

Politics

COVID-19 and new regulations

The changes are being made regarding the virus, regulations tighten and the quarantine reduces from 12 to 8 days.



FULL STORY ON Page 2

Economics

Georgia exports 1,797 tonnes of hazelnuts

FULL STORY ON Page 3

On the rules that should be followed on Election Day; Mikheil Saakashvili's candidacy to be nominated on the post of PM



Wearing masks will be compulsory on Election Day.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

As the elections approach, the Election Administration of Georgia has started to inform the people about the regulation on Election Day, in times of COVID pandemic. At Palitrane news evening program, the Chairwoman of Central Election Commission, Tamar Zhvania talked about the rules that voters will have to follow on October 31st.

As Zhvania told Palitrane news, persons

with COVID infection might not be able to exercise their right to vote, but citizens who are quarantined will be able to participate in the voting. As she said, considering foreign experience, engaging COVID patients in the elections is not possible, however, she believes that the realization of votes of people who are in quarantine should be assured.

Zhvania noted that wearing masks will be mandatory measure for voters as well as observers and election commission mem-

bers. Voters will not have to undergo thermal screening procedures on Election Day since the arrangement of separate space for people with temperature is not up for discussion due to infrastructural issues.

With the help of the US embassy and USAID, disinfectants will be placed at every station. Also, CEC has decided to hand out individual pens to every voter. Commission members will operate on Election Day with protective shields and gloves so as to avoid infection spread.

According to her, the temperature of commission members will be checked before Election Day. In case even one member tests positive for COVID-19, the whole commission will be quarantined, therefore to avoid any complications on Election Day, CEC is working on developing a backup commission, so-called special group.

As for political activities, on September 7th, at the briefing, the Chairman of the National Movement, Grigol Vashadze announced that the United National Movement and the member parties of the Power In Unity will nominate the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili as a candidate of PM's post. The decision has been made unanimously by the opposition parties.

Vashadze said that using Saakashvili's resources is very important for the state, he should return and be face to face with his people, therefore a decision has been made to unveil his candidacy. As he said, all of the parties within the political coalition Power in Unity supported the nomination of Saakashvili for the post of PM.

Prior to the briefing, the ex-president published a video on social media announcing his comeback and apologizing for the mistakes that had been done during his governance. Later, after the briefing, he published another video regarding his future plans in Georgia. As he stated, he will come to Georgia calmly without turmoil.

As Saakashvili says in the video, the reason for his candidacy for the PM's post is not because he wants to be back to the government.



Ex-president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili

CONTINUED ON Page 3

By Anastasia Sokhadze

COVID-19 and new regulations

According to the Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia, from September 15th, foreigners entering Georgia on a reciprocal basis will have to submit the answer to the PCR test.

According to the Prime Minister, the decision was made to insure the health of Georgian citizens and foreigners.

“From September 15th, all foreigners entering Georgia, including on the principle of reciprocity, who had no obligation to enter the country freely, will be required to take a 72-hour PCR test, which is necessary for us to work with colleagues and partners, our citizens and insure the health of guests as well.

This decision applies to countries that have not had any restrictions on the principle of reciprocity, they will be granted a similar request from September 15th,” said the Prime Minister.

The regulations are also going to change. According to Gakharia, the control of social and ritual events in closed spaces will be way stricter.

As he said after the meeting of the Interagency Council, the requirements for open spaces are relatively light.

Also, according to the decision of the Coordinating Council of the Government, schoolchildren and students in Batumi and Kobuleti will start studying remotely during the first two weeks. Gakharia talked about it as well at the briefing held after



According to Giorgi Gakharia, the control of social events and gatherings in closed spaces will be way stricter.

the meeting of the Coordination Council in the Government Administration.

For two weeks, until October 1st, studies in Kobuleti and Batumi will be distance learning, which means that in Batumi and Kobuleti children will continue their studies in schools and students in classrooms from October 1st.

The decision to reduce the

quarantine period to 8 days is expected to be made by the Interagency Council today, on September 7th. It is planned to hold a council meeting in the government administration.

At the same time, as the Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia said, in case the quarantine period is reduced to 8 days, the quarantine or self-isolated person will have to un-



Amiran Gamkrelidze claimed that in Batumi, one case of Coronavirus has been detected at the Khopa market and testing will be starting tomorrow.

dergo PCR test twice in the next 72-72 hours after leaving the quarantine area.

According to her, reducing the quarantine regime from 12 to 8 days is an optimal model.

“There are only two mechanisms to protect us from imported cases. One is isolation, through quarantine and self-isolation, and the other is testing. Our country today uses

the PCR testing mechanism once every 72 hours,” stated Gabunia.

