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ECONOMICS

Tbilisi says connection with cargo taken from Georgia to Beirut tragedy unfounded



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Gov't presents the 3rd stage of anti-crisis social assistance programs



► "Believe me, if this continues, we will have to announce another social package at the beginning of next year," PM commented, concerning the economic crisis fueled by the Covid-19 pandemic.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The government will spend €410 million on social assistance - the relevant decision was announced today by the Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia. The assistance package allows that all self-employed who have submitted incomplete documentation for receiving a one-time €300 assistance, will be credited with compensation.

250 000 Georgian citizens applied to the Georgian government to receive compensation for the self-employed. This assistance was received by 170 000 citizens, that had presented necessary documents, however, as Gakharia notified yesterday, before the closure of the program remaining 80 000 citizens who failed to meet the requirements for filling in the documents, will be satisfied and will be given €300.

Also, all adolescents under 17 will receive €200 compensation from the government: "Who is at the highest risk now, who are the most vulnerable groups? "Of course, the children, and therefore it was impossible to choose a more correct group," the Prime Minister explained.

Moreover, utility bills will be subsidized for the population in November, December, January and February:

"For those who have lost their jobs or receive a reduced salary, the government has decided to extend this program for 4 months of winter in terms of support for utility bills," Gakharia stated. As before, 200 kWh and 200 m³ of gas consumption will be compensated by the government and relatively affluent citizens will be able

to refuse such assistance in the program.

Gakharia also announced the partial reimbursement of tuition fees for vulnerable students. Due to the economic crisis, the state will partially or fully fund the tuition fees of more than 33,000 students who have up to 150,000 social points.

According to the Minister of Defense, Irakli Gharibashvili, Georgian servicemen and their families will receive 50% of the tuition fee and the excellent servicemen and their families will receive a ministerial scholarship of €750. Gakharia explained that the implementation of these programs became possible because of two reasons:

"First - because under pressure from irresponsible politicians, we did not make unreasonable promises and unreasonable compensation in the first days, and second - with the citizens of Georgia and, of course, with Bidzina Ivanishvili, we were able to mobilize resources in the Stop COV fund."

The PM also commented that the third stage of anti-crisis social assistance, which is being implemented by the Government of Georgia, is not related to the pre-election period. After the government session, Gakharia said that the start of the program was expedited so that it would not

be perceived as part of the pre-election campaign. He also responded to such speculations by recalling his debate in the Parliament when the representative of the opposition remarked that the assistance programs for the population are small and need to be continued.

The Minister of Finance, Ivane Machavariani, explained where the funds needed for the provision of social assistance will be mobilized. According to Machavariani, the funds allocated for the social package will be fully allocated from the COVID Fund, which currently counts up to €135 million and the renewed state budget that envisioned €300 million for social assistance. According to him, because tourism can not be partially restored in 2020, this winter will be difficult, that's why the decision of subsidizing utilities was made.

According to the Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, a total of €410 million is provided for social assistance, of which €200 million will be used to subsidize utility costs, and €170 million will be spent on youth assistance packages.

Yesterday, the PM also presented a new member of the government, Tea Akhvlediani as the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality.

Until now, Tea Akhvlediani was the First Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, and before that - the Ambassador of Georgia to Estonia. Tea Akhvlediani replaced Ketevan Tsikhelashvili as the State Minister, who was appointed Ambassador of Georgia to Austria.



► According to the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Tea Akhvlediani, the discussion of the issue of Georgia at the closed session of the UN Security Council is an important development.

Teona Tamazashvili's continues to fight for justice

TEONA TAMAZASHVILI REFUSES TO TRUST THE INVESTIGATION.

BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

Tamar Bachaliashvili disappeared on July 18th. The young programmer was last spotted by surveillance cameras in the Tetrtskaro district. After a 5-day search, on July 22nd, she was found dead in her car near the Tetrtskaro forest.

According to Mamuka Chelidze, Director of the Central Criminal Police Department, Tamar Bachaliashvili's body has no traces of violence at first glance. He also noted that the investigation is working on all possible versions.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tamar Bachaliashvili read about "What happens to their Facebook page in case of one's death" from her computer the day before her disappearance, and a month ago she was looking at articles on the Internet about suicide.

