

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

PM Garibashvili rules out new lockdown

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili stated at the Executive Government Meeting yesterday that the government does not plan to re-impose restrictions as the country "will no longer withstand new lock-down". The prime minister claimed that the government would manage the epidemiological situation instead of introducing restrictions and lockdowns.

According to Garibashvili, as a result of 'the careless street rallies', the number of coronavirus cases has doubled in the last two weeks.

"These events have practically led to the doubling of the number of infected. I

wish to once again urge the population to be vigilant and treat every action and public gathering with a degree of responsibility," noted the PM.

The PM underscored that currently there are 1.5 million doses of Chinese manufactured vaccines and half a million doses of Pfizer vaccine in the country. According to him, Georgia will also obtain an additional one million doses of Pfizer vaccine directly from the manufacturer in the following month.



Garibashvili stated that the state economy grew by 12 percent in the first six months of 2021, allowing the state to increase the budget by one billion Lari.

Garibashvili urged the public to get vaccinated and underscored the importance of relying on scientists, rather than 'gossips and rumours' related to vaccines.

The Head of Government of Georgia also discussed the positive trends in the economy that have been observed lately. He stressed that the growth indicator has reached 12% in the first six months of the year, which enabled the state to increase the budget with GEL one billion and not to take new loans.

"We opened up everything. The

economy has been growing super-fast for several months now and we have unprecedented growth in the world. In April our economy grew by 45%, in May - by 25% and we expect factual data for June to manifest 18% of growth," said the PM.

On Monday, Georgia reported 1,264 new cases of coronavirus, 1,665 recoveries, and 11 deaths. There have been 404,023 cases of coronavirus since February 26, 2020, with 374,753 recoveries and 5,714 deaths. Currently, 23,530 individuals remain infected with Covid-19.



Vaccination with the first dose of Pfizer started yesterday in Georgia among people aged sixteen and over. There are 37 medical facilities engaged in the immunization process.

Infrastructure and Regional Development Plan envisions spending ₾ 31 billion by 2030

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure Irakli Karseladze presented the agency's 10-year action plan last Friday. According to the Ministry, the Government of Georgia will invest more than ₾ 31 billion in the next 10 years for the infrastructural development of the regions of Georgia and the improvement of the living standards of the population.

As a result, by 2030, the construction of all highways will be completed; Travel time from RedBridges to Sarpa will be halved to 4-4.5 hours instead of 8 hours; By 2025, all cities will have a 24-hour standard water supply; By 2030, the entire population of the country will have full access to standard water supply; By 2025, four modern regional solid waste management centers will be built, and by 2030, all 6 regional centers will be completed, which will gradually replace the 54 old municipal landfills; Regions will develop socially and economically; Municipalities will be strengthened and their

capabilities will increase; By the end of 2025 at the latest, the revenues of self-governments will be at least 7% of GDP.

