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89 cases over last 2 days, Georgia reintroduces restrictions



► People who have been in the shop Dona, the hotel Oasis and the restaurant Mravalzhamieri will be tested for Coronavirus.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The cases of Covid-19 have risen by 45 and 44 in the previous two days, resulting in the government reintroducing restrictions as the number of active cases surpassed 400, the highest since the start of the COVID pandemic in February.

The Government reintroduced the ban on large-scale social gatherings, allowing only 10 people to participate in indoor events. Previously applied to indoor areas, the restrictions will now be extended to outdoor areas as well. Cultural and sports events involving over 200 attendees are also banned.

As Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze announced, events related to the Tbilisoba holiday will not be held this year.

The reopening of cinemas and theaters, previously scheduled to take place during September 15th and the beginning of October, respectively, will be postponed until November 1st.

According to the Government Administration, the new restrictions will not apply to election campaign events.

Amiran Gamkrelidze, the head of the National Center for Disease Control, an-



► Amiran Gamkrelidze calls on the population to keep public order and discipline.

nounced that the policy of lockdown all over the world, including Georgia, is no longer on the agenda except in special cases. According to him, the management of the infection is carried out by the so-called balanced policy. He said that an increase in coronavirus cases was expected in the summer, especially in Adjara, where basic recommendations were not met. He stated Adjara remains as the most active zone for the virus at the moment, with the source of infection of 10 cases still unknown. As Gamkrelidze noted, starting studies will increase mobility and it is necessary to have good sanitary conditions in all schools.

Healthcare Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze announced that COVID-19 patients between the ages of 18 and 65, with mild symptoms and without any chronic diseases, will be treated at hotels in Georgia's three largest cities, Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi.

Yesterday, it was confirmed that MP Levan Gogichaishvili was infected with the virus. Parliament states that all persons who had contact with him after September 5th will be self-isolated and tested, and all persons entering the building will undergo thermal control.

The State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality visits occupation line



► The minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, Tea Akhvlediani, during her visit to the occupation line.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On September 9th, the Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality Tea Akhvlediani met with representatives of Georgian checkpoint in Rukhi village and learned about the situation on the Enguri bridge on site.

The minister also visited the so-called passage of Pakhuliani-Saberio and the dividing line of Ganmukhuri-Pichori as well as the so-called checkpoints of Orsantia-Otobaia, Khurcha-Nabakevi, and Shamgona-Tugiloni, which have not been functioning for a couple of years.

The minister also visited the facilities in Rukhi, such as a

multi-functional shopping center and a hospital "which has a very important meaning for people living on both sides of the dividing line."

According to the Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, together with local self-governments, the minister met with the residents of the dividing line villages, listened to their needs, and discussed the ways to solve them.

As Akhvlediani stated, she visited all of the villages along the occupation line in Abkhazia, where so-called passages existed for years and where physical obstacles are still standing, which hinders the ability of people to

communicate and move freely. The minister also met with locals, who have been living under the pressure of Russian occupation for years. The locals discussed the difficulties created especially by the restriction of free movement with the minister and talked about the ways to solve them.

The Minister stressed that there are peace initiatives of the Ministry, which aim to improve the social-economic situation of people and expand the opportunities for education and development of young people living on both sides of the occupation line.

As Akhvlediani noted, the Georgian side has never quit communicating with Abkhaz people.

"We have never stopped communicating with Abkhaz community; especially, during the pandemic till today, we have accumulated crucial experience of cooperation on the issues of

common interest, which gives us hope that in the future we may be able to further enhance this dialogue in order to solve the severe humanitarian condition," said the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and added that in order to achieve this, the ministry will work intensively within the frame of existing official formats, such as Geneva International Discussions.

Akhvlediani hopes that the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Gali will be restored in the near future, which, as the minister said, has a great potential to suppress Human Right violation facts and to mitigate the current harsh humanitarian situation. She noted that by restoring free movement, enhancement of contacts between people will be significantly facilitated, "which in turn will be another solid step taken towards strengthening peace and stability."



► The Minister listened to the local people's concerns and discussed the ways to solve them.

