the woman’s uterus. One cycle of IVF takes about two weeks.

IVF is the most effective form of assisted reproductive technology and Innova In Vitro is the one providing the best services in this regard. Innova In Vitro has been collaborating with the world’s leading clinics and laboratories for a number of years, adapting the ultra-modern and time-saving methodologies of infertility treatment in Georgia, and has proved to be very successful so far.

The team at the Innova In Vitro clinic, formed with highly-trained experts in the spheres of gynecology, biology, generics and surgery, with 15 years in vitro fertilization experience, led by Ketevan Osidze, and with Spanish embryologist Garcia Jordan as IVF Lab Director, have set the requirements of the patients and achieving the most fruitful outcomes as their main priorities, synthesizing their brilliant theoretical knowledge with innovative treatment methods. At the clinic, patients are offered complete diagnostics and management of all infertility abnormalities, followed by application of the relevant treatments. What is most important, the team spares no effort to ensure the completion of this process in the shortest time possible and also offers a genetic study of the embryo, much facilitating the procedure.

The Innova In Vitro clinic specializes in various directions related to the field: in vitro fertilization; Insemination; Donation-Surrogacy Programs; Gynecological Endocrinology; Neuroendocrinology; Conservative Gynecology; Establishing the causes of miscarriages and their appropriate treatment, as well as Contraception.

Each client of the clinic is treated with special care, accentuating the significance of individual factors. The reproducdologist individually evaluates the chances of success in each case. Through the high-quality of services, transparency of procedures and individual approach to the clientele, the Innova In Vitro clinic is now welcoming local, as well as international patients from various countries worldwide.

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WHAT'S ON IN TBILISI

THEATER

TBILISI ZAKARIA PALASSHIVILI OPERA AND BALLETT THEATER
25 Rustaveli Ave.
TEL: (+995 32) 2 90 04 56

June 8, 9
CARMEN
Georges Bizet
Conductor: Zaza Azaia парашавли
Choreographer: Gia Margania
Starring: Tve Demurishvili, Anzor Khidasheli, Shaphamandia Moyake, Goxa Abuladze, Givi Ginegviselvili, Otar Shokhravashvili, Nino Chachua, Mariam Baratashvili, Tamaz Saginadze
Ticket: 25-300 GEL
June 8-9, 20:00

MOVEMENT THEATER
182 Aghmashenebeli Ave.
TEL: (+995 32) 98 19 29 36

June 7
FAUST
Based on the works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Directed by Khakhi Bakuradze
Language: Non verbal
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 10-15 GEL

June 13
DIVINE COMEDY
Based on the works of Dante Aligieri
Three 20-minute choreographic statements (two 10-minute intervals)
Language: Non verbal
Directed: Josel Bakuradze
Composer/Arranger: Sandra Nikoladze
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 10-15 GEL

SHALIKASHVILI THEATER
37 Rustaveli Ave.
TEL: 955 50 02 03

June 7
RELECTION
Love triangle: a successful artist and a ballerina who love each other, but a businessman and owner of the gallery is in love with her too.
Dedicated to Amiran Shalikashvili
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 10-15 GEL

GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM SIMON JANASHIA
3 Rustaveli Ave.
TEL: (+995 32) 299 80 22, 293 48 21

Exhibitions:
- GEORGIAN COSTUME AND WEAPONRY OF THE 18TH-20TH CENTURIES
- NUMISMATIC TREASURY
- EXHIBITION STONE AGE
- ARCHEOLOGICAL TREASURE
- NEW LIFE TO THE ORIENTAL COLLECTIONS

Until September 10
Under the joint initiative of Georgian National Museum and Georgian Poet, Exhibition: STORY TOLD BY POSTAGE STAMPS
Dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the first Georgian stamp.

Until August 31
Multimedia technology exhibition- IMAGMICA. A JOURNEY INTO BEAUTY.

