

Politics / Economics

IMF predicts Georgian economy to increase 3.5% in 2021

IMF previously predicted for the economy to increase by 4.3%



FULL STORY ON Page 2

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Formula TV reports that two of their employees were attacked on April 9. According to the channel, one of the journalist's car was attacked, while another employee was physically assaulted. Formula believes that the attack is related to the activities of the TV company.

The director of the company Zuka Gumbaridze said that the attack on the employees is caused by the huge polarization in the country, noting that He noted that this type of violence in many cases in connection to the rhetoric that the Georgian government has.

He called on the Public Defender and the diplomatic corps to take an interest in the facts of increased violence against the media and to respond accordingly to ensure a safe media environment in the country.

The US Embassy has made a state-

US Embassy calls on authorities to conduct an impartial investigation on attacks on Formula TV journalists

Two of Formula TV's employees were attacked on Friday, April 9



Formula TV representatives are saying that the attacks on journalists are connected to the channel's professional activities. Photo: RFE/RL

ment about the attack against the Formula TV Employees, condemned it, and talked about the beating of another Formula TV Journalist Vakho Sanaia in

February.

The embassy urged the Georgian authorities to conduct swift, timely, and impartial investigations into these inci-

dents. The embassy added that the attacks on journalists are unacceptable and that in a democratic country, they must be free and safe.

Transparency International Georgia also commented on the fact and called on Georgian authorities to investigate the incident promptly.

TI said that the incident once again shows how difficult and dangerous it has become for media to work in conditions of high polarization. Also, TI Georgia noted that the government of the country fails to create a safe and secure working environment for critical media representatives.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia noted that it has started an investigation into the case of damaging the car, however, did not comment about the attack on the Formula employees.

In February, another employee of the TV Channel Vakho Sanaia was attacked. Sanaia, who is an anchor of the main news program of the TV Channel, was attacked by three people in February. All three were detained on February 27.



Tbilisi

The US Embassy condemns the attack on Formula TV journalists. Photo: US Embassy

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One of the reasons for the slow economic recovery might be the slow vaccine rollout in Georgia

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The International Monetary Fund, IMF, has updated its prediction regarding the economic growth in Georgia. According to IMF's prognosis, the economy of the country is expected to grow 3.5% in 2021.

For comparison, the International Monetary Fund has previously predicted for the country's economy to grow 4.3% in 2021. The decrease in the pre-

diction might be connected to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in the country and the restrictions currently in place to prevent the further spread of the virus in the country.

In addition to these, the vaccine rollout in the country is slow, which is slowing down the economic recovery process. According to the prediction of the International Monetary Fund, Georgia won't be able to go back to the pre-pandemic picture un-

til 2022.

The prediction could be changed once again depending on the steps Georgia will take to overcome the challenges. As for the neighboring countries, the International Monetary Fund predicts that in 2021, the lowest increase in the region will be reported in Armenia with only 1%. For Russia, the company is predicting a 3.8% increase, for Azerbaijan - 2.3%, and for Turkey - 6%.

At first, Georgia was able to contain the spread of the coronavirus in early 2020 by imposing harsh restrictive measures, including curfews, banning public transport, lockdown, and border closures among many others.

However, after easing the restrictions in the summer, the number of daily confirmed cases increased rapidly. Near the end of November, to slow down the spread of the virus in the country, Georgia has once again adopted strict measures. According to the experts, this is one of the reasons why the economy is

restoring slower than previously expected.

According to the information from the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, in total, 17,261 people have received the Covid-19 vaccine.

The National Statistics Office of Georgia has recently published a report about the estimates of economic growth of February 2021. The data published by the statistics office shows that the real Gross Domestic Product in Georgia declined by 5.1 percent in 2021 compared to the same period of 2020.



According to IMF prediction, Armenia will have a 1% economic increase in 2021, Azerbaijan - 2.3%, Russia 3.8%, and Turkey - 6%

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Tsertsvadze warns about the third wave, Gamkrelidze announces it has started

"The third wave has started, but we want it to be as manageable as possible and not turn into a large-scale epidemic," Amiran Gamkrelidze announced yesterday.

Gamkrelidze stated that all the clusters have hitherto been

directly or indirectly connected to various gatherings- weddings, celestials, or birthday parties.

"Control won't be able to manage this solely," he noted and added that the public should realize the necessity of abstaining from social gatherings.

"50 to 70% of the cases reported in the country is the British strain," Gamkrelidze added.

Tengiz Tsertsvadze, however, stated the third wave hasn't begun yet, but the number of cases has increased in the last few days.

"Fortunately, there is no increase in mortality yet. We must be careful about that, otherwise, if the third wave starts, we will not be able to keep the mortality at a single-digit number."

Tsertsvadze encourages everyone to not gather in the coming 2-3 months, adding that if 6-7 thousand get jabbed daily, the third wave can be avoided.

Rally against Namakhvani HPP to be held in Tbilisi today

Today, on April 12, a rally in support of the population of the Rioni gorge will be held in front of the government administration at 16:00 in Tbilisi.

According to the rally organizers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs uses dirty methods and removes the activists' tents for ungrounded reasons. Today's rally demands that "the occupation of the Rioni Valley be stopped."

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the village of Namakhvani, the water level of the Rioni River exceeds the maximum of the water level indicator, therefore, a decision was made to "remove the tents from the danger zone and move the citizens to a safe place." Activists are protesting the ministry's decision, stating the Interior Ministry is using the raised water level for its advantage to dismantle the tents.

Georgia: EU regrets rushed changes to legislation on selection of Supreme Court judges

The European Union has welcomed the Georgian initiative to amend the legal framework of the selection process of Supreme Court judges, but is disappointed that the Georgian Parliament hastily designed and adopted these amendments without an inclusive consultation process, according to a statement, issued on 7 April by the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The amendments were adopted by the Georgian Parliament on 1 April.

"The European Union has repeatedly expressed concerns over the shortcomings in this selection process and the applicable rules," says the statement. "We regret that Georgia had already previously amended this legislation in a rushed process without a timely request to or awaiting the final opinion of the Venice Commission."

The European Union therefore strongly recommends Georgia to request as soon as possible a Venice Commission assessment on whether the adopted amendments comply with its previous recommendations. The new rules, once confirmed by the Venice Commission, need to be applied equally to all applicants.

"It is crucial that the Supreme Court, Georgia's highest judicial instance, is composed of judges of utmost professional competence and integrity," says the statement.

The European Union reminds that revising the selection process of Supreme Court judges in line with Venice Commission recommendations is also a condition for the disbursement of the second tranche of macro-financial assistance to Georgia under its current programme.

Weather

Monday, April 12

Day Few Showers

High: 20°C

Night Rain

Low: 8°C

Tuesday, April 13

Day Rain

High: 15°C

Night Rain

Low: 8°C

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