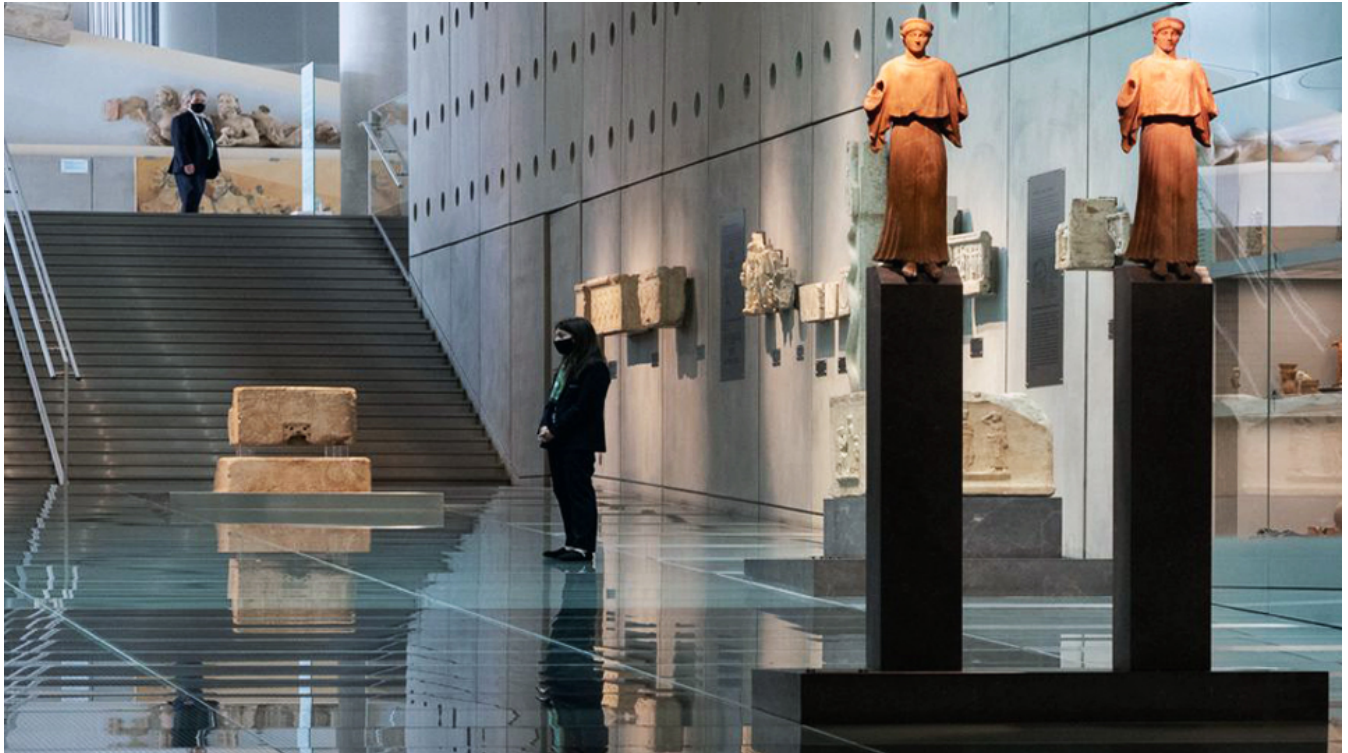


Greece to reopen museums on May 14, ahead of tourism season

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Greece will reopen its museums to visitors a day before the official start of the tourism season on May 15, authorities said on May 7.

Venues such as Athens' Acropolis museum with archaeological treasures found near the ancient citadel overlooking the city have been closed since mid-November following a second lockdown imposed to curb the Covid-19 spread.

The government started easing restrictions in late April after a small reduction in Covid-19 cases. It allowed bars and restaurants to reopen earlier this week while organised beaches will open on May 8 for the first time this year.

"It is obvious that the country's epidemiological picture is showing a steady improvement," said Nikos Hardalias, Deputy Minister of Civil Protection.

He added that authorities had recorded a reduction in the epidemiological burden, as the number of infections fall and vaccinations increase, in 61 regions including Athens and Thessaloniki, and an increase in only 10 regions.

Tourism accounts for about a fifth of Greece's economy and job market, and after the worst

year on record for the sector last year the country can ill afford another lost summer.

Open-air cinemas will resume on May 21 while open-air performances on May 28. Primary schools will open on May 10 and daycare centres on May 17.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said recently that a combination of widespread testing, immunisation, and the fact that many activities would take place outdoors gave authorities confidence that tourists would be able to visit safely.

A country of 11 million, it has reported a total of 358,116 infections and 10,910 deaths. On May 7, it reported 2,691 new infections and 63 deaths.