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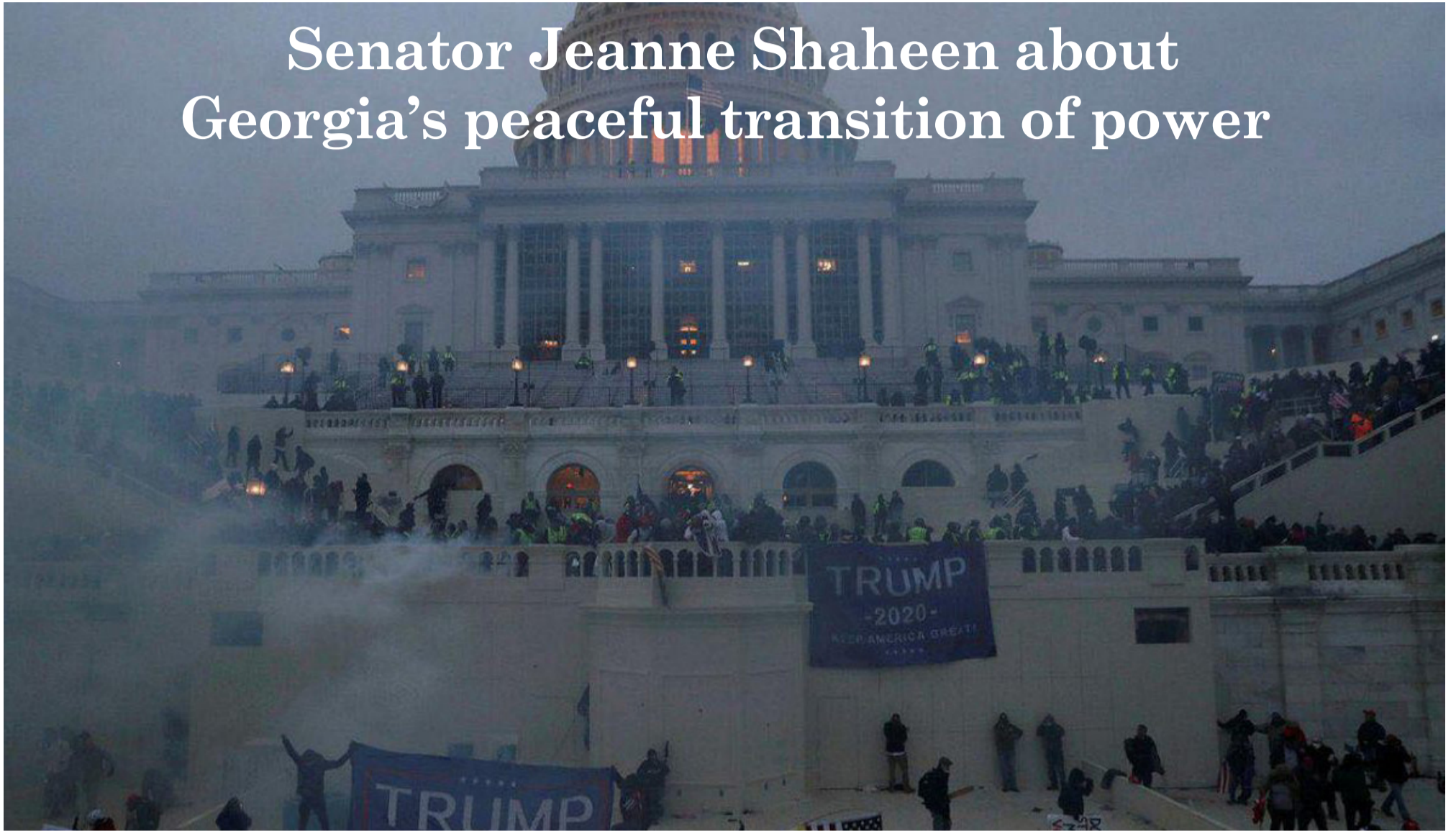
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Senator Jeanne Shaheen about Georgia's peaceful transition of power



► 52 people were detained and 4 died as a result of Capitol Storm in Washington D.C. on 6th of January. The state of emergency will last for an additional 14 days in the US capital and will also affect the inaugural ceremony scheduled for January 20.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The events of January 6 in Washington were unprecedented in modern American history. Supporters of President Trump stormed the Capitol building, where they were to confirm the victory of President-elect Joe Biden at a joint congressional hearing. 4 people were killed. Cases of invasion of the Capitol were last recorded more than 200 years ago - in 1814 the British managed to penetrate there.

The US Congress has officially confirmed the votes cast by the Electoral College, according to which the next president will be Joe Biden (who received 306 votes, whilst Trump got 232), and the vice president - Kamala Harris. They will take office on January 20. After the official approval of Joe Biden's victory by the Congress, Donald Trump said that he would hand over power in accordance with the law.

