

Politics

PM Gakharia meets with EU Special Representative Toivo Klaar



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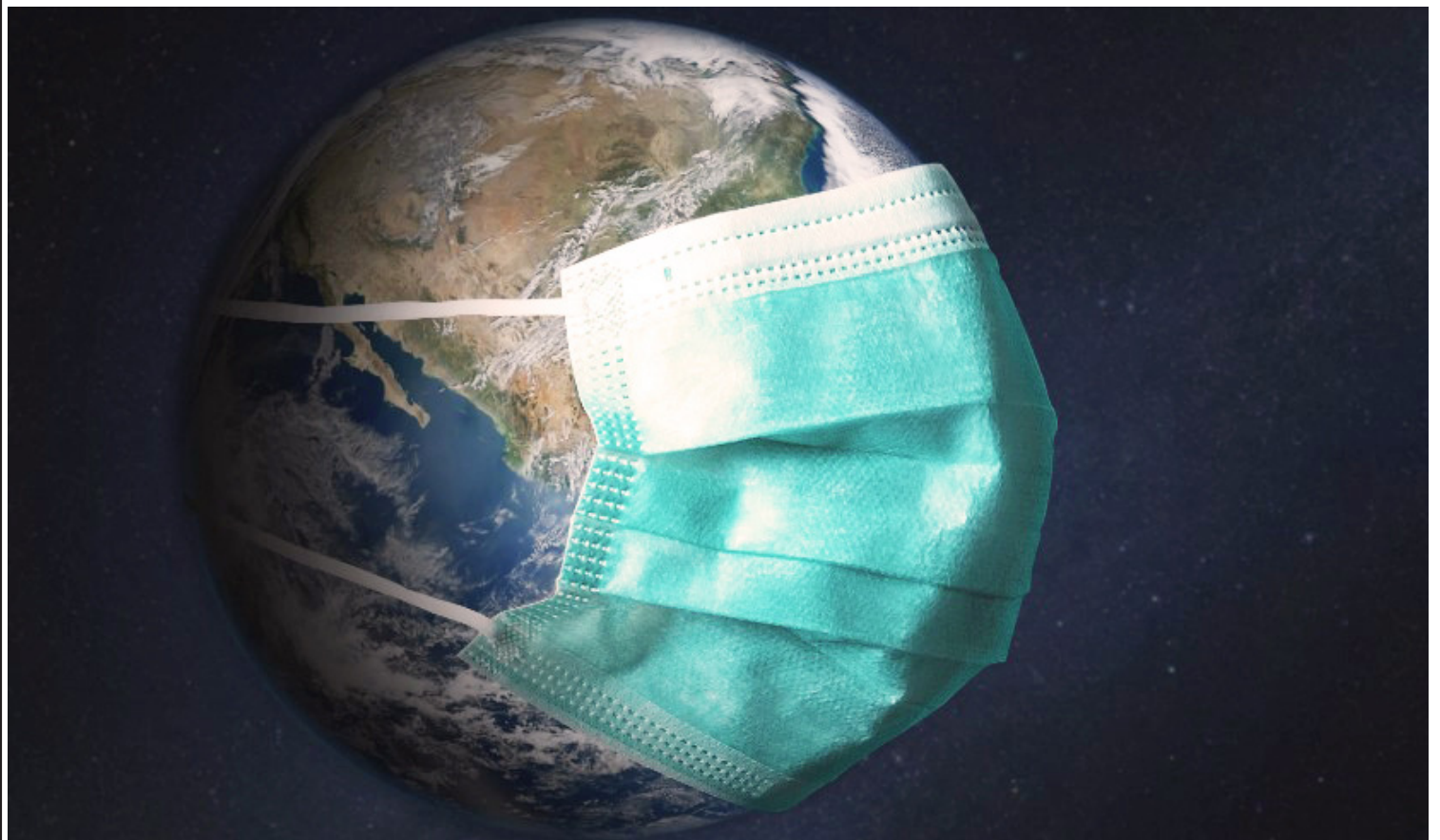
Economics

Assets of Georgian banks increase by 1.73% in December



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NDI releases new poll on Public Attitudes in Georgia



According to the results of the poll, 39% believe the worst is yet to come regarding the pandemic, while 33% think the worst is already left behind.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and CRRC Georgia have released a new poll concerning economic issues and challenges the pandemic has brought. The data reflected in the poll results were collected between December 17- 24, 2020, through telephone interviews using the random-digit-dial method. The research project is funded with UK aid from the British people.

