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Georgian PM, FM meet with Armenian officials in Yerevan



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World Bank approves €85 million to support job creation and firms affected by the pandemic in Georgia



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BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Embassy of Georgia warns Georgian citizens in Israel: "A missile attack might be launched in the direction of the centre of Israel from 18:00. Ashkelon; Ashdod; Beer-sheva; In addition to Sderot, Yavne, Gadera, Kholoni, Bat Yami, Rishon Lezion, Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak, Givataim, Ramat Gani, Ramat Aviv, Lodi, Ramle, Herzelia, Kfar Shmariahu are endangered. Please return to your place of residence. Refrain from being in the open space; When the alarm goes off, enter the shelter or the stairwell of the apartment building. Take care."

Georgian Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani wrote on Twitter that the Georgian government is closely monitoring developments in Israel, condemning the violence.

The airstrikes have been going on for 2 days between the Israeli army and radical Palestinian militant groups.

On May 12, health officials in the Gaza Strip reported that at least 53 Palestinians, including 14 children, had been killed and more than 300 wounded since the clashes began. The Israeli army says at least 20 extremists have been killed in attacks on up to 140 targets in the enclave. 7 Israelis were killed and dozens wounded in a missile attack by a group known as Hamas, the ruler of Gaza, and Islamic Jihad.

Embassy of Georgia warns citizens in Israel about a possible missile attack



► According to Zalkaliani, a Georgian citizen was slightly injured in Israel.



► The deadly exchange of fire between Israeli military and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip has escalated significantly, the UN fears a 'full-scale war'.

The situation in the region has become extremely tense due to the possible eviction of several dozen Arab families from East Jerusalem. Such a decision was made by an Israeli court. This caused dissatisfaction among the Palestinians. On May 7, they threw stones, bottles and pieces of armature at police. To localize the conflict, police banned Muslims from coming to the temple mountain. According to Palestinian media, Israeli security forces used rubber bullets and sound grenades. After a while, the police stormed the third holy shrine of Muslims, Al-Axie's mosque yard and prompted people to leave it. The court's

decision on the eviction of Palestinians was postponed, but the clashes continued.

Militants in Gaza began firing missiles into Israel on Monday night, and Israel has responded by hitting targets in the territory. On Wednesday Israel said it had killed senior Hamas (the militant group that runs Gaza) officials in Gaza, and was also targeting missile launching sites. Hamas confirmed the death of its commander and other warriors. On Wednesday, a third high-rise building in Gaza was destroyed. Hamas said it was incensed by "the enemy's targeting of residential towers."

The ongoing unrest in the Arab community of Israel has intensified in several cities over the past few days - in solidarity with the Palestinians and over a long-standing complaint that they are considered second-class citizens in the Jewish state. The violence was particularly severe in mixed, Jewish-Arab cities, including Lod, which surrounds a commercial centre near Ben Gurion Airport. The airport was closed overnight due to attacks.

According to the Israeli army, 850 of the missiles fired from the Gaza Strip either landed in Israel or were hijacked by the Israeli anti-missile system. 200 landed in Gaza.

Violent unrest in towns in Israel with mixed Jewish and Arab populations has led to hundreds of arrests. Lod near Tel Aviv is under is in an emergency mode. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the government would use all its strength to protect Israel from "enemies" in the outside and rioters inside. According to Israeli media, protesters set fire to a synagogue in the city and destroyed property.

The ongoing escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas is one of the worst since the 2014 war and raises international concerns that the situation could spiral out of control. Israel and the Palestinian Authority blame each other for escalating the conflict. The United Nations, the European Union and the United States have expressed concern and called on the parties to show restraint.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.4271 | EURO - 4.1656 | GBP - 4.8418 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.6357 | SWISS FRANC - 3.7973 |

Georgian PM, FM meet with Armenian officials in Yerevan

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Yesterday, within the framework of the official visit to Armenia, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The meeting focused on relations between the two countries. According to the Georgian governmental administration, the sides reviewed transport communications, energy and road infrastructure. PMs also talked about the cooperation between Georgia and Armenia in trade, economy, logistics and culture spheres. After the face-to-face meeting, the sides held a joint conference where they made statements about deepening collaboration in various fields.