"While I do not agree at all with the election results and the facts support it, January 20 will be a legitimate transfer of power," he said, noting that this decision means the end of "the most glorious first term" in the history of the presidency.

The joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate was adjourned after part of the pro-Trump protesters stormed the Capitol building.

It took the police several hours to evict them from the building and restore order. Lawmakers pulled them out of the building accompanied by security. A curfew was imposed and the National Guard was mobilized to quell the unrest in the capital.

The session was later resumed. Part of the Republican legislature tried to prevent Biden from winning. They protested against the votes cast by the Electoral College in several states. These include Georgia, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada and Michigan. In the case of Arizona, Nevada and Michigan, the procedure did not come up for debate. Debates were held in both houses of Congress over the votes of Georgia and Pennsylvania, although neither chamber supported the protest.

Some of the senators, who said they did not support Biden's certification of victory, changed their position after invading the Capitol building. Among them is Li

After the riots in the Capitol building in the US capital, Senator Jeanne Shaheen also spoke about Georgia during the renewed session of the Congress.

"What is happening today is not just a problem of the United States, it is also a problem of young democracies around the world. As Senator Romney said, they look at us as an example, we are a magnificent city on a hill. We hope for a better future for those who cope with oppression." She said.

Speaking about the importance of a peaceful transfer of power, Shaheen cited the example of Georgia in 2012, recalling that on the second day of the election, after meeting with him, President Saa-

kashvili decided that there should be a peaceful transfer of power in Georgia.

"Chamber, I've traveled to developing democracies around the world, to Afghanistan and Iraq to the Western Balkans, to Africa, to the Country of Georgia. I went there with my colleague, Senator Risch in 2012. We went to Georgia to observe officially on behalf of the Senate the election between outgoing President Mikhail Saakashvili and the ruling party United National Movement and opposition party Georgian Dream. The party was newly formed, supported and funded by billionaire Oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili," she said. Senator underscored that this battle was for the parliament as well as for control of the government; she visited multiple polling places on election day with Senator Risch and agreed with the international assessment that the election was free and fair and that Georgian Dream was the winner. However, there was a real concern in the country, that Saakashvili would refuse to give up the power and that would end up with violence.

"The day after the election, Senator Risch and I visited the President at home. We sat down with him and we pointed out that the hallmark of a democracy, for what he worked so hard in his 8 years as a President of Georgia would be to give the power peacefully to those, who were elected by the voters" Shaheen remembered, emphasizing that the President listened to senators and left the office peacefully - "The future generation must recognize that democracy means the peaceful transition of power".



► The US Congress has officially confirmed the victory of Joe Biden in the presidential election.

Paata Imnadze: We want to do 20,000 Covid-19 tests every day during January

ACCORDING TO IMNADZE, ASYMPTOMATIC CASES SHOULD BE REVEALED



► "We should be better prepared for lifting the restrictions, for which, it is very important to take more steps and reveal the cases that are asymptomatic," said Imnadze.



► There were total of 235,491 cases of Covid-19 reported in Georgia.

BY NIKA GANTSEMLIDZE

According to Paata Imnadze, Deputy Director of the Center for Disease Control and Public Health, in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus, it is important to do 20,000 tests daily in January.

"We should be better prepared for lifting the restrictions, for which it is very important to take more steps and reveal the cases that are asymptomatic," said Imnadze.

He said that, as of today, even those who do not have any symptoms can go and get tested for coronavirus and that the country can do 20,000-21,000 tests a day without any problems. According to Imnadze, over the last few months, there were days when this number of tests were taken and it is perfectly possible to do so again.

As of today, there are restrictions in the country to limit mobility. As a result of the restrictions, there is no public transportation and most of the shops and shopping centers are closed. As health experts are saying, the restrictions in the country had a positive influence

on the number of daily reported coronavirus cases. On the other hand, health experts are also claiming that lifting the restrictions during the Holiday season

might have a negative impact on the current situation.

As they are saying, we will be able to assess the impact of lifted restrictions from December 24 to

January 2 in the coming weeks.

According to the Government plan, starting from January 16, restrictions will be lifted on transportation and malls. However, on the weekends, shopping malls and public transportation will still be closed.

As the Interagency Council announced yesterday, there were a total of 15,492 tests performed in the past 24 hours. Out of these tests, 1,612 were positive. The number of daily reported cases have decreased significantly, es-

pecially compared to November, when there were more than 5,000 cases reported every day. Since the beginning of the pandemic in last February, there were a total of 235,491 positive cases of Coronavirus identified.

Out of these, 2694 people have died because of Covid-19 complications. In the last 24 hours, 278 people have passed away. 419 people have recovered from coronavirus in the past 24 hours. In total, 223,695 people have recovered.