According to the results of the survey

on public attitude, 45% of the respondents think that there is democracy in Georgia, while 42% believe that there is no democracy in the country and 12% do not know the answer to this question. As for the question asking in which direction the country is developing, 38% think Georgia is developing in the wrong direction, 32% said that the country is developing in the right direction, and 22% think that Georgia is not changing. 45% of the surveyed people believe there is democracy in Georgia now, while 42%

believe the opposite (12% do not know the answer).

As the poll has revealed, jobs (46%), poverty (37%), and rising prices/inflation (31%) are the biggest national-level issues Georgian people face. A considerable percentage of surveyed people are also concerned about the issues of territorial integrity, Covid-19, education, and pensions.

"For years, our polls have shown that Georgians have perceived little progress on the top national issues of concern — employment, poverty, inflation — and

they express a clear desire that their elected representatives work together to address these problems," - said Alan Gillam, NDI Georgia Country Director.

The majority of respondents (59%) name unemployment as the biggest problem of the Georgian economy. When asked about household well-being, only 23% said they are better off economically since 2016, while 32% feel their situation has worsened and for 45%, it hasn't changed.

It is noteworthy that 80% support the Georgian government's stated goal to join the EU, only 8% disapproves of the idea. 74% approve of the goal to join NATO, 9% disapproves and 19% do not know the answer.

As for the healthcare issues, the majority with 46% consider medicine prices the biggest problem in the healthcare system. People are also concerned about Covid-19 related issues (25%), accessibility of hospitals on Covid-19 (16%), lack of qualification of doctors and med personnel (14%), availability of hospitals and healthcare services (13%), cost of medical care/doctor's visits (13), accessibility of doctors for Covid-19 issues (12%). 9% think there are no issues in the healthcare system.

The majority of respondents (60%) believe that the government is handling the pandemic well, while 33% think the opposite. In response to the question - if the Coronavirus vaccine existed, would you vaccinate yourself and your kids? - 41% of respondents say yes, 41% answer no, and 17% say they do not know.



The majority of respondents (59%) of the survey name unemployment as the biggest problem facing the Georgian economy.

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PM Gakharia meets with EU Special Representative Toivo Klaar



Co-Chair of the Geneva International Discussions and EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar and the Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Yesterday, Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia met with Toivo Klaar, Co-Chair of the Geneva International Discussions and EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia. According to the press service of the government administration, the latest regional security changes and related challenges were discussed during the meeting.

Gakharia noted at the meeting that the recent changes in the Caucasus region further aggravates challenges occurring in the occupied territories “making it more important for the government of Georgia to coordinate an effective unified vision and policy toward the occupied territories.”

According to the official

Weather

Tuesday, January 26

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 10°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: -2°C

Wednesday, January 27

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 11°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: -1°C

statement, the meeting underlined the importance of the recent judgment by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the 2008 Russo-Georgia war case and the need to use it in the country’s de-occupation process. For the record, Georgia has recently won the case against Russia in the ECHR. According to the judgment delivered by the Strasbourg-based court, Russia was responsible for the breach of six articles of the European Convention of Human Rights

during the conflict. The court said that Kremlin is guilty of the torture of Georgian prisoners of war and the expulsion of Georgian villagers from their homes in South Ossetia.

During the meeting, the conversation also focused on the security situation in the occupied regions and nearby territories and the humanitarian problems created as a result of restriction on freedom of movement by the Russian occupation forces. The need to boost the incident prevention and response mechanism meetings and the platform of the Geneva International Discussions was also stressed

at the meeting.

According to the PM of Georgia, the challenges concerning the occupied territories are a national security-level problem, which, apart from the implementation of a unified, coordinated policy by the Government of Georgia, also requires active and direct involvement from the EU and other strategic partners.

Gakharia thanked Klaar for the EU’s engagement in the peaceful conflict-resolution process and the objective international monitoring carried out by the EU Monitoring Mission in the territories along the occupation lines.



Recently, Georgia has won the 2008 Russo-Georgia war case in the European Court of Human Rights.

