

# Georgia independence day/world

## Georgia commits to democratic path to reform, growth

Ivane Matchavariani  
AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA

Georgia's Independence Day commemorates the establishment of the first independent Democratic Republic of Georgia on May 26, 1918, following the Russian Revolution. After being annexed by the Soviet Union in 1921, Georgia regained its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union.



In the early 1990s, Georgia's young democracy went through a period of nationalist rule, separatist wars and ineffective governments. However, since the peaceful 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia has made remarkable progress in democratization and transition to a market economy. The

government has implemented wide-ranging economic reforms that have resulted in a rapidly growing economy and dramatically improved investment climate. Georgia is now a democracy with some of the most liberal economic policies in the world, not just the region, and has experienced rapid and broad-based economic growth over the last several years.

The independent, Westward-leaning foreign policy of Georgia is vehemently opposed by Russia, which wants to re-establish its century-old monopoly over the transport of Caspian Sea energy resources and refuses to accept the right of former Soviet republics to pursue their independent destinies.

In August 2008, Russia invaded Georgia in support of Kremlin-backed separatist regimes in Georgia. The govern-

ment of Georgia had no choice but to respond in self-defense to a long-planned invasion by Russia's 58th Army. Russia's invasion and continued occupation of nearly one-third of Georgian territory failed to oust Georgia's democratically elected government, cripple Georgia's economy or cut off the flow of oil and gas through Georgia.

The international community has strongly condemned Russia's occupation of undisputed Georgian territory and unilateral recognition of two separatist regions of Georgia as independent states, in violation of the ceasefire plan negotiated by French President Nicolas Sarkozy on behalf of the European Union.

In the aftermath of the war, the government of Georgia set three priorities: (i) sustaining and strengthening the economy; (ii) development of closer

ties with the EU, the U.S. and NATO; and (iii) furthering democratic reforms.

At the joint EU/World Bank Donor Conference in Brussels, Belgium, in October 2008, 38 countries and 15 international organizations pledged the generous sum of \$4.5 billion in post-war economic recovery aid to Georgia. Japan was among the largest donors, pledging \$200 million in grant aid for emergency assistance and in loan aid over three years for the improvement of the East-West transport corridor. With this vital assistance, we have rebuilt damaged infrastructure, stabilized the economy, and provided housing, education, health care and employment and training schemes for those displaced by the war.

The financial support of the international community has helped shore up investor confidence in Georgia's economy. Major foreign investment projects announced in 2009 include (i) a project by the Investment Authority of Ras Al Khaimah, one of the United Arab Emirates, to expand the Black Sea port of Poti and develop a 400-hectare free economic zone; (ii) a \$3.8 billion investment by an Egyptian home appliance manufacturer to produce furniture, textiles and ceramics in a free economic zone in the western Georgian town of Kutaisi (an investment of unprecedented size for Georgia); and (iii) a deal by Turkish conglomerate Anadolu Group and Britain's Energon International to build a \$150 million hydroelectric power plant in the Samtskhe/Javakheti region.

Georgia continues to strengthen its political and economic ties with the EU, the U.S. and NATO. In January, Georgia signed a Strategic Partnership Charter with the U.S., which details a framework for strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Georgia, support for Georgia's sover-



**Bilateral dialogue: Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze meets his counterpart Hirofumi Nakasone on March 10 at Iikura House in Tokyo.** EMBASSY OF GEORGIA

eighty, independence and territorial integrity, and strengthens Georgia's democratic institutions. Georgia and the U.S. have agreed to update bilateral investment treaties, expand Georgia's access to the Generalized System of Preferences and discuss entry into a free-trade agreement.

The EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, launched this May, will forge closer political ties, and further economic integration between the EU and six "Eastern Partners": Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova and Belarus. Under the initiative, Georgia will have the opportunity to enter into a deep and comprehensive free-trade agreement with the EU, and a regional trading bloc with other Eastern Partnership countries, cooperate with the EU on mutually beneficial energy security measures, and benefit from millions of euros in economic and technical assistance.

