

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Traditional folk dance in the Lake Balaton region on International Dance Day

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases Jan-Feb wages, March industrial producer prices

V4, Turkish foreign ministers meet in Bratislava

NBH Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting

Budapest mayor marks 40th anniversary of Hungary's table tennis world championship win

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: UN 'HAS SIDED WITH A TERRORIST'

The UN "has launched a shocking attack on Hungary", with one of its commissioners planning to initiate procedures against the country "because of the sentencing of Ahmed H for terrorist activities," the foreign minister said.

Speaking after a session of the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva, Péter Szijjártó told MTI that Ahmed H. "led an attack against Hungarian police protecting the Hungarian border in which many officers were injured". "This man is simply a terrorist," Szijjártó said, insisting that the Syrian national had sought "to allow hundreds, thousands of illegal migrants to enter the country".

"The UN is now championing this terrorist," the minister said. "A human rights commissioner of the UN has informed the Hungarian government that they will initiate proceedings against Hungary concerning Ahmed H's treatment in the country," Szijjártó added. "This human rights commissioner is also one of George Soros's people; he is one of the leaders of the Open Society Foundation," the minister said. "It is clear that the UN, similarly to Brussels, is under Soros's influence as regards migration," he insisted. "In this sense there is no difference between New York, Geneva, and Brussels," Szijjártó said.

VARGA: KAZAKHSTAN OFFERS HUNGARIAN FIRMS NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Hungarian-Kazakh economic cooperation has become more and more intensive recently, and will hopefully be extended to mutual investment projects and joint ventures in the years to come, Finance Minister Mihály Varga told a Hungarian-Kazakh business forum in Nursultan. The minister called Kazakhstan a major strategic partner for Hungary. Two-way trade has kept increasing for three years to hit a record of over 600 million dollars last year, the finance ministry said in a statement. Varga and Kazakh Minister of National Economy Ruslan Dalenov signed an economic cooperation agreement, envisaging closer investment and business relations between the two countries. Further, the two countries concluded ten agreements on cooperation in education, culture, water management, agriculture, finances and other fields.

SOCIALISTS: GOVT WAGING HATE CAMPAIGN USING BANGÓ BORBÉLY'S 'RATS' REMARKS

The government has used a "misinterpreted" version of recent remarks by Ildikó Bangó Borbély, deputy group leader of the Socialists, to launch "a campaign of hatred and

lies" against the opposition party and its supporters, Socialist leader Bertalan Tóth said. Bangó Borbély, answering a question concerning massive public support for ruling Fidesz on television last week, suggested that "there are many rats" in the country. Tóth said the government's campaign was aimed at "diverting public attention from real problems such as health, looted EU funds, or diminishing media freedoms". He insisted that Bangó Borbély's remarks did not refer to Fidesz supporters and her words were "fully misinterpreted" and voiced support for her in her current post.

Socialist MEP István Ujhelyi said Hungary had a "rat government", stressing that he was not referring to Fidesz voters. "What Fidesz has done to Hungary is disgusting, what they are doing is detrimental," he said. Ujhelyi insisted that "rat as an epithet was not introduced by the Socialists". He said that "hate mongering is one of Fidesz's most important weapons" but warned that Facebook users might associate a "government of rats" when looking at a relevant advertisement by the ruling party. Since Friday, several Fidesz and government officials have called on Bangó Borbély to return her mandate in parliament.

GOVT OFFICIAL SLAMS EC JUDICIARY SCOREBOARD 'SUBJECTIVE'

Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communication and relations, slammed the

European Commission's Judiciary Scoreboard showing figures on trust in the individual member states' justice systems, saying judiciary independence cannot be measured in opinion polls.

In a message to news portal Politico, Kovács wrote that "the independence of the judiciary is not a question that can be seriously evaluated in public opinion research and, secondly, the notion that you can use those subjective numbers as a basis of a 'scoreboard' ... is problematic, to say the least."

In reaction to Kovács's letter, Politico issued a correction for its Friday newsletter saying that it was three quarters of Croatians, not Hungarians, who rated their countries' judiciary independence as bad. In Hungary, that number is 33%, barely above France's 31%, Kovács pointed out. Hungarian citizens rated Hungary 19th regarding the perceived independence of the judiciary, while companies said it was 27th of the 28 member states.

GULYÁS: EUROPE FAILS TO SEE OWN INTERESTS AS REGARDS TURKEY

Europe has failed to properly recognise its own interests as far as Turkey is concerned in connection with migration, the head of the Prime Minister's Office said at the 12th Security Conference in Istanbul. Turkey has a crucial role to play because as the first safe country outside the European Union it caters for more than

Hungary Matters is an English-language newsletter produced and distributed by the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) with content provided by Duna Media Service Provider exercises copyright over all content. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, redistributed or transmitted without prior written permission from the publisher, with the exception of copies made by individuals for private use, educational purposes or scholarly research, provided that such transmissions do not exceed the extent justified by the purpose and are not aimed at financial gain, even indirectly, and the source name are indicated at all times.



3 million Syrian refugees on its territory, Gergely Gulyás told a roundtable discussion focusing on migration, refugees and the protection of the EU's external borders. Turkey has this way guaranteed to harbour people who have left their homes, Gulyás said. Once circumstances that forced them to leave cease to exist, they will return to their homeland and participate in rebuilding their countries, he added. This is why Europe's interests lie in a strong and stable Turkey, Gulyás said.

