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Task Force has been established to prevent the spread of COVID-19

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On February 27, 2020, a Task Force was established under the Cabinet of Ministers in order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the country. The Task Force consists of senior officials of relevant government authorities. It coordinates all major measures, taken by the Republic of Azerbaijan and reflects Azerbaijan's response regarding the fear of an outbreak of the infection within the country in relation to the spread of the coronavirus in the world.

The special quarantine regime has been strengthened

Task Force under the Cabinet of Ministers released information on additional measures with respect to the coronavirus. According to the information, effective as of 29 March 2020:

1. The special quarantine regime shall be strengthened.
2. The inter-regional and inter-city movement of transport facilities has been fully suspended for the period of the special quarantine regime except for special purpose vehicles including the vehicles for emergency medical aid, lifesaving and survival, rescue, agricultural and social service purposes, as well as cargo carrying trucks. The transport facilities can freely move within the boundaries of Baku and Sumgait cities and Absheron region.
3. Working hours of Baku metro has been limited. Baku metro shall work only from 07:00 a.m. to 09:00 a.m. and 17:00 p.m. to 20:00 p.m.
4. During the special quarantine regime, customers will be serviced only in supermarkets, grocery stores and pharmacies. Delivery and online sales will remain without any restrictions.
5. During the special quarantine regime, Azerbaijan will suspend customer service at all catering establishments, including restaurants, cafes, and teahouses.
6. To regulate the density of people flow, the government has limited entrance of individuals to the boulevard, parks, and recreation areas.

The teaching and training process has been suspended

As per decision of the Task Force dated 20 March 2020, the teaching and training process in all educational institutions has been suspended until 18 April 2020 (the first day of study is set for 20 April 2020.) in the framework of social isolation measures to prevent spread of COVID-19.

Employees of some governmental institutions do not work

On March 20, 2020, the Task Force made a decision to send employees of some governmental institutions on a special leave starting from 29 March until 29 April 2020 by maintaining wages. The decision is temporary and this is initiated by the Task Force to ensure the safety of citizens more effectively, and the wages of citizens sent on a special leave will be paid in full.

A special labor regime has been declared in Azerbaijan

As per decision of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 25 March 2020, non-working days have been extended in the Republic of

Azerbaijan. The decision is adopted in accordance with Article 119 of the Constitution and Article 25 of Law on “sanitary and epidemiologic wellbeing”.

By the said decision, a special labor regime is declared in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The special labor regime will be as follows:

- ▶ for those working within the five-days working week: 29 March 29 – 3 April 2020 are non-working days.
- ▶ for those working within the six-days working week: 26-28 March and 30 March – 4 April 2020 are considered as non-working days.

This decision does not apply to publicly important, life-support entities, as well as banks, supermarkets, grocery stores, pharmaceutical companies, pharmacies, food production enterprises and senior officials, and where necessary, other employees of state bodies and institutions listed in the Appendix of the decision.

The Appendix of the decision includes the following state bodies and institutions:

- ▶ The Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
- ▶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (including Embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan in foreign countries)
- ▶ The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The General’s Prosecutor Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The State Custom Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Central Bank of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ The Intellectual Property Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The activity of courts has been limited

As per the Resolution of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated March 19, 2020, it is recommended to all courts of the Republic of Azerbaijan to temporarily postpone consideration of cases in their proceedings, except for cases that need to be considered urgently or do not require a court hearing.

The Decision also states that the reception of persons in all courts should be suspended, and the reception should be carried out only by telephone, mobile and Internet. Individuals and legal entities should be advised to send their applications to the courts, including appeals and cassation complaints, by mail or electronically.

These limitations are effective for the period of March 20, 2020 – April 20, 2020.

Additional limitations have been made for persons and activities

According to decision of the Task Force dated March 30, 2020, as part of the measures taken by the state to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, people are required to stay in private homes and apartments, places of permanent or temporary residence.

Activities in all areas, except for the areas of work and services necessary for the life and activity of people (the list of which indicated below), are suspended from March 31, 2020 to April 20, 2020.

During this period, it is allowed to continue activities in the following areas, subject to compliance with the requirements of the special regime period:

1. Executive authorities and organizations, the list of which is determined by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan (see the section “special labor regime”);
2. Health and social services – research and laboratory services, hospitals, polyclinics, veterinary medicine;
3. Infrastructure services – utilities, production and supply of electricity, water supply and reclamation, telecommunications;
4. Transport and logistics services – cargo transportation, public transport, taxi services;
5. The main types of production – defense industry’s products, oil equipment and facilities, raw materials, daily care and hygiene products, chemical products, oil and gas, metallurgical industry; construction and household equipment; engineering and design services; supply, storage and wholesale of food products;
6. Retail and wholesale services – food products, pharmacies, gas stations, zoo shops, including animal feed outlets, sales points for construction materials and household items;
7. Household services – collection and utilization of household waste, postal services, chemical cleaning, car repairs and car washes, translation services, animal shelters, design services;
8. Mass media;
9. Financial institutions – banks and currency exchange offices, insurance organizations, organizations providing payment services and clearing services;
10. Types of special services – delivery services, repair of household appliances, disinfection services

Visa registration through "ASAN Viza" electronic portal has been suspended

On March 13, 2020, the government of Azerbaijan suspended the visa registration through "ASAN Viza" electronic portal for 45 days in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country. Foreigners traveling to the country have been requested to apply to relevant embassies and consulates general of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The embassies and consulates general of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be working in a special regime.

For violation of the quarantine regime administrative and criminal liabilities have been introduced

Within the measures taken against spread of COVID-19 in the country, the legislator has also adopted administrative and criminal liability for violation of anti-epidemic, sanitary-hygienic and quarantine regimes.

Administrative liability. For violation of anti-epidemic, sanitary-hygienic and quarantine regimes – (i) individuals will be fined in

the amount from one hundred up to two hundred manats; (ii) officials in the amount from one thousand and five hundred up to two thousand manats, or depending on the circumstances of the case, taking into account the identity of the violator, administrative detention for up to one month may be applied; (iii) legal entities will be fined in the amount from two thousand up to five thousand manats.

Criminal liability. If the violation of anti-epidemic, sanitary-hygienic or quarantine regimes causes the spread of diseases or leads to a real threat to the spread of diseases, such violation is punishable by the penalty at the rate from two thousand five hundred up to five thousand manats or restriction of freedom for the term up to three years or imprisonment for the term up to five years.

As per information provided by the Task Force on March 26, more than 700 individuals have been punished by administrative penalty and criminal liability action was initiated against one individual.

Coronavirus Response Fund has been established

On 19 March 2020, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a Decree on measures to protect the public health in the Republic of Azerbaijan and strengthen the counter measures against the coronavirus infection. According to the Decree, a Coronavirus Response Fund was established. The purpose of this Fund is to prevent the spread of the coronavirus infection in the Republic of Azerbaijan and provide financial assistance to counter measures.

Business entities, individuals and governmental institutions have contributed to the account of the Coronavirus Response Fund.

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