

THE GEORGIAN CHRONICLE

MONTHLY BULLETIN

Major events and trends in politics, economy and social life

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GOVERNMENT

This month was marked by intensification of both diplomatic and state-building activity of the government, manifested in the ratification of Russian-Georgian treaty on friendship, and cooperation, achieving the approval of Georgian plan for resolution of Abkhaz conflict at CIS summit, and success in attracting international oil companies. The visit of the foreign minister of Germany to Georgia has displayed its growing interest to the region. The domestic state-life dominated by elaboration of state budget, energy-policy, and activization of legislative work.

PRESIDENT

In his January 16 address to the parliament president Shevardnadze called for activization of legislative work particularly in the spheres of the civil, and labour codes, for passing the new codes of Criminal Law, and "paying proper attention!"

'to the reforms in health care and education. Mr. Shevardnadze particularly stressed the urgency of adoption the law on land ownership. "The rights of possessing all forms of realty must be ensured, proprietors' rights ought to be substantiated, and the necessary governmental control should be intensified".

Among the bills to be adopted urgently, Mr. Shevardnadze singled out the following: "Bill Against Corruption"; "Bill on Consumer Rights"; "Bill on Notary Offices"; "Bill on Constitutional Court"; "Bill on Bankruptcy"; "Bill on Health Resorts"; "Bill on Housing Construction"; "Bill on Emergency Measures and Investigation"; "Bill on State Secret"; "Bill on Mineral Resources"; "Antimonopoly and Competition Bill"; "Bill on National Minorities". Mr. Shevardnadze also claimed the amendments and additions in the codes of administration offense 'which refer to the infringement of the law related to the new terms of management'.

PRESIDENTIAL DECREES

In his January 22 decree Mr. Shevardnadze strongly scolded the deputy minister of communications and posts Otar Bitsadze for shortages in national radio-broadcast system, and committed him for immediate redress of deviations. According to presidential decree N52 the listing of bills to be prepared within executive power for 1996 was approved. The listing comprises 87 bills. That same decree prolonged the term of operation of State Commission for Legal Reforms attached to the Ministry of Justice, to January 1, 1998.

On January 31, the president decreed the establishment of the National Security Council, and has staffed it by state minister, ministers of foreign affairs, interior, defense, security, justice, finances, the chairman of frontier department, prosecutor general, a presidential assistant for security issues, and Tbilisi mayor.

APPOINTMENTS. The president re-appointed Kakhi Asatiani as the Chairman of Sports State Department. Konstantine Salia was promoted at the post of the Chairman of State Department of Tourism. Leri Gigineishvili has been appointed as the Chairman of State Department for Social-Economic Information.

For serious mistakes led to huge detriment for the national forest resources, president Shevardnadze dismissed David Gigauri from the post of the chairman of forest department, and replaced him by Givi Japaridze.

PARLIAMENT

On January 17, a plenary sitting of an extraordinary parliament's session discussed the Russian-Georgian Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Goodneighborhood' submitted by the Committee for Foreign Relations. The supporters of the ratification (the factions 'CUG', 'URG', 'Imedi' and allied MP's constituting a parliamentary majority) argued its expediency by the attempt of urging Russian State Duma to do the same, with the aim to legitimate the recognition of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russia through the mentioned Treaty. According to the chairman of Constitutional and Legal Committee Mikheil Saakashvili the Treaty has been examined by American experts who allegedly did not discover in it any threat for Georgia. The faction 'National Democrat' regarded the ratification of treaty as untimely in the background of current Russian-Georgian relations, and outlined the plenty of Treaty clauses allowing their double interpretation. Special attention was drawn to the differences between Russian and Georgian versions of the Treaty in that clause where the Russian version recognizes the nations' right of self-determination (Mr. Saakashvili however, considered that as 'technical error'). The MP's of faction 'Majoritarians' had diverged in the attitude towards the expediency of ratification the Treaty, but following the faction discipline, finally backed it. The faction 'Abkhazia' opposed to vote for the treaty until the control over Abkhazia region is regained. By the nominal ballot the Treaty was ratified by 141 votes in favour and 34 against out of 175 registered MP's.

