

Ex-president Saakashvili urges military to participate in elections 'to save the country'

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, currently the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Ukrainian National Reforms Council, has stated in a Facebook video address that the country 'must be saved' from the current Georgian Dream leadership and called on the military servicemen 'to fulfill civic responsibility' and 'actively participate' in the October 2 municipal elections in Georgia.

Saakashvili stressed that he, together with the previous government, created the powerful armed forces from the 'factually destroyed, decrepit Georgian army', while, according to him, the founder of the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party Bidzina Ivanishvili has done his utmost over the past years to weaken the country's armed forces. Saakashvili stressed that the equipment has been drastically weakened and the exercises have been reduced as well. He also noted that the transfer of apartments to the military was carried out on the principle of nepotism.

According to him, the October 2 municipal elections are 'also a referendum' and 'carry crucial importance' in deciding the country's future. Ex-president also stressed that he counts on the patriotism and devotion of Georgian soldiers.

Saakashvili's address comes after his recent promise that he would return to Georgia for the upcoming election. However, ruling party officials do not believe that Saakashvili will do so as he has repeatedly made such promises in recent years without any real action. According to Georgian Dream Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze, the ex-president will be arrested immediately upon his arrival. Saakashvili faces several criminal



Georgian Dream Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze states that if Saakashvili returns to Georgia, he will be sent to prison.

charges, including the violent dispersal of anti-government mass protests on November 7, 2007, appropriation or embezzlement of budget money in large quantities, raiding of TV channel Imedi by riot police, and other crimes.

According to the Georgian Defense Minister Juansher Burchuladze, Mikheil

Saakashvili's recent statement is aimed at discrediting and politicizing the army. He turned down the nepotism-related allegation and reminded Saakashvili of his commitment to the military during his rule in 2007, which, as Burchuladze stated, was fulfilled during the rule of the current government. Burchuladze

stressed the progress of recent years in terms of armament, equipment, and social conditions in the Georgian Defense Forces. According to the Defense Minister, the professionalism of the Georgian military and the high level of training is confirmed by the assessments of international partners.



Georgian Defense Minister Juansher Burchuladze, Mikheil Saakashvili's recent statement is aimed at discrediting and politicizing the army.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1152; Euro - 3.6691; GBP - 4.3074; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2671; Swiss Franc - 3.3744

Public transport resumes operation

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Public transport resumed operations yesterday after almost a month-long break, however, all other existing restrictions such as wearing face masks both in open and closed spaces and online studies remain in force. As the Public Relations Manager of Tbilisi Transport Company Tamaz Robakidze said, the face mask rule will be strictly monitored in public transport.

As of September 12, a total of 1,491,371 vaccinations have been administered in Georgia. In total, 593,944 people (20.8% of the adult

population) have been fully vaccinated and 897,427 people (31.4%) have been vaccinated with at least 1 dose. A vaccination promotion lottery, with a prize fund of GEL 2,800,000 started yesterday as part of the COVID-19 vaccine incentives. The lottery will last until the end of the year and will offer 100 and 500 GEL prizes daily on the website stopcov.lotto.ge. According to the lawyer of the Georgian Lottery Company Ketik Khutsishvili, weekly raffles will have prizes of ₾ 1,000, ₾ 1,500, ₾ 5,000, and ₾ 10,000, while the final raffle will be held on December 31, offering ₾ 100,000.

As Amiran Gamkrelidze,

head of the National Center for Disease Control, announced yesterday, last week the vaccination rate was studied in both public and private schools and the 100% rate could not be found anywhere. According to him, the vaccination rate does not differ significantly between public and private schools and ranges up to 70%. He stressed that studies must start in classes in October, and for that, the vaccination rate in schools must be 80%.

As of Monday, Georgia reported 946 new cases of coronavirus, 4,351 recoveries, and 48 deaths. 27,595 people remain infected with the virus. In total, the country has had 581,815 cases of coronavirus since February 26, 2020.



The vaccination promotion lottery, with a prize fund of ₾ 2,800,000, started yesterday to boost Covid-19 vaccination rates in Georgia.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgian Dream's Tbilisi mayoral candidate presented a transport policy to the public this Monday, which, according to him, will be implemented if the citizens re-elect him as Tbilisi mayor. Kaladze promises to increase the number of municipal buses, arrange transport corridors, launch a system of term passenger passes, and, as a result, increase the speed and capacity of public transport.

According to the GD mayoral candidate and current Mayor of Tbilisi, the renewal of the minibus park will be completed this year as well, as promised.

380 new buses will be added to Tbilisi. Of these, 180 units will be 8-meter buses, and next year 200 units of 18-meter buses will be purchased. There will be 10 transport corridors in the city, on which public transport will be able to move quickly and smoothly through the appropriate bus lanes.

