

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Bathers at Lake Balaton

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parliament meets

90th Book Week presser

TOP STORY

ÁDER SLAMS VALEA UZULUI INCIDENT AS 'BLASPHEMOUS, UNLAWFUL'

Hungarian President János Áder has slammed a Thursday incident in the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) military cemetery between Hungarians and Romanians as “blasphemous, in violation of laws and international agreements and also deeply immoral.”

The cemetery in eastern Romania commemorates Hungarian soldiers fallen in the first world war. In April 2019, the local council erected a memorial site in the cemetery, for Romanian soldiers fallen in the second world war. Ahead of the site's inauguration late on Thursday, the visitors of that event clashed with Szekler demonstrators and eventually forced their way into the cemetery.

Speaking after attending the Whitsun mass in Șumuleu Ciuc (Csíksomlyó), a traditional place of pilgrimage in Romania, Áder said that the memorial for Romanian soldiers contained 52 crosses, some of which “have been erected over the ashes of Hungarian soldiers”. The Romanian authorities have also found the memorial site unlawful, he said. The construction of the memorial site infringes on the Romanian-Hungarian agreement on the maintenance of war graves, Áder said. It is also “deeply immoral”, he added.

It is in the interest of Hungary and of ethnic Hungarians living in Romania to find a solution enabling a peaceful coexistence between Romanians and Hungarians, he said.

WRECKED HABLEÁNY SOON TO BE HOISTED

The wreck of the Hableány, a sightseeing boat which sank in the River Danube in central Budapest with a group of tourists aboard, could be lifted to the surface “in the foreseeable future”, an official of the counter-terrorism force (TEK), which is in charge of the salvage operation, told a press conference.

Nándor Jasenszky said that the four harnesses necessary to lift the wreck are now in place. The large crane to be used in the operation will soon take its final position, and the experts will align and fix the four ships that will lift Hableány from the river bed, he said. He noted that the boat had been used for 70 years, and it was not known what damage the collision had done to its structure. The salvage operation is aimed at lifting the wreck in one piece, he said, adding that it was “very likely” that the bodies of further victims of the collision would be found inside the wrecked vessel.

The exact date has not been determined as yet, but TEK “will be bent on” completing the operation as soon as possible, he said. He said the cool temperatures of the morning hours would be good for the operation, and added that they would not attempt to lift the wreck at night in bad visibility.

Meanwhile, Hungary’s authority for air transport restricted the country’s airspace above a section of the

Danube with a view to preventing the disruption of recovery efforts. The restricted zone extends from about 1 km north of Budapest’s Árpád Bridge down to the city of Paks, about 100 km south of Budapest, and in about a 2-kilometre radius east and west of the river.

At the time of the collision Hableány had 33 South Korean tourists on board and a crew of two Hungarians. Seven tourists were rescued from the water after the collision. The bodies of 19 tourists and one of the Hungarian crew have been found and identified, while a search is still under way for 8 missing persons.

HIDVÉGHI: FIDESZ’S OWN PREROGATIVE TO DECIDE ON EPP MEMBERSHIP

Hungary’s ruling Fidesz party will decide on its own whether to remain a member of the European People’s Party (EPP) depending on where its policies will be represented best, MEP-elect Balázs Hidvéghi told public radio on Sunday.

Hidvéghi, who is also the party’s communications chief, said that the EPP’s “lukewarm, left-leaning policies” had yielded no results and that it “should be steered to the right”. Many within the EPP have “genuine respect” for Fidesz’s results in the May European parliamentary election, he said, and many have expressed their wishes that the Hungarian Fidesz-Christian Democrats (KDNP) alliance should remain in the party family. However,

the party’s primary goal is to “put into practice the mandate received from the Hungarian people”, he said.

A vast majority of Hungarians have voted that Fidesz should take a stand against immigration and for a Europe of nation states, he said. Voters, he added, also want Fidesz to insist on preserving national sovereignty and to “oppose bad Brussels policies that have weakened Europe”. If this is best done within the EPP, Fidesz will decide to stay, “and if not, [Fidesz] will continue elsewhere”, Hidvéghi said.

Regarding the re-election of Manfred Weber, the EPP’s group leader in the EP, Hidvéghi insisted that the vote was “not a real election” but rather an “automatic move rooted in the tradition that that position goes to the nation sending the largest group of MEPs to the EPP.” Fidesz would have had no advantage from opposing that, Hidvéghi said, adding that they maintain their view that Weber would be “unfit to be president of the European Commission.”