Teona Tamazashvili, the mother of the 23-year-old, told journalists that she declares "with full responsibility that Bachana Lobzhanidze was sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to kidnap her daughter from home."

The mother of the deceased rules out suicide and says that nobody keeps her informed regarding the investigation.

"I categorically rule out that my daughter committed suicide. She also passed an exam last week to get an English certificate and was looking for a second job. Why would she commit suicide?" stated Tamazashvili. "I no longer trust the investigation. I was begging from the beginning to take Tamuna's computer on time and open it on time. They did not take it, no one came except Mikheil Ramishvili. No one else showed up or expressed their interest," claimed Tamazashvili.

Bachaliashvili's family has been requesting a meeting with the Prime Minister for several



► The mother of the deceased rules out suicide.

days now, but Gakharia said today that he would meet with them only after the investigation is over and that he won't allow anyone to put jurisdiction under question.

According to Tamazashvili, the family does not believe the version spread by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and does not trust the investigation. They have already demanded the

involvement of the FBI in the investigation.

On August 6th, the family was able to meet with the Chief Prosecutor. According to Tamazashvili, she received a promise that the FBI would be involved in the case.

The Prosecutor General, Irakli Shotadze, promised that no one would be protected and that justice will be served.



► Mamuka Chelidze, Director of the Central Criminal Police Department, holds a briefing on the case.

Assistance to the vulnerable in the focus of pandemic recovery

UNDP HELPS IMPROVE SAFETY AND LIVING CONDITIONS IN MUNICIPAL SHELTERS FOR HOMELESS AND OLDER PEOPLE

TBILISI. 6 August 2020 – With the aim of "leaving no one behind" in the COVID-19 pandemic, three municipal shelters in Tbilisi, Rustavi and Samtredia that together house up to 200 homeless and elderly people were provided with medical equipment, computers, water heaters, kitchen appliances, furniture and household supplies. The initiative, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with financial support from Denmark and the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, aims to expand municipal services for vulnerable and high-risk groups during the COVID-19 crisis.

On 6 August, UNDP Head Louisa Vinton visited municipal shelters in Tbilisi and Rustavi together with Mzia Giorgobiani, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi Municipality Andria Basilaia and Rustavi City Mayor Irakli Tabaghua. Vinton met with residents and staff of the shelters to understand the challenges they face. A similar visit is planned to Samtredia on 11 August.

"For people with no place to live, the COVID-19 pandemic can be life-threatening," said Vinton, "so we are glad that municipal shelters can offer refuge. UNDP's aim is to improve safety and living

conditions for those who rely on shelters and, looking beyond the crisis, to find systemic solutions for the vulnerable."

UNDP is assisting municipal shelters as part of a broader support package provided by the UN system to help the Government and communities manage the health emergency and recover from its economic and social consequences. Georgia was one of the first 46 countries named eligible for funding from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, established by the UN Secretary-General, and the UN team in Georgia has received USD 1 million to protect vulnerable groups from the pandemic impact.

UNDP has been on the front-line of the pandemic response in Georgia since the first days of the emergency, focusing on the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Working closely with Government, donors and partners, UNDP has repurposed much of its annual USD 20 million programme to assist in the response and speed up the recovery. Among other activities, support has been provided to municipal authorities and local communities under the programme for decentralization and good governance that UNDP is implementing in partnership with MRDI with over USD 4 million in funding from Denmark.

FRIDAY AUGUST 7

Day  Clear

High: 32°C


Night  Partly Cloudy

Low: 19°C

SATURDAY AUGUST 8

Day  Clear

High: 34°C

Night  Clear

Low: 20°C

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Tbilisi says connection with cargo taken from Georgia to Beirut tragedy unfounded



According to Lebanese authorities, after the seizure of the ship, the ship-owning company declared itself bankrupt and left the ship, crew and cargo at the port of Beirut. Later, the cargo was unloaded and stored at the port of Beirut. Photo: AP News

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Natia Turnava, stated the connection between the tragedy in Beirut and the ship loaded in Georgia 7 years ago is groundless.

At the briefing held after the government session, Turnava said that ammonium nitrate is a nitrogen fertilizer that is produced all over the world, adding that it has been produced in Georgia for years and is one of the important export products.

