

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



National Cohesion Day marked in front of Parliament

MTI/Zoltán Balogh

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**CEE parliament speakers from 15 countries meet in Warsaw**

**12 CEE countries represented at 3 Seas Initiative in Ljubljana**

**Stats office prelim report on retail trade in April**

**Independent MP announces result of signature drive demanding Hungary joins**

**European Prosecutor's Office**

## TOP STORY

### GOVT SUBMITS 2020 BUDGET BILL TO PARLT

Finance Minister Mihály Varga has submitted Hungary's 2020 budget bill to parliament.

The minister said the bill is designed to support families with a focus on implementing the government's family protection action plan. He highlighted increased support for families, the economy protection action plan, tax cuts and increased spending on security as the budget's four main pillars. The government will spend an extra 224 billion forints (EUR 691m) on family support while the economy protection action plan will pump another 500 billion forints into the economy, Varga said.

Next year's budget targets annual economic growth of 4% and a budget deficit of 1% of GDP, he said. The public debt is seen dropping to 65.5% of GDP by the end of the year and inflation is targeted at 2.8%, according to the figures released on Parliament's website. The bill targets a narrower deficit and more than doubles the size of reserves from this year. It targets revenue of 21,424.7 billion forints and spending of 21,791.7 billion, producing a deficit of 367 billion.

House Speaker László Kövér confirmed that lawmakers will vote on the budget on July 12.

## **ANOTHER TWO VICTIMS OF SHIP COLLISION FOUND**

Two victims of last week's Danube ship collision were found in the river on Tuesday but 17 people are still missing. Recovery teams have pulled the body of a victim from the sunken sightseeing boat, counter-terrorism force TEK, which is in charge of the recovery efforts, said. The body was discovered in the window of the wreck on Tuesday morning and pulled to the surface in the afternoon, TEK said in a statement. "The recovery teams are still working amid high-risk conditions and are doing everything they can to ensure that the operation is successful," the statement said, adding that raising the wreck of the Hableány was still their top priority.

Budapest police said on the website police.hu on Tuesday afternoon that the body of a South Korean passenger had been found. The body was lifted from the Danube at the village of Kulcs in Fejér County, around 60 km downstream from the accident. The authorities are looking for further victims along the entire length of the river south of Budapest, police.hu added.

The bodies of two other victims were recovered on Monday. The one found near the southern Hungarian village of Harta is that of a South Korean national, a male aged around 60, the South Korean foreign ministry confirmed. Another body, recovered also on Monday in a joint effort of

Hungarian and Korean divers near Margaret Bridge, that of a woman, has also been identified, the police said.

The rescue efforts were swift and professional, Interior Minister Sándor Pintér told parliament's national security committee. Within half an hour after a river cruiser and a sight-seeing boat collided near the Parliament building and the smaller boat sank, the rescue operation was taken over by high-ranking officers of the police and the disaster management authority, he told the committee hearing. Speaking to the press after the hearing, Pintér said the Hungarian authorities were cooperating well with the South Korean government, embassy and divers. Pintér said the South Korean experts "have accepted the Hungarians' arguments" on the dangers of entering the wreck, which is located near Margaret Bridge, under high waters with extremely swift currents. Visibility is still close to zero, he said, adding that entering the wreck may prove extremely dangerous. The rescue operation is set to resume and the experts will aim recover as many of the victims' bodies as possible, Pintér said, "but we do not want further casualties". Ultimately, the aim is to remove the shipwreck from the water, he said.

The Hableány, carrying 33 South Koreans and two Hungarian crew, collided with a cruise ship and sank last Wednesday. Seven passengers were rescued, eleven have been confirmed dead and 17 are still missing.

The Ukrainian captain of the Viking Sigyn, a Swiss-registered cruise ship, has been detained.

## **GULYÁS: FIDESZ BETTER OFF IN EPP**

Berlin, June 4 (MTI) - Prime Minister's Office chief Gergely Gulyas, in an interview to German conservative daily Die Welt published on Tuesday, said he believed Hungary's ruling Fidesz party was better off remaining a member of the European People's Party. "The EPP, too, would be better off keeping us," he told the paper.

Commenting on the Hungarian government's decision to postpone the introduction of public administration courts indefinitely, Gulyas said Hungary wanted to avoid another showdown with the European Commission over the country's justice system, pointing out that another dispute could have "negative consequences". Asked if the government's decision on the courts had been made in the interest of Fidesz keeping its EPP membership, Gulyas said this had not been the motivation behind the move, adding, at the same time, that the decision "might make it easier for the EPP to keep us in".