The MEPs of Fidesz-KDNP are aiming to clinch leadership positions in EP committees, Hidvéghi said. The party alliance is sending 13 representatives to the EP, making it the third largest group within the EPP. “We are rather a large faction, this lends us political power and commands respect,” he said. A divorce from the EPP would not weaken Hungary’s position, he said. He cited a strengthening cooperation among the Visegrad Group as an example, despite the fact that their MEPs sit in various EP party families.

SZIJJÁRTÓ, S KOREAN COUNTERPART DISCUSS SHIP COLLISION

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó met his South Korean counterpart Kang Kyung-wha on the sidelines of the Globsec security forum in Bratislava on Friday. In a statement sent to MTI after the talks, Szijjártó called “exemplary” the cooperation between Hungarian and South Korean rescue teams working to salvage a sightseeing boat which sank in central Budapest last week, causing the death of at least 18 South Korean tourists.

Szijjártó informed his colleague about the status of the salvage operation. He said that preparations are under way to lift the wreck out of the River Danube, and added that a thorough investigation has been launched to reveal every detail of the disaster. The South Korean minister thanked all participants in the operations for their efforts.

Meanwhile, a foreign ministry official said on Saturday that the Hungarian embassy in Seoul has received numerous messages from South Korean citizens expressing their gratitude for the work carried out by Hungarian authorities and the solidarity shown by the Hungarian people in connection with last week’s Danube boat collision. Multiple letters have praised the work of the Hungarian rescue teams, while many Koreans said they had been moved by the candles and memorial objects left on the

bank of the Danube in memory of the victims, Tamás Menczer, state secretary for communications and international representation, said in a Facebook post.

KÖVÉR PRAISES JÁSZ MINORITY’S ‘ABILITY TO SURVIVE’ AT JÁSZ WORLD CONGRESS

The Jász people, an Iranic ethnic minority present in Hungary since the 13th century, is an example to European nations in its “ability to survive”, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér said in his address to the Jász world congress on Saturday. Kövér, the patron of the three-day meeting, said Jász minorities have an opportunity at the world congress in Jászkisér, eastern Hungary, to find each other and strengthen their sense of community.

The secret to that ability to survive, Kövér said, was a strong identity. “If they take all your wealth but you preserve your identity, you can get everything back. If your identity is lost, you lost everything and have no chance of recovering it,” he said. The Jász ethnic minority in the 18th century paid the “enormous sum” required of them to be liberated from serfdom, Kövér noted. This was a “lesson” they taught to the peoples of the world, he said. Today’s message to the world is that those who “consider themselves indebted to their homeland” will survive, thrive and will determine the course of history, he said.

The Jász were a nomadic people originating from Ossetia, an area in

modern-day Iran. Their language was of the Iranic language family. The Jász settled in northeast Hungary in the 13th century, after which their original language was gradually replaced by Hungarian. The Jász held their first world congress in 1995, on the 250th anniversary of their liberation from serfdom.

TRÓCSÁNYI RECEIVES STATE ORDER IN LEBANON

President Michel Aoun of Lebanon expressed his thanks to the Hungarian government for supporting his country, Hungarian Justice Minister László Trócsányi told MTI from Beirut on Monday afternoon.

The minister arrived in Lebanon at the invitation of Jean Daoud Fahed, the President of the Lebanese Supreme Judicial Council on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the court. The Lebanese President awarded a National Order of the Cedar, Commander grade, to Trócsányi at the anniversary celebration.

The minister told MTI about the Hungarian assistance given to Lebanon, including a church renovation programme, as part of which 33 churches will be renovated with a contribution of 463 million forints (EUR 1.4m) from the Hungarian government. At the meeting, the Lebanese president said Lebanon and Hungary are among those countries that consider their identity important and want to preserve it in the future, Trócsányi said, adding that Michel

Aoun expressed his understanding of and support for Hungary's migration policy.

Trócsányi also conducted talks with his Lebanese counterpart Albert Serhan and invited him to a conference on international justice, due to be held in Budapest.

SZIJJÁRTÓ REVISITS WWI CEMETERY ISSUE WITH ROMANIAN COUNTERPART

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó and Teodor Melescanu, his Romanian counterpart, had further talks concerning the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) military cemetery, by phone on Monday.

A statement from the Hungarian foreign ministry quoted Melescanu as saying that the Romanian prime minister ordered the Romanian defence ministry to take control over the cemetery. The statement added that the Hungarian side has acknowledged the decision.