That same day the parliament approved the proposal forwarded by the deputy parliament chairman Eldar Shengelaya on creation a presidential body-attached permanent board for elaboration a new state attribution.

At January 24 parliaments sitting the 'Bill on National Security Council' was placed for consideration The bill regards the council as presidential consultative body aiming at reviewing of key issues related to internal and foreign aspects of state security, elaboration of draft bills and regulations. The council is committed to place for parliament's consideration on annual basis the vital issues of army building. The parliament met a vigorous demand of the faction 'Revival' representing Ajaria and amended the bill in such a way that "the supreme power representatives of Abkhaz and Ajaria Autonomous Republics as well as parliament's chairman directly participate in the work of the National Security Council". After that compromise the bill was unanimously approved by 150 votes in favour, and none against.

That same day by 134 votes in favour and 27 against the parliament ratified the Minsk convention of CIS on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations on Civil, Criminal and Family Issues.

On January 26 the Committee for legal and Constitutional issues having discussed two drafts bill on Constitutional Court presented by Supreme Court and President gave the priority to the latter as basis for elaboration the final version. On January 31, the parliament by 148 votes in favour and 1 against adopted the law 'On Constitutional Court' which is to be come in effect April 15.1996.

Within the Agrarian Committee the bill on ownership of agricultural lands is in work with participation of the representatives of executive power, academic circles, and public organizations. According to semi-official newspaper 'Sakartvelos Respublika' despite sharp discussions some key provisions of the bill have already been agreed.

In the immediate future a special parliamentary group is to present for parliament's consideration the issue concerning the problem of Abkhazia.

By February 4, the parliament's Finance-Budgetary Committee to be finalized the work over state the budget 1996.

GOVERNMENT

At January 28 sitting of government chaired by president Shevardnadze the results of operation of the national economy, and the plans for future were discussed. In connection with growing the world prices on cereals a 40% rise of prices on bread was declared in the terms of preliminary paying compensation. Mr. Shevardnadze stressed the improvement in the sphere of state stock-taking, and book-keeping, and assessed as revival the recent financial-economic achievements, and called for balanced budget on the ground of IMF and WB recommendations. Mr. Shevardnadze strongly claimed a mandatory repayment of arrears to energy department which at present totals 121 mln. Lari. The president forecasted the improvement in supply with natural gas and oils by development this branch with solid foreign investment.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The coming elections of the chairman of the National-Democratic Party (NDP) provoked the rumours on growing split between two NDP-leaders Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia, and Mamuka(Ivane) Giorgadze pretending on this post. According to 'Msgepsi' newspaper within the very NDP there is no single opinion whom to be given the priority as NDP's chairman at the party congress scheduled for February 17. An unofficial N3 in NDP Vano Khukhunaishvili has openly supported the candidacy of Mr. Giorgadze. However, on January 30 NDP's Chief Committee officialy nominated Mamuka Giorgadze at the chairman's post, but the distribution of votes has not been disclosed.

At January 19 meeting of extra-parliamentary oppositional parties united in coordinating center of national-leberation movement, held at the headquarter of the National Independence Party(NIP), the parliament, ratified a Russian-Georgian Treaty was sharply criticised, and the ratification was assessed as harmful for the national interests. "We have to sound the alarm" told the meeting the NIP leader Irakli Tsereteli. The meeting also distributed the address to Caucasian nations in support of rebellion Chechnia. The opposition however, is not going to resort to any actions of civil disobedience.