On the topic of the Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance's victory in last month's European Parliament election, Gulyas said the reason why the ruling alliance had achieved such a convincing victory was because Hungary had seen convincing progress. "The people are doing better

and that's what matters most," Gulyas said.

Asked about Fidesz's decision to focus its campaign on the issue of migration, he said: "The two go together. Hungarians know what they stand to lose if we don't stop migration." The Hungarian government's opposition to migration has been clear since 2015, Gulyas said, adding that hopefully those members of the EPP that had disagreed with Fidesz back then have since moved closer to Fidesz's position on the issue. He noted that most members of the EPP oppose illegal migration and agree that European Union member states should be free to decide for themselves whether or not they want immigration.

Asked about Hungary's accession to the euro zone, Gulyas noted that Hungary made a commitment to adopt the common currency when it joined the EU in 2004. The only question, he said, was when the currency would be introduced. Economists believe the right time for a member state to adopt the euro is when its gross domestic product reaches 90% of the average EU GDP, he said, adding that Hungary could achieve this within ten years.

Concerning EPP Spitzenkandidat Manfred Weber, Gulyas said the CSU politician "didn't want our support and we will grant him this wish". He said the EPP had a slew of experienced politicians who would be willing to head the European Commission.

Commenting on the composition of the next European Parliament, Gulyas said the "four big winners" of the May 26 election were the Hungarian ruling parties, Poland's ruling Law and Justice, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini's League Party and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP).

He added that there were issues on which "we can cooperate with the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Liberals", noting that Fidesz had voted with other EP groups in the past, as well. "But we don't want permanent cooperation with them and we think there are a number of important groups to the right of the EPP that aren't at all extremist," he said.

### **ORBÁN MARKS COHESION DAY IN SÁTORALJAÚJHELY**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, addressing a commemoration of the Trianon Peace Treaty, said: "We can stand proud and declare that we have survived."

"Here we are at the heart of Europe, despite being divided up, despite wars and dictatorships," Viktor Orbán said in his address in Sátoraljaújhely, north-east Hungary, marking Hungary's National Cohesion Day. Hungarians, he said, had "not only survived but they are now the largest nation in the Carpathian Basin".

"Together we will again be great, successful and victorious," Orbán told his audience, some 1,000 young people from ethnic Hungarian communities participating in a camp

organised by the Rákóczi Association. He added that Hungary seeks to cooperate with its neighbours and anyone willing to cooperate "will do well". Orbán said Hungary's "economic, cultural and military powers" were rising "noticeably". It is time to use those powers to increase cooperation with the peoples of central Europe, he said. "Hungary's hundred years of solitude is over ... now we're miles away from where we set off thirty years ago, when we broke away from the Soviet Union".

Concerning the Trianon treaty, Orbán said that "whatever was unjust at some time, will continue to be unjust until the end of time, because while time heals wounds it does not heal an amputation". What happened 99 years ago "was not an agreement but a diktat and punishment for losing the war". The winners had power but no moral superiority, he said. They punished millions of people who had been summoned to war by their country and who "cannot be blamed for fighting in a war which had no good or fair side", Orbán said. The victors' decisions "sowed the seeds of further animosity, dictatorships and future wars rather than freedom and peace," the prime minister said. "We received the blows of national socialism and then of communism one after the other, for which the soil had been prepared by the peace diktats," Orbán said. "Wherever you come from, you are at home; Hungary is your home, too," he concluded.



**HARRACH PAYS TRIBUTE TO WWI HUNGARIAN SOLDIERS BURIED IN ROMANIA**

Péter Harrach, parliamentary leader of the co-ruling Christian Democrats, visited the graves of Hungarian soldiers that fell in the first world war and were buried in the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) military cemetery in Romania's Harghita county. Harrach told MTI after the visit that it was important for members of the Hungarian parliament to mark National Cohesion Day "at places where there is a great need to express cohesion". He quoted the constitution as saying that "the Hungarian nation is made up of an alliance between Hungarians of the past, present and future".

"We bow our heads before the graves of an endangered Hungarian military cemetery and express at the same time that we are responsible for the whole nation, not only for the present, but for heroes of the past and for the future as well; this is a responsibility we have to pass on to the next generation," he said.

Harrach told MTI that issues around the cemetery should be resolved through diplomacy and not in the public eye. He said that Hungary has asked for an explanation for developments in the cemetery and added that some of the issues were up to historians to resolve.