Pashinyan stressed that the centuries-long friendship between the two countries as well as the common values of democracy and the supremacy of law lay a solid basis for partnership. As the Armenian PM noted, the sides decided to focus more on trade and economic ties. They also touched upon the developments in the technology, educa-



► Georgian PM Irakli Garibashvili and Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan discussed bilateral trade, economic, and cultural relations during the official visit of the Georgian government delegation to Armenia.

tion, science, and culture fields. According to Pashinyan, the sides discussed regional issues and expressed a strong belief that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would be resolved once and for all under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group chairmanship.

“Armenia-Georgia partnership is, undoubtedly, one of the most significant guarantees for ensuring stability in the region,” Prime Minister of Armenia stated.

Garibashvili stated at the joint briefing that Armenia’s stability and democratic development is highly important to Georgia and the whole region. Georgian PM stressed to keep supporting peaceful cooperation and coexistence in the South Caucasus. As he stressed, Georgia is committed to facilitating regional dialogue in terms of economy, trade, culture, and other humanitarian issues.

Within the framework of the official visit of the Georgian gov-

ernment delegation to Yerevan, Georgia’s foreign minister David Zalkaliani also met with his counterpart Ara Aivazian.

The two foreign ministers discussed bilateral relations and expressed a willingness to deepen economic cooperation. FMs also spoke about the situation in the South Caucasus region and underscored the importance of

resolving all existing problems through dialogue and negotiations. Zalkaliani stated at the meeting that Georgia is ready to offer the capital, Tbilisi, to its partners in the South Caucasus as a platform for dialogue.

After the meetings, the Georgian Prime Minister laid a wreath at the memorial of 1915 Armenian Genocide victims.



► Georgia’s foreign minister David Zalkaliani and his Armenian counterpart Ara Aivazian.

World Bank approves €85 million to support job creation and firms affected by the pandemic in Georgia

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On Wednesday, the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors approved €85 million financial support that will benefit micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Georgia impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the statement published by the World Bank, the new Relief and Recovery for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) project aims to help businesses and create jobs by expanding and strengthening programs that support MSMEs and by promoting the digitalization of Georgia’s economy. The project will assist at least 6,000 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country.

“Through this latest support package, the World Bank will boost job creation and support firms that are the backbone of



► According to the statement, the project is part of the World Bank’s broader support for Georgian people and is the third lending operation to the country directed at mitigating the social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

Georgia’s economy and key to a resilient recovery. This includes helping firms gain easier access to finance and funding investments in financial infrastructure that will promote technology adoption and the use of digital financial services,” said Sebastian Molineus, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus.

According to Lasha Khutishvili, Minister of Finance of Georgia, it is vital to support the

private sector that has been affected by the pandemic as well as to encourage the creation of new enterprises that will enable the country to accelerate economic growth.

As the WB informs, the project aims at enlightening the financial constraints facing the firms and helping them adjust their business to a post-COVID-19 scenario. The direct support for micro and small firms will be



► “The support of the World Bank and the allocation of €85 million to help Georgia’s small and medium-sized enterprises in the post-pandemic period is invaluable,” said Natia Turnava, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

distributed by the Enterprise Georgia Entrepreneurship Support program in the form of grants. As for the small and medium-sized enterprises, they can receive support through co-financing of interest payments under Enterprise Georgia’s Produce in Georgia program.

According to the World Bank, the project will also help strengthen the country’s financial infrastructure and increase the use

of digital financial services. The project will also focus on the needs of female entrepreneurs, climate change, and green economy.

As the statement reads, Relief and Recovery for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is part of the World Bank’s broader support for Georgian people and is the third lending operation to the country directed at mitigating the social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

THURSDAY		MAY 13	
Day		Sunny	
		High: 27°C	
Night		Cloudy	
		Low: 15°C	
FRIDAY		MAY 14	
Day		Sunshine	
		High: 29°C	
Night		Clear sky	
		Low: 16°C	

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