Deputy Health Minister of Georgia, Tamar Gabunia: Elderly people will be the first ones to receive the vaccine

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Earlier on Thursday, Deputy Health Minister of Georgia, Tamar Gabunia stated that the vaccine will first be available to elderly citizens. She added that there is a certain protocol that a country should follow in order to receive even a single dose of the new anti-COVID-19 vaccine.

Georgia is expecting to receive three vaccines authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna. In November last year, the head of National Disease Control Centre (NCDC), Amiran Gamkrelidze announced that Georgia is expecting to receive a vaccine in either March or April 2021 via the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (Covax). According to Gamkrelidze, Georgia has ordered a total of 1,400,000 doses for 700,000 people (in order for the



vaccine to work, each individual recipient must receive two shots). Georgia has already spent a total of 17 million USD to receive the initial doses of vaccination, and 4 million USD were spent for the country to be able to make a choice between the three types of vaccines approved by the WHO and FDA.

In December, the head of the

NDCC outlined the protocol of vaccination in Georgia as follows: the first recipients of the vaccination will be medics, epidemiologists and elderly people residing in the nursing homes. Those groups will then be followed by people over 75, people over 65, and the individuals under 55 who suffer from various chronic diseases. Shortly after the announcement

was made, Amiran Gamkrelidze tested positive for COVID-19.

Over the last 24 hours there were 1,612 new cases confirmed in Georgia, as well as 28 deaths and 419 recoveries. In the last 24 hours, a total of 15,492 tests were conducted, 6,408 of which were PCR tests, and the remaining 9,084 were rapid tests. Since February 2020, there were 235,491 cases documented in Georgia, 223,695 out of which have successfully recovered, and 2,694 have died. There are currently 9,076 active cases of the COVID-19 in the country, and the new strain of highly infectious "British" coronavirus has been detected in Georgia. The imposed curfew and other healthcare-related regulations remain in place until the government's meeting later this month, which will determine whether the epidemiological situation in the country has improved well-enough to have some of the restrictions removed.

FRIDAY JANUARY 8

Day Cloudy
High: 8°C

Night Partly clouds
Low: 0°C

SATURDAY JANUARY 9

Day Some clouds
High: 12°C

Night Clear skies
Low: 1°C

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Pensions to increase in 2021



► According to the Law on the Development of Mountainous Regions, people of retirement age living in the mountains are entitled to a monthly supplement of 20% of the state pension.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

In 2020, amendments to the law were made on pensions, resulting in the definition of an automatic mechanism for reviewing pensions annually. As a result of the pension indexation formula, from 2021 the basic pension has increased by ₾20 to ₾240, while the old-age pension over 70 has increased by ₾25 to ₾275. Pensions are one of the most important social and political issues in Georgia. Moreover, it is the only source of income for hundreds of thousands of people, so its volume is often an integral part of election promises and political discourse.

Obtaining the indexation formula was one of the components of the ongoing program with the International Monetary Fund. According to the new formula, the rate of pension growth will depend on the level of inflation and economic growth. More specifically, pension indexation is defined by law as follows: Pension for elderly under the age of 70 - will increase by the average inflation rate of the last 12 months, but not less than ₾20. Pension for pensioners aged 70 and over - by the sum of the arithmetic average of 80 % of the average GDP growth rate for the last 12 months and real GDP growth rates for the last 6 quarters, but not less than ₾25. Thus, regardless of inflation and economic growth parameters, the pension increase will not be

less than ₾20, and for pensioners aged 70 and older it will not be less than ₾25.

Compared with the level of basic pension with other countries in the region, the pension in Georgia is quite close to the average pension in Ukraine, which is \$ 72. Pensions are higher in Armenia, at about \$ 86. The average pension in Azerbaijan is \$ 176; In Russia - \$ 218 dollars.

According to the draft budget for 2021, a total of ₾2.6 billion will be spent on the pension provision of the population. This is ₾370 million more than in 2020. According to the Ministry of Finance, ₾210 million will be spent on the introduction of indexation, and the increase in the number of pensioners will increase the costs of the system by ₾160 million.

Over the next 5-10 years, the growth rate of the number of retirees will accelerate even more, because today one of the largest age group - people aged 55-60, or so-called "Baby Boomers" will start retiring, therefore, from 2022, the pension budget of the population will reach ₾3 billion.

With such an increase in the budget, it is interesting to look at how the purchasing power of the

pension itself has also changed. If we compare the amount of the basic pension in US\$, we will see that the pension in dollars was the highest in Georgia in 2013, when the then 150-₾ pension was \$ 86 dollars. In 2020, the base pension of ₾220 will cost \$ 66.8. If the Lari does not depreciate next year, the value of the ₾240 pension will be \$ 72.9, still less than the 2013 pension.



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► The pension of all pensioners will increase not less than the inflation rate, i.e. the increase in prices will no longer affect the amount of the real pension.