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PM Gakharia presents anti-crisis economic plan
The plan was presented at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Council.

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BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

According to Paata Imnadze, Deputy Director of the National Center for

#stayhome Stay home, Stay safe #staysafe

More than 485 confirmed Coronavirus cases in Georgia



According to the official information, 139 patients have already recovered.

Disease Control and Public Health, has stated that there is no need for aggressive testing in the country since the situation is still under control. As he said, until today, every decision that was made by the team worked very well and they were able to keep the situation controlled.

Imnadze said that more than 12,000 PCR tests have been conducted in Georgia today; Also, 5-6 thousand quick tests

on antibodies. He also noted that antigen-based tests have been performed but did not specify how many.

Imnadze also spoke about the sensitivity of

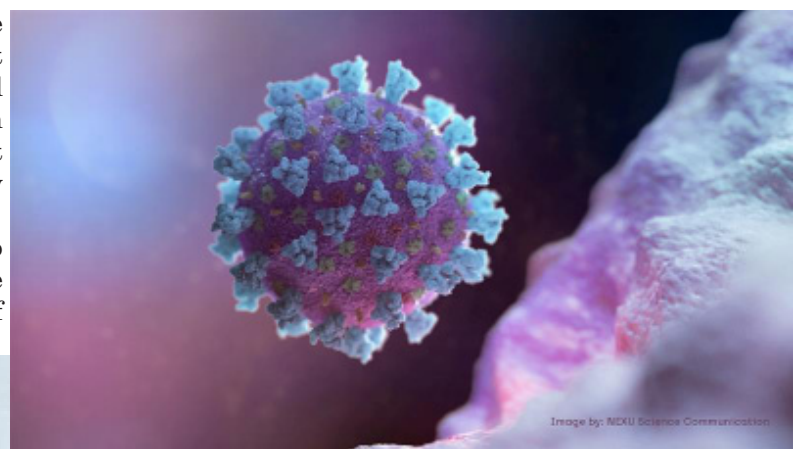


Image by: NIKU Science Communication



Imnadze talked about tests that have been conducted in the country.

Most of the restrictions are still in effect.

rapid antibody tests and said that often, when the test shows a severe infection, the PCR test does not confirm the result.

"Antigen is a fast method, but still an instrumental method. Its sensitivity is quite good, not like PCR, but not bad. As for the rapid test of antibodies, recently the quality has improved with these tests, although their sensitivity and specificity are not high," said Imnadze.

Imnadze also noted that there are currently 12,000 PCR tests in the country, and they are expected to replenish supplies on Monday or Tuesday.

"We hope to increase the number of tests according to the epidemiological situation and increase it in May, probably during the middle of the month, and we hope to have 1500 to 2000 tests daily," he added.

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PM Gakharia presents anti-crisis economic plan



Gakharia said that there will be different stages for lifting the restrictions.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia has met with the leaders of the government to discuss the Anti-crisis Economic plan. The plan was presented at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Council.

The PM talked about the steps taken by the government to prevent the virus from spreading further, noted that caring for

citizens' health, as well as saving the economy and ensuring social welfare are today's current challenges.

Gakharia highlighted that with the help of the state, citizens were provided with the opportunity to defer loan payments for the next three months, which was crucial for individuals who lost income.

Gakharia stated that restrictions should be lifted gradually,

the second stage will start in about two weeks, and it will mostly affect construction, activities related to the supervision of construction materials, car washes and car services in full, as well as repair of computers, personal and household goods and operation of recreational zones. At the third stage, trade restrictions will be lifted, the fourth stage will affect shopping



Other government representatives attended the presentation.

Weather

Monday, April 27

Day Clear
High: 21°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 8°C

Tuesday, April 28

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 17°C
Night Clear
Low: 7°C

and that 'the transition from one stage to the next one' should be discussed with epidemiologists. "The first, second and third stages are lifting bans on activities in open spaces." As PM says,

malls. At the 5th stage, lifting of restrictions will apply to closed-type markets and fairs, as well as to all types of restaurants and food facilities, including on-site services. The 6th stage of the re-

strictions will apply to entertainment, sports and recreation facilities, creative activities, gambling businesses, hotels and education institutions.

According to the PM, these steps will be taken after working with the professionals. The

first case of the virus was reported in the country on February 26, since then, more than 485 cases were reported. 6 people have died from complications of the Coronavirus in Georgia. More than 139 have already recovered.