The leader of United Communist Party of Georgia(UCPG) Panteleimon Giorgadze were staying in Moscow January 14-16. In his January 17 interview to BGI , he predicted the failure of Shevardnadze at CIS summit. Mr. Giorgadze said that the Russian communists who won majority in Duma don't trust Georgian parliament because of its alleged anti-Russian attitude.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

RUSSIA & CIS. The semi-official 'Sakinformi' agency received the release issued by the leadership of the Grouping of Russian Troops in Trans-Caucasia(GRTT) where the urgency of the ratification of Russian-Georgian agreement on deployment of Russian military stations in Georgia, signed by the heads of both governments(September 15,1995), was stressed in order to give to these stations a legal status.

The chiarman of the parliament Zurab Zhvania paid a two-day visit to Armenia, January 15-17. Negotiating with president Ter-Petrosian of Armenia, and other officials Mr.Zhvania arose the idea of regional(TransCaucasian) strategic cooperation which reportedly had not met with enthusiasm by Armenian party. Mr. Zhvania underlined the prioritve meaning of the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity, and its economic benefit to Armenia which received a great deal of goods through the provisionally locked railway branch via Abkhazia. In turn Armenian party forwarded the issue of the rights of Armenian population in Georgia. The parties agreed the creation of joint parliamentarian commission.

Russian Duma has not reacted in any way the ratification of Russian-Georgian Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation by Georgian parliament. At the same Mr. Shevardnadze decided to participate in January 19 Moscow CIS summit despite his earlier hesitation, provoked by the reluctance of Russian authorities to extradite a Moscow-fled former chief of Georgian security service Igor Giorgadze and his accomplices, suspected as instigators of terrorism against head of state, and coup. Georgian delegation presented a plan agreed with UN Security Council envisaging the imposing a full round embargo on break-away Abkhazia, suspension of all official, non-official, and commercial contacts with self-proclaimed Abkhaz government within CIS, and launching only a humanitarian aid, but in accordance with Georgian Government. A month-long prolongation of the mandate of Abkhazia-deployed Russian (formally CIS) peacekeeping troops, has been stipulated by obligatory authorizing these units with police and commandant functions. In his speech made at the summit president Shevardnadze appealed CIS community to give rebuff an aggressive separatism, and with reference to the UN-NATO experience in Bosnia called for combination of force and persuasion to cope with separatism effectively.

However, the embargo issue, and transformation of CIS peacekeepers in Abkhazia into police units plan encountered into criticism on the part of some CIS leaders(President Lukashenko of Belarus), and the leadership of a newly elected pro-communist Russian State Duma, in alliance with powerful pro-Abkhazian lobby in Russia. Despite that a Georgian plan was strongly supported by other participants of CIS summit, particularly President Nazarbaev of Uzbekistan, and was approved unanimously. The agreement signed by all CIS leaders is to be put into effect February 19, after the detalizing the ways of its impementation by CIS experts' working groups. Its notable that in Moscow Georgian

delegation did not forward the claim on extradition of Mr. Giorgadze. Meanwhile, a specially arrived to Moscow Abkhaz delegation led by the leader of self-proclaimed government Vladislav Ardzinba was cordially hosted in Russian Duma, foreign ministry, and other state agencies. Mr. Ardzinba negotiated with foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov, vice-premier Alexei Bolshakov and other Russian officials which reportedly resulted in an agreed alternative plan for the settlement of conflict. On January 31, despite the protest of the group of Georgian MP's also staying in Moscow! in order to gain support within Russian establishment, the chairman of Duma's commission for CIS affairs, Georgi Tikhonov arranged a joint news-conference with Mr. Ardzinba, where a January 19 CIS summit agreement was sharply criticised. Mr. Tikhonov told news-conference that this agreement will be voted down in Duma. According to Georgian MP's almost all Duma factions have criticised the CIS summit-elaborated agreement on Abkhazia, and claimed its mandatory ratification within Duma. As the only result of Georgian deputation's lobbying in Moscow, might be regarded the creation of permanent interparliamentary commission for further work over Abkhazian problem.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

On January 23-24, the German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel paid a two-day visit to Georgia. He negotiated with president Shevardnadze and other officials a wide range of issues including German assistance to the national energy sector, strengthening of OSCE mission in Georgia, and German help in Georgia-EU relations. Mr. Kinkel made a speech in Georgian Parliament. During the talks Mr. Kinkel several times underlined that 'Transcaucasus and particularly Georgia represent the spheres of German interests'. Mr. Shevardnadze in turn welcomed 'German return to Caucasus'. Mr. Kinkel reportedly turned down Mr. Shevardnadze's proposal on mediation in the settlement of Abkhaz conflict together with Russia, having stressed the necessity of mediation-free rapprochement of Caucasian nations. During the visit no political and economic agreements have been signed.

