

## Country's Total External Debt to Drop to 51.1% of GDP in 2022, PM Garibashvili Says

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced yesterday at the Cabinet meeting that the country's total budget next year will amount to ₾ 65 billion, meaning that GDP per citizen will exceed \$5,500, "which is a historical maximum."

According to Garibashvili, double-digit economic growth is expected by the end of the year, enabling the government to increase the budget by one billion ₾ 310 million. He also stressed that the foreign debt has been reduced, and in 2022, 60% of GDP, the country's total external debt, will drop to 51.1%.

The head of the government stressed that the next year's budget includes raises in salary for public sector workers by about 10%, noting that the change will not be one-off and the raises will continue in the following years as well. It was also noted at the Cabinet meeting that from January of 2022 pensions will increase to ₾ 260 for pensioners under 70, and ₾ 300 for those over 70. State benefits for veterans will also grow to ₾ 100.

According to Garibashvili, ₾ 114 million from the 2022 budget will be allocated for the construction of residential buildings for refugees, while ₾ 500 million will be used for Covid-19



**"We have succeeded in increasing GDP, our country's entire economy, by ₾ 6.5 billion, an impressive achievement in light of the pandemic and crises," Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said.**

management, and ₾ 300 million for implementing projects in Georgia's regions.

The financing for individual

Ministries in 2022 are as follows:

- Ministry of Finance - ₾ 105,404,800, (increased by ₾ 16,000,000)

- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development - ₾ 932,000,000
- Ministry of Regional

Development and Infrastructure - ₾ 2.8 billion (increased by over ₾ 430,000,000)

- Ministry of Justice - ₾ 310,568,400 (increased by ₾ 14,000,000)

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs - ₾ 176,000,000, (increased by ₾ 6,000,000)

- Ministry of Defence - ₾ 1 billion, (increased by ₾ 72,000,000)

- Interior Ministry - ₾ 865,000,000, (increased by ₾ 85,000,000)

- Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Health, Labor and Social Affairs – over ₾ 6 billion

- State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality - ₾ 3,000,000, (increased by ₾ 500,000)

- Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia - ₾ 593,000,000

- Ministry of Education and Science - ₾ 1,694,000,000.

- Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth Affairs - ₾ 357,000,000.

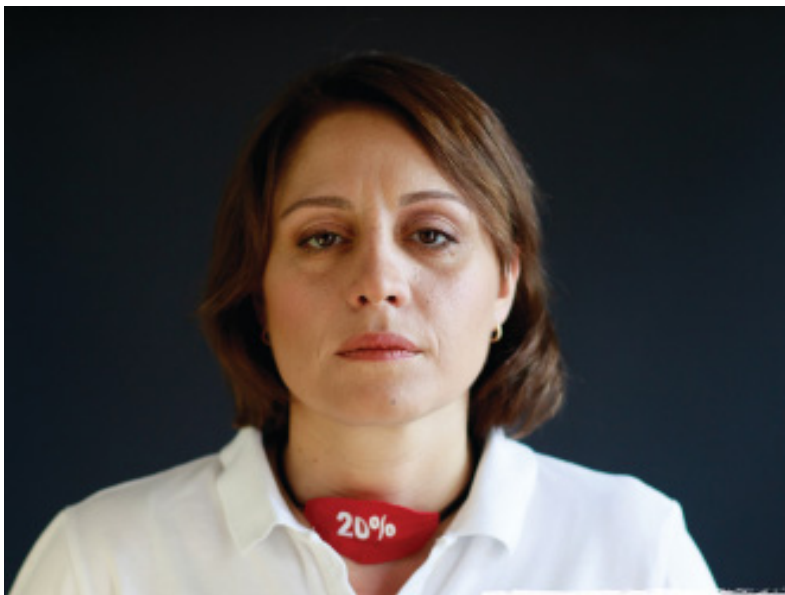


Starting January 1, pensions will increase by ₾ 20-25.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY  
THE MESSENGER STAFF

**Droa's Leader Elene Khoshtaria Meets With Saakashvili at Gori Military Hospital**



Elene Khoshtaria, the leader of political party Droa met with Mikheil Saakashvili at the Gori Military Hospital.

After the meeting, he said he would continue to fight for early elections and the release of

Mikheil Saakashvili.

“Under this government, it is impossible to live a single day without a fight.