IOSEB GRISHASHVILI TBILISI HISTORY MUSEUM - KARVASHA
8 Sioni St.
TEL: (+995 32) 2 98 22 81

May 16–June 10
Georgian National Museum in the framework of The Museum Festival presents the photo exhibition ‘3993’ of Swiss artist – Daniel Spehr, showcasing photo-shoots taken during his stay in Georgia, reflecting the political, social, and cultural reality of Georgia in the 1990s, reflecting the complicated, contradictory and historical reality.

Until June 18
KAKO TOPURIA'S SOLO EXHIBITION
The exhibition represents Tapuria’s recent works, revealing nostalgia, ironic motives, feelings of chosens and more. Implemented within the project ‘Contemporary Art Gallery’

Until June 10
Exhibition SUMMARIZING CITIES. EUROPEAN SQUARES AND THEIR HISTORIES
The exhibition proposes a change of perspective regarding European urban squares.
The project is supported by Georgian National Museum, Embassy of Romania in Georgia, The Order of Architects in Romania - OAR and Romanian Presidency of the Council of The European Union and is implemented in several European cities.

MUSEUM OF ILLUSIONS
10 Berlomi Str.
Discover the Museum of Illusions Be brave enough to jump into an illusion created by the Vortex, deform the image of yourself in a Mirror Room, be free in the Infinity room, resist the laws of gravity and size ratio, and take a practical approach in every possible pose. Enjoy the collection of holograms, and discover optical Illusions.

MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS
10 Berlomi Str.
The MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS
The unique collection of the museum aims to provoke feelings of understanding among individuals and provide a kind of therapy for those who have experienced break-ups.

MUSIC

SOUNDS OF GEORGIA
June 7, 8, 12, 13
And Drink
Mini concerts in the cozy atmosphere of Old Tbilisi, a mix of traditional Georgian music of different genres: folklore, a capella, guitar, and Georgian pop and city songs.
Start time: 17:00
Ticket: 24 GEL

June 11
GOLDEN WAVE 2019
An Award Ceremony as a tribute to the legendary rock band ‘Queen’. Mark Martin as a special guest, will present a Queen Show at the award ceremony.
Start time: 18:30
Ticket: 50-155 GEL

TURNTABLE

June 7
DECORDER: GIEGLING (CONCERT)
Transcending Hierarchy
A concert night dedicated to the interaction between audio and visual, performer and audience. Could our paradigms shift through self-awareness of one’s perception?
- Birds & Tapes LIVE, Leafar Legov
- Birds & Tapes LIVE, Otto Hernandez
- Birds & Tapes LIVE, Leafar Legov
- Otto Hernandez
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 20 GEL

June 8
DECORDER: GIEGLING (BIRTHDAY PARTY)
Dj Dustin, Eli, Konstantin, Leafar Legov
Start time: 16:00
Ticket: 30 GEL

ELECTRO CARRIAGE BUILDING FACTORY

4 K. Cholokashvili Str.

June 8
POPULAR GEORGIAN BAND MGZAVREBI
Start time: 20:00
Ticket: 20 GEL

GALLERY TBILISI
2 Rustaveli Ave.

June 7
WHITE PARTY
1st SANTA DIMOV
Start time: 19:00
Ticket: 25 GEL

CULTURE
**13th Black Sea Jazz Festival to Kick Off in Batumi Resort on July 18**

BY GABRIELLE COLCHEN

The summer season in Georgia is rich in cultural and entertaining events taking place across the country. The Black Sea Jazz Festival, annually organized by Eastern Promotions and TBC Status, is one of the pioneer outdoor events, taking place in Batumi Seaside Resort and bringing together the world’s most acclaimed artists from different genres.

The Black Sea Jazz Festival has become one of the leading events in Georgia, significant for both the economic and tourism development of the country. This year, Batumi is to host the 13th Jazz Festival from July 18 to 20. The concerts will take place in the Batumi Tennis Club. The lineup is as follows: July 18 - CORY HENRY & The Funk Apostles (USA); July 19 - MKORUMO (GEO) and (AMP FIDDLER &); special guest Drummer From Detroit (USA), July 20 - INCognito (UK). The official resident of the festival is DJ Vania Machaidze, known by the stage name DJ MACHINE.