Georgia is committed to strengthening and deepening its excellent bilateral relationship with Japan. In addition to having consistently provided economic assistance to Georgia over the years, Japan has shown a strong political com-

mitment to the Black Sea and Caucasus region through its "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" policy, and its sponsorship of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Develop-

ment, which promotes cooperation on democracy building and economic development among Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze visited Japan at the invitation of the government in March and met Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone. At their meeting, the ministers discussed a wide range of topics, including the bilateral relationship and global issues of mutual interest, and agreed to schedule mutual visits by high-ranking officials on a regular basis.

This January, Japan opened an embassy in Georgia, which will further strengthen the bilateral relationship, and encourage the development of economic and cultural ties.

We invite Japanese companies to participate in the reconstruction and modernization of Georgia's transport, energy and municipal infrastructure; Japanese consumers to enjoy world-famous Georgian wine, mineral water and ecologically clean agricultural products; and intrepid Japanese tourists to explore the wonders of Georgia's high mountains, valleys of vineyards, and unique cultural and architectural heritage blending East and West.

## Landmark events suggest maturing ties

Taro Nakayama  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-GEORGIA  
PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE  
OF FRIENDSHIP

On the occasion of the Independence Day of Georgia, it is my great honor to extend my warmest congratulations to the government of Georgia and its people on behalf of the Japan-Georgia Parliamentary Friendship League.



The relationship between Japan and Georgia commenced in 1992 and has been accelerated through such occasions as the visit of President Mikhail Saakashvili to Japan in March 2007. Also, the Embassy of Georgia was

opened in February 2007 in Tokyo and Ambassador Ivane Matchavariani assumed his duties as the first ambassador of Georgia to Japan in 2008, and I hear from everybody that the ambassador has been working very vigorously for the bilateral relationship ever since.

This year, I believe, will be remembered as the year of a great leap forward for this bilateral relationship, which started with the opening of the Japanese Embassy in Tbilisi in January and was followed by the visit of Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze to Japan in March.

Georgia has faced great difficulties because of the tragic conflict concerning South Ossetia last August. Japan pledged an assistance package of up to \$200 million at a donors' conference for the

reconstruction of Georgia.

Georgia has achieved good economic growth, and has been making significant progress in democratization and in shifting to a market economy. I have visited the country twice and was struck by Georgia's great development potential. Japan has been an active and consistent supporter of reform efforts in Georgia for many years, and I sincerely hope that the country will be reconstructed and return to a path of stability and development soon.

I also hope that more Japanese people will open their eyes to the charming aspects of Georgia such as the wonderful food and wine, and its rich nature. Finally, I wish to express my best wishes for the prosperity and development of Georgia and its people.