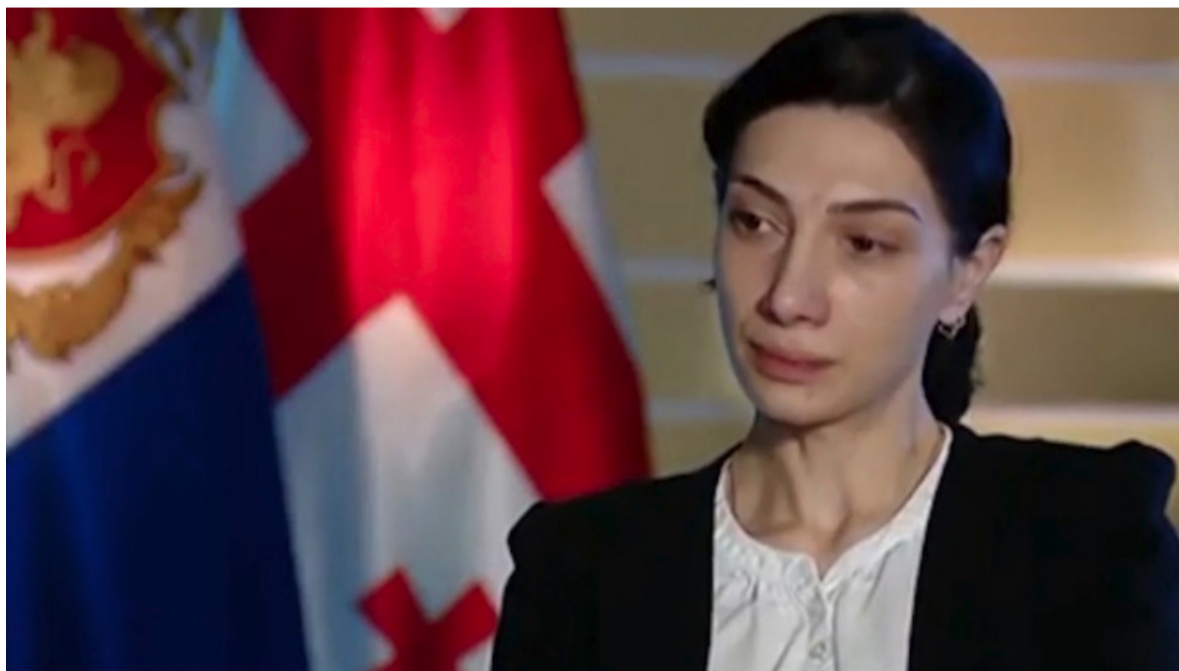
Also, according to Amiran Gamkrelidze of the National Center for Disease Control, from tomorrow in Batumi, testing will start at the Khopa market. As he told reporters, beyond 34 cases confirmed today, there was one more individual infected at the Khopi market.

Investigator sentenced to 3 years in prison for putting psychological pressure on a minor, leading to suicide

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Mariana Choloiani, a detective accused in the case of death of 15-year old Luka Siradze has been found guilty and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment by Tbilisi City Court. Choloiani was accused of psychological violence against the minor, who had a suicide attempt after the interrogations, on December 10-11th.

Luka Siradze, who jumped off the 9th floor due to possible violence from police, died in the hospital on December 17th. According to the family and lawyer of the deceased, Choloiani pressurized the minor to plead guilty to the offense of damaging the property of the Mtsvane school in



Mariana Choloiani pleads not guilty.

Tbilisi. The family and lawyer also said that during the interrogation, the violence against the

teenager was intense, he was taken to a separate room for a couple of minutes, from where he

returned crying. State Inspector Londa Toloraia stated that Choloiani threatened the 15-year-

old that if he did not confess the crime, his brother would have ‘problems’.

After Siradze’s death, Choloiani was arrested and charged with two episodes of crime under the first part of Article 335 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, which involves coercing a person to provide information. She was also deprived of the right to hold an official position at law enforcement agencies for two years.

A lawyer of the accused, Giga Mosiashvili stated that the City Court has made a politicized and unfair decision and plans to appeal the verdict. As he said, in the case, the only guide used by the prosecution for accusation was a testimony of the victim’s mother, which he thinks to be subjective, and as for testimonies of neutral witnesses, they have been ignored.

CONTINUED ON Page 3

Weather

Tuesday, September 8

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 19°C

Wednesday, September 9

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 29°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 18°C

published by

The Messenger

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The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia’s English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0829; Euro - 3.6440; GBP - 4.0546; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.0497; Swiss Franc - 3.3711

Georgia exports 1,797 tonnes of hazelnuts



“The state should stand by every farmer with technological, knowledge and access to finance and we will have results,” PM Gakharia said.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

“Hazelnut picking has already started in Samegrelo, the forecast figure is 50,000 tons, the export of which will bring about \$100 million to the region,” the Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia said at the ‘Hazelnut 2020’ event in Zugdidi.

According to him, fruit growing is important both for Samegrelo and for the Georgian economy in general.

