

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamas Soki

Advent lights on Pécs Cathedral

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Christmas events

## TOP STORY

# GOVT SPOX: OPPOSITION MISLEADING PEOPLE ABOUT LABOUR CODE AMENDMENT

The opposition has maintained its lies about the labour code amendment and again misled people at Friday's anti-government protest, the government spokesman said.

The opposition has lied saying that people could be forced to work overtime and they would only get paid for overtime after three years as a result of the amendment to the law, István Hollik said on Saturday.

The truth is that working extra hours will only be possible on a voluntary basis with the employee's consent and the wage for this must be paid at the end of the month, he said. The reason for the lies is that the opposition lost the general election in the spring and they seek to seize power with the help of street violence, he added.

"The opposition is being helped by George Soros with money and through his NGOs because Soros's aim is to weaken and defeat governments that oppose migration," he said. Hollik expressed regret about "the vandalism and aggressive acts of recent days" having been followed by another act of vandalism when a man threw a smoke bomb at the president's office on Friday evening.

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## **ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATION STAGED AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE**

Opposition parties and civil groups staged a demonstration in front of the presidential palace in Budapest's Castle District on Friday evening.

The protest was held under the motto "Shame on you, János!" after President János Áder signed a new law under which the maximum of overtime work could be raised and another one introducing a system of administrative courts.

Anna Donáth, deputy head of the Momentum movement, welcomed that protests are held "not only in Budapest but in other cities, moreover, across Europe" against the Hungarian government's policies. "Let 2019 be a year for resistance," she added.

Socialist board member Balázs Bárány said that people have had enough of the government's propaganda depicting protesters as "Soros-agents and anti-Christians" and added that the government "had better get used to a different style of opposition politics from now on".

Tamás Szűcs, head of teachers' union PDSZ, said that "there cannot be another agenda for January than to stop the country".

Csaba Gyüre, deputy leader of conservative Jobbik, said that "we will not be slaves in our own country!" He also demanded that the president should be directly elected rather than by parliament.

Independent MP Ákos Hadházy said that the "illegitimate laws" could be annulled if the protesters "demonstrate power".

Párbeszéd co-leader Tímea Szabó carried a puppet with Áder's features and said that "the president is no other than Viktor Orbán's puppet".

László Varju, an MP of the Democratic Coalition, said "it is time that the people ousted the mafia-state" and added that "if Orbán wants peace he should resign".

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## **TWO-TAILED DOG STAGES MOCK-DEMONSTRATION IN CENTRAL BUDAPEST**

The satirical Two-tailed Dog Party staged a "national Christmas peace march" in Budapest, marching from the Parliament area to the Chain Bridge and then back to Parliament on Friday evening. Demonstrators in the front row carried a banner reading "The worse the better". The crowd chanted slogans including "More overtime work!", "No pensions!" or "Long live the Party".

Speakers addressing the event thanked the government "for all their good deeds for the people".

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## **EUROPE SUCCESSFUL ONLY IF IT REMAINS EUROPEAN, ORBÁN TELLS AUSTRIAN NEWS PORTAL**

Europe will be stable and successful only if it remains European, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an

interview with Austrian news portal oe24.at published on Sunday.

Commenting on next year's European Parliamentary elections, he said this will be the first time that the nations of Europe vote on a common issue. Migration is an issue that concerns the entire continent and it will be in the focus of the election campaign everywhere, Orbán said. He expressed hope that those people will have the stronger voice who want to preserve and protect their national identity and Christian traditions. It would be good for Europe to have a common voice stating that Europe belongs to Europeans, he said.

"We have a culture and we have our religions and values. Religious freedom is important to us and anyone who wants to live here should accept that, and they must not be anti-Semitic," Orbán said.

"But if we do not clearly state our expectations then they will not respect our culture and our culture will perish. And chaos will arise," he added.

To read the full German text of the interview, please visit <https://www.oe24.at/welt/Orban-im-Exklusiv-Interview-Wir-sind-jetzt-die-Bad-Boys/360897953>

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## **ÁDER RETURNS AMENDMENTS CONCERNING STATE AUDIT OFFICE TO PARLT**

President János Áder returned two amendments - one concerning the State Audit Office (ÁSZ), and another on public administration officials - to parliament for reconsideration on Friday.

According to information on the presidential office's website, Áder criticised the new stipulations for "creating a decidedly more disadvantageous" conditions for auditors, whose job involves "stricter moral norms and rules of behaviour" than usual, and who are expected to do their work "independently and at a high level, promoting the public interest". Áder also objected to the legislation's ensuring broader powers to the head of ÁSZ, without "regulating the scope and details", which, he said, was not in line with the constitution.

The president criticised stipulations under which employees dismissed could find another job in the public sector for a period of time "disproportionately long" compared to the severance payment they are entitled to, an amount which is aimed at "providing financial security for the interim".

The amendments were passed by parliament on December 12.

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## **LMP: LABOUR CODE AMENDMENT 'NEOLIBERAL LAW OF A NEOLIBERAL GOVT'**

Péter Ungár, a lawmaker of opposition LMP, on Friday called the recent amendment to the labour code "the neoliberal law of a neoliberal government".

Addressing a press conference, Ungár said Fidesz had been elected to represent the interests of workers against those of multinational corporations, but it had now enacted

several measures that have gone against this promise. The politician said the labour code amendment, which he called the "slave law", "clearly serves the interests of multinational companies".

"Yesterday Fidesz had a chance to align its actions with its words, but this didn't happen," he said, reacting to President János Áder's decision to sign the amendment into law.

Ungár said the legislation would also hurt unions by making workers negotiate their overtime hours with their employers on their own. Further, it attempts to tackle worker poverty by making people work more, he added. Commenting on the recent demonstrations against the labour code amendment, Ungár said it was possible that legal violations had taken place. As an example he pointed out that police did not enter headquarters of the public broadcaster MTVA despite Socialist MEP István Ujhelyi alerting them multiple times. Ungár also said that MTVA's security chief was heard giving instructions to police, when they are only supposed to take orders from their own superiors or senior interior ministry officials.

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## **SYRIA'S NUNCIO THANKS HUNGARY GOVT SUPPORT TO HOSPITALS**

Syria's Apostolic Nuncio thanked the Hungarian government for the financial support it has provided to the "Open Hospitals" humanitarian project in that country, the head of the prime minister's press office said on Saturday.

In a letter sent to the Hungarian prime minister, Mario Zenari informed Viktor Orbán that in framework of the project three Catholic hospitals - two in Damascus and one in Aleppo - treat about 400 poor and ill patients free of charge on a weekly basis irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliation, Bertalan Havasi said. There are many people living today in extreme poverty in Syria who are unable to afford basic health care, the nuncio said. Financial contributions to support hospitals in the country are indispensable since their operational costs have become very high, Zenari added. Endorsed by Pope Francis, the "Open Hospitals" project has become all the more necessary due to the fact that, according to WHO statistics, 54% of public hospitals and health centres in Syria are either completely closed or partially operating due to damage from the war, the nuncio said.

Earlier this month, Hungary's foreign minister expressed the government's continued commitment towards protecting and supporting Christian communities that face threat. Péter Szijjártó noted that the government had contributed 2 million dollars to the three Syrian hospitals' medical expenses.

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## **GOVT LAUNCHES HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME WITH POLAND IN SYRIA**

The Hungarian government has set aside 212 million forints (EUR 658,400)

to support a humanitarian programme launched in partnership with Poland in Syria, according to a decree published in the official gazette Magyar Közlöny. The programme is aimed at tackling the migration crisis at its roots and providing care to children left without parental care in Syria, the decree said.

It will be implemented in the framework of the government's Hungary Helps humanitarian initiative.

### **NY FOUNDATION THANKS GOVT FOR JEWISH CEMETERY RESTORATION FUNDING**

The New York-based Heritage Foundation for Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries (HFPJC) has thanked the Hungarian government for providing funding for the restoration of pre-WWII Jewish cemeteries, in a letter, the head of the prime minister's press office Bertalan Havasi told MTI on Friday. HFPJC/Avoyseinu has been the leading organisation in cemetery restoration for almost two decades, assistant director Rifky Gelbman said, adding that it was their pleasure to share a short overview of the successful implementation of the first cemetery projects with

the Hungarian government. The foundation implements all of its restoration projects in conformity with Jewish law, Gelbman said. A list of cemeteries is available at <https://hfpjc.com/cemeteries?country=Hungary>.

### **GOVT TO CONTRIBUTE HUF 10 BN TO ESZTERGOM BASILICA RECONSTRUCTION**

The government has allocated over 10 billion forints (EUR 31m) for the reconstruction of Esztergom Basilica, according to a decree published in the official Hungarian gazette Magyar Közlöny on Friday.

The total will be made available in instalments between 2019 and 2022.

Consecrated in 1856, Esztergom Basilica is the largest church in Hungary and with its 100 metres, even today the highest building in the country.

### **HUNGAROCNTRAL WINS EU FUNDING FOR MODERNISING AIR CONTROL**

HungaroControl, Hungary's air control service, has won a total of 3.5 billion forint (EUR 10.9m) European Union support to carry out developments in order to strengthen aviation safety

and help the effectiveness of air control, the service said on Saturday. This is the highest amount of EU funding ever won by HungaroControl, the statement added. A total of four projects will be affected, the most important of which is the mir TWR (Modular Integrated Remote Tower) scheme.

"Thanks to the 3 billion forint support won for the implementation, high-level technology infrastructure developments required for airport air traffic control can be carried out," HungaroControl said.

Based on further developing the company's Remote Tower solution, testing will be carried out in a simulation environment for the remote control of air traffic in Debrecen Airport and the Pápa military base. This project has attracted international interest, with Singapore's Changi Airport testing a prototype similar to Budapest's, the statement showed. A software development project for the MATIAS control system prepared with the involvement of the company's experts has also won support and HungaroControl will participate in two additional projects as part of international consortiums, the statement added.