According to the Minister of Economy, if the technology of storage and consumption of this product used in agriculture is not protected, it may have a disastrous result.

According to Turnava, in 2013, in one of the ports of Georgia, the ship was loaded with ammonium nitrate in compliance with safety norms, and the exporting country can not be held responsible for who bought it and stored it for the next 7 years.

The Minister of Economy expressed her sorrow over the tragedy in Beirut. Two powerful blasts in the Lebanese capital, Baghdad, on August 4th killed at least 137 people and injured 5,000, Lebanese Healthcare Ministry informed on August 6th. In addition to the port infrastructure, buildings within a distance of 10 km have been demolished or damaged.

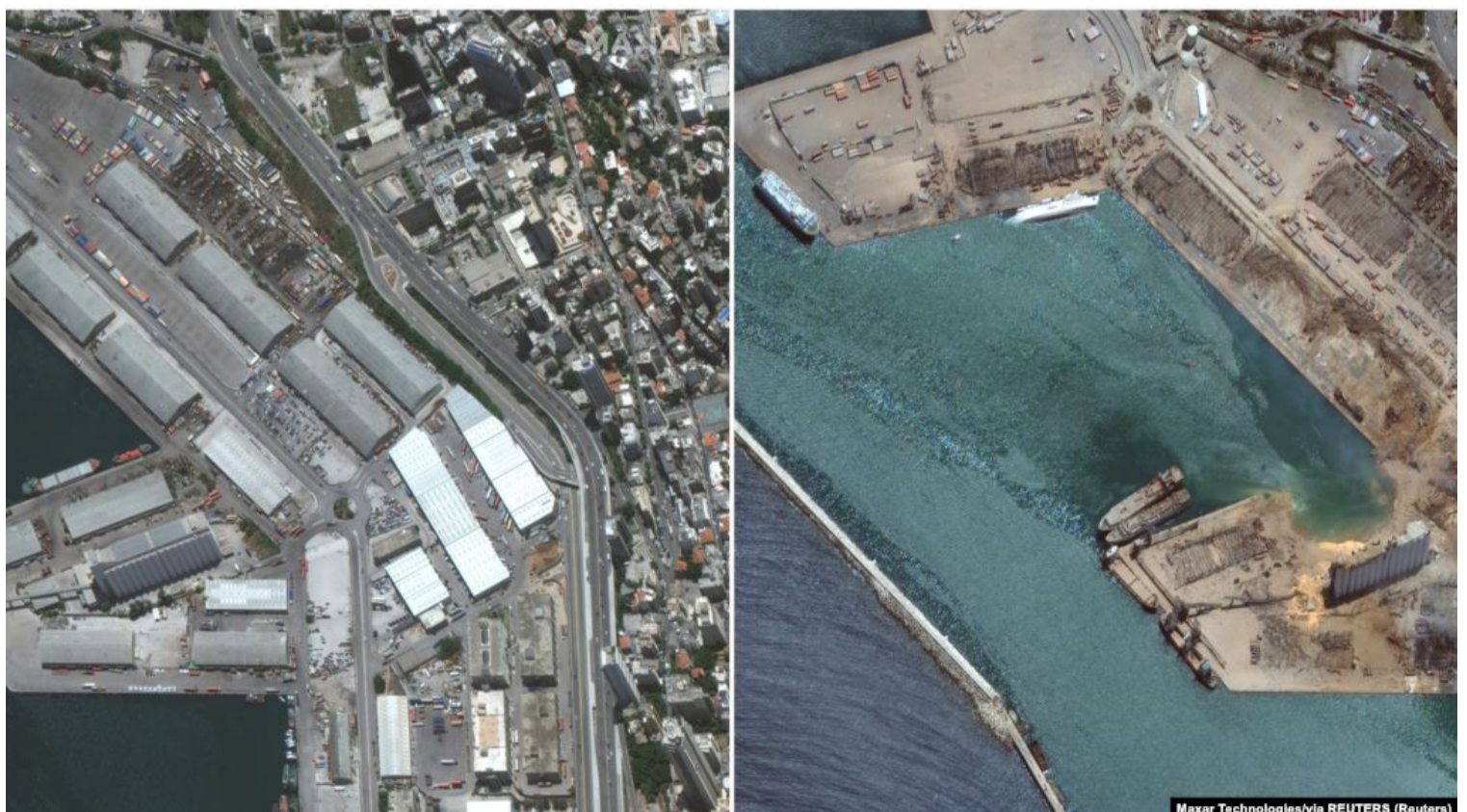
The Lebanese authorities named the violation of the rules of storing high-explosive ammonium nitrate in one of the port warehouses as the cause of the tragedy. The ship Rhosus was loaded with this product (2750 tones) in the port of Batumi in 2013, which was supposed to carry cargo to Mozambique but stopped in the port of Beirut in September due to technical problems. The ship was seized in 2014, and the Lebanese customs service confiscated the cargo and transferred it to the warehouse. One of the versions argued that the ammonium nitrate that exploded in Beirut could have been produced by 'Rustavi Nitrogen.'