On January 27 the group of Georgian MP's left for Paris with further travel to Germany and Belgium in order to familiarize with the experience of legislative activity in these states and developing the contacts with parliamentary circles.

In Washington the Council for Support of Legal Reform in Georgia, staffed with highly-experienced experts of the Western countries has been created.

On January 31, president Shevardnadze negotiated with the delegation of the international federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent led by its secretary general George Weber. After the surveying the IRCC activity in Georgia and humanitarian aid accomplished, Mr. Weber forwarded the issues related to taxation of IRCC-delivered cargos, and claimed the assistance of Georgian government in restitution of real estate, and other property (comprising about 300 units) nationalized in 1936-38 by Soviet regime. Mr. Shevardnadze promised to meet the claim.

Mr. Giorgi Chanturia, the president of Georgian international oil-corporation received the letter from the president of international oil company 'Shevron Overseas' Richard Matske, who reaffirmed his willingness to follow the agreement achieved at his January 8 meeting with Mr. Shevardnadze, and send to Georgia his representatives for elaboration the schedule of development of oil transit infrastructure in Georgia.

On January 26, a new Israeli Ambassador to Georgia Mrs. Lili Khakham passed her credentials to President Shevardnadze and discussed the prospects of bilateral cooperation.

REGIONS

The privatization is underway in Ajarian Autonomous Republic. At the end of the month through the auction the restaurant 'Ajara' (with face value \$302,000), and the administrative building of 'Trade Industry' department (face value - \$120,000) have been sold. 140 more economic entities are to be privatized. The next auction is scheduled for the middle of February.

CONFLICT ZONES

ABKHAZIA.

NEGOTIATIONS. On January 2 UN secretary general Boutros Ghali presented Security Council the report on situation in Abkhazia, and promoted the elaboration the programme of securing human rights in Abkhazia (Georgia).

The UN Security Council adopted the resolution on Abkhazia on the ground of discussion a January 2 report of the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali. The resolution approved the activity of UN observers' team and CIS peacekeepers in conflict zone, though claimed the securing of their undelayed transference, for inspection the deposits of heavy armaments. The resolution expressed concern on still delayed repatriation of refugees to Abkhazia, and continuing acts of violence in Abkhaz-controlled territories, lack of progress in all-round resolution of the conflict and called an Abkhaz side to be more cooperative in settlement of conflict., approved the efforts of UN secretary general and Russia as mediator for peaceful resolution of the conflict. The resolution condemned the acts of ethnic cleansing in Abkhaz -controlled regions. The resolution called donor-states for contribution in order to provide humanitarian aspects, ceasefire, and mine clearing(demining). On January 12, UN Security Council decided to prolonge the mandate of UN observers monitoring the conflict zone in Abkhazia to July 12.1996. in the event of changes in the mandate of CIS peacekeepers(this mandate expires February 15).

The spokesman of the US State Department Nicholas Berns stated the US government supports the last initiatives of Georgia on the settlement of Abkhaz conflict, submitted at January 19 CIS summit, and reaffirmed the attitude of US administration on support of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

According to a chief officer of Sukhumi-based Abkhaz government Stanislav Lakoba the police functions for Russian peacekeepers in conflict zone will obligatory lead to the resumption of hostilities. Mr. Lakoba accused Russian militaries of recent selling Georgia 12 attack helicopters, and spare parts for SU-27 jets. Leonid Lakerbaya, an Abkhaz foreign minister said in Abkhaz radio-broadcasted interview that Abkhazia will demand the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers if a Russia-backed Georgian plan for conflict resolution come in effect.

