

Georgian PM Holds Telephone Conversation With German Chancellor



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili assessed the conversation with the German Chancellor as 'productive'.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz held a phone conversation on Tuesday. The conversation focused on Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration, including the EU Membership Application filed by Georgia, as well as Georgia's bilateral cooperation with Germany and the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine.

As the PM's press service reports, the close partnership between Georgia and Germany was highlighted in various areas, "which are based on common values and interests - ensuring international security and stability".

The Prime Minister of Georgia noted that Georgia strongly appreciates the role of Germany in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the country, thereby expressing hopes for securing solid support of Germany in the consideration of the EU Membership application of Georgia. Georgian Prime Minister signed the

country's application for EU membership on March 3, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The sides also discussed the current military activities witnessed in Ukraine

and the worsening security environment in the region of Eastern Europe. According to the Prime Minister's press service, Garibashvili once again underlined that joint ef-

forts of the international community and world leaders are essential for ending the war at the earliest time possible.

Georgian Prime Minister told media outlets ear-

lier that Georgia, as well as the international community, must condemn Russia's aggression and the entire world must spare no effort to end the war as soon as possible. He

also stressed the importance of continuing the provision of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, noting that it is necessary to express solidarity in this way.



Georgian Prime Minister signed the country's application for EU membership on March 3.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.2348; Euro - 3.5576; GBP - 4.2706; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.0954; Swiss Franc - 3.4560

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgia Lifts Outdoor Facemask Mandate from March 28

The Inter-Agency Coordination Council, the responsible body for fighting back the pandemic made the decision at Tuesday's meeting that Georgia will drop its outdoor mask mandate starting March 28. Wearing the mask will remain obligatory in public transport and indoors.

Additionally, the restaurants, cafés, arts, entertainment and sports venues will be allowed to operate at full capacity, without restriction on number of guests per table.

The decision of terminating the remote working was made as well.

Georgian nationals who arrive in the country without presenting a negative PCR test result will no longer be required to self-isolate.

The council also made a decision to continue the vaccine incentive program through April, paying citizens over fifty years ₾ 200 for their first jab and ₾ 100 for receiving a booster dose.

Health Minister Zurab Azarashvili commented that the pandemic is nearing its end.

"Hospitalization rate has significantly decreased... there are



Amidst the decline in Covid-19 cases in Georgia, the interagency council lifted some pandemic-related regulations.

less than 800 people undergoing treatment at a hospital," he noted, adding "mortality rate has also significantly declined."

The Minister also added that this week Georgia will receive the first batch of Paxlovid, Pfizer's antiviral medicine for treating COVID-19.

On February 22 the Government decided to halt the use of quarantine hotels, along with several other restrictions, such as limitations on public events and gatherings, starting March 1.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced in mid-February the Government anticipated the general situation with the epidemic to stabilize by the end of March.

Chief of the National Center for Disease Control Amiran Gankrelidze said after the meeting that spread of the virus has 'stabilized' in Georgia. According to him, 14-day positivity has fallen below 5%, while the number of fatalities recorded were the lowest since summer of 2021.

As of March 22, Georgia has confirmed 1,643,295 cases of Covid-19 of which 16,678 have died. On Tuesday, 1,053 cases and 7 fatalities were reported.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Pentagon: Russian Military Freezing Due to Lack of Proper Equipment

According to a senior US Department of Defense official, the Russian military is freezing due to a lack of proper equipment.

According to American media, a senior Pentagon official said the lack of proper equipment is compounded by the shortage of food and fuel between Russian forces.

According to him, the Russian army still has problems with logistics and sustainability.

"Their soldiers have a problem with the equipment. We have indicators, we conclude that some of them were withdrawn from the front because they were frozen," said the representative of the Department of Defense.

According to him, the Rus-

sians also have problems with the command, which complicates communication between them.

Israeli PM Bennett: Russia no Longer Demands Replacing Zelensky and Demilitarization of Ukraine

According to the Prime Minister of Israel, Naftali Bennett, Russia no longer demands the replacement of President Volodymyr Zelensky and the complete demilitarization of Ukraine.

As Bennett noted, part of the negotiations is still "a long way to go." At the same time, according to him, Ukraine no longer asks for NATO membership.

"Together with our other friends, we will continue to build a bridge [between the parties] to end the war. This is the best thing that can happen," the prime minister said.

Recall that Ukraine requested mediation between Russia and Ukraine, citing Israel's good relations with both sides as the reason.

Jake Sullivan: On March 24, Biden will announce new sanctions against Russia



By THE MESSENGER STAFF

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Thursday, March 24, that US President Joe Biden will announce new sanctions against Russia.

An extraordinary NATO summit will be held in Brussels on March 24, which will be attended by Biden.

Biden will talk about sanctions with the allies.

"All I can say is that the presi-

dent will not only focus on the new sanctions but also on ensuring that a joint effort is made to prevent an invasion of Ukraine. This is an important part of the next phase," Said Jake Sullivan.

Joe Biden will talk to European leaders about "energy security and joint steps to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian gas in the long run."

"The president is also talking about human rights and responding to the growing influx of refugees from Ukraine." Said Sullivan.

Biden will attend G7 meetings and will also travel to Poland, where, as Sullivan says, he "will meet with American troops involved in the defense of NATO territory, as well as experts involved in humanitarian issues."

The US President will also meet with the leader of Poland, Andrzej Duda. Sullivan does not know whether or not Biden will meet Ukrainian refugees.

Weather

Wednesday, March 23

Day Snow Showers
High: 4°C
Night Light Snow
Low: 0°C

Thursday, March 24

Day Snow Showers
High: 3°C
Night Light Snow
Low: -1°C

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