Tbilisi Vice-Mayor Irakli Khmaladze spoke about the details of the municipal transport renewal.

According to him, Kaladze's team has managed to purchase 536 brand new buses and bring them to the city during the last 4 years.

"We have thus completely replaced the yellow buses. Our goal is to purchase an additional 380 buses over the next 4 years to make it even more comfortable and flexible to travel by public transport," Khmaladze said.

According to him, the introduction of 1000 new minibusses

in the city will be completed by the end of the year.

As the vice-mayor explained, the income for the drivers of minibusses will be in the form of salary, which will be more stable for them. "Free, 90-minute transfer mode will be extended to all minibusses, as we have today on 300 new minibusses," he added.

A new public transport coverage network will be launched in 2023 and 10 fast transport corridors will be completed by then. The first corridor has been operating for a year now. In 2020, a rapid corridor connecting Politkovskaya and Beri Gabriel Salos streets was put into operation. 9 more corridors will be put into operation in the term of the next 2 years.

As it was mentioned at the presentation, the following fast-moving traffic corridors will be arranged: University Str. - Moscow Ave.; Tamarashvili Str. - Moscow Ave.; Chavchavadze Ave. - Khizanishvili Str.; Vazha-Pshavela Ave. - Beri Gabriel Salosi Str.; University Str. - Kupradze Str.; Khizanishvili Str. - Kupradze Str.; Demetre Tavaddebuli Str. - Station Square; Demetre Tavaddebuli St. - University Str.; Khizanishvili

GD mayoral candidate Kaladze presents Tbilisi transport policy

Str. - University Str.

Khmaladze noted that a system of 1-week, 1-month, 6-month, and 1-year passenger passes will be launched for preferential and comfortable travel.

"As a result of all this, we will have the following improvements in the direction of public transport: the 35-minute waiting period at stops will be reduced to 10 minutes; During our tenure, over the next 2 years, the total capacity of Tbilisi buses increased from 27,000 to 52,000 seats, and from 2023 to 103,000 seats; The coverage area of the bus network will increase from 151 sq. Km to 235 sq. Km; Speed on fast transport corridors will increase by 30%; The parameter of daily public transport service, which today is 623,000 trips, will increase to 1,050,000 trips in 2 years," Khmaladze said.

Guramishvili, Station Square, Sarajishvili, Marjanishvili, Freedom Square, 300 Aragveli, Rustaveli, Isani, Tsereteli Avenue, and Nadzaladevi - these

are the metro stations on the rehabilitation of which Tbilisi City Hall will spend €60 million. The project will be implemented in cooperation with the EBRD.

"We have announced a tender for the purchase of 40 units of European type wagons and at the end of this month, we will know the already winning company. An additional 52 wagons will be overhauled, which will increase the safety of passengers."

The construction of the corridors connecting the two new ropeways: Isani-Metromsheni-Vazisubani and Sarajishvili-Sea district will start and be completed within the next four years. The construction of the ropeway connecting Rustaveli-Mtatsminda will also be completed.

According to the Vice-Mayor of Tbilisi, the introduction of a smart transport system in the capital will start in 2022. He explained the priorities of the smart system and said that the users of this system are Singapore, London, Barcelona, Paris, Berlin, and Copenhagen.

It collects and processes data on road traffic, develops special modes and solutions to regulate problem nodes.

The system can identify unexpected incidents and traffic jams and create and implement a special mode in automatic mode to regulate and neutralize them. It can also prioritize special transport such as public, emergency, and fire and release special corridors for fast movement.

Ultimately, the goal of the smart transport system is to increase road safety, reduce traffic jams and travel time, increase traffic speeds and improve the ecological situation.

The campaign also includes the program of replacement of all houses in disrepair.

"As for the Khrushchev project, in the third massif of Varketili, the concept has been prepared, we have already offered it to the business and 2 specific businesses are working on a project to replace a specific area.

I hope the project will be successful and it will be an example for other businesses. However, if these areas cannot be repaired and damaged houses replaced in the third Varketili massif, our new program will be extended to this settlement and we will replace these houses," Khmaladze explained.



"I promise the population of the capital that by the end of the year, there will be no so-called Yellow minibus running. There will be only renewed, ecologically clean, and European-type minibusses, which will serve the population of Tbilisi."



The main directions of transport policy are: 'smart' transport system; 380 new buses; replacement of minibusses; 10 new transit corridors; new subway carriages; season ticket; cables; 260 km bicycle lanes; third stage of taxi reform.

Weather

Tuesday, September 14

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 31°C

Night Clear

Low: 18°C

Wednesday, September 15

Day Clear

High: 31°C

Night Clear

Low: 18°C

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