REFUGEES.A crowded rally of Tbilisi based refugees from Abkhazia in front of Russian embassy, attended by the leaders of exiled pro-Georgian Abkhaz government claimed from Russian government the implementation of its commitments for the settlement of Abkhaz conflict and secure a safe repatriation of refugees. The participants expressed their distrust to Russian peacekeepers, and called Georgian government for use of military force to regain its control over the region.

VIOLATIONS. On January 5, in Shesheleti village of Gali district(located within 12 km. safety zone of peacekeepers responsibility) 3 Abkhaz gunmen shot down an 8 member family of the Sanayas, among them 2 under-age youngmen, reportedly for suspect in their linkage with Georgian security-supported armed irregulars having allegedly activated in Gali. On January 8 Georgian Security Ministry officially denied the information on existence in Gali any Georgian diversion groups.

According to 'Iberia' agency during the last 2 months Abkhaz separatists forcibly has stroke off the list of tenants still residing Abkhazia 300 Georgians. They were taken off by help of International Red Cross to adjacent Georgian and Russian sites.

An armed clash in Sukhumi reportedly on the ground of financial litigation between the groupings of Vladislav Ardzinba, and other separatist leader Sergei Tarba resulted in 10 casualties.

According to January 26 statement of the chairman of the exiled Council of Ministers of Abkhaz Autonomous Republic Zourab Erkvania, in violation of January 19 CIS summit agreements a relieved frontier regime at an Abkhaz plot of Russian-Georgian state border has been maintained.

TSKHINVALI (former South Ossetia). At January 4 sitting of self-proclaimed government it was pointed out that as a result of mass illegal export from the region to Russia manufacturing and industrial equipment, a local industry "has actually dead".

The head of OSCE mission to Georgia Dr. Dieter Boden at his January 4 meeting with foreign minister Irakli Menagarishvili reaffirmed that OSCE insists on exclusively peaceful resolution of the conflict.

At January 11 sitting of self-proclaimed Ossetian government its leader Ludvig Chibirov having summarized the results of the latest Georgian-ossetian negotiations for peaceful resolution of conflict, stated that 'South Ossetia will claim either the establishment of confederative relations with rest of Georgia, or proclaim an 'independent Republic of South Ossetia'. According to Mr. Chibirov a final decision on this issue would be made after the presidential elections in Russia.

The presidential authorized envoy to Shida Kartli region Badri Khatidze paid a visit to Tskhinvali and discussed with local government the economic situation in the region and the problems of drug-smuggling to the other Georgian regions via Tskhinvali.

Within January 15-19 a Norwegian government-sponsored informal Georgian-Ossetian talks for the settlement of conflict held in Oslo. However, the negotiators staffed by both governmental and public representatives had not achieved any beneficial progress in reproaching the attitudes.

On January 30, the ambassadors of the USA, and UK to Georgia together with the head of OSCE mission in Tbilisi Dieter Boden visited Tskhinvali to familiarize with situation in the region. Without giving details, the newspaper "Droni" reported with reference to the sources in foreign ministry that the first deputy foreign minister of Georgia Mikheil Ukleba expressed his discontent on this arrangement to OSCE officer Kazimir Kurovski.

ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

BUSINESS SECTOR. On January 23, a parliament's chairman Zurab Zhvania chaired the meeting with group businessmen, and manufacturers within parliament's economics committee, attended also by the National Bank President and government members. The demands of businessmen were chiefly centred on the necessity of changes in taxation policy, and exemption from excises certain types of production (mainly wines, brandies tobacco, beer), they told the meeting that increasing of excises on these products by 1000% significantly declined their production. According to businessmen because of imperfection a legal base for enterprising many economic entities face either bankruptcy or closing. Mr. Zhvania promised a profound revision of legal acts concerning the interests of business in the country.

