

Facemasks become mandatory outdoors, govt prohibits holding social events

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Per the decision of the Inter-Agency Coordination Council, wearing facemasks outdoors becomes mandatory if five or more people gather starting August 10. Facemasks are also mandatory at public gathering areas, such as bus stops and markets. The decision was made amid the worsened epidemiological situation. According to Deputy Health Minister Tamar Gabunia, if the rate of facemask use, which currently stands at 51%, increases to 90%, the daily cases will be reduced by at least 1,000 units.

As the press service of the Government Administration reports, restriction prohibiting nightclubs from operation in open and closed spaces remains in force. The government will also strictly control the enforcement of acting regulations in food facilities, which are not allowed to operate between 00:00-05:00.

According to the government's decree, organizing crowded social events such as weddings, anniversaries, funeral services is banned starting today. For hosting such events, food facilities will be fined GEL 10,000 for the first time, and in case of the repeated violation, the relevant facility will be closed down.

On July 26, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili announced that the economy would no longer withstand another lockdown, therefore, the government would start managing the epidemiological situation instead of introducing restrictions. A couple of days ago, PM stressed that another lockdown in Georgia would be 'absolutely unjustified' as



According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Council, reinforcement of the acting restrictions will be strictly observed.

the country had imported more than two million doses of coronavirus vaccine. He urged everyone to vaccinate, underscoring that defeating the virus is only possible through vaccination. So far, 197,118

people are fully vaccinated in Georgia.

As Minister of Economy Natia Turnava has announced, there will not be any decision to have sectoral, targeted restrictions or closure of any sector. Ac-

ording to her, due to the lockdowns there was a 6% decrease in the economy last year, however, she claims that the government will not follow the same path this time as the country has secured a sufficient number of vaccines.

Since the first detection, Georgia has recorded 450 149 cases of COVID, out of which 403 762 individuals have recovered and 6 128 died. As of yesterday, there were 2 236 new coronavirus cases, 3 146 recoveries, and 44 deaths with Georgian capital Tbilisi recording the highest number of 946 Covid-19 cases, followed by the Adjara region with 499 cases, and the Imereti region with 177 cases. The daily test-positivity rate stands at 9, 54 %.



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Politics / Economics

ISFED releases report on Unofficial Election Period



Fitch revises Georgia's Outlook from negative to stable

FitchRatings

FULL STORY ON Page 2

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ISFED

საერთაშორისო არჩევნების
და დემოკრატიის საერთაშორისო
საზოგადოება

According to the ISFED, the ruling Georgian Dream party has been dominating the unofficial campaign phase so far.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On August 6, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) issued a Monitoring Report for the Unofficial Election Phase of the 2021 Local Self-Government Elections. The report covers the period from June 1 through August 2. ISFED revealed the alleged

facts of dismissal on political grounds, discrimination and violence against female politicians, and implementation of projects to manipulate voters' will.

As ISFED reports, on August 2, a day before the launch of the official campaign period, the Parliament of Georgia elected the chair and two professional members of the Central Election Com-

mission (CEC) with "low legitimacy", meaning that they will hold the positions only for 6 months. ISFED believes that it was not possible to select the nominees that would enjoy high legitimacy among the public and the political spectrum, hence, lack of public trust, which is the main problem facing the election administration, remains unad-

As ISFED reports, the monitoring revealed the incidents of gender-based insults against female members of the Parliament.

ressed ahead of the local self-government elections.

Similar to the 2020 Parliamentary election, cases of announcing and implementing infrastructure and social projects to win the hearts of voters are common. As one of such decisions ISFED names the initiative of Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili to write off fines from individuals and legal entities imposed for violating coronavirus regulations. ISFED believes that such actions carry the risk of manipulation of voters' choices.

The report revealed the trend of alleged politically motivated dismissals and pressure in the regions of Georgia, mainly targeting ex-Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia's party. The report

also revealed that against the background of worsening the model of the gender quota mechanism by the Parliament of Georgia, the problem of the existence of a hostile environment towards women in politics became more evident. ISFED also stressed the existence of gender-based insults against female members of Parliament.

The report reads that negative attitude towards media representatives has become particularly alarming.

"Hampering the work of media representatives negatively affects the right of voters to receive complete and comprehensive information on political/electoral processes, and by extension, the right to make an informed choice," ISFED reports.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1050; Euro - 3.6493; GBP - 4.3113; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2270; Swiss Franc - 3.3849

Fitch revises Georgia's Outlook from negative to stable

Fitch Ratings

According to Fitch Ratings, Outlook revision reflects Fitch's confidence that the Georgian authorities will continue implementing policies supporting macroeconomic stability.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Fitch Ratings has revised the Outlook on Georgia's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to Stable from Negative and maintained its sovereign credit rating at BB. According to Fitch Rating, the Outlook revision reflects a much-improved macroeconomic baseline and Fitch's confidence that the Georgian authorities will continue carrying out policies supporting macroeconomic stability and medium-term sustainability of public finances.

As Fitch reports, despite the

country being severely damaged by the pandemic, Georgia navigated an external shock well. "This year's projected strong economic recovery will help government debt to start declining, while accumulated fiscal buffers will help limit pandemic-related risks," Fitch Rating states.

As it is said in Fitch's statement, 'Georgia's economic recovery has gained surprising momentum' as real GDP growth in the first six months of 2021 increased by 12.7%.

According to Fitch's forecast, Georgia's government debt ratio peaked in 2020 at 60% of GDP, declined to 56.0% this year and will decrease to 55.2% in 2023.

The Prime Minister of Georgia commented on the revised outlook of Fitch, saying that "Georgia has practically returned to its pre-pandemic indi-



"Decision made by Fitch Ratings is believed to be a significant message to international investors on the quick economic recovery witnessed in the country" the PM stated.

cator with the released ratings". PM notes that Fitch Ratings has upgraded the country's economic growth projection to 7.8% against the background of a higher-than-expected economic performance. As Garibashvili noted, the goal is to reach an investment rating by 2025, which is only 2 steps away from

Georgia's current status.

"Decision made by Fitch Ratings is believed to be a significant message to international investors on the quick economic recovery witnessed in the country" the PM stated.

According to Minister of Economy Natia Turnava, the revised outlook of Fitch Rating re-

flects increased confidence from international investors in Georgia.

"This is a very good precondition for us to have very high economic growth at the end of the year, to completely eliminate the damage of the previous year, and to maintain the position of economic growth leader in the region," the Economy Minister stated.

Weather

Tuesday, August 10

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 37°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 21°C

Wednesday, August 11

Day ☁️ Partly Cloudy
High: 35°C

Night ☁️ Partly Cloudy
Low: 21°C

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