

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Gábor Kiss

Roman-era paved road discovered along route of a northern Transylvanian motorway

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Plenary session of parliament**

**Cbank Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting**

**Coronavirus updates**

**European Parliament holds plenary session**

## TOP STORY

# RULES FOR NEXT STAGE OF REOPENING ANNOUNCED

The government has published a list of new rules that will enter into force when the number of Hungarians inoculated against Covid-19 reaches 4 million.

According to the statement published on the government website [kormany.hu](http://kormany.hu), the night-time curfew will start at midnight and shops will be allowed to stay open until 11pm. People holding immunity certificates will be allowed to use indoor areas of catering establishments until 11pm, as well as hotels where they can be accompanied by children. Venues offering leisure activities that were shut in November will reopen to immunity certificate-holders. Gyms, swimming pools and skating rinks will also reopen to certificate-holders and to all professional athletes under the age of 18. Sporting events can be visited by certificate-holders and accompanied minors until 11pm and face masks will not be required. Venue operators will check the validity of visitors' immunity certificates; failing to do so they can face fines ranging between 100,000 forints (EUR 280) and 1 million forints or up to one year in prison. The obligation to wear masks will remain in force in public areas, on public transport and in shops.

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## **MÜLLER: HUNGARIAN JAB TO BE BASED ON INACTIVATED VIRUS TECHNOLOGY**

Hungary will apply a tried and tested inactivated virus technology in the development of its coronavirus vaccine, Cecilia Müller, the chief medical officer, said. The technology, on which China's Sinopharm jab is also based, is able to provoke a strong immune response against the virus, Müller told a press briefing, expressing hope that the Sinopharm vaccine will therefore also be effective against the virus's variants. The 600,000 doses of the Sinopharm jab that were delivered to Hungary on Saturday have been reviewed and distributed to the vaccination points, she said, adding that they will also be sent out to general practitioners soon.

The chief medical officer also said Hungary had reached a vaccination rate of 37%, compared with the European Union average of 21%. The number of active infections has dropped to 258,218 and average concentrations of the virus in Hungary's wastewater systems appear to be declining, she said. Meanwhile, Müller said the Indian variant of the virus had yet to be detected in Hungary.

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## **OFFICIAL: MORE CHILDREN LIKELY TO RETURN TO KINDERGARTEN, SCHOOL**

The number of children returning to kindergartens and schools is expected to further increase this week, the state

secretary in charge of public education told public radio. Zoltán Maruzsa said that even though the government had decided to reopen kindergartens and schools in the lower grades a week ago, parents were given the option to keep their children at home and their absence was "handled with due flexibility". Last week, 75% of all 1-4 graders returned to their classrooms and 60% of small children went back to kindergarten, Maruzsa said. The state secretary said that the upper grades of primary school and secondary schools would reopen on May 10 when the "full education system will return to classroom mode". Maruzsa said that the final examinations of secondary schools would be held similarly to last year, ensuring a safe distance between participants.

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## **HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTER WELCOMES WHO'S IMMUNISATION STRATEGY**

Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler welcomed the World Health Organisation's new Immunization Agenda 2030 strategy, saying it would help save more than 50 million people over the next decade. "Vaccines in the current phase of the fight against the pandemic mean hope and life in our country and the world over," Kásler said in a video on Facebook. "It is in this spirit that I encourage my compatriots to take the vaccine." The minister noted that the new strategy was introduced by WHO Director-General Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus as part of the organisation's World Immunization Week 2021 campaign.

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## **HUNGARY RECORDS 176 COVID FATALITIES, 1,936 NEW INFECTIONS**

Fully 176 patients, generally elderly with co-morbidities, died over the past 24 hours, while 1,936 new infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Monday. So far 3,603,901 people have received a first jab, while 1,665,067 have been fully vaccinated. The number of active infections stands at 258,218, while hospitals are treating 6,443 Covid patients, 782 of whom need respiratory assistance. There are 35,472 people in official quarantine, while 5,297,235 tests have been officially carried out. Since the first outbreak, 771,454 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 26,801. Fully 486,435 people have made a recovery. So far, most infections have been registered in Budapest and Pest County, followed by the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Győr-Moson-Sopron and Hajdú-Bihar.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: PEACE, STABILITY IN MIDDLE EAST CRUCIAL FOR HUNGARY**

Peace and stability in the Middle East is crucial for Hungary, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Beirut. Stability in the region is inconceivable without peace and progress in Lebanon,

therefore the European Union “should support rather than criticise that country,” Szijjártó said at a press conference held with former Lebanese foreign minister Gebran Bassil, leader of Lebanon’s biggest Christian party. Concerning possible EU sanctions against Lebanon, Szijjártó said that in such cases he preferred “a direct flow of information” to “biased positions”. “It would be very wrong if the EU, in this difficult situation, imposed sanctions on certain, democratically elected political players,” he said. Hungary prefers a “fair and balanced approach” to Lebanon, even if it shares the view that a stable country needs a stable government, Szijjártó said. He added, however, that setting up a government like that was Lebanon’s internal affair. For this reason, Hungary rejects all attempts to exert pressure on the country, especially those targeted at a party representing a religious community.

“Lebanon’s Christian community can always count on our assistance and support,” Szijjártó said, adding that aid should not be limited to rhetoric but manifested in actual deeds. Last year Hungary’s government co-financed ten church, health and educational projects in Lebanon, and now it has donated 20 ventilators and 20,000 face masks to the country, Szijjártó said. He added that 16 Hungarian soldiers are

serving in the local UN peacekeeping mission, and 50 Lebanese students a year get scholarships at Hungarian universities. Szijjártó called on the international community to support Lebanon in its fight against migration pressure. He stressed the need to eliminate the causes of migration and then enable refugees to return to their homeland.

### **DK CALLS ON GOVT TO DROP ‘MISLEADING’ VACCINATION CAMPAIGN**

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) has called on the government to drop its vaccination campaign suggesting that “untested” Eastern vaccines are better than Western ones. Zoltán Varga, DK’s parliamentary spokesman, told an online press conference that the government was using a “misleading” table, which showed that among people inoculated with the Pfizer vaccine “the number of new infections and deaths is much higher” than among recipients of other vaccines. Varga quoted Katalin Karikó, one of the developers of the Pfizer vaccine, as saying that authors of the table had neglected crucial data, such as the age and chronic conditions of the patients surveyed. Varga insisted that the government was trying to undermine people’s trust in Western

vaccines, adding that “the government would even falsify statistics and lie to justify its vaccine purchasing practices”.

### **OFFICIAL: GLOBAL MINIMUM CORPORATE TAX RATE WOULD BE ‘VIOLATION OF SOVEREIGNTY’**

An effort backed by US President Joe Biden to introduce a global minimum corporate tax rate is a “violation of financial sovereignty”, state secretary for tax affairs Norbert Izer said in Monday’s issue of daily Magyar Nemzet. “The concept violates states’ financial sovereignty and attempts to reverse the progress of those countries that have made serious efforts to introduce lower taxes,” Izer told the paper. He said an endeavour to coordinate global rules on the taxation of tech giants had “taken a new direction” as the OECD hashes out a plan for a global minimum corporate tax rate. He noted that Hungary’s 9% corporate tax rate is the lowest in the European Union and added that EU organisations – not the OECD – decide what rules apply in the area of the EU. “Hungary will not consent to any solution that makes life more difficult for local businesses or reduces the financial sovereignty of the Hungarian state,” Izer said.