At present only 8500 enterprises and commercial units have undergone a mandatory re-registration. this is only 20% of their total number. According to official assessments if such low pace of registration will be kept this arrangement will take at least 4 years. The parliament has prolonged the term of re-registration to September 1, 1996.

At Georgian Main Stock Exchange the January trades with fixed-date contracts. During the 29 trades, 169 deals have been concluded. The turnover of contracts was 460(1contract total 10 vouchers). The observers however indicated the low interest of brokers in vouchers, and this tendency is likely to keep until the shares of profitable entities be placed at the auctions. Some broker firms expect the rise of vouchers' price. Simultaneously the interbank credit auctions

ECONOMIC POLICY

A January 4 presidential decree committed the Finance Ministry and the National Bank to elaborate the regulations of trading by foreign currency and treasury banknotes at Tbilisi interbank currency exchange for development of internal currency market and securing the convertibility of the national currency.

Under the presidential decree N124 a provisional charter of energy-fuel state corporation has been approved. The charter transforms energy, oil, gas, and coal departments into state companies, and subordinates them to the energy-fuel state corporation, the chairman of which has been renamed as president and has been authorized to approve the corporation's staff, license the building and running of energy units, and accomplish the supervision on quality of gas and oil products.

On January 10, the government set about the discussion of a state budget 1996.

STATE BUDGET. According to draft state budget, the total budget revenue is 555 mln. Lari(9,4% of GDP), out of this sum 380,8 mln will come on entries from tax payments. Total budget expenses are - 772 mln. 60,7% of which will be repaid by tax entries(against 38,2% in 1995). Budget deficit totals 217 mln.(3.8% of current GDP). In new budget the expenses for medicare and social security will be reduced from 37% to 29%. At the same time the salaries of the employees in state-funded agencies will rise to 30-50 Lari per month. The defence expenses will total 65mln.(11,6% of total expenses), 24,2mln((4%) to be allocated for funding of power and ruling bodies. For serving of state arrears 79mln(14%) to be allotted. The draft budget has still been in work within Parliament's Committees. Within January the budget entries from custom's payments have totaled 400,000 Lari, which twice exceeds the same figure for 1995, but

totals 76% of target volume. The entries from tax payments in central and territorial budgets in January have totalled 14,5 mln. Lari

SOME OFFICIAL STATISTICS. At government's sitting January 28 it was pointed out that by the end of 1995 more than 6300 economic entities have been privatized which totals 69% of the total number of units subjected to privatization. 42% of privatized units are of commercial and everyday services. At present 900 joint-stock companies are registered. More than 3 mln. of citizens have received vouchers, however only 300,000(23,3%) of them have been used at 16 cheque auctions conducted. Out of the shares of 153 auction-placed enterprises, the shares of 138 have not been sold at all. During 1995, out of 229 operating banks 129 were deprived the licenses of banking activity. Out of 74,800 registered enterprises only 40,000 have been found as active tax payers. At the same time for the last year 677(44,7%) enterprises did not operate at all.

In Tbilisi power station the 3rd, 8th, and 9th energy units have been operated. On January 19, the 4th unit has been put in operation. The repair works at the 6th unit are underway. The volume of generated power totals 320 meggaWtt. Because of exhaustion of water resources the Emguri hydro power plant is on the verge of stop, but still generates 3 mln. Kwtt/hour. The leadership of Energy Corporation denied the rumours on alleged decision on full stopping of Enguri plant. A total volume of power generated in January by the national energy system is 583 mln. KWtt/hour.

During 1995 in Georgia 962 industrial units have been operating, for this period the national industrial output totalled 575,6 mln. Lari.

During 1995 the deficit of payment balance has totalled \$300 mln. The foreign trade turnover has totalled \$407,2mln. while the foreign trade balance - \$148,6mln. In 1995 Georgia conducted foreign trade operations with 68 countries (against 51 in 1994).

