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Ivanishvili donates material assets worth \$1.5 bln to Cartu Charity Foundation



Bidzina Ivanishvili stated on 11th of January that he left the Georgian politics.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Former Prime Minister of Georgia and the founder of the ruling Georgian Dream party Bidzina Ivanishvili has told Entrepreneur online magazine that he will donate 90% of his material assets worth \$1.5 billion, except those with

credit or other obligations, to the Cartu Charity Foundation.

Ivanishvili said that he and his wife have \$ 200 million at their disposal, which was beyond a billion and a half in capital. Thus, the former GD chairman transferred the businesses and a significant portion of the real estate he owned

through offshore companies to the Cartu Fund. As it is known, the changes were registered in the last days of December 2020.

The biggest change was registered on December 31, when the 'Tourism Development Fund', which in turn owns the facilities under construction 'Panorama

Tbilisi' and 'Paragraph Shekvetili' was transferred to the Cartu Fund. Prior to the change, 100% of these companies were owned by Panamanian FRANKSTON INTERNATIONAL SA. The volume of the authorized capital of the company according to the financial statements for 2018 was ₾ 580 million.

Tourism Development Fund includes Tabori Resorts; Sololaki Hills; Hotel project under construction in Ganmukhuri, as well as real estate in Chakvi and Abastumani.

On December 31, 2020, the owner changed to Bidzina Ivanishvili's construction and engineering companies - Elita Burji and Burji, both of which were transferred to the Cartu Foundation. Elita Burji itself owns a number of subsidiaries that own real estate in Chorvila, Tbilisi, Batumi and Bakuriani.

The assets will also include Ivanishvili's collection of paintings.

26 assets have already been donated to the foundation per the State Registry Agency, while 2 others are being transferred.

The change of ownership did not affect the projects managed by the Co-Investment Fund. The owner of Axis Towers; Gallery of Tbilisi; the hydropower plants under construction are unchanged.

Cartu International Charity Foundation is founded by Cartu Group, and the list of Cartu Group owners is offshore companies owned by Bidzina Ivanishvili.

Ivanishvili explained the reason for such a move by recalling that he had previously announced that he would eventually spend at least 90% of his property



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The Busy First Week of January Politics



BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The year started with the appearance of a new political party European Socialists in the Georgian Parliament. The Georgian Dream considers this to be a significant achievement, a beginning to forming a diverse parliament. The opposition, who are still boycotting, think of the four new MPs of the 10th Convocation of the Parliament as an extension of the ruling team.

The first half of January is usually not so politically busy due to the New Year and Orthodox Christmas (January 7) celebrations. However, this year turned out to be an exception. It seems like during the celebrations, the political clashes haven't paused: the Georgian Dream still refuses to satisfy the demands of the opposition to hold snap elections, however, at the same time, the ruling team is not happy with the one-party parliament and is doing its best to convince the parties to enter through threats or promises.

The first week of January the Georgian Dream's efforts re-

sulted in a new opposition party's appearance. The party originally comes from the Alliance of Patriots. The story of the party is the following: the boycotting opposition not only refused to enter the Parliament, but they also removed their parties from the list of backstage talks with the Georgian Dream. However, the Alliance of Patriots turned out to be different-according to the CEC, they gained 3,14% and acquired four places in the parliament, which the party refused. However, it turned out that the party had removed all the members from the list except for three. One of the leaders of the party Irma Inashvili explained that the three members of the party who were left on the list, are financial supporters of the Alliance of Patriots and that only one of them, Prison Injia, is a former member of the party. Inashvili added that Injia was asked to

leave the party. The whole thing is a little strange considering that the four MPs were elected from the Alliance of Patriots, not the European Socialists, who will have a hard time acting as an opposition force with four members.

The Georgian Dream used this as an opportunity to announce that the opposition has been formed in the Parliament of Georgia. The ruling team announced that it expects the rest of the parties to show up as well. They believe there are a lot of parties who want to enter the parliament but they are "victims of bullying" from other opposition parties. They mean Aleko Elisashvili's party and a part of Girchi.

The opposition considers the Georgian Dream's celebrations to be ungrounded as four members won't create an opposition force. The UNM member Tina Bokuchava believes that the rul-

ing team is trying to create an impression of Democracy. The opposition has made it clear that they believe the four MPs who entered the Parliament are not part of the Alliance of Patriots, but businessmen. Gia Khukhashvili stated that they have invested in politics and gained seats, which they would like to use to their advantage. This surfaced another systemic flaw in Georgian politics- the integration of the business into politics when business makes politics and politics makes business.

The Georgian Dream actively discusses the opposition's pro-Russian attitude. Irakli Kobakhidze called the part of the Alliance of Patriots that didn't enter the Parliament, pro-Russian. Kobakhidze expressed his hope that "the 10th Convocation of the Parliament won't have any pro-Russian forces." Mamuka Mdinardze agrees

and further claims that the United National Movement and the European Georgia are both pro-Russian and due to this, he wouldn't want them in the Parliament. The opposition parties consider the government's comments regarding this comical. The Alliance of Patriots is pro-Russian but how can part of the party be pro-Russian and those who entered the Parliament, pro-West. The UNM and European Georgia parties have reminded Kobakhidze about the time he hosted Gavrillov from Russia and had to resign because of it.