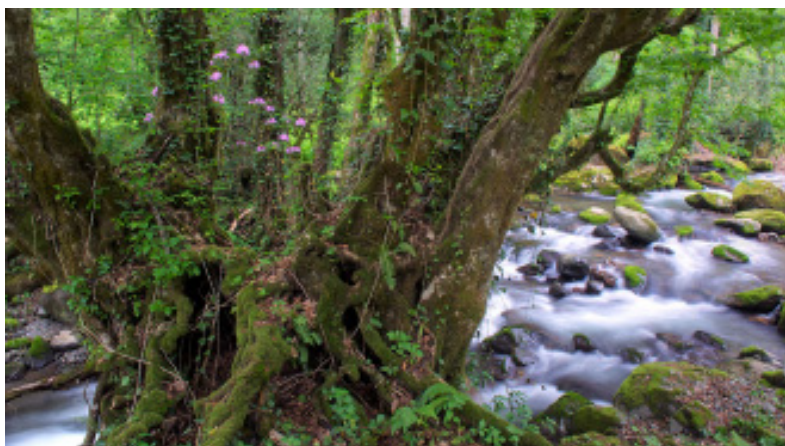
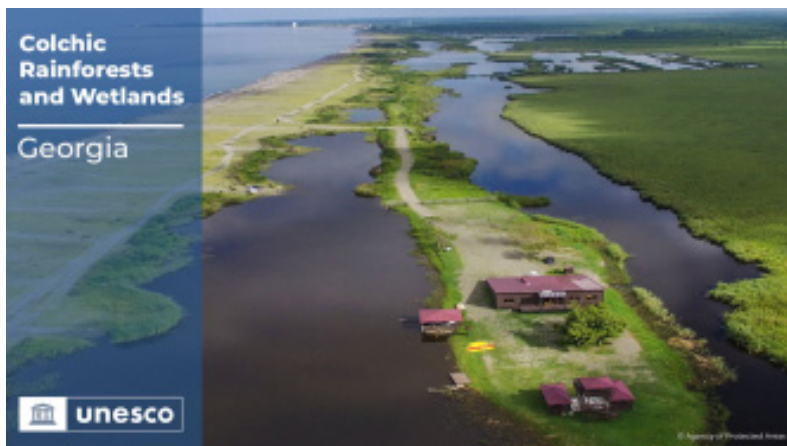
According to the ministry, only in 2020, despite the pandemic, a 70 km highway was opened, as a result of which the travel time from Tbilisi to Batumi has been reduced by 1 hour and it is already possible to get to Batumi in 4 hours. As of now, 219 km of highways have been built in the country and currently, construction works are underway on the 118 km highway.

By 2025, the construction of all major sections of the highway will be completed, and by 2030, a total of 760 km of highways will be finished. By the same time, 97% of roads of international importance and 93% of domestic roads will be rehabilitated. Work on the Rikoti Road project is intensive. Currently, 71 out of 96 bridges are being built simultaneously, and 47 out of 53 tunnels, of which 8 tunnels have already been cut. The 2.5 km section of the new road, which consists of



In the very first year of the VAT distribution reform, municipalities received ₾ 100 million more in revenue. By 2025 revenues of the municipalities will become less than 7% of the GDP, which means the allocation of more than ₾ 1 billion additional resources.

Western Georgian rainforests and wetlands granted UNESCO World Natural Heritage status



Mtirala and Kolkheti National Parks and Kintrishi and Kobuleti Protected Areas are the first Georgian natural sites that have joined the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili stated that Colchic rainforests and wetlands are “an absolutely worthy addition to the World Heritage list.”

management experience, attract visitors and increase their number,” said the PM.

According to the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Levan Davitashvili, Georgia once again became famous on the world map for its distinctive biodiversity. As he stated, the Ministry, in cooperation with UNESCO, has been working on this nomination since 2019.

These four locations are the very first natural sites in the country to be on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The List features over 200 natural locations including, the Great Barrier Reef, Amazon Forest, Grand Canyon National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and Mount Etna. The list includes three non-natural Georgian monuments- the Gelati Monastery, the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta, and Upper Svaneti.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On Monday, The World Heritage Committee inscribed Colchic rainforests and wetlands of Georgia on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The decision was made at the 44th ses-

sion of the World Heritage Committee, held online and chaired from Fuzhou, China. Mtirala and Kolkheti National Parks and Kintrishi and Kobuleti Protected Areas are now among 213 sites worldwide that have been granted the UNESCO World

Natural Heritage status.

According to the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili, this is a very important event not only for the country but also for the region. As he noted, the UNESCO World Heritage Sites are the

most important part of the Caucasus Ecoregion and the Black Sea Basin.

“Granting World Natural Heritage status to the protected areas will help increase Georgia’s popularity, develop ecotourism, share international

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6 bridges and 4 tunnels, will be opened in September, and the construction of the Rikoti highway will be completed in stages in 2021-2024. Accordingly, by this time the journey from Tbilisi to Batumi will take 3 - 3.5 hours.

