

Morning Headlines for Slovenia: Thursday, 3 December 2020

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By STA

This summary is provided by the [STA](#):

New surge in coronavirus cases, 57 more deaths

LJUBLJANA - Slovenia recorded 2,429 new coronavirus cases for Tuesday, the third highest daily increase since the start of the epidemic, as the test positivity rate hit 33.8%. Government data also show that 57 more patients with Covid-19 died, which brings the overall death toll since the start of the epidemic to 1,547. Nuška Čakš Jager from the National Institute of Public Health said the increase in cases could be attributed to the introduction of rapid tests at health institutions and care homes. Positive tests are double-checked with PCR tests. Infectologist Bojana Beović, the head of the government's coronavirus task force, responded to calls for an easing of coronavirus restrictions by saying extra caution was needed in planning any potential relaxation.

Logar expects conduct in European spirit regarding exclusive zones in Adriatic

BRUSSELS, Belgium - Foreign Minister Anže Logar said Slovenia always acted in a European spirit and expected the same from European partners as he commented on intentions by Italy and Croatia to declare exclusive economic zones in the Adriatic Sea. He said this was a strategic issue that would be addressed in tolerant dialogue, not in the public square. When Logar pays a visit to Italy on 10 December, the issue will be discussed. The statement came after three opposition parties expressed concern over the news, highlighting the potential impact of such declarations on the Slovenia-Croatia border arbitration agreement.

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EU presidency trio discuss social affairs and employment

LJUBLJANA - The ministers in charge of employment and social affairs of Slovenia, Germany and Portugal, the current rotating European Council presidency trio, discussed on Tuesday relevant initiatives with Nicolas Schmit, the EU's Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, and social partners. Labour Ministry State Secretary Mateja Ribič, standing in for the labour minister, presented the priorities of Slovenia's presidency in the second half of 2021, one of which will be tackling population ageing in the light of demographic changes.

Gantar calls for more EU coordination on Covid-19 vaccine

LJUBLJANA - Health Minister Tomaž Gantar attended a video conference with EU counterparts discussing the current state of the coronavirus pandemic and the proposed EU strategy for a coronavirus vaccine. He stressed more cooperation and coordination was needed at the EU level. The minister said the right lessons should be drawn from the experience with the pandemic so far and that the weaknesses that had become apparent during the crisis should be addressed as soon as possible.

President Pahor says action by each individual required to curb epidemic

LJUBLJANA - President Borut Pahor told Radio Ognjišče that the coronacrisis was a rare crisis in which every individual can contribute towards a solution. He said everyone should perform noble acts to send out the message that "we are not alone". Pahor said people had become more irritable and looked for culprits, and in doing so they may do each other injustice. The "division of political spirits, this rift, which people notice" is creating additional unrest.

President urges govt and STA management to resolve open issues

LJUBLJANA - The STA is doing important work in the interest of the public, which is why its existence should not be jeopardised, President Borut Pahor said. He called on the government and the STA management to resolve, in line with regulations, issues that had resulted in suspended financing of the agency. Pahor made the statement after talking with STA director Bojan Veselinovič and Government Communication Office (UKOM) director Uroš Urbanija.

STA chief supervisor rejects information concealment claims

LJUBLJANA - The STA supervisory board does not support the Government Communication Office's (UKOM) decision to suspend the funding of the STA's public service and rejects the claims about information concealment, chief supervisor Mladen Terčelj said. He also rejected claims about the STA's business being non-transparent. Radovan Cerjak, a member of the supervisory board appointed in September, meanwhile said the supervisory board had not discussed the suspension of financing and labelled Terčelj's statement "a solo action".

EANA urges govt to stop pressure on STA, ZNP calls for resolution of "dispute"

LJUBLJANA - The European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA) expressed its support for the independence of the STA, urging the Slovenian government to eliminate any moves against the STA that would alter the agency's workflow, reputation and business. It said mass media is the cornerstone of democracy, and news agencies the backbone of free media worldwide. ZNP, a Slovenian journalist association, urged a prompt resolution of the ongoing dispute.

Top science accolades presented

LJUBLJANA - The winners of this year's Zois Prizes for lifetime achievement in science and research are researcher Tamara Lah Turnšek of the National Institute of Biology, who has discovered a protease enzyme, and University of Ljubljana professor emeritus Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik, credited with spearheading pioneering study into lithium batteries 30 years ago. The pair, along with Puh Prize winner Janez Trontelj and Ambassador of Science Boštjan Kobe, were presented in a documentary on TV Slovenija on Tuesday evening.

Three bids submitted for car e-tolling contract

LJUBLJANA - The state-run motorway company DARS announced it had received three bids in response to a tender to set up a system for electronic tolling of cars, which is to become operational in December 2021. The lowest bid, valuing the project at EUR 14 million, was submitted by the Slovenian company Iskratel in partnership with Hungarian ARH Informatics. The other bids are by Slovakia's Skytoll and a group of Slovenian companies partnering with Austria's Kapsch.

Romana Tomc gets The Parliament Magazine's MEP Award

BRUSSELS, Belgium - Slovenian MEP Romana Tomc (EPP/SDS) is this year's recipient of The Employment, Social Affairs & Regions Award by The Parliament Magazine. The Brussels-based fortnightly presented the 2020 MEP awards for efforts and achievements in various fields online on Tuesday. Tomc said that the accolade was proof that Europe had not forgotten about its citizens in these difficult times and that efforts regarding social affairs, employment and demographic issues were vital.

Farmers' reps say situation on agricultural markets catastrophic

LJUBLJANA - The Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia (KGZS) warned that the situation on agricultural markets is deteriorating practically on the weekly basis due to declining purchase prices. KGZS president Roman Žveglič called on the state and the food industry to take immediate measures. "We are at a point when cheap imports may destroy Slovenian farming," he said.

Ajša Vodnik gets another term as vice chair of AmChams in Europe

LJUBLJANA - Ajša Vodnik, director general of AmCham Slovenija, won another term as vice-president of AmChams in Europe, a network of American Chambers of Commerce from 43 countries in Europe and Eurasia. This means Slovenia will remain the seat of the organisation for another two years. Vodnik, who will start her next two-year term in January, sees her role in the post as "excellent potential" in the light of Slovenia's EU presidency in the second half of 2021, AmCham Slovenia said.

Kiblix festival exploring virtual worlds

MARIBOR - The international festival of art, technology and science Kiblix this year explores virtual worlds and because of the epidemic it is being held in a new hybrid form. Organised by the Kibla centre, the 2020 festival focuses on the human experience of virtual worlds, which have become so important this year because of coronavirus. The festival informally started at the end of November, but the main events are being held between December and February.

Korean Film Week puts women in spotlight

LJUBLJANA - The Korean Film Week 2020, organised by the Vienna-based Embassy of the Republic of Korea, is to kick off on Thursday, focusing on the past century of Korean women. Running until Sunday, the free online event will feature five films capturing the overlooked stories of Korean women to raise awareness about certain aspects of Korean culture that have been hidden from history. The films will be screened via the Shift72 online video platform on www.koreanfilmweek.net.