The Georgian Dream will try to convince those parties to enter the Parliament who are easier for them to deal with, while they continue attacking the United National Movement and the European Georgia.

(Translated from Georgian by Mariam Mchedlidze)

Weather

Wednesday, January 13

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 6°C

Thursday, January 14

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 14°C

Night Overcast
Low: 5°C

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on public and public affairs a year and a half ago. He underscored that this statement did not receive a proper response from the media and the public at the time. Former GD chairman stated that the purpose of the assets 'cannot be changed' in

the process of management or alienation, because most of them 'are not ordinary business projects' but projects which are targeted for the development of individual branches, or even entire regions, and are designed to ensure improvements in economic, tourism and other fields.

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Georgia to receive 13,000 tonnes of the US wheat

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sent an additional 13,000 tonnes of wheat and 4,000 tonnes of soybeans to Georgia this month. The US ship has already arrived at the Poti Port today to deliver the cargo. According to the head of the First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Giorgi Khaniashvili, the USDA does not only help Georgia sustain high standards of food safety and improve the quality of beef and dairy products but also contributes to the overall growth and development of the local companies.

The arrival of the wheat and soybeans for the country's livestock is the second of the three shipments that were announced under the USDA Food for Progress program. The first shipment was received in December last year when 14,000 tonnes of the high-quality wheat arrived with the US Ocean Grand ship to the seaport in Poti. In 2019, the country imported 30,000 tonnes of wheat from the United States, and this marked the first portion of the imported wheat that Georgia has received



from the United States as an independent country. Amidst the outbreak of the global pandemic in 2020, the US Amba-

sador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan has announced that an additional 27,000 tonnes of wheat would be imported to Georgia in order to

assist the country in a crisis response against the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of that, under the \$ 14.5 million Food for

Progress Program, Georgia received \$400,000 for 18 small grant agreements aimed at strengthening the "dairy, beef, and farming sectors" as well as the overall improvement of the food safety standards.

Since 2014, Georgia has largely been depending on the wheat imported from Russia. Despite the strained relationships between the countries, it has been reported that between January-May of 2019, the country has imported 117,000 tonnes of Russian wheat. As the tense relationships between the countries continue to be further strained by the travel ban and the tightening of the Georgian wine export to Russia introduced by Moscow, many economic experts believe that there is a real chance of Russia using Georgia's dependency on the Russian wheat as serious political leverage over the country. Thus, finding alternative sources of wheat imports can become a feasible damage-control measure.

The wheat that was received this month will be sold on the private market, and the proceeds will be donated to the Agricultural Development Programme.

Pfizer to be first vaccine Georgia receives against Covid-19



The Ministry of Health says that the purchase of the Chinese vaccine is not being considered at this stage.

By NATALIA KOCHASHVILI

The Minister of Health Ekaretire Tikaradze, announced that in the near future it will be possible to vaccinate the population with the Pfizer vaccine, during a meeting with the US Ambassador to Georgia. According to her, an important meeting was held with the ambassador, they discussed steps taken against the pandemic, epidemiological development and testing. The main topic of the meeting was the vaccine. "We

are actively cooperating with the Covax platform and we have made some progress regarding the fact that in the near future it will be possible to vaccinate the population with the Pfizer vaccine," Tikaradze said.

According to the Ministry of Health, US Ambassador Kelly Degnan emphasized that it is important to have a clear vaccination plan in Georgia.

Which vaccine against coronavirus would be available to Georgia depended on the choice of the Covax platform.

Georgia has already paid part of the amount needed to vaccinate 700 thousand people - \$4 million.

"The Pfizer vaccine could be the first vaccine we receive, followed by the AstraZeneca vaccine - the two closest we can get through the Covax platform," said the First Deputy Health Minister Tamar Gabunia earlier today, noting that in the long run, it will be technologically easier for Georgia to get a vaccine that needs to be kept at 2 to 8 degrees and does not need to be kept at 70 degrees of Celsius, which is the case with the Pfizer vaccine. She said that taking this into account, storing AstraZeneca will be technologically simpler.

Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is used in the USA, UK, Canada, and the EU. It is approved by the World Health Organization.

The Parliamentary Health Committee has debated and supported a package of legislative changes to be passed to the Bureau, which would include regulating the legal framework for vaccination against coronavirus.

At the meeting of the Health Committee, where the legislative changes were discussed, the Deputy Minister of Health reaffirmed that the vaccine needed to vaccinate 20% of the Georgian population from the Covax platform has already been ordered, and by the end of January the system will be ready to vaccinate citizens.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), collective immunity to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is unlikely this year.