The Kvesheti-Kobi historic project has been launched, which, in addition to being unique in terms of construction engineering, will be a comprehensive response to all the road challenges in this region. Upon completion of the project, the Cross Pass will no longer be closed due to climatic conditions. The local population of 10 villages will have full access to education, medical and other services at any time of the year. The 9 km long, 15 m diameter road tunnel in rocky cliffs will be unique worldwide. A special drilling machine has been specially made for the tunnel and drilling works will start in August. The project will reduce travel time between Kvesheti-Koba,

Sadakhlo-Lars, Tbilisi-Gudauri, Tbilisi - Kazbegi.

A tender has already been announced for the construction of a 16 km Bakurtsikhe-Tsnori bypass road as well as a new Kakheti expressway and the 35 km section of the Tbilisi-Sagarejo-85 km Kakheti highway, where a 4-lane cement-concrete expressway will be built.

The ministry reported that compared to ₾ 377 million that was spent on road infrastructure development in 2012, ₾ 1 billion 531 million was spent this year, and in a 10-year plan, only ₾ 17 billion of total ₾ 31 billion will be spent in this direction.

In terms of water supply, in 2020 4 large cities - Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Chiatura, and Tsnori, for the first time in the history of their existence, moved to 24-hour water supply.

“In the spring, a project worth ₾ 260 million was signed for the construction of a complete water supply and sewerage system in Khashuri.

360 000 people will improve water supply in 150 settlements (26 cities, 105 villages, 3 small towns, 16 resorts) 200 000 have never had it at all. Designing for rehabilitation-construction works of water supply network

starts in the following settlements: Ozurgeti, Senaki, Bolnisi, Khoni, Ninotsminda, as well as Ingiri, Tsaishi, Tsaghveri, Nukriani, Tskhvarichamia, Tskhemliskhidi, Dvabzu, Tezami, Kevliani, and others. By 2025, all cities will have 24-hour water; in 2030, 100% of the country will be covered.

₾ 9 billion will be spent on the development of water supply and sewerage systems in the next 10 years. Agency noted that in 2012 the financing of the sector was only ₾ 34 million, in 2021 - ₾ 348 million.

According to the ministry, the closure of the old municipal landfills will continue. Out of 54 municipal landfills, 24 have already been closed and 30 have been rehabilitated. By 2025, the construction of new landfills will be completed in Kutaisi, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. By 2030, all old landfills will be closed and a total of 6 new regional centers will be built. Funding in this area has increased exactly 5 times and over the next 10 years, more than ₾ 613 million will be spent.

Critical and basic infrastructure development will continue in the regions. From 2019 to

date, the Ministry of Infrastructure alone has completed the construction of 41 schools for up to 10,000 children. By 2022, a total of 65 new schools will be built. Reconstruction-rehabilitation of more than 100 schools has started and will continue, to which will be added the rehabilitation of another 60 schools soon. 31 kindergartens are under construction, of which 29 have already been completed. Construction of modern sports complexes has started this year in Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Rustavi, and Akhaltsikhe and this process will continue throughout the country. Mobilization and construction

works have already started in different municipalities of the country on the projects selected within the new program of Renewed Regions initiated by the Prime Minister, according to which, all urban renewal projects in all 63 municipalities will be implemented simultaneously, directly based on the needs of the municipalities and the initiatives taken from them.

Documents on spatial planning of Batumi, Tsikhisjvari, Khada gorge, and other territories of the country will be added to the currently developed 73 spatial-territorial planning documents.



The program of the Smart Specialization project was launched in the Imereti region to determine the comparative and absolute advantages of the region, the development, and use of which will be of the greatest benefit to Imereti.

Weather

Tuesday, July 27

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 34°C
Night Showers
Low: 20°C

Wednesday, July 28

Day Chance of Rain
High: 26°C
Night Rain
Low: 19°C

published by

The Messenger

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