On the event's sidelines, Gulyás held talks with Mehmet Uçum, legal advisor to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ekrem İmamoğlu, Istanbul's newly elected mayor.

GOVT LAUNCHES EUR 1.8 M PROGRAMME TO BENEFIT ETHNIC HUNGARIAN CHILDREN

The government has launched a bid for ethnic Hungarian civil and religious organisations and businesses with activities supporting children, Árpád János Potápi, state secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, said. The grants to be distributed, totalling 600 million forints (EUR 1.8m), will help organise activities including training courses, promotion of talented children, family programmes, festivals and sports events, Potápi said. He added that the grants would range between 250,000 and 3 million forints. The programme is aimed at encouraging ethnic Hungarian families "to have more children who will become adults with a strong Hungarian

identity", the politician said. The Hungarian government is committed to supporting "all those working to improve the lives of Hungarian families," he added.

GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARY BELIEVES IT CAN REVERSE NEGATIVE POPULATION TRENDS

Hungary believes it can prosper on its own and can reverse the aging of its population, the state secretary in charge of youth and family affairs told a conference in Budapest. Population aging is a growing problem and young people are not having enough children or cannot commit to having the number of children they would want, Katalin Novák told the conference entitled "Shift Towards a Family-friendly Europe". The government has been working to solve this problem since 2010 by supporting families and applying a family-friendly approach to all areas of governance, Novák said. Today the government spends twice as much on family subsidies as in 2010, she said, adding that Hungary spends 4.8% of GDP on family support schemes, the highest proportion in Europe.

Kazimierz Kuberski, Poland's deputy minister for family affairs, told the conference that the Polish government also considered it a priority to improve its demographic situation. The Polish government has also introduced a variety of measures aimed at encouraging couples to have children, Kuberski added.

Radka Maxová, a member of the Czech parliament's upper house, citing recent surveys, said living standards were the biggest factor in couples' decision to have children. Maxová said the Czech government offered family subsidies for every social and age group.

FIDESZ TO TOUR COUNTRY WITH ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Ruling Fidesz will launch a campaign touring the country over the next four weeks to reach out to voters for the May 26 European parliamentary elections, the party's communications director said. Over 60 leading politicians and MEP candidates will hold some 220 forums to allow personal discussions about the upcoming ballot's stake with as many voters as possible, Balázs Hidvéghi told a press conference. The EP elections will have an unprecedented stake, he said. Voters will have to decide whether the EU should remain a community of European nations and European people or become a continent of immigrants, Hidvéghi said. At stake also is whether voters elect pro-migration or anti-migration politicians as leaders of the European Union, he said.

HUNGARY JOBLESS RATE REACHES 3.6%

Hungary's three-month rolling average jobless rate reached 3.6% in January-March, unchanged from the previous

three-month period and edging down from 3.9% twelve months earlier, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The rate covers unemployment among those between the ages of 15 and 74. In absolute terms, there were 165,700 unemployed, 2,500 fewer than in the previous period and down 12,200 from a year earlier.

The unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group stood at 11.2%. The unemployed in this age group account for more than one-fifth of all jobless, KSH noted. Out-of-work Hungarians spent about 13.9 months on average looking for employment during the period, and 37.6% of the unemployed had been seeking work for one year or longer. The number of employed stood at 4,497,100 among 15- to 74-year-olds, 61,900 more than in the same period a year earlier. The employment rate was 60.6%, up 1.0 percentage point.

The number of employed included 121,000 Hungarians in fostered work schemes and 108,900 working abroad. The number of those employed on the domestic primary labour market rose by 2.1% from a year earlier to 4,267,200, while the number of fostered workers dropped by 23.6%. The number of those working abroad was up by 12.8%.

ING Bank chief analyst Péter Virovác said the Hungarian economy has reached full employment given its current labour market structure. Without a significant labour market reform the unemployment rate could remain around 3.6% for the rest of the year. Takarékbank analyst András Horváth said the employment rate could be improved by around 4 percentage points based on the performance of more competitive EU member states. However, the available labour force is low-skilled and government intervention and more training would be needed for this improvement. Erste Bank analyst Orsolya Nyeste companies have a high demand for workers, more people are being employed on the primary labour market which is reflected in the dropping number of fostered workers.

PILOT TRAINING CENTRE TO BE SET UP IN HÉVÍZ

Norwegian companies will invest 15 million euros in setting up a pilot training centre in Hévíz, in western Hungary, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said. Central European Aviaton Cluster and Pilot Flight Academy plan

to start the trainings in September 2019. The facility is scheduled to train some 300 pilots annually, Stig Eyde, CEO of Central European Aviaton Cluster, said. The centre will use the Hévíz-Balaton airport as a base, he said, adding that Hungary's business environment is fostering investment. At the press conference in Budapest, Szijjártó said the training centre would also cement Hungary's position in the dynamically developing aviation sector.

ORGAN CONCERT AIDING NOTRE DAME RECONSTRUCTION TO BE HELD IN SZEGED CATHEDRAL

An organ concert to aid the reconstruction of Paris' Notre Dame, which was heavily damaged in a fire on April 15, will be held in the Votive Church of Szeged on Friday, organisers told MTI. The concert will feature works by French authors. The southern Hungarian city's cathedral was built after Szeged survived the largest flood of its history in 1879. It was rebuilt in part from donations by the international community, including large funds from the city of Paris.