

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/ Zsolt Czegledi

Cyclist in Debrecen, E Hungary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Coronavirus updates

### Stats office releases data on Oct wages, Q3 central budget balance

## TOP STORY

# AGENCIES UPBEAT ON HUNGARY'S ECONOMY

Hungary ended 2021 with investment grade status from all three major credit rating agencies, Finance Minister Mihály Varga has said.

Varga said this meant investors had confidence in the Hungarian economy in spite of the crisis caused by the pandemic. Hungary's repayment of 430 million dollars in public debt before maturity, which has allowed the country to save 10 billion forints (EUR 27m), strengthens this confidence, Varga said in a Facebook post. Hungary has also exchanged 1,300 billion forints' worth of short-term government bonds for long-term bonds with maturity of between 8 and 20 years, he noted. Last year Hungary also became the first country in the world to successfully issue a green "panda" bond targeted at the domestic Chinese market, he added. Another factor that has boosted investor confidence, he said, was that Hungary last month increased its financial reserves by 350 billion forints. Varga added that this would stand the country in good stead when it comes to global economic risks.

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## **GOVT TARGETS 2022 BUDGET DEFICIT TARGET AT 4.9% / GDP**

The government has saved 755 billion forints by postponing several public investments, allowing it to lower its 2022 budget deficit target to 4.9% of GDP from 5.9% and continue reducing the public debt, Mihály Varga, the finance minister, said. Hungary's budget also has the resources to cover measures such as family tax rebates, the 13-month pension, personal income tax exemptions for those under 25 and wage increases, he said.

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## **TRUMP ENDORSES ORBÁN**

Donald Trump on Monday issued a statement endorsing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

"Viktor Orbán of Hungary truly loves his Country and wants safety for his people. He has done a powerful and wonderful job in protecting Hungary, stopping illegal immigration, creating jobs, trade, and should be allowed to continue to do so in the upcoming Election. He is a strong leader and respected by all. He has my complete support and Endorsement for reelection as Prime Minister!" Trump said on his Save America website.

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó on Monday thanked Trump, the 45th president of the United States, for endorsing Orbán in a statement ahead of the general election in Hungary.

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## **MINISTRY: ONLY 1 % OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS HAVE REFUSED JOB**

Altogether 94% of Hungary's public school teachers are vaccinated against the coronavirus, with 1% having refused to get inoculated so far, the human resources ministry said on Monday. Fully 3% of the country's 78,000 public school teachers have a doctor's recommendation against getting the job, the ministry told MTI. One percent of teachers have been granted an exemption by the minister, while another 1% are on sick leave or have submitted a request for exemption, the statement said. The remaining 1% of teachers who have not been vaccinated can return to work after getting the jab, the ministry said.

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## **CORONAVIRUS - 248 DEATHS, 5,865 NEW INFECTIONS OVER WEEKEND**

Altogether 248 patients died of a Covid-related illness over the past three days, while 5,865 new coronavirus infections were registered, [koronavirus.gov.hu](http://koronavirus.gov.hu) said on Monday. So far 6,266,483 people have received a first jab, while 5,982,104 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 3,178,228 Hungarians have received a booster jab. The number of active infections went down to 101,023, while hospitals are treating 3,313 Covid-19 patients, 318 of whom need respiratory assistance.

Since the first outbreak, 1,262,280 infections have been registered, while the number of fatalities has risen to 39,434. Fully 1,121,823 people have made a recovery.

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## **PMI JUMPS TO 64.8 IN DECEMBER**

Hungary's seasonally-adjusted Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) climbed to 64.8 points in December from 52.2 in November, Halpim, the organisation that compiles the index, said on Monday. A PMI over 50 signals expansion in the manufacturing sector. Among the PMI sub-indices, the employment index remained above 50.0 points for the third month in a row.

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## **HUNGARY'S HOUSE OF MUSIC AMONG TIME OUT'S 'BEST NEW THINGS'**

Visiting the House of Music -- a tribute to Hungarian musicians who have made their mark on the world -- is runner-up on Time Out magazine's list of "best new things to do in the world in 2022", project company Városliget said.

Time Out calls the House of Music, designed by Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto, "the standout initiative" of the Liget Budapest project which aims to rehabilitate the capital's City Park and transform it into a museum island.

"Opening in early 2022, Sou Fujimoto's House of Music, Hungary in City Park features a roof perforated with 100 or so cavities that allow

natural light, trees and sound to infiltrate the two performance venues, exhibition spaces and library, which are linked by magnificent spiral staircases, and a complete glass exterior to aid reliance on renewable energy," Time Out said.

### **MOME TO LAUNCH ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MA PROGRAMMES**

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME) will launch English-language MA programmes in photography and interaction design from the 2022 autumn semester, the school said on Monday. The foundation that runs the university initiated the launch of at least two English-language MA programmes every year over three years starting in the autumn of 2022. "Our goal is to make MOME the best known creative university in Central Europe by 2030," MOME foundation chairman Gergely Böszörményi-Nagy said. MOME rector József Fülöp said the first two English-language programmes express the school's "commitment to tradition and the future", referring to MOME's namesake, László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), who did much to advance avant-garde photography, and to the subject

of interaction design, which involves making interactive digital products, environments and services. MOME will promote the two English-language MA programmes among art school students in the region in a campaign that will run until April.

### **AIR POLLUTION HIGH IN NE HUNGARY**

Air quality has deteriorated in north-east Hungary due to a high concentration of airborne particles, the National Public Health Centre (NNK) said on Monday. NNK declared air quality to be "dangerous" in Sajószentpéter and Kazincbarcika, while air quality has deteriorated to unhealthy levels in Putnok. Concentrations of particles are also considered to be too high in Eger, Salgótarján, Miskolc and Nyíregyháza, NNK said. Forecasts show air quality is expected to improve thanks to strong winds on Monday.

### **SUZUKI LEADS HUNGARY NEW CAR MARKET FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW**

Japanese car maker Suzuki led Hungary's new car market for the sixth year in a row in 2021, Magyar Suzuki said on Monday. Figures compiled by

Datahouse show 17,650 new Suzukis were registered in Hungary last year, giving the company 14.48% market share. Those sales included 8,350 of the Suzuki Vitara and 6,261 of the Suzuki S-CROSS hybrid models, both produced at the car maker's plant in Esztergom. In addition to the vehicles made in-country, Suzuki sold 2,314 Swift, 513 Ignis, 203 Swace and nine Across models in Hungary.

### **4iG ACQUIRES DIGI**

Listed IT company 4iG on Monday said it acquired 100% of telecommunications company DIGI. 4iG announced late in November that it agreed to acquire 100% of DIGI - the runner-up on Hungary's fixed line voice, internet and TV market - for EUR 625m. "With the closing of the transaction and the acquisitions made in the infocommunications sector over the past year, 4iG will become one of the largest telecommunication operators in Hungary, while the group has also built a dominant position in the Western Balkan telecom market," 4iG said. Hungary's government earlier declared 4iG's acquisition of DIGI of "national strategic significance", exempting the transaction from the scrutiny of competition authorities.