“Whatever we say, although this year was epidemiologically difficult, we had many constraints economically, there was a crisis, but not a single day of agricultural work, as well as work on system infrastructure, did not stop,” PM announced.

He mentioned the Peach harvest in Kakheti, exports of which have almost doubled. PM also spoke of apple picking in Kartli, which will start soon and this year the harvest will be 3 times more - the expected amount is 120 thousand tons.

According to him, the fight against Farosana in Georgia was one of the best examples of how to fight these pests in the world, and this fact is recognized.

Georgia has already exported 1,797 tonnes of hazelnuts this year which is an increase of 81% compared to the same period of last year, says the Georgian Ministry of Agriculture.

The major European countries to which Georgia has exported hazelnuts are: Germany – 460 tonnes; Italy – 423 tonnes; Czechia – 154 tonnes; Spain – 93 tonnes; Poland – 66 tonnes; Lithuania – 62 tonnes; Other European countries to which Georgia has exported hazelnuts this year are Ukraine (61 tonnes), Great Britain (22 tonnes), Austria (22 tonnes), Estonia (22 tonnes), Belarus (21 tonnes), Latvia (21 tonnes), France (42 tonnes), Greece (10 tonnes).

Georgian hazelnuts have also been exported to Armenia (154 tonnes), Russia (66 tonnes),

Mexico (25 tonnes), and Brazil (24 tonnes).

Despite the coronavirus crisis,

negotiations have been carried out with exporters and associations of hazelnut producers, as a result of which hazelnuts are still making it to export, says the ministry.

Gakharia, together with the Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture Levan Davitashvili, visited the hazelnut drying-warehousing enterprise “Koki 2014” in the village of Koki, Zugdidi Municipality, which was established with the support of the United Agro Project.

Leaders got acquainted with the complete process of receiving and handing over hazelnuts in the enterprise, which includes hazelnut reception, slicing, weighing, drying, laboratory research, and storage.

According to the founders of “Koki 2014”, the enterprise serves about 300 farmers in the Samegrelo region every year.

A total of ₾770,000 was invested in the enterprise, of which ₾285,000 was a state grant.

The production capacity of the enterprise dryer is 1,000 tons, and the storage capacity is 500

tons. The enterprise permanently employs 17 locals. Products are sold in export markets.

The Prime Minister and the Minister spoke to the farmers gathered on the territory of the enterprise and called on them to make the most of the state support programs in order to further develop their farm and contribute to the well-being of their families as well as become employers.

According to the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, as of September 5, 24,240 tons of peaches and nectarine were exported from Georgia, which is 11,208 tons more than in the same period last year.

According to the data of the National Wine Agency on September 5, 5,000 tons of different varieties of grapes have been processed in the Kakheti region. According to the agency, at this stage, 160 wine companies are registered in the coordination headquarters, 30 wineries have already been involved in the grape processing process.



As of September 5, 24,240 tons of peaches and apples were exported from Georgia.

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

“I do not miss working in government, I will not be a PM for the full term, but only two years. These two years will be enough to drag the country out of a swamp and develop quickly,” he said.

The news had severe reactions from the ruling party as well as from the opposition. Politicians negatively estimate his candidacy.

One of the leaders of the Freedom-European Georgia, Giga Bokeria told the journalists that the country should not return to where it was during his and

Saakashvili's rule since ‘that is not what Georgia needs,’ Bokeria believes that Saakashvili desires to return to the past, but the country needs turning changes and progress.

The Leader of the Democratic Movement- United Georgia, Nino Burjanadze doubts that Saakashvili will come to Georgia and states that she practically excludes any chance of that. She estimated the nomination of Saakashvili as a candidate for Prime Minister as putting their own party interests higher than taking into account the country's and united opposition's interests.

Many of the Ruling party

members do not find Saakashvili's statements and his candidacy serious as there are several considerable obstacles that Saakashvili will have to face. Firstly, he is no longer a Georgian citizen, which means that he is restricted from the right to become a Prime Minister of Georgia. Also, in January 2018, he was sentenced 3 years in prison in absentia for the case of Sandro Girgvliani's murder and in June 2018, he was sentenced 6 years imprisonment in absentia for beating MP Valeri Gelashvili, accordingly provided that he comes to Georgia, he will face criminal responsibility.

Investigator sentenced to 3 years in prison for putting psychological pressure on a minor, leading to suicide

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Family of the deceased demanded the punishment of a maximum term- 5 years, but, according to Siradze's brother, considering that the defense side was proving quite the contrary (innocence of Choloiani), ‘we can not say that it(the sentence) is unfair.’ The family plans to consult with lawyers and then decide whether to appeal the sentence or not. Siradze's brother said that they would continue to fight to punish the people who took part in the process of interrogation along with Choloiani.



Georgian Prosecutor's Office stated that Choloiani did not comply with the Juvenile Justice Code of Georgia while Questioning Siradze.