At different times, the Black Sea Festival has hosted such big names as HUGH MASEKELA, SERGIO MENDES, TANIA MARIA QUARTET, LISA STANSHIELD, SNOOP DOGG, AL JARREAU, MACY GRAY, JANIBROQUIAL, MS. LAURYN HILL, ROBERT PLANT and even THE PRODIGY. This year, for the festival, Giorgi Kereselidze, Director of Eastern Promotions and organizer of the Festival, talked to GEORGIA TODAY about this year’s program and performances:

“Always, this year we aim to offer the audience an interesting and varied program. Over the years, the Black Sea Jazz Festival has become ever more diverse. We always try to include “happy” music in our program, since this is what holidaymakers need and expect when they come to the seaside. We do our best to meet their needs and provide quality positive music to guarantee them a good time. While Tbilisi Jazz Festival is more conservative and is where jazz enthusiasts can enjoy relatively serious jazz music, the Batumi Black Sea Jazz Festival is much more fun, incorporating various genres like funk, rock, electronic music, soul and hip hop. The concerts last longer, and after performances guests can relax and dance until late,” he told us, adding that “this year we aimed to stick to this format and expand it even more.

“This year’s program is energetic, diverse and fun. We were eager to invite Cory Henry to perform in Georgia. He has become one of the top most acclaimed musicians in demand, so has a very busy schedule. Luckily, he was free on July 18, so we planned the entire program around this date. He will open the festival with his group The Funk Apostles. The next day we have two very amazing performances. On July 19, we present a very interesting and very special guest, MokuMoku, that is made up of young gifted musicians. I think through a good marketing strategy they can go beyond the borders and perform at international festivals in different countries. Although it is difficult to establish and endure one’s career in music, it is so good and different that I think it is a very important mission. The second day is an American musician AMP FIDDLER, who is notable for his innovative approaches to music. He has very distinctive projects, I have attended two of them and I was impressed. He feels the audience and knows how to direct his music. The Georgian audience is so energetic and expressive that the artist will feel it and we hope that evening will be unforgettable. On July 20, the festival closes with legendary British group Incognito on its jubilee tour, and we are very happy to host them in Georgia on that day. Every evening, the concerts will be followed by DJ sets which sometimes go on for the entire night. There are no novelties at the festival, as well as the participation of local interesting local musicians,” the festival organizer said.

Program Black Sea Jazz Festival 2019

**CORY HENRY & THE FUNK APOSTLES (USA)**

Cory Henry is an American jazz pianist, composer, arranger, producer and Grammy Award holder who started his music career in 2006 by touring with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He is an original member of the R&B band Amp Fiddler from Detroit. From Detroit. He will perform together with his old friend Andrés known as ‘Drummer From Detroit’. Since the 90s, he has been creating funk music, incorporating hip-hop and other music genres.

**INCognito**

Incognito is a British acid jazz band. Their debut album, Jazz Funk, was released in 1981. Since then, for over 40 years the band members have released more than 15 albums. The band members have changed time to time, yet Jean-Paul “Nicko” Maunick, the band’s slide guitarist, saxophonist, composer, and record producer, has remained. The band has featured Linda Morrit, Jocelyn Brown, Mayna Lea, Tony Monkrell, Imaine, Vanessa Haynes, Mo Brandi, Natalie Williams, Carleen Anderson, Pamelia (PV) Anderson, Kelii Sae, and Joe Jackson.

MOKUMOKU

The group was established in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2014. Their music embraces hip hop and jazz. On the evening of July 19, the band has released three albums: Blues Build The Temple (2003), Black Heavens (2007), Chicago/Martigny (2019) and several singles including Sugar Glider: “Halo is Alive and She Is 97” and “Filip.” Besides MokuMoku has been part of such international festivals as MadCool Festival 2019 and Bruxelles Up! 2017. Currently the band is working on their fourth studio album named Feast.

