

Ivanishvili Says Saakashvili Era Is Over

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TBILISI, Georgia — Georgia's prime minister said Tuesday that he would skip President Mikheil Saakashvili's annual address to parliament this week, snubbing a rival he eclipsed by leading an opposition coalition to victory in an October election.

Bidzina Ivanishvili's blunt promise to stay away from Saakashvili's speech Friday reflects tension between the ascendant billionaire prime minister and the long-ruling president, who is barred from seeking re-election in October.

"What new he is going to say? He will probably be telling us lies again," Ivanishvili told a news conference. "Saakashvili's era is over. Era of lies is over in Georgia."

Saakashvili will address the parliament for the last time before his term ends. It will also be his first address to a parliament dominated by his adversaries.

(Reuters)

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