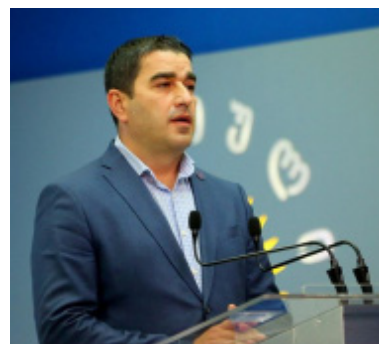
We have a very clear task in the fight, this is an extraordinary election and no one should think that it will be pushed to the background by some form of manipulation.

Without snap elections, there is no protected person in this country under illegitimate government and seized institutions.

And my clear task is to stop the act of revenge against Mikheil Saakashvili. This is not a matter of political expediency and approval. Mikheil Saakashvili and I are on different platforms, we talked about it. “Nevertheless, I can not rest until he is in this condition,” Khoshtaria said.

Elene Khoshtaria was on a hunger strike for 17 days demanding that Mikheil Saakashvili be transferred to a civilian clinic.

**Shalva Papuashvili Says UNM is Fighting to Remove Ivanishvili's Role from History, Calls it Censorship**



“The UNM is not only fighting to remove information about Bidzina Ivanishvili from the textbook of modern history. They are also fighting to remove the role of this man from History. This is a fight against History, this is direct censorship!” Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science stated.

According to Papuashvili, there is a system for assessing school textbooks; the textbooks are released in advance, and anybody may become acquainted with them and give remarks before the books are accepted. There were no negative comments on the book, according to the MP.

“There is an attempt to interfere in politics with education and politicians present them as censors of the 21st century. According to the national curriculum, one of the components of Georgian history is the teaching of modern history. The public saw quotes and excerpts taken out of context, which were cut off from the context. In general, that chapter discusses the political leaders of recent years. Among them are Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania, Eduard Shevardnadze. This is part of our history of what adults need to learn. The agitation we are seeing is another example of 21st century censors,” Papuashvili said.

**Queen Tamar and David Soslan story's onstage premier**

The UK and UNDP support a theatrical performance based on a medieval Georgian-Ossetian royal marriage

**T**BILISI. 6 December 2021 – The twelfth-century marriage between a Georgian queen and an Ossetian prince is one of the most potent symbols of Georgian-Ossetian relations. The story of love and dynastic marriage, enriched with the historical background of the Georgian ‘Golden Age’, was brought onstage at the Shota Rustaveli Theater and Film State University with support from the United Kingdom (UK) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Adapted by Nino Popiashvili, directed by Tamar Khizanishvili and produced by the non-governmental organization Caucasian Mosaic, the play features a rich cast of ethnic Georgian and Ossetian actors (Tinatin Kobaladze, Manana Tsintsadze,



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Weather

Tuesday, December 7

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 15°C  
Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 3°C

Wednesday, December 8

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 13°C  
Night 🌧 Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 5°C

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# Queen Tamar and David Soslan story's onstage premier

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Lili Khuriti, Nana Khuriti, Vazha Pukhaevi, Viktoria Jusoeva and Megi Tedeeva). Presented in both Georgian and Ossetian and using music composed by ethnic Georgian and Ossetian composers, the play quotes from the Georgian epos 'Knight in the Panther's Skin', written during Queen Tamar's reign.

The play tells the story of the royal marriage and highlights the roles that women held in the politics and diplomacy of the time. This includes women's participation in peace processes, particularly the well-known story of Queen Tamar's wise decision to dispatch Khvashak Tsokali and Kravai Jakeli on an ultimately successful diplomatic mission to negotiate with a rebel nobleman.

"In Georgia, the twelfth century is referred to as the 'Golden Age.' Art and literature researchers know it as a 'Georgian Renaissance.' It is also a period of close relations between Georgians and Ossetians, as reflected



in several dynastic marriages. Reviving these great stories reminds us of historical ties between the people of the Caucasus," said UNDP Head **Nick Beresford**.

In 2018, the Caucasian Mosaic, with the European Union (EU) and UNDP support, collaborated with the Shota Rustaveli State University of Theatre and Film to produce a

play that also depicted the history of Georgian-Ossetian relations. The collaboration adapted the ancient Caucasian epos Nart Sagas for the theatre. The theatrical adaptation followed a

2017 illustrated Georgian-Ossetian edition of Nart Sagas for children. The 'Queen Tamar and David Soslan' play continues a series of theatrical adaptations that serve to bring Georgians and Ossetians closer together, resolve conflict and build peace.