DJ. MACHAIIDZE

Georgian pioneer DJ MACHAIIDZE is well known to the audience. His music incorporates Funky House, Disco House, House of Sound and Funky House sounds.

Tickets for 13th Black Sea Jazz Festival are available at Tbilisi.Biz, and the festival is supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Ajara. The festival is carried out within the frames of the Check in Georgia State Program.

‘Keto and Kote’: Vulnerable Children Discover the Magic of the Opera

BY GABRIELLE COLCHEN

Last weekend, the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre welcomed for the first time in Georgia, the famous Georgian Opera by Victor Didzari. On Saturday, they celebrated International Children’s Day with a very special event for children with complicated social background.

At the event, over 500 children from various Georgian regions through the theater Social-Cognitive programs, together with the staff of the Opera and Ballet Theatre, members of the Youth Club LATAVA actively participated.

The club aims at encouraging the interest of young people toward the arts, at the same time developing their sense of civic responsibility.

The social-cognitive program is one of the priorities of the theater,” says Badri Maisalidze, Artistic Director of the Theater. “The program is oriented on the future generations and is aimed at promoting interest in the classical arts among the younger generation. Of course, the program is not an organized organization and we do not insist on this, but we want to make our activity interesting for any member of society and this is our main message – The theater serves and is a part of the whole community."

“Keto and Kote” was definitely a great choice of opera for these children. This Georgian musical comedy for children is one of the most famous and appreciated comic operas since its premier in 1999. From the beginning to the end, the public had no time to be bored. The opera is full of action, twists, turns and absurdities. The comic is based on the grotesque, with vast exaggerations of the characters and situations. The audience relates very closely, very lovingly, relating to the public, making the audience feel like they were entirely part of the show.

The performance featured soloists, the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet State Theater and National Ballet Company Sukhishvili. The main conductor was reva Takidze, director Ioane Kereselidze, set, costume and lighting designer Georgi Ako-Keshelidze, and chief choreographer, Ilia Sukhishvili. After the special Saturday show for children, GEORGIA TODAY went to speak to the team behind the project. Russian Matusabatidze, Project Manager (Head of the International Relations and Development Department of the theater), explained how special this day had been, “The theater welcomed socially vulnerable people from different regions of Georgia, People and children with disabilities. All of them greatly appreciated the show and left the Opera with happy and enthusiastic faces. The main goal of the project was met, which gives a great motivation for further such projects.”

“Art and culture can shape young people.” Amiran Krsitesvashvili, Deputy State Representative of Shida Kartli, told us, “This kind of project is interesting and original for our region. The activity is aimed to build further collaboration and I live in hope that each child who has been displaced will one day soon be able to go back to their homes.”

“On July 13, the Georgian National Opera and Ballet and the Georgian Children’s Day: 23 beneficiaries of alternative care of the SOS Children’s Villages Georgia were given the chance to see ‘Keto and Kote’ for the first time,” Mariam Ahkimbaidze, Youth Care Specialist of SOS Children’s Villages Geor gia, told us. “Russian Matusabatidze organized the day, a lady who has been actively collaborating with the administration of the Children’s Villages. The kids were excited by the theatrical, as well as by the opportunity to spend the day and they enjoyed listening to the arias from prominent Georgian film, Georgian music. This activity is aimed to reflect the emotional and social development of the children. We are happy to raise awareness of this significant field of art and positively impacting on the kids’ well-being.”

Mia Chitaistavieli, head of Kojiro Diaspora told us of her gratitude to the Georgian National Opera and Theater and the Head of the project Russian Matusabatidze: “The children were very happy after the performance,” she said. “I would also like to thank the Successful organization, cooperation and especially attention. We have been to the opera for the first time and are looking forward to further collaboration.”

The participants gained a lot from the show, and the partner organizations were very enthusiastic about organizing such events in future asking for the magic of ‘Keto and Kote’ to work for everyone last weekend!”

By Gabriele Colchne

**’Keto and Kote’: Vulnerable Children Discover the Magic of the Opera**

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