Szjijártó requested that the two defence ministries should start consultations "to restore order in line with bilateral and international obligations" at the cemetery.

Both ministers urged a peaceful settlement of issues around the cemetery.

At the cemetery, containing the graves of Hungarian first world war soldiers, the local council has erected a memorial site for Romanian soldiers fallen in the second world war. Ahead of the site's inauguration last Thursday,

the visitors of that event clashed with Szekler demonstrators and eventually forced their way into the cemetery.

EUROBAROMETER: TWO-THIRDS OF HUNGARIANS WOULD WELCOME EURO

The majority of people in countries outside the euro zone would welcome the introduction of the European currency, according to the latest Eurobarometer survey published in Brussels on Friday. The report said that voter support for the common currency was 66% in Hungary, the highest in the group of seven countries. On average, 55% of the group's population would support an immediate while 42% an early introduction of the euro, the report said. Fully 56% of respondents in the seven countries said that the common currency has a good impact on the economies which have already joined the currency union. In Hungary, 70% of participants had the same opinion. The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

OPPOSITION'S BUDAPEST MAYOR CANDIDATES PROTEST HOMELESS BAN

Civil group A Város Mindenkié (The capital belongs to everybody) staged a demonstration on Friday protesting Hungary's ban on homelessness, which the Constitutional Court has recently upheld. The demonstration,

in front of the Constitutional Court's headquarters in central Budapest, was attended by mayoral candidates of the opposition parties.

Gergely Karácsony, candidate of the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance, said that the Constitutional Court has "gone over to the dark side" and insisted that Hungarians "no longer have the rights to security and accommodation".

Olga Kálmán, an independent candidate supported by the leftist Democratic Coalition, said that protecting human life was "a fundamental obligation" and condemned the legislation. Momentum's Gábor Kerpel-Fronius called for a capital which ensures accommodation opportunities to all its residents.

Organisers of the demonstration said the protest was staged to raise public awareness that "homelessness is caused by a lack of affordable housing, which could be remedied through stopping evictions and putting an appropriate housing policy in place rather than harassing homeless people".

VARGA PRESENTS LATEST TAX CUTS, GROWTH INCENTIVES AT AMCHAM FORUM

The government wants to continue its investor-friendly economic policy, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said at a business forum organised by the American-Chamber of Commerce in Hungary (AmCham) on Friday,

presenting planned tax cuts and growth incentives which are part of a government plan announced by the minister on May 30. The plan aims at shielding the Hungarian economy from the impact of a global slowdown.

The government's strategic partnership agreement signed with AmCham in 2011 and the strategic partnership agreements concluded with US-based companies present in Hungary have lived up to expectations, the minister said. The United States was the third biggest foreign investor in Hungary in 2018, Varga said, adding that there are about 1,700 US-owned companies operating in the country, employing more than 100,000 people.

FIRST DIRECT FLIGHT FROM SHANGHAI LANDS IN BUDAPEST

The first flight of Shanghai Airlines from Shanghai Pudong airport landed on Friday morning at Budapest's Liszt

Ferenc International Airport. Shanghai Airlines will fly three times a week between the two cities.

At the press conference after the landing, Budapest Airport CEO Jost Lammers noted that the flights are the first direct connection between Budapest and Shanghai. Launching the flight was the result of cooperation between the foreign ministry, the airport and the Hungarian Tourism Agency, he said. Budapest Airport is developing its facilities to accommodate Chinese travellers, he noted: it employs service staff speaking Mandarin and has introduced online paying methods popular in China.

State Secretary Levente Magyar of the foreign ministry said that the connection between Budapest and one of China's economic hubs was established in the year marking the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the countries. Sino-Hungarian ties are developing more dynamically than ever, thanks

to a stable political and economic background, he said. Duan Jielong, China's ambassador to Hungary, and Tian Liuwen, the Deputy CEO of China Eastern Airlines, also attended the event.

EUROPEAN MACCABI GAMES TO BE OPENED BY ÁDER

The 15th European Maccabi Games will start in Budapest on July 29 and will be officially opened by the event's chief patron, President János Áder, a day later, the president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (Mazsihisz) said. Some 3,000 participants from 40 countries are expected to the event which will run through August 7, András Heisler told a press conference at Ludovika Campus, the central venue for the games. A total of 2,200 athletes will compete in Budapest, a record high in the 90-year history of the games, he said.