Public Defender publishes special monitoring report of preschool institutions

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On September 9th, 2020, the Public Defender of Georgia, Nino Lomjaria presented a special report on the Results of the Monitoring Carried out in

Preschool Educational Institutions. The report was prepared with the help of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), within the framework of a project – Strengthening the Capacity of the Center for the Rights of Children and reflects the result of the monitoring of the rights situation of children in preschool institutions of Georgia.

Preschool institutions were checked in the following regards:

infrastructural condition; food; sanitation- hygiene; healthcare; violence against children; human resources.

According to the statement published by Public Defender, to examine the situation in preschool institutions and compliance with national and international standards of protection of the rights of children, 143 kindergartens were monitored in Tbilisi as well as other cities

of Georgia, villages, and towns, including mountainous regions of Georgia.

The monitoring has revealed improvement of the situation compared with the results of monitoring carried out in 2014 by Public Defender, mainly in the direction of healthy and balanced food, as well as special nutrition needs.

However, public defender notes that despite the operations

implemented by the state and the municipalities, there are still issues in kindergartens, which demand more effort from the relevant structures. According to Amy Clancy, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Georgia, despite the adoption of national standards in 2017, monitoring of preschool institutions revealed

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SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10

Day Cloudy High: 30°C

Night Clear Low: 18°C

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Clear Low: 19°C

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International Monetary Fund starts mission in Georgia



► The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, the system of exchange rates, and international payments.

► Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The International Monetary Fund has launched a mission in Georgia under the leadership of Mercedes Vera-Martin.

Due to the global pandemic of COVID-19, the mission will work in virtual mode and its first online meeting was held with the Minister of Finance Ivane Mach-

avariani. The parties reviewed the current economic situation in the country, as well as the main fiscal and macroeconomic parameters for next year.

The conversation focused on the government's anti-crisis policy, measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and in this regard, the \$ 200 million budget assistance provided to Georgia

by the International Monetary Fund, as well as IMF-supported economic reforms in the current and future periods.

As mentioned, despite the global economic crisis, Georgia maintains economic stability, as evidenced by the maintenance of a sovereign rating for Georgia by two reputable rating companies (S&P; Fitch).

"At the meeting, the importance of assistance to international financial institutions, which is aimed at controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and reducing its negative economic impact, was reiterated," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Ministers

of Finance, Head of the IMF Resident Representative in Georgia, Resident Advisor of the International Monetary Fund Tax System Modernization Support Project, Heads of Departments of Budget and Macroeconomic Analysis and Fiscal Policy Planning.

The mission will work until September 14th.

Public Defender publishes special monitoring report of preschool institutions



► Public Defender of Georgia, Nino Lomjaria.



► The monitoring has revealed that in some kindergartens bathrooms are not provided with hot water.

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that many such institutions do not have the necessary safe internal or external infrastructure, water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions to assure well-being and development of children.

"These issues are even more problematic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and

they could serve as additional barriers to access to pre-school education," she said.

The statement reads that the challenges detected as a result of monitoring mostly refer to the infrastructure of the institutions, educational items, and arrangement of yards. There are also problems in relation to the lack of qualified employees and

overcrowding.

According to the report, the trends identified as a result of the monitoring are the following:

Due to insufficient space, the needs of children are limited, especially in kindergartens located in non-standard buildings; kindergartens are not fully adapted to the needs of children with

disabilities and are not able to ensure their full involvement; in the vast majority of kindergartens, yards are not arranged in accordance to the needs and safety of children; lack of equipment, which is especially acute with regard to bedrooms, classrooms and dining rooms; kindergartens are rarely provided with toys relevant to the age and

number of children; bathrooms are not arranged in accordance to the needs of children and especially children with disabilities. Space and furniture do not correspond to the number of children, additionally, in some kindergartens bathrooms are not provided with hot water; the majority of teachers have not been trained in child abuse issues, which deters detection and timely response to the acts of violence; 34% of inspected kindergartens have children with disabilities, but only 14.2% of them have a position of a special teacher; geographical accessibility is a problem as well, children are transported to nearby kindergartens only in 75% of the villages.

The Public Defender hopes that the recommendation developed in response to the results of the monitoring will be considered by the relevant authorities.

The findings of the survey were presented by Maia Gedevanishvili, Head of the Department of the Rights of the Child of the Public Defender's Office, and Lika Gvinjilia, a member of the monitoring group.