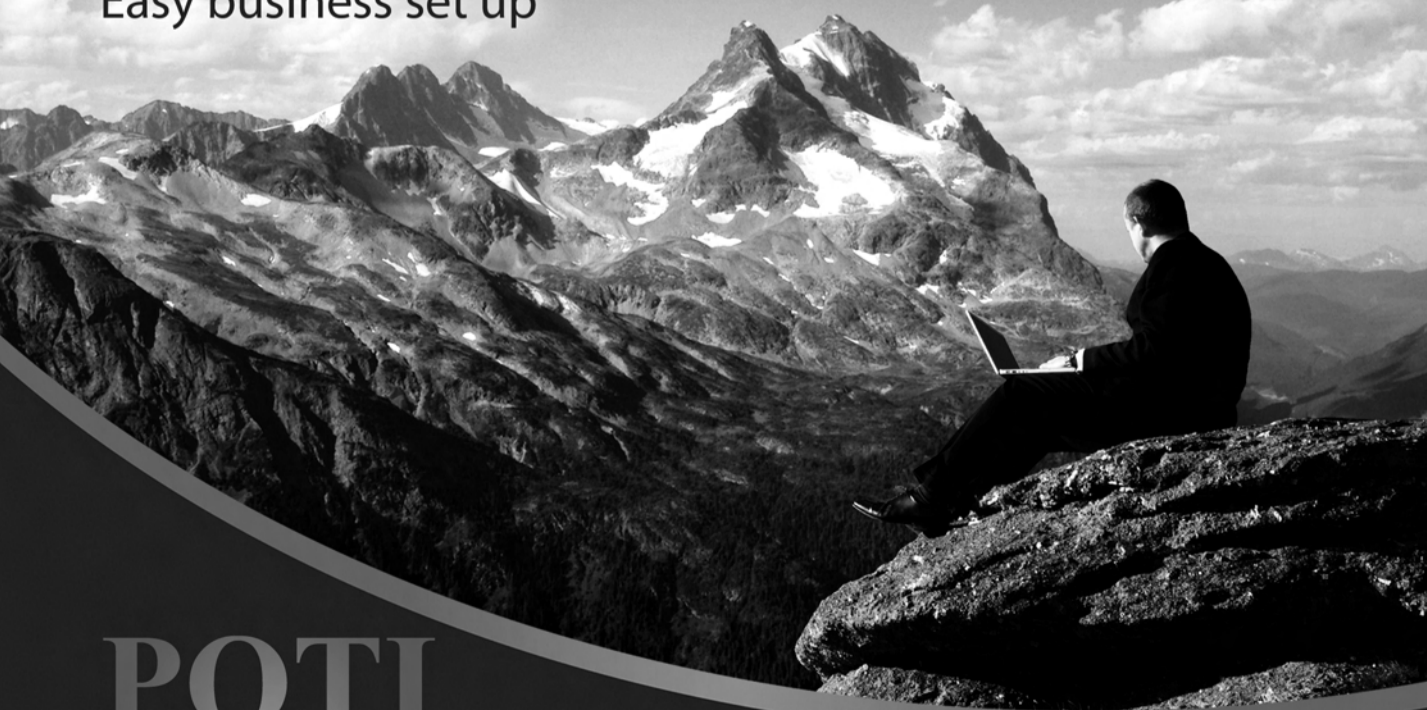
FREE INDUSTRIAL ZONE  
**RAKIA GEORGIA**



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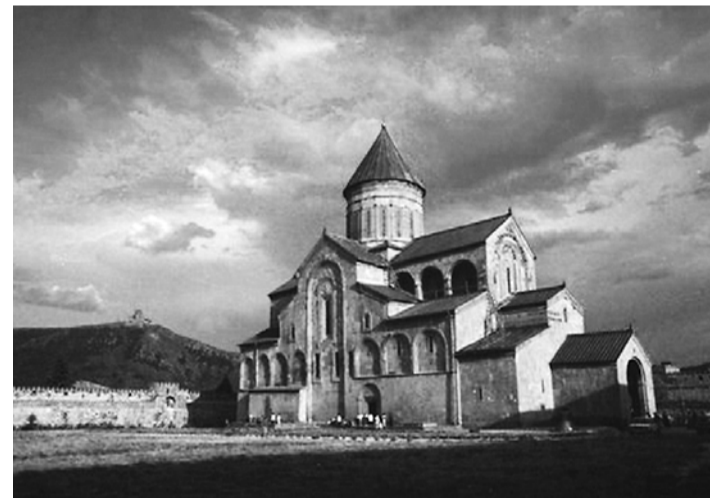


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**Enduring faith: Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta is an 11th-century masterpiece of Georgian architecture.**

### Congratulations

to the People of Georgia on the Occasion of  
Their Independence Day

Geogian Wine & Dining GAUMARJOS!

1-25-17 Higashi-Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0022  
11:30 a.m.-14:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.-2:00 a.m.

Tel: 03-3442-5666  
Holiday Sunday



Château  
**MUKHRANI**

Est<sup>d</sup> 1878

Château Mukhrani is located in the eastern part of Georgia, in the village called Mukhrani. The company was established in 2004 by foreign and domestic investors.

The vineyards of the château are located on the best selected plots of the exquisite terroir and cover 90 hectares. The first vintage produced 70,000 bottles of the unique wine. However, in the near future, we plan to produce more than 300,000 bottles annually. The château has the following premium wine: red dry — Saperavi, Saperavi-Cabernet; white dry — Chardonnay, Rkatsiteli. They mature in oak casks for six to 24 months and then for a number of years of dedicated in-bottle aging. By 2010, the company will produce super premium wine by the name of Château Mukhrani.

The company sells the wine domestically, and exports to France, Italy, Britain, Ukraine, Poland, Germany and Czech Republic.

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