The Moldavian-flagged ship Rhosus belonged to Igor Grechushkin, a resident

of the Russian city of Khabarovsk and currently living in Cyprus, who had left the Russian and Ukrainian sailors, members of the ship's crew stranded in Beirut alone.

Rustavi Nitrogen releases a statement regarding the explosion in Beirut, saying that "due to the fact that JSC Rustavi Nitrogen has been operating the plant for the last 3 years, we are deprived of information whether ammonium nitrate was really produced in Rustavi in 2013."

JSC Rustavi Nitrogen, which is one of the largest exporters in the country, produces up to 1% of the ammonium nitrate



Georgia has no grounds to connect with the explosion in the port of Beirut in any way, the Maritime Transport Agency says. Photo: RFE/RL

consumed in the world, which is produced with local permission and international standards. And goes for export.

"According to reports, this nitrate has been stored in Beirut since 2013, which

Ad title: (National Staff of the JICA Georgia office)
Provided by: Resident Representative of JICA Georgia office
Published: 7 August, 2020/ Deadline: 14 August, 2020

JICA Georgia office is pleased to announce an opening for the position of National Staff

Job description:

- ** Analyze and Survey of the Country's current Economy and Politic;
- ** To collect information on the development as well as policies and projects of other donors and analyze the issues with regard to assigned programs;
- ** To coordinate submission of requests from the counterpart Government;
- ** To supervise the implementation process of assigned programs; to prepare implementation and budget plan, make logistic arrangement and make necessary coordination and negotiation with related organizations in Caucasus countries and Japan, to make necessary translation and interpretation when communicating with counterparts, and to monitor the progress of assigned programs;
- ** To coordinate Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteer's (JOCV) activity in Georgia;
- ** Other tasks given by Resident Representative;

Skills and requirements:

- ** University degree;
- ** Highly proficient in spoken and written in English, Japanese and Russian languages. (Regarding English and Japanese proficiency, certificates are necessary);
- ** Computer literacy (word, excel, power point etc);
- ** At least five years of work experience in the similar field;
- ** Analytical, open-minded, honest character;
- ** Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- ** Well-organized; strong sense of responsibility; hard working;
- ** Willingness to go to the field trips;

Preferable but not mandatory skills:

- ** Familiarity with terms related to finance is preferred;

Term:

From October, 2020 till October, 2021 with possible extension (Probation period is 3 months. The employer will be able to terminate the contract depending on the performance during the probation period).

Salary:

US\$1300~1500/month (actual amount will be adjusted based on the past work experience and will be paid in GEL)

Working hours:

Monday – Friday, 9:30 – 18:00 (with lunch break from 13:00 – 14:00)

Next step:

Only shortlisted persons will be notified by email and invited to the interview. Interested candidates are required to send the CV (only in English) with two contact information from previous workplaces/schools and copies of certificates to: gg_oso_rep@jica.go.jp and jicageorgia@gmail.com; no later than 14 August, 2020.

is a gross violation of its safe storage norms, especially since ammonium nitrate loses the properties necessary for its proper use after 6 months," reads the statement.

The Maritime Transport Agency also issued a statement regarding the explosion in Beirut, where the agency states that there is no basis for any connection between Georgia and the explosion.