More than 485 confirmed Coronavirus cases in Georgia

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The first case of the novel Coronavirus was reported in Georgia two months ago, on February 26th. Since then, the number has been rising steadily. Around the world, there are almost 3 million reported cases of the Coronavirus reported and more than 200,000 people have died.

According to the official data,

the most cases are reported in the US, where the number of the infected is almost one million. Following the US is Spain, and then Italy.

The virus has originally spread from the Wuhan region of China, where, as of today, there are only 801 active cases. In total, China has reported more than 82 thousand cases of the virus.

NEWS IN BRIEF

By MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia is in the middle of Covid-19 peak, Paata Imnadze says

Deputy director of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health Paata Imnadze stated at the briefing that Georgia has reached a peak which was predicted by health officials. He also ironically apologized to everyone who got 'disappointed' with the fewer new cases of Covid-19.

"We have been predicting that the end of April and the early May would be a peak based on all calculations."

We are in the middle of the peak and our mission is to hold onto the plateau."

According to the latest update, 488 people have been infected with the Coronavirus in Georgia, 136 of them have recovered and 6 have died. 4,928 people are in quarantine.

Strict quarantine has been announced in the Tetrtskaro Municipality

Strict quarantine restrictions have been imposed in Tetrtskaro municipality due to high epidemiological risks after the nurse at the local hospital tested positive for Covid-19.

Quarantine has also been announced at a Tetrtskaro Hospital. Kvemo Kartli state representative Shota Rekhviashvili told reporters that a large-scale preventive measure was taken with a group of epidemiologists arriving in the municipality, the contacts of the infected are being analyzed.

Control checkpoints have been set up at the entrances and exits of the district center and representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Defense have been mobilized. The strict quarantine restricts the free movement of citizens.

There are currently 9 Covid-19 patients in the Tetrtskaro Municipality.

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Finance Minister recent developments and future

By MESSENGER STAFF

The Minister of Finance of Georgia, Ivane Machavariani, visited a TV show Forbes Kvira and talked about recent developments.

“The government has managed to save ₾300 million only from current expenses, such as business trips, check in Georgia, various events that can no longer be held, etc. The main burden falls on these measures, which cannot be carried out.”

“In total, we are talking about savings from 700 million to a billion. If we are forced to extend the restrictions for a long time,

more will be saved” added Machavariani.

Machavariani explained that the Georgian state does stop paying the foreign debts under the Coronavirus pandemic. According to him, \$1.5 billion remains in the country after attracting funds from international financial institutions and paying off debts. The government will use the money for the purpose of the anti-crisis plan, which was presented by Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia on Friday.

“Georgia’s debt is growing, and we may even approach 60% of GDP. However, compared to the results from other countries,



Finance Minister Ivane Machavariani spoke about economic updates



The novel coronavirus has originally spread from the Wuhan region of China

we may be happy about it. This is a natural and adequate event, although uncomfortable,” said Machavariani.

He added that in case the situation gets worse, debts should still be paid, explaining that the

Coronavirus has shown us that it is necessary for small companies to have their data open and transparent so that the state does not have to work twice as much in such situations and for it to be able to help them pur-

posefully.

The virus has affected the world’s economy, with many saying that the outcome of it might be worse than the 2008 world financial crisis.

Most Commodity Prices to Drop in 2020 As Coronavirus Depresses Demand and Disrupts Supply

Despite ample supplies of agricultural commodities, trade and supply chain disruptions raise food security concerns.

WASHINGTON, April 23, 2020 – The global economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic has driven most commodity prices down and is expected to result in substantially lower prices over 2020, the World Bank said in its April *Commodity Markets Outlook*.

Energy and metals commodities are the most affected by the sudden stop to economic activity and the serious global slowdown that is anticipated. Commodities associated with transportation, including oil, have experienced the steepest declines. Despite only moderate impact on the outlook for most agricultural commodities, supply chain disruptions and government steps to restrict exports or stockpile commodities raise concerns that food security may be at risk in places, the report says.

“In addition to the devastating human toll, the economic impact of the pandemic will dampen demand and cause supply disruptions, negatively affecting developing countries that rely heavily on commodities,” said **Ceyla Pazarbasioglu, World Bank Group Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance & Institutions.** “Policymakers must resist the urge to impose trade restrictions and actions

that put food security at risk, as the poor would be hit the hardest.”

Monthly average crude oil prices plunged 50 percent between January and March. Prices reached a historic low in April with some benchmarks trading at negative levels. They are expected to average \$35 per barrel in 2020, a sharp downward revision from the October forecast and a 43 percent drop from the 2019 average of \$61 per barrel. The downward revision reflects an historically large drop in demand. The decline in crude oil prices has been exacerbated by uncertainty around production agreements among the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other oil producers. Energy prices overall (which also include natural gas and coal) are expected to average 40 percent lower in 2020 but see a sizeable rebound in 2021.

