

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Visegrad Four prime ministers at an informal meeting in Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bulgarian President Rumen Radev in Budapest

Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka Tilak Marapana in Budapest

EU health ministers meet in Luxembourg

Stats office reports on construction output in April 2019

TOP STORY

HUNGARY DEMANDS NEW EU AGENDA

The EU's strategic agenda for the next five years should address national competencies concerning the issues of migration, respect for sovereignty and the protection of Christian culture, a government official has said.

In last month's European Parliament election, Hungarians entrusted the ruling alliance with three objectives: to stop illegal immigration, to protect national sovereignty and to protect Christian culture in Europe, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications and relations, told a press conference. In line with this mandate, the text of the bloc's next strategic agenda must include a clause declaring that the EU should ensure the preservation of national competencies when it comes to managing migration, Kovács said. Hungary's proposal aims to stop illegal migration, he said, adding that to do so, the EU would have to work together with its neighbouring countries.

Concerning the next strategic objective, Kovács said the EU's institutional system should respect the sovereignty of the bloc's member states, arguing that the EU could only be strong if its member states are. He also said: "Christianity is the foundation of European culture, and the EU's strategic document [should] include the fundamental value of European culture and the protection of Christianity."

V4 PREMIERS AGREE TO PRESENT UNITED FRONT AT EU SUMMIT

The prime ministers of the Visegrad Group agreed at an informal meeting in Budapest to present a united front on matters of European Union leadership positions and policy at next week's EU summit, the Hungarian PM's press chief said. At the meeting held at the Castle District premises of the Prime Minister's Office, the prime ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia discussed the future of Europe, the election of new EU leaders and the Czech Republic's upcoming V4 presidency, Bertalan Havasi told MTI. The V4 premiers were in agreement that the grouping plays a crucial role in shaping the future of the continent, Havasi said. As they are aware of the responsibility they carry, the V4 leaders are playing an active role in the debates on the future of the EU, including personnel issues, he added. The V4 want the bloc's leaders to be fit and experienced enough for their roles and to have respect for the people of central Europe and the Visegrad cooperation. The grouping expects the EU's leaders to always consider the interests of central Europe when making joint decisions about the bloc, Havasi said.

BODY OF ANOTHER HABLEÁNY COLLISION VICTIM IDENTIFIED

A body found in the River Danube near the village of Bölcske, some 100km downstream from Budapest, has been identified as that of a victim of the sightseeing boat Hableány, police said on Thursday. A search is under way along the entire river section downstream from the city to recover the bodies of the three South Korean passengers still missing. The Hableány was lifted from the Danube on Tuesday afternoon. During the salvage operation, the bodies of four victims were found. The wreck was taken to the Csepel port in the south of the city to undergo further examination.

The Ukrainian captain of the cruise ship which collided with a sightseeing boat in central Budapest on May 29 has been released from custody after posting a bail of 15 million forints (EUR 46,000), the Budapest Municipal Court said. Under the court's binding ruling, the 64-year-old captain of the Viking Sigyn cruise ship will now be kept under criminal supervision for a maximum period of four months. The captain has been ordered to wear a tracking device and must appear in person before the authorities investigating the collision twice a week, the court noted in a statement. The captain was taken into custody on June 1 on suspicion of criminal misconduct.

President János Áder has thanked people who took part in rescuing the victims of the Danube collision. Áder said neither Hungary nor South Korea would forget the sight of the battered boat slowly being raised from the water. He wrote that "an extraordinary drama" had taken place on the Danube in Budapest and that every moment had been about the value of life and reverence shown for it. "Thanks are due to everyone who saved lives from the first moment of the tragic boat accident," he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY OPPOSED TO TAX COMMUNITIZATION BY BRUSSELS

Hungary rejects efforts by Brussels to advance "a kind of socialist, utopian economic strategy" through tax harmonisation and the communitization of taxation, Péter Sziijártó, the foreign affairs and trade minister, said at a conference organised by business daily Világgazdaság. Tax harmonisation, conducted by unifying member states' tax policies, would set back competitiveness, while making taxation a supranational, rather than a sovereign matter, would spread the burden resulting from the undisciplined fiscal policy of some governments to other countries, Sziijártó said. Hungary's tight fiscal policy and special measures have produced a decline in public debt relative to GDP even while the

government initiates tax cuts, he added.