The Valea Uzului military cemetery is the largest WW1 memorial site in

Romania's Harghita county. However, the local council of the eastern Romanian town of Darmanesti, in Bacau County, has moved to establish a memorial site in the cemetery for Romanian soldiers who fell in the second world war. This has seen the erection of 52 concrete crosses and one large Orthodox cross in the fenced-off cemetery site holding the graves of some 600 soldiers of Austria-Hungary.

Meanwhile, the state secretary for Hungarian communities abroad, Árpád János Potápi, said the 99 years that have passed since the signing of the Trianon peace treaty was proof of the strong will of Hungarians to survive and keep their country alive. It was aimed at "destroying Hungary's political system, as well as its economy, military and society", he told public broadcaster M1. Later, speaking at a ceremony in front of Parliament, Potápi said the future of the Hungarian nation was "in the hands of Hungarian mothers and fathers" and thanked grandparents and parents who decided to raise their children and grandchildren to be Hungarians. "Those parents and grandparents have passed on not only their mother tongue, but the notion that we belong somewhere: to the global family of all Hungarians. On this day we are celebrating this outstanding unity," he said.

Closing the commemoration, 5,000 children joined together from the Carpathian Basin to sing the Hungarian national anthem in Kossuth Square.

Hungary's parliament declared June 4 the Day of National Cohesion in 2010.

**KÖVÉR MARKS IPU ANNIVERSARY**

International cooperation is crucial for tackling global problems, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér told a celebration marking the 130th anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Hungary's IPU membership. IPU keeps the international community's old and recently emerging problems high on its agenda to contribute to the fight against poverty, nuclear disarmament, tackling migration, efforts against climate change, and combatting terrorism, he said, warning, however, that "patriotism and international cooperation must complement each other". "We cannot for a moment forget about preserving a national identity and national characteristics, about guaranteeing the rights to the mother tongue and the homeland." Respecting national characteristics at a time of globalisation is a fundamental requirement for any kind of international cooperation, Kövér said.

IPU President Gabriela Cuevas Barron said in her address that while democracy did not use to be a generally accepted value at the time IPU was founded in 1889, recent generations tend to take it for granted. She warned that they are wrong: preserving democracy requires a day-to-day fight. Cuevas Barron highlighted



the crucial importance of human rights, and said that its institutions should be renewed so that they can meet challenges of the 21st century. Those institutions should be transparent and capable of representing the voters, she added. The IPU chief spoke highly of the Hungarian parliament's contribution to IPU activities. She said that the Hungarian delegation participates in debates on sensitive issues, humanitarian issues, and climate change. The Hungarian IPU group was formed in May 1895 by 131 members of the upper and lower houses, headed by author Mór Jókai, a popular MP at the time.

Later in the day, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó discussed the growing role and significance of parliamentary diplomacy Cuevas Barron, the ministry said. They agreed that in a continually changing global political and economic situation, the role and significance of parliamentary diplomacy is ever more important. There are numerous tensions around the world that parliamentary diplomacy can tackle with a wide

range of tools, the ministry said in a statement. Szijjártó told Cuevas Barron that in the fast-changing world, the stable parliamentary background of the Hungarian government is crucial to the country's competitiveness, helping fast and sensible decision-making.

### **PINTÉR: LAW ENFORCEMENT SECTOR TO SEE NEXT WAGE HIKE IN JAN 2020**

Hungarian law enforcement employees will see another wage hike in Jan 2020, the scope of which is still to be decided, Interior Minister Sandor Pintér said in his annual report to parliament's national security committee.

Public safety has improved further in Hungary, Pintér said. The number of crimes has fallen from nearly 430,000 in 2010 to 178,000 in 2018, he said.

The public is also satisfied with the police's work, he said. Some 90% of Hungarians say police officers are "doing their job" while 80% see them as humane and capable, Pintér said.

### **MOL LIMO FLEET LOGS 5M KM**

The MOL Limo car-sharing fleet has covered about 5 million km since the launch of the service in January last year. More than 45,000 people have registered to use the service. The fleet has grown to 450 vehicles, including 300 petrol and 100 electric Volkswagen up! models and 50 next-generation Mercedes Benz Class A models. MOL Limo plans to expand the area where service is currently available to the borders of the capital by 2020 and to increase the number of electric cars.

From June, MOL Limo has dedicated parking slots at Liszt Ferenc International Airport. The airport's entry system will automatically let the vehicles in and out, with users charged a 1,990 forint additional airport fee, which will be added to the standard per-minute fee. The per-minute fee for the Volkswagen models is 77 forint, excluding a discount for users who pay a supplemental monthly fee. Users pay 111 forints per minute for the Mercedes models.