

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

Lunar eclipse

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases report on Jan-Nov 2018 wages

Conference on Hungarians' perception of Germany

Finance ministry releases detailed 2018 budget report

Day of Hungarian Culture

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: MIGRATION CRISIS NOT YET OVER

The latest figures on illegal border crossings in Europe contradict claims by some EU leaders that the migration crisis is over, the foreign minister said in Brussels.

"Brussels is making a stealth attempt to reinstate its failed migration policy," Péter Szijjártó told reporters during a break in a meeting with his European Union counterparts. "There's some hoodwinking going on when it comes to migration, with European officials cheering and giving their analysis about how the migration crisis is a thing of the past," he said. The minister argued that the most recent reports show that the number of people attempting to enter Europe illegally is up. The fact that 50% more illegal migrants were apprehended in Turkey last year than in 2017 and that the number of arrivals on the Greek-Turkish land border is rising contradicts the claims of some EU leaders, Szijjártó said. Further, the number of illegal arrivals registered in Spain and Cyprus has doubled over the past year.

Szijjártó pointed out that the UN global migration compact is included as a reference point in the migration chapter of the joint declaration of the upcoming EU-Arab League ministerial meeting. He noted that one-third of the EU member states did not vote for the package.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY HAS HAD 'FAIR SHARE' OF EXPERIENCES WITH FAKE NEWS

Hungary had its "fair share" of experiences with fake news and attempts at outside interference in its domestic affairs, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on the sidelines of a meeting with his EU counterparts in Brussels. Speaking to reporters, Szijjártó said the meeting also covered plans by the European Union to introduce a new mechanism designed to filter out fake news stories and protect the bloc from the interference of foreign powers.

One such case in which fake news has affected Hungary, he said, has been that of Ahmed H, the Syrian migrant who spent 40 months in prison for inciting a riot in 2015 on the Hungary-Serbia border. Szijjártó noted that other EU member states and NGOs had addressed that case and that the European Parliament had explained in a report that Ahmed H was trying to keep the others at the border calm. Ahmed H was sentenced to five years in prison in a repeat procedure last year for illegally crossing the border as part of a rioting crowd and throwing objects at police, which the court regarded as complicity in terrorist activities. Szijjártó said he had informed his counterparts that the Syrian migrant's expulsion from Hungary is under way. "We're waiting for member countries that backed

Ahmed H during the trial proceedings to volunteer to take him in," he said. So far, there are no takers, he added.

On the topic of the ongoing EU-ASEAN meeting in Brussels, Szijjártó said that given the growth of the Southeast Asian region, the EU should work to speed up its ongoing talks on free trade deals with the ASEAN countries. The volume of Hungary's trade with the region went up by 23% during the first ten months of 2018, the minister added. Szijjártó said that on the EU event's sidelines he held bilateral talks with his Thai, Malaysian, Singaporean and Philippine counterparts, as well as with the deputy foreign minister of Vietnam and the minister for international cooperation of Myanmar.

ORBÁN CONGRATULATES SÖDER ON ELECTION TO HEAD BAVARIAN CSU

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has congratulated Markus Söder on his election as chairman of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), in a letter, Orbán's press chief said. Orbán called the traditionally close partnership between his ruling Fidesz and Söder's governing CSU parties an important pillar of Hungarian-Bavarian and Hungarian-German ties, Bertalan Havasi told MTI. "Our commitment towards Christian values provides a solid foundation for finding a common solution to issues affecting the future of the European Union," Orbán said. The prime minister said he and the

Hungarian government would support this endeavour and wished Söder much success in serving his post. Söder was elected to the post at a special party congress with 87.4% of the votes in Munich on Saturday.

OPPOSITION ASKS STATE RAILWAYS NOT TO APPLY NEW OVERTIME RULES

Opposition parties have asked the management of state railways MÁV not to apply new rules that allow employers to increase overtime and delay pay for it for up to three years in line with the amended labour code.

Socialist Party deputy group leader Ildikó Borbély Bangó told a press conference held in front of MÁV's headquarters that the management of electricity company MVM visited last week had told them that they were not planning to put the new regulations of the "slave law" in practice. She added that MÁV managing director Róbert Homolya would be asked to sign a declaration under which he would make every effort to prevent the application of the new regulations.

Independent lawmaker Anett Bósz said that state-owned companies should show an example and demonstrate that employees are important to them. Another independent, Bernadett Szél, said that ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrats treated workers as "vile little proles" and it was the opposition's duty to prevent the application of the "slave law". Hungarian workers want higher

wages rather than working overtime, she added.

Democratic Coalition (DK) group spokesman Zsolt Gréczy said the "slave law" had been approved under unlawful circumstances and surveys showed that 70-80% of Hungarians were against it. Párbeszéd spokesman Richárd Barabás said the law was exploiting workers and while prices in Hungary were at a European level, wages were still "scandalously" low.

Tamás Csányi, who introduced himself as a future lawmaker of conservative opposition Jobbik, said that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his government had "crossed the Rubicon" and the opposition had to protect workers from the government. After submitting a letter addressed to MÁV's managing director, Borbély said that the senior managers they met said that for the time being MÁV was not going to enforce the "slave law".

DK: TOURISM LAW VIOLATES EU DATA PROTECTION RULES

The leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) will turn to the European Commission over Hungary's recent changes to the law on tourism, which, according to the party, is in conflict with the European Union's principles on data protection. DK MP Gergely Arató told a press conference that the new rules are "aimed at spying on Hungarians" and argued that state agencies would now have "unlimited access" to the personal data of tourism customers

stored in a central database under the new legislation. "We don't want a Big Brother," he added. Arató insisted that the data collected from tourism could be abused in a number of ways such as "the tax authority launching an investigation into residents' holiday spending" or "collecting information on participants of an opposition event in another city".

HUNGARY POLICE JOIN EUROPEAN INITIATIVE AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING

The Hungarian police (ORFK) have joined a Europol initiative aimed against money laundering, the police said on its website. The Europol action focuses on a form of money laundering in which criminal organisations may advertise attractive jobs on the internet and request that applicants should have a bank account. The new employee is then asked to receive a large amount on their account and then to forward it to a third person for a commission. "A simple financial transaction could in fact be participation in global money laundering, thus turning an innocent jobseeker into an accomplice", they warned. ORFK warned that the criminals typically send the job offer from email addresses or internet profiles "deceptively resembling" those of existing companies or persons, and recipients are advised not to answer or open the links included.

HOLLYWOOD STARS PAY TRIBUTE TO VAJNA

Hollywood stars have paid tribute to Andrew G. Vajna, after the Hungarian-American film producer died on Sunday.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, who worked with Vajna on Total Recall and Terminator 3, said the producer was a Hollywood "revolutionary power and dear friend". Antonio Banderas, who worked with the producer on the script of Evita in 1996, also bid farewell Vajna on Twitter. "God be with you, my friend. Thank you for everything. Adios amigo mío. Gracias por todo". Sylvester Stallone, who starred in the Rambo films, posted on Instagram, calling Vajna a "pioneer". Vajna, he said, had been the one to show faith in the first Rambo movie when no one else did. "My heart is broken," Stallone wrote.

ERDŐ: ALL CHRISTIANS MUST PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE

It is the duty of all followers of Christ to foster social justice and help the poor, the head of Hungary's Catholic Church, Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, said at the opening of prayers in the Evangelical Church of Deák Square in Budapest on Sunday evening. The Cardinal emphasised Christian unity, saying it was the duty of Christians "to shape the order of these worldly things according to the gospel". "And this also means

working at every level ... to promote social justice and help the poor," Erdő said. István Bogárdi Szabó, head of the Council of the Reformed Church in Hungary, said this year's prayer, taken from the Book of Moses, was to obey the command: "Follow only the truth". This command "takes us out of our own time and from our own circumstances, and ... brings us to God."

POZSGAI'S 'THE DEVOTED' WINS MAIN PRIZE IN CALCUTTA FILM FEST

Hungarian director Zsolt Pozsgai's film, *The Devoted*, received the Golden Fox award at the gala of the Calcutta International Cult Film Festival held between January 16 and 17, Pozsgai said. The film tells the story of an encounter between the founder of the Protestant Church, John Calvin, and Catholic Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order. The main characters were played by Máté Szabó and Ádám Lux, respectively. The film was made to mark the 500th anniversary of Reformation in 2018. *The Devoted* has won awards earlier at festivals in Monaco, Zurich and Argentina.

1989 REGIME CHANGE, SEUSO TREASURE, OLD PERSIA ON NATIONAL MUSEUM'S PROGRAMME

The Hungarian National Museum will put on major exhibitions on the 1989 regime change, Hungarians in the 19th-century Californian gold rush and the antique Persia, and install a permanent exhibition showing the Seuso Treasure this year, the museum's director-general said. The museum will organise several programmes during the year to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the collapse of communism with a focus not only on its political but its day-to-day aspects as well, Benedek Varga said. It will host a temporary exhibition on Hungarian 1849 emigres in California's gold rush, he said.

The museum will open a permanent exhibition showing the Seuso Treasure, a priceless collection of Roman-era silverware which was recently returned to the country after a decades-long absence, and the Roman period of Pannonia, in June, Varga added. It will host from November a large-scale touring exhibition featuring the

history of Old Persia from the Median rule throughout the era of the Sasanian dynasties, he said.

BUDAPEST MODERN OFFICE SPACE AREA EXPANDS BY 44,000 SQM IN Q4

The modern office space market in Budapest expanded by 44,000 sqm in Q4 2018 to 3,628,105 sqm by the end of the year, the Budapest Property Consultants Coordination Forum (BIEF) said. The expansion of space happened as four office buildings, Hillside Offices, Tópark Offices, Pasarét Office Building and Societé Budapest were inaugurated. Modern office space in the capital includes a little over 3 million sqm areas available for renting and nearly 610,000 sqm of offices owned by companies using them. Vacancy rate on the Budapest modern office space market was 7.3% in Q4, down by 0.2 percentage points compared to Q4 2017. Vacancy rate was highest in the agglomerations area, reaching 38%, but it was as low as 4.3% around Váci road and 3.4% on the Pest side outside of the city centre.