The EU, UK and UNDP supported the undertaking under their joint initiative for building confidence between conflict-divided communities, Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM). Working closely with civil society organizations on all sides of the conflict, they addressed some key confidence-building areas, such as healthcare, youth education, people-centred diplomacy, cultural cooperation, minority rights, gender equality and environmental protection. Since its start in 2010, COBERM has supported the implementation of over 200 initiatives, contributing to developing new approaches to peace and confidence building.

Photos: Daro Sulakauri/ UNDP

## A focus on women's rights in the context of Tbilisi International Film Festival with a retrospective Agnes Varda

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Tbilisi International Film Festival (December 6 to 12, 2021), a retrospective of the French filmmaker Agnes Varda is organized by director Tatjana Kononenko with the French Institute of Georgia. This project, which received the support of Mr. Jacques Fleury, Food Alliance's Chief Executive Officer, will cover most of the key works of filmography of the icon of the French Nouvelle vague. The programme will be opened by the film *Le Bonheur*, followed by a discussion about women and cinema with the filmmaker Lana Gogoberidze and her film *Some interviews on personal matters*.

Agnes Varda's retrospective allows to revisit the issues, still relevant today, raised by her work: women's rights, violence against women and their relationship to their bodies. The French Embassy in Georgia and the French Institute of Georgia will organize a discussion on December 9th at 4pm at the Cinema House, just before the screening at the Amirani cinema of *Women reply* and *One sings, the other doesn't* (Agnes Varda). This discussion will bring together H.E. Diego Colas, Ambassador of France to Georgia, Kaori Ishikawa, Resident Coordinator of UNWomen in Georgia, Ms. Baia Pataraiia, Director of the NGO Sapari, Ms. Anna Tvaradze of the NGO Hera XXI and Ms. Tatjana Kononenko, director and organizer of this retrospective.

This discussion will be an opportunity to reaffirm France's commitment to women's rights



and to recall the French position on the issues of abortion, the right to health and sexual freedom, discrimination, and gender violence. The Tbilisi International Film Festival will as usual highlight French cinema through the

screening of French productions, such as *Everything Went Fine* (Francois Ozon). Several French personalities will take part in the selection juries of the competing movies, including Kristian Feigelson, sociologist and Profes-

or at the Sorbonne-Nouvelle University. He will hold a conference entitled: "Revolts in cinema: resistance lines".

France, that succeeded in preserving an international-ranking cinema industry, stands at

Georgia's side, great country of cinematographic tradition, to develop further its cooperation with it in this field.

To discover the complete program, visit the festival website: [www.tbilisifilmfestival.ge](http://www.tbilisifilmfestival.ge)

06.12	AMIRANI 3
18:30	HAPPINESS (79MIN, 1965), AGNES VARDA AFTER THE FILM CONVERSATION WITH LANA GHOGHERIDZE ON "WOMEN IN CINEMA"
21:15	SOME INTERVIEWS ON PERSONAL MATTERS (95MIN, 1978), LANA GOGBERIDZE
07.12	AMIRANI 4
18:00	THE BEACHES OF AGNES (110MIN, 2008), AGNES VARDA
20:30	DOCUMENTEUR (63MIN, 1981), AGNES VARDA
09.12	CINEMA HOUSE
16:00	DISCUSSION AS PART OF AGNES VARDA RETROSPECTIVE : "ADDRESS SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS' ISSUES" WITH MS. K. ISHIKAWA, UNWOMEN COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE H.E. MR. D. COLAS, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE TO GEORGIA MS. T. KONONENKO, FILMMAKER MS. B. PATARAIIA, DIRECTOR OF SAPARI MS. A. TVARADZE FROM HERA XXI
09.12	AMIRANI 4
18:00	WOMEN REPLY: OUR BODIES, OUR SEX (8MIN, 1975), AGNES VARDA VAGABOND (1106MIN, 1985), AGNES VARDA
20:30	ONE SINGS, THE OTHER DOESN'T (120MIN, 1977), AGNES VARDA
10.12	AMIRANI 4
20:00	ULYSSE (20MIN, 1982), AGNES VARDA DAGUERRÉOTYPES (75MIN, 1976), AGNES VARDA



CINEMA AMIRANI  
36/1, MERAB KOSTAVA ST  
CINEMA HOUSE  
2, OZMEBI KAKABADZEEBI ST