NDI releases new poll on Public Attitudes in Georgia

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According to the survey, Georgians’ views of the parliament have improved. Half of the surveyed people think the performance of the government is good (38 % negatively assesses the government’s performance). The respondents were also asked about their attitudes towards the

new parliament. The majority of the citizens think that for the new parliament to represent the interest of the Georgian people, it is crucial for political parties to collaborate (82 %) and for all elected parties to participate in parliament (76 %).

“However, citizens remain skeptical of Parliament’s willingness to address citizen con-

cerns (41 percent do not believe parliament will work on issues that matter to them); deploy consultative processes (a quarter and a third of Georgians do not think the new parliament will engage citizens or CSOs more actively, respectively); and behave ethically (only 36 percent agreed),” reports NDI.

According to the poll, 31% of

respondents support GD party, 25% do not support any party, 24% refused to answer, 5% supports UNM, and 9% supports other parties (which include, Alliance of Patriots, Strategy Aghmashenebeli, Girchi, European Georgia, Lelo, and Labour Party).

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Assets of Georgian banks increase by 1.73% in December



According to Koba Gvenetadze, NBG director, access to alternative sources of financing for the Georgian private sector is growing every year - after 2016, the volume of securities nominated in the national currency increased by an average of 40%.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

As of January 1, 2021, the total assets of 15 commercial banks operating in Georgia reached ₾ 56.9 billion, which is 966.9 million more than in the previous month. According to the National Bank of Georgia (NBG), the growth of assets was 1.73%, and without the effect of the exchange rate, this growth was 2.30%. The increase in assets was mainly due to the one billion increase in deposits. Meanwhile, the size of banks' loan portfolios increased by 858 million last month.

The volume of non-bank deposits in the banking sector amounted to ₾ 34.63 billion as of which is ₾ 1.04 billion, or 3.09% more than in December 1 (3.57% more without the exchange rate effect). In December,

compared to the previous month, there was a decrease in time deposits by ₾ 21.21 million, or 0.13% (increased by 0.43% without the exchange rate effect), while demand deposits increased by ₾ 1.06 billion, or 6.07% (excluding the exchange rate effect - 6.49%).

The larization ratio of deposits for January 1 of the current year was 38.61%. Compared to December 1, the larization of deposits increased by 0.57%.

The average weighted annual market interest rate on time deposits in December was 6.34%, including 8.31% on national currency deposits and 2.01% on foreign currency deposits.

"The share of the US dollar in foreign currency deposits was 84.24%, while the share of the euro was 14.39%," read the NBG report.

As for loans, according to the report, the volume for the first



of January amounted to ₾ 38.22 billion.

The volume of loans issued by commercial banks (excluding interbank loans) in December 2020 increased by ₾ 858.68 million (2.30%) compared to the previous month and amounted to ₾ 38.22 billion as of January 1 this year. During the same period, the volume of loans in national currency increased by ₾ 676.90 million (4.16%), while the volume of loans in foreign currency increased by ₾ 181.77 million (0.86%). At the end of December 2020, commercial banks issued ₾ 5.42 billion (6.90% more than in the previous month) and foreign currency loans in the amount of ₾ 13.20 billion (1.70% more than in the previous month) in foreign currency.

During December 2020, the volume of lending to the resident household sector increased by 1.51%, or ₾ 279.75 million, and amounted to ₾ 18.75 billion. "As of January 1, the larization ratio of total loans was 44.32%, up 0.79% from December 1, 2020 (excluding the exchange rate effect, increased by 0.82%)," the NBG reported.

EU supports European Court of Human Rights judgment in Georgia-Russia case

The European Union has reiterated its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia, responding to a judgment by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Grand Chamber on 21 January in the inter-State case concerning the armed conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation in August 2008 and its consequences.

The Georgian government had asserted that certain administrative practices of the Russian Federation had breached the European Convention of Human Rights in the context of this armed conflict. The ECHR ruling clearly concludes that after 12 August 2008 the Russian Federation, exercising effective control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, violated



Photo: European Union

several provisions of the Convention, the European Union External Action Service said in a statement, published on 22 January.

"Achieving justice and accountability is an important part of conflict resolution and the EU calls upon the Russian Federation to ensure the proper follow-up of the ruling," the statement said. "The European Union is fully committed to supporting conflict resolution, which also requires efforts to address the legacy of past conflicts, including through its engagement as co-chair in the Geneva International Discussions, the efforts of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, and the crucial role played on the ground by the EU Monitoring Mission".

The European Union firmly supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders, the statement said.