Metal prices also fell in early 2020. The biggest declines were in copper and zinc, which are particularly associated with global economic activity. Metal prices are projected to drop 13 percent overall in 2020 as slowing demand and the shutdown of key industries weigh heavily on the market. Industrial metals would be affected the most by the global economic slow-

down, in particular that of China, which accounts for more than half of global metals demand.

Agriculture prices are less tied to economic growth, and saw only minor declines in the first quarter of 2020, except for rubber, which is used in transportation. Prices are expected to remain broadly stable in 2020 overall as production levels and stocks of most staple foods are at record highs. However, agricultural commodity production could face disruptions to the trade and distribution of inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides, and labor availability. Disruptions of supply chains have already affected emerging market and de-

veloping country exports of perishable products such as flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

“This enormous shock to commodity markets and low oil prices could deliver a serious setback to developing economies and jeopardize the necessary investments in critical infrastructure that support long term growth and create quality jobs,” said **Makhtar Diop, World Bank Vice President for Infrastructure.** “The international community must rally together to address these setbacks by advancing interventions in diverse sources of energy, sustainable transport and access to digital infrastructure and services that allow people to stay connected during these uncertain times. This will be key to delivering vital social services, protecting jobs, supporting business and saving lives.”

An analytical focus examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on commodity markets. Mitigation measures taken to control the virus have resulted

in an unprecedented collapse in oil demand, and supply chain disruptions could cause dislocations in the consumption and production of other commodities and imperil food security. The pandemic has the potential to affect commodity demand and supply for an extended period, the analysis finds.

The plunge in oil prices provides policymakers in emerging market and developing economies with an opportunity to undertake energy-subsidy reforms. These reforms can help free spending for urgent pandemic-related purposes, discourage wasteful energy consumption, and reallocate spending to programs that better target the poor.

Another analytical section looks at OPEC in the context of other similar commodity supply management agreements. Such agreements have collapsed over time under pressure from economic forces and other events, and OPEC may be subject to the same pressures.

| | Price indexes (2010=100) | | | | | | Change (%), q/q | | Change (%), y/y | | Revisions ¹ | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|--------|------------------------|--------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 ² | 2020 ³ | 2021 ⁴ | 2019Q4 | 2020Q1 | 2020Q2 | 2020Q2 | 2020Q2 | 2020Q2 |
| Energy | 55 | 66 | 87 | 70 | 45 | 34 | 1.7 | -18.4 | -40.3 | 18.0 | -35.1 | 17.7 |
| Non-energy ⁵ | 79 | 84 | 85 | 82 | 78 | 79 | 1.0 | -0.7 | -5.1 | 2.5 | -4.0 | 0.9 |
| Agriculture | 87 | 87 | 87 | 83 | 82 | 84 | 4.1 | 1.2 | -1.1 | 1.8 | -0.9 | -0.1 |
| Beverages | 91 | 83 | 79 | 75 | 72 | 74 | 5.1 | -0.9 | -5.3 | 2.3 | -4.4 | 0.2 |
| Food | 90 | 90 | 90 | 87 | 87 | 88 | 4.0 | 1.5 | -0.5 | 1.0 | -1.2 | 2.1 |
| Oils and meats | 88 | 87 | 85 | 77 | 78 | 80 | 7.2 | 3.1 | 0.1 | 2.7 | -1.8 | 5.2 |
| Grains | 81 | 81 | 80 | 80 | 88 | 89 | 0.8 | -4.4 | -1.5 | 1.8 | -1.0 | 0.4 |
| Other food | 99 | 102 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 98 | 0.0 | -2.5 | -0.4 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Raw materials | 80 | 81 | 81 | 78 | 77 | 79 | 1.2 | 1.0 | -0.8 | 1.0 | -5.3 | 0.3 |
| Fertilizers | 78 | 74 | 82 | 81 | 73 | 70 | -7.0 | -4.5 | -9.0 | 3.1 | -12.0 | 1.0 |
| Metals and minerals | 63 | 78 | 83 | 78 | 68 | 71 | -1.8 | -4.7 | -13.2 | 4.0 | -11.0 | 2.9 |
| Precious metals | 97 | 98 | 97 | 105 | 119 | 119 | 0.7 | 5.4 | 13.2 | -0.3 | 7.7 | 0.7 |
| Non-metals items | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crude oil (\$/bbl) | 43 | 53 | 68 | 61 | 35 | 42 | 1.0 | -18.7 | -43.0 | 20.0 | -37.5 | 18.1 |
| Gold (\$/oz) | 1,240 | 1,288 | 1,200 | 1,302 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 14.9 | -0.5 | 9.3 | 0.0 |