Szijjártó said cutting taxes further would be one of the government's main tasks in the coming years. Businesses are expected to plough back savings from the lower taxes on labour into higher remuneration and technological developments, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC TIES WITH SE ASIA IN HUNGARY'S INTEREST

The rapid development of economic, trade and investment ties to South-East Asia is in Hungary's interest, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Thursday after talks with Cambodian counterpart Prak Sokhonn. South-East Asia is one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, Szijjártó told a joint press conference. "The cooperation outlook ... with Cambodia is positive because the country has launched some major development schemes that also offer great opportunities for Hungarian companies," he said. Cambodia needs some serious investment in water management and Hungarian technologies have already been implemented in the region, he said. Significant investment is also planned in food processing and a state administration digitisation scheme is currently under way, he added. Hungarian companies will receive subsidies to participate in

development projects in Cambodia, he said. An economic cooperation agreement has been signed and an economic mixed committee will be set up, he added. Eximbank will open a 46 million dollar credit line to encourage Hungarian and Cambodian companies to work together. Also, talks are under way on a tied aid loan scheme and Hungary will open a representation in the Cambodian capital, he said. He added that Hungary has offered 15 scholarships to students from Cambodia to study in Hungarian higher education institutions.

Cambodia is located in an area prone to natural disasters, which is one of the root causes of migration from the region, he said. Hungary's migration policy rests on the notion that help should be taken to where the trouble is and therefore Hungary has proposed to the European Union that development support for Cambodia should be increased in the next EU budget period, he added. Hungary also encourages the EU and the United Nations to intensify participation in a demining scheme, he said. Hungary stands opposed to the EU withdrawing Cambodia's trade privileges. Instead of imposing punishment, support should be boosted, Szijjártó added.

Sokhonn said Hungary and Cambodia had maintained long-lasting cooperation and regular dialogue. Both countries are dedicated to giving a new impetus to bilateral relations, he added. He expressed thanks to Hungary for supporting

his country in international forums. Before the press conference, a memorandum of understanding was signed on economic cooperation and agreements on education and development cooperation.

SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR PUNISHING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR VALEA UZULUI INCIDENT

Romania should hold those "truly responsible" for the violent incident in the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) memorial cemetery responsible instead of penalising peaceful commemorators, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó has said. Hungary expects Romania to conduct a "fair review" of last Thursday's clash in the cemetery in eastern Romania, he said.

The cemetery in Valea Uzului is a resting place of Hungarian soldiers and others fallen in the first world war. In April, the local council erected a memorial site for Romanian soldiers. Ahead of the site's inauguration on June 6, the visitors of that event clashed with Szekler demonstrators and eventually forced their way into the cemetery.

Speaking at a press conference on an unrelated matter, Szijjártó said that video recordings clearly show a "crowd attacking peaceful Hungarians and vandalising the cemetery". It is unacceptable that Romanian authorities have punished the victims instead of the perpetrators of violence, he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT COMMITTED TO PROVIDING HELP WHERE IT IS NEEDED

Hungary's government is committed to its policy of providing help at the location where it is needed, the foreign minister told a conference in Budapest on the European aid programme supporting Syria and Iraq.

The Quadra programme was launched in 2016 and supports refugees and the communities receiving them to improve adaptation skills, education and work opportunities.

The European Union faces historic challenges and the most serious of these concerns migration, Peter Szijjártó said. "The first time Hungary came face to face with a large wave of illegal migrants was in 2015 and the security risks it brought to Europe have since become obvious," he added. Migration waves pose risks not only to the target countries but also to the people who pay to human smugglers and become their victims, he said. "Our migration policy is clear," Szijjártó said. "But the only things most of the world knows about it are that we insist on our right to decide ... whom we want to live together with, that we protect our borders, don't allow in illegal migrants and that we insist on our national, religious, historical and cultural identity." Less is said about "the other part of our policy", the minister said. Szijjártó underlined

the government's position that the root causes of migration should be eliminated and help should be provided to allow everyone to live in peace in their homeland or to return there as quickly as possible. "What we believe is a basic human right is that everyone should be able to live in peace and safety in their homeland, and this is what should be guaranteed," he said.

For many, it is not possible to live peacefully in their homeland, so international support for countries that give shelter must be increased substantially, he said. "Making the return home is far more feasible from neighbouring countries than from thousands of kilometres away." "Hungary doