

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Balázs Mohai

Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration participant in Budapest

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**37th Hungarian Press Photo competition**

**Ady centenary events**

## TOP STORY

# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY MARKED IN BUDAPEST

Commemorations were held in Budapest on Sunday, to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in 1945.

Gergely Gulyás, the head of the Prime Minister's Office, said in his address at a ceremony held at the Holocaust Memorial Centre that the Hungarian state had "failed to protect its citizens at the time of the Holocaust". "There was no collective crime, responsibility lay on the state," he said.

Referring to political developments in Hungary before WWII, Gulyás said that "it is a fact that Jews were deported after Hungary's German occupation, however, all that could not have happened without participation by the Hungarian administration".

The Hungarian government is "proud that Jews and non-Jews now live side by side in security, among flourishing cultural and religious activities," Gulyás said.

Israeli Ambassador Yosef Amrani said that the Holocaust is an "incomprehensible, indescribable tragedy, which we must remember".

András Heisler, head of the federation of Hungarian Jewish communities (Mazsihisz) said at another commemoration that the Holocaust is not an "internal affair" for the community, but an issue concerning the whole of society.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: ENCOURAGING MIGRATION HUGE MISTAKE**

International institutions that make decisions and adopt documents that encourage migration “are making a huge mistake”, Hungary’s foreign minister said. Péter Szijjártó spoke from New York ahead of attending a United Nations Security Council session on managing the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. He said the UN’s Global Compact for Migration, by promoting migration as a human right, posed a serious global risk. He also criticised the compact for declaring each country either an origin, transit or destination country in the migration process.

The minister said his address to the session would cover the problems posed by climate change as well as demographic booms in certain regions that he said will all lead to increased illegal migration.

Some 200 million people will be forced to leave their homes by 2050, he said, warning that the international community should concentrate on preventing these waves instead of encouraging them. He also slammed Brussels’s migration policy for pushing for migrant quotas. These documents and policies, he said, ignore the rights of countries that want to be neither origin, transit, nor destination countries for migrants. Hungary is one of these countries, he added.

## **ÁDER SENDS CONDOLENCES TO BRAZIL OVER SLUDGE DISASTER**

President János Áder has sent a telegram of sympathy to Jair Bolsonaro, the president of Brazil, over an industrial sludge spill which may have claimed hundreds of lives. Reports of the disaster have shaken Hungary, Áder wrote in his telegram released to MTI on Sunday, and added that Hungary had been hit by a similar spill in 2010. Áder expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and offered Hungary’s assistance to Brazil in reconstruction works. The disaster happened in south-eastern Brazil when the dam of a reservoir collapsed on Friday. So far, 34 people have been reported dead, but further hundreds could still be buried under the sludge that spilt from the damaged facility.

## **PALKOVICS APPOINTED TO COMMISSIONER OF BUDAPEST-BELGRADE RAILWAY**

Minister of Innovation and Technology László Palkovics has been appointed to government commissioner in charge of coordinating the upgrade of the Hungarian section of the Budapest-Belgrade railway line. The related government resolution was published in the official gazette Magyar Közlöny on Friday. Palkovics has been appointed to the post for a two-year term. The upgrade, to be completed

by 2023, aims to facilitate the delivery of Chinese goods to Europe arriving at the Greek port of Piraeus. These goods would be brought by rail through Serbia to Hungary.

## **GOVT TO ‘FIGHT TO THE END’ FOR RIGHTS OF HUNGARIANS WORKING IN AUSTRIA**

Hungary’s government will “fight to the end” for the rights of Hungarians working in Austria, as it is convinced that Austria’s decision to cut family benefits for foreigners working in the country violates EU laws, a government official said. Katalin Novák, the state secretary for youth and family affairs, noted that the European Commission has launched an infringement procedure against Austria over the issue of benefits for family members of workers posted abroad.

On January 1, Austria cut family benefits paid for foreigners working in the country to the price levels of the country of residence of the child. Novák said the decision would hurt Hungarian citizens the most, because it is mostly they who have children in Hungary. As an example, she said that if a Hungarian citizen lives along the border with Austria and travels there for work on a daily basis and pays taxes and contributions there, with their family staying at home in Hungary, they will now only be eligible for 60% of the benefits they received in the past. This affects some 40,000 Hungarian children, Novák pointed out.

The state secretary noted that in November, the V4 together with Bulgaria, Slovenia and Lithuania asked Marianne Thyssen, the EU commissioner for employment and social affairs, to address the issue. The commissioner said in December that the EC would look into Austria's measure, Novak said.

### **FIDESZ: PROMOTING ANTI-SEMITISM UNACCEPTABLE**

Providing "encouragement to anti-Semitism" is unacceptable in Europe, ruling Fidesz said on Sunday, on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In its statement, the ruling party insisted that many Western European Jews again live in fear because "with mass immigration, anti-Semitism has been released onto the continent". According to the statement, those "allowing masses of anti-Semitic immigrants to enter are committing a historic crime" and suggested that some parties of the Hungarian opposition are "ready to side with anti-Semitic, extremist political forces in the hopes of gaining power".