In January 1996 the minimal living wage per capita totalled 98 Lari, the living wage for 4 member family totalled 195 Lari. Within January 25-30, in Tbilisi the foods has become cheaper by 1%.

SOCIETY

SCIENCE. In Ajaria under the decision of its Supreme Council the regional scientific center regarded as division of Georgian academy of sciences has been founded. According to the president of the national academy of sciences, the academician Albert Tavkheldize this arrangement meets the the national science development conception envisaging the strengthening of regional scientific units.

TRIALS/LITIGATIONS. On January 18, and 30, the sessions of trial on former defense minister and MP, the leader of abolished National-Liberation Front(NLF) Tengiz Kitovani, and his companions-in arm Irakli Surguladze, and the citizen of Russia Valeri Fisun have been conducted. The defendants are accused of creation illegal armed groups, and attempt of unleash civil war by armed invasion in Abkhazia. Mr. Surguladze made a political statement regarding the abolition of NLF as illegal. Mr. Fisun failed to familiarize with bill of indictment for its copying by hand in violation of trial regulations. Mr. Kitovani declared that he possess the evidences exposing the prosecutor general Jamlet Babilashvili as accomplice in the attempt on Shevardnadze's life in Aug ust 1995. Mr. kitovani said that he will present these evidences to a special parliamentary commission it created.

On January 30 the trial session on another 'Zviadist' Zaur Kobalia has resumed. The witnesses questioned failed to give precised data(evidences) whrether Mr. Kobalia's private enterprise was occupied by repair of armoured technique of pro-Gamsakhurdia militia during the civil war in Georgia 1992-93.

In Arbitrary Court the litigation between the National Democratic Party and Culture Ministry belonged Drama Institute has been underway. The NDP is likely to vacate it premises occupied since 1990 as party's headquarter. The final decision to be made at February 13 sessions.

OTHER NEWS. According to BGI agency 22% of women recently confined leave their children in maternity hospitals because of severe social-economic conditions

On January 16, the chairman of oppositional Party of National Ideology Zurab Gagnidze has detected in his apartment an overhearing device. In his statement issued January 17 Mr.Gagnidze made president Shevardnadze and security minister Shota Kviraya responsible for this act, and forecasted the terrorism against himself.

On January 18, the power supply to Tbilisi has completely knocked down because of stopping of all energy units of Tbilisi power station. The next day the situation was relatively improved.

On January 27 in Akhmeta district(North Georgia) unidentified gunmen shot down the trucks of IRCC international federation. As a result two IRCC officers have been wounded.

At the initiative of CUG youthy branch on January 30 in Tbilisi the conference devoted to relations between Georgia-resided ethnic minorities was held. The conference aimed at the consolidation of non-Georgian population against aggressive nationalism and separatism, and searching the points of rapprochement the interests.

VIEWPOINTS

According to the interview given to 'Droni' newspaper by the chairman of the Constitutional and Legal Committee of the Parliament, MP, Mikheil Saakashvili Georgia would face a legislative vacuum, and the recently eliminated mafious groups like 'Mkhedrioni' could be replaced by a new group of mobsters. According to Mr. Saakashvili at present the state controls 10 per cent of the national economy, while the 'shadow-sector' constitutes its 90 per cent. and has its own 'shadow' cabinet. In another interview to 'Akhali taoba newspaper Mr. Saakashvili told that the credit of trust to Russia has been expired completely.

The chairman of Tbilisi-based exiled Supreme Council of Abkhazia Tamaz Nadareishvili told BGI agency that after expiration the mandate of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia, the use of military force should be regarded as the only way of conflict resolution.

The member of NDP Chief Committee Vano Khukhunaishvili told 'Msgepsi' newspaper that the current state attribution of Georgia does not meet the national traditions, and NDP would support its change.

The leader of United Republican Party(URP) Nodar Natadze in his interview to 'Akhali Taoba' newspaper qualified the ratification of Russian-Georgian Treaty in parliament as the act capable to "lead the country to disaster".