¹Revisions of the forecasts for 2019 and 2020. ²Q4 2019. ³Q1 2020. ⁴Q2 2020. ⁵Includes energy and metals. ⁶Includes energy, metals, and minerals. ⁷Includes energy, metals, and minerals. ⁸Includes energy, metals, and minerals. ⁹Includes energy, metals, and minerals. ¹⁰Includes energy, metals, and minerals.

Iakob Zubalashvili - Country of Liquid Sun



Zubalashvili, Watman and Emerich in 1840-1842 in which Emerich threatened confiscation of the enterprise due to the non-payment of land rent and Zubalashvili blamed Watman for all the failures. These circumstances led to the termination of production in 1842. In order not to leave the sugar remains unused, Zubalashvili, together with Pepinov, who lived in Tbilisi, opened a rum and vodka factory. Their product was of quite a high quality and so they tried to export it to Russia. For certain period of time, Pepinov, who was the factory's technologist, was asking for the government's permit to export 2,000 puds of rum to Russia without duty.

In 1843, Zubalashvili built a large caravansary in Tbilisi with ten shops storage facilities, wine cellars and 71 rooms for guests. He also built the church in Kutaisi, established pharmaceutical, construction and commercial companies, built schools in Javakheti and houses, churches, schools and bakeries in Tbilisi



whilst taking care of the education of talented young people and initiating and implementing a great deal of good deeds.

After Iakob's death, his sons Anton and Konstantine developed their father's initiative even more, becoming acquainted with a new branch of industry in the form of oil extraction and purchased from Rotshild the island

of Bibi-Eibat, near Bakum, in Caspian Sea.

In recognition of a lifetime of great service, Tbilisi awarded the title of Honourable Citizens to Levan, Stepane and Iakob Zubalashvili. In further homage to this family, one of the streets in the center of Tbilisi has been named Zubalashvili Brothers.

Since ancient times, farmers in all of Georgia's regions have made chacha, fruit vodkas, extracts and bitter drinks based upon raw the materials of local provenance: in Kakheti - chacha, in Kartli - apple, peach, apricot plum, in Samtskhe-Javakheti - mulberry, chanchuri, cornel, in Guria - wax vodka (honeycomb), in Mtiuleti and Svaneti - zhipitauri, in Imereti - cherry plum, wild pear, in Khevi - beer.

Industrial production of spirit beverages in Georgia has been developing since the 1820s. In this regard, Iakob Zubalashvili (1792-1864), a famous Maecenas and entrepreneur, has made a special contribution.

The first great merchant from amongst the Catholic Zubalashvilis was Stepane, a prominent figure himself, who traded in Turkey, Iran, Middle Asia and India. He ultimately settled in India where he had several caravansaries, marrying a local woman and dying in India in 1815.

Beginning in the 1820s, Stepane's brother, Iakob Zubalashvili, began his activities-not by trading-but by the production of vodka in the city of Kutaisi. This is especially noteworthy because no manufacture existed in that enterprises, as such, did not exist in western Georgia at this time and neither were local Georgians skilled in

trade, had not yet emerged as major traders.

Iakob Zubalashvili amassed a significant wealth through the production of vodka and, for the purpose of extending his activities, he also tried his luck in Tbilisi. In 1835-1836, on a land plot adjacent to the Didube German colony belonging gymnasium teacher, Mr Emerich, Zubalashvili opened a vodka distillery together with a foreign partner, Mr Watman. Initially intending to use wheat-based spirits for the production of his vodka, he opened the first sugar factory in the Caucasus in 1837 and used sugar remains for making the vodka. The opening of sugar factory was such an important event that Zubalashvili even received a significant privilege from the government-exemption from excise tax-and in return had to plant sugar cane plantations in Georgia worth the amount of the money saved. The income which was generated was immense. The only function of the factory was importing raw sugar from abroad and producing it into lump sugar. The factory existed for seven-to-eight years with its maximum annual income reaching 186,000 roubles.

Zubalashvili's vodka distillery in Tbilisi functioned successfully and at full capacity and remained profitable although a disagreement arose between



Рабочие завода «Барамбо» | Barambo factory workers