### **FOREIGN MINISTER OPENS TOURISM EVENT, HAS TALKS IN NEW YORK**

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó opened a tourism event promoting Hungary on the sidelines of the New York Times Travel Show in New York on Saturday. In his opening address, the minister

praised Budapest as "Europe's safest city and one with the most sporting events".

Szijjártó had talks with his Belgian counterpart Didier Reynders and said after the meeting that they had conflicting views concerning Europe's future and migration. Belgium "interprets solidarity exclusively as accommodating migrants" while the Hungarian position is that "border protection is a form of solidarity because that considerably eases the burden on other countries", he said. Parties at the talks, however, agreed that such differences should not hinder bilateral business ties, Szijjártó said, and added that the turnover of bilateral trade last year had been nearly 4 billion euros, up by 14% from the previous year. Szijjártó and Reynders, who will run for the post of Council of Europe secretary general, also agreed that the CoE should "continue to ensure opportunities for dialogue between various approaches in Europe" and that the organisation should be "retained as a forum for European dialogue", Szijjártó said.

Szijjártó also had talks with Izumi Nakamitsu, the United Nations' under-secretary-general for disarmament, and said that it was crucial that powers of the East and West should keep on their agenda issues around disarmament, especially in light of the breakdown in US-Russian disarmament talks. Supporting the UN's mechanism to restrict the trade of light weapons is of key importance to Hungary because that could be instrumental

in stemming the smuggling of such weapons from the Western Balkans, Szijjártó added.

### **MAYOR CANDIDATE KARÁCSONY SEEKS 'MORE CREATIVE, GREENER' BUDAPEST**

Budapest must become "more socially sensitive, more creative, and greener", Gergely Karácsony, candidate for Budapest mayor of the Párbeszéd party, said on Saturday, presenting his programme. Karácsony said that if elected, he would be a mayor that "represents the public will" and he would initiate that the municipal assembly should discuss proposals tendered directly by residents. Concerning the environment, Karácsony said it was crucial to save Budapest's trees and further develop green areas. As mayor, he would ban non-green cars from certain areas of the city, as well as construction in green areas, he said. He added that the City Park and the Római district along the river Danube in northern Buda should be retained in their current form.

Regarding housing, Karácsony said that the current 4.5% ratio of social housing within the total housing stock should be raised to 10%. He said he would appoint an "ombudsman for housing" and the rent of municipal apartments would be defined in proportion to the tenant's income. Budapest's economic growth "has come to a halt", a situation which calls

for an “innovative economy” and re-utilisation of former industrial zones, Karácsony said.

### **MI HAZÁNK PARTY AIMS TO PROTECT “NORTHERN CIVILISATION”**

The ultimate aim of the Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) party is to “rescue, protect and rebuild Hungary, the whole of Europe, and northern civilisation”, the head of the radical party said at a rally in Budapest. “Hungary belongs to Hungarians and Europe to the European peoples,” László Toroczkai said. Mi Hazánk is a new political force that will not cooperate with either the ruling Fidesz party or the “left-wing liberal block including (conservative) Jobbik,” he added. Toroczkai said that “by the end of the century, the population of the Earth will exceed 11 billion, and Africans will make up 40% of the population of the planet”. “This mass of people will set off towards an increasingly depopulated Europe”, he insisted.

“In this situation, Europe is threatened by two major groups”, he said. One is the “system of bankers represented by French president Macron”, which has an “interest in transforming Europe into a mass of a mixed population of faceless consumers”, and the other is Islamization; Islam, which has been “aggressively expanding ever since its birth”, he said. Mi Hazánk equally opposes “both conquering ambitions”, Toroczkai said. He said the the programme of Mi Hazánk focuses on strengthening national consciousness, and “reinforcing the Central and Eastern European axis based on Polish-Hungarian cooperation, to be strengthened with Croatia and the Baltic states”.

### **CENTENARY OF POET ADY’S DEATH MARKED**

Lawmakers and the heads of Hungarian cultural institutes marked the centenary of Hungarian poet Endre Ady’s death at his tomb in

Budapest’s Fiume Street Cemetery. László L. Simon, the deputy head of parliament’s committee for cultural affairs, laid a wreath at the tomb and said that “the elementary force of Ady’s poetry is an example for later generations”. The year 2019 has been declared an Ady memorial year.

The Socialist party held a commemoration at the poet’s statue in Budapest. Party head Bertalan Tóth said that next to his poetry, Ady was also a notable journalist who tackled issues such as corruption or hate-mongering against Jews. István Hiller, the Socialist deputy house speaker, said that Ady has pointed to the failings of “the Hungarian nation and state” and saw the future in a “European Hungary”. Other commemorations of the poet, who died on January 27, 1919, included a literary walk guiding participants along the capital’s “Ady memorial sites”, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences’ memorial evening, exhibitions and TV broadcasts.