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# Government ready to meet all parties interested in Namakhvani HPP project as the protests hit 168<sup>th</sup> day



By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Minister of Economy of Georgia Ekaterine Turnava stated earlier today that she is ready to meet "all interested" in Namakhvani hydroelectric plant project. Today, the long-standing protest against the construction of the Namakhvani HPP by Turkish company ENKA has reached the 168<sup>th</sup> consequent day.

Minister Turnava stated that a large-scale meeting will soon be held with the representatives of NGOs, scientists, and all the parties interested in the building of Namakhvani HPP. Meanwhile, the tensions in Rioni Valley, where the protests are held were high today, as the police dismantled the protestors' tents yesterday, amidst the "fears of the possible flooding", after one man drowned. Earlier today, the protesters urged the

residents of Rioni to join them in a protest action at the central square of Kutaisi and beep the horns to draw attention to the protest. The police have already been mobilized on the spot where the protestors are expected to arrive. Some clashes between the police and the protesters have been reported today, as the former did not permit people from Gumati to enter Namakhvani, which led to a confrontation between the gathered crowd and

the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs stated earlier today, that it will not permit the violent scenario to unfold, and, thus, will treat all violations of law with all seriousness:

"We urge the citizens of the Rioni Valley not to go beyond the means of freedom of expression permitted by the country's law and obey the orders of the law enforcement officers", Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said in its statement.

Georgia's Prosecutor General, Nino Lomjaria, has also issued her statement regarding the situation in Rioni Valley and urged the government to deescalate the situation via the direct dialogue with the protesters:

"Four days ago, I met protesters in the Rioni Valley, who had very specific and legitimate questions to the government, who are seeking dialogue and advocating for peaceful protests only.... The government should be responding to the ongoing protests not via police action, but with dialogue and direct communication", Lomjaria added.

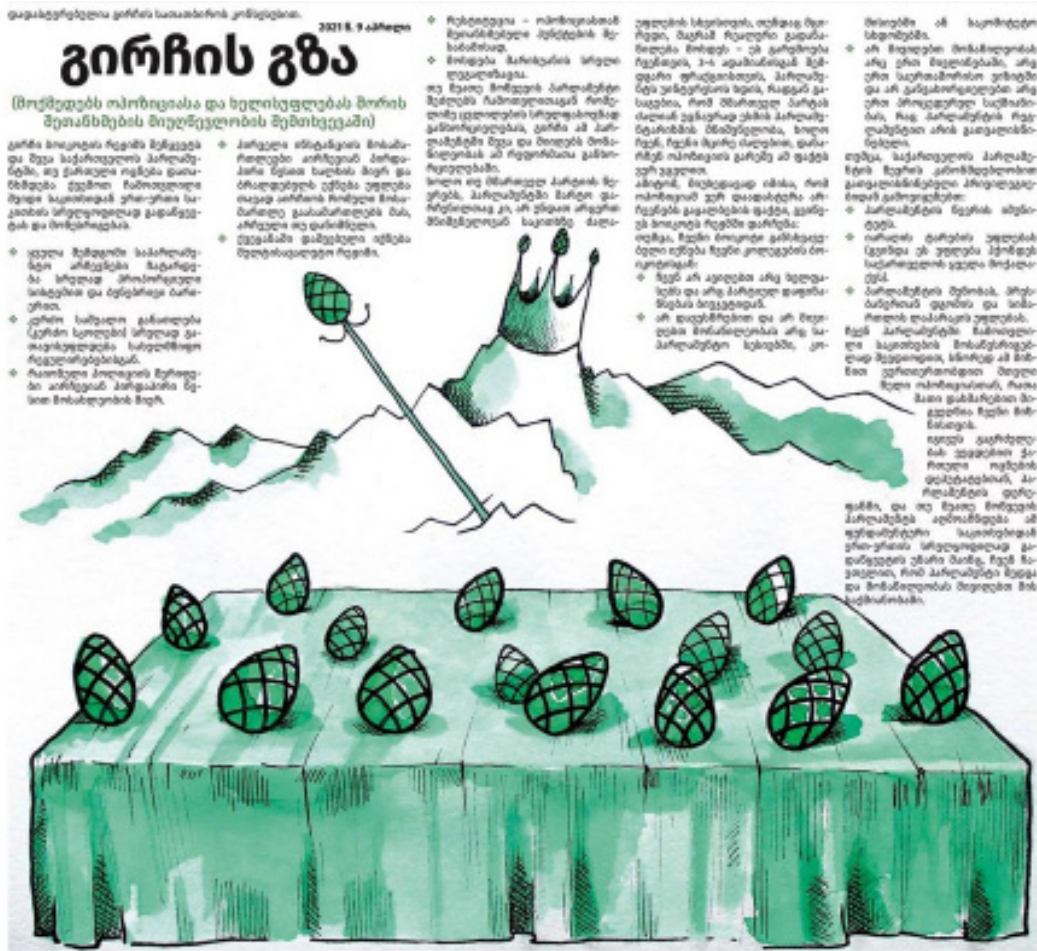
Georgia's Public Defender also called for the government authorities to schedule a meeting with the protestors as soon as possible, hold a series of transparent and result-oriented discussions with the interested parties until all questions and uncertainties are addressed successfully, have the police immediately ensure the people's right to freedom of movement and freedom of assembly, and ensure the readiness of all interested parties to participate in media discussion and debates to keep the general public informed on the matter.



Police dismantling activists' tents in Namakhvani village, Imereti, April 11, 2021. Photo: Ombudsman of Georgia



# Opposition Girchi party releases action plan on parliament entry



According to Girchi, they continue boycotting differently by refusing salaries or the state party funding and participation in any parliamentary sessions, commissions, committee sittings, procedural activities, and international business visits.

If the ruling GD party fulfills at least one of the proposed demands, Girchi will enter the legislature.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Yesterday, in a teaser of its newspaper, the Girchi opposition party unveiled its action plan on Parliament entry, which consists of 7 demands and will come into force if the ruling and opposition parties fail to reach an agreement. Girchi will enter the parliament if the Georgian

dream entirely fulfills one of the seven outlined issues.

- The demands are as follows:
- All following parliamentary elections should be held in a fully proportional electoral system and with a natural threshold
  - Private secondary schools should be fully freed from state regulation
  - District police sheriffs

should be directly elected by the community

- First instance judges should be chosen directly by the people, and defendants should have a right to choose between elected and appointed judges during their trials
- The government should allow a multi-currency regime
- Restitution should be made

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

## Third coronavirus wave starts in Georgia, says NCDC Head

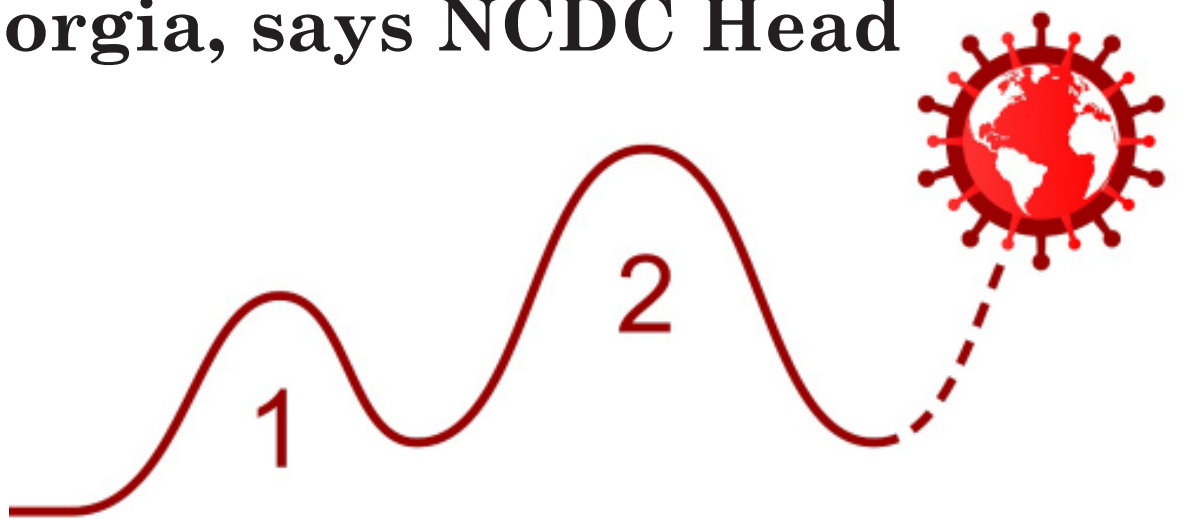
The Head of the Georgian National Centre for Disease Control Amiran Gamkrelidze states that as in many other countries, the third wave of Covid-19 has started in Georgia as well. According to him, the number of new cases per 100,000 inhabitants per day has increased and all the indicators determining epidemiological situation have deteriorated.

As Gamkrelidze stated at the briefing yesterday, there are about 17 cluster outbreaks in the country, all of them related to

big feasts and parties. "These outbreaks are manageable so far but if we do not introduce radical measures and observe recommendations, the virus will start to spread widely," the NCDC head remarked.

Gamkrelidze also touched upon the vaccination rate. "As of today, 20,622 people have been vaccinated which is not enough. At least 3,000-4,000 people should get the jab per day," said Gamkrelidze. He also stressed that 34 cases of side effects have been reported after vaccination, 7 of which were serious.

The NCDC head stated at the



Georgia reported 359 coronavirus cases, 526 recoveries, and 6 deaths on Monday.

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### Weather

Tuesday, April 13

Day T-storm  
High: 14°C  
Night Rain  
Low: 8°C

Wednesday, April 14

Day Rain  
High: 18°C  
Night Clear  
Low: 6°C

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## Georgian Farmers' Association presents new platform - agrogate.world



The Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA) was founded in 2012 and is a non-commercial, non-for-profit legal entity. Currently, the organization unites about 4,000 farmers across Georgia. The Association acts as a facilitator between the government and farmers.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Organized by the Georgian Farmers' Association, a panel discussion was held in the village of Udabno - "Pandemic Opportunity or Challenge for the Agricultural Sector". The meeting was attended by US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan, Israeli Ambassador to Georgia Ran Gidor, Ambassador of the Netherlands Maaïke van Koldam, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Natia Turnava, Minister of Environment and Agriculture Levan Davitashvili, as well as representatives of different countries' diplomatic corps, agro tourist facilities and donor organizations.

Within the framework of the event, a presentation of the agro-tourism online platform [agrogate.world](https://agrogate.world) was held. The platform was created by the Georgian Farmers' Association and it aims to uniting agro-tourism facilities of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in one space.

Through the online platform [agrogate.world](https://agrogate.world), tourists will be able to book both accommoda-

tion and master classes at the agro-tourism facility. Videos created in two languages will be posted on the website along with the photo material, which will make it easier for the user to find information about a particular object.

Agrotourism, as a form of recreation and development, is a world-recognized direction that is becoming increasingly popular. People, exhausted of urban routine, are more and more often fleeing to nature, to villages, owning a pastoral life - participating in agriculture, taking care of pets, working on the land, exploring the ancient customs and rituals preserved in the countryside. Along with the best form of relaxation, agrotourism also involves job creation, economic development, ecology and some competition in business, which increases the prospects for rapid development in this field. As world experience shows, the benefits of agro-tourism are quite significant in agriculture. In order to develop agro-tourism in Georgia, it is necessary to have a well-put together infrastructure and a proper farm agriculture.



The meeting also presented [gfdigital.ge](https://gfdigital.ge) and its 5 platforms ([Agronavti](https://Agronavti); [agroskills.ge](https://agroskills.ge);

[Agromap.ge](https://Agromap.ge); [Smart Village](https://SmartVillage); [Agrojobs.ge](https://Agrojobs.ge)), created by the Georgian Farmers' Association and

digitizing the fields of agriculture, vocational training, tourism and employment.

## Third coronavirus wave starts in Georgia, says NCDC Head

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briefing that the so-called British strain circulates in 50-60% of Covid-19 cases in Georgia. Fortunately, other mutations, such as Brazilian, South African, or Indian strains have not been detected in Georgia so far.

Gamkrelidze stresses that if the recommendations, such as the universal wearing of facemasks, keeping distance, following the rules of sanitation, and, most importantly, avoiding large gatherings, are followed and the engagement in vaccination increases to 3,000-4,000 individual per day, it will be pos-

sible to establish public immunity in the country by April-May.

Georgia reported 359 coronavirus cases, 526 recoveries, and 6 deaths on Monday. According to the official statistics, Tbilisi recorded the highest number (202) of Covid-19 cases, followed by the Adjara region (46 cases) and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region (40 cases). Since the first outbreak of the virus in the country, Georgia has recorded 288 755 cases in total, among them, 277 829 people recovered and 3 883 died. The daily test-positivity rate stands at 2,62%.



According to the Head of the NCDC Amiran Gamkrelidze, 17 cluster outbreaks in the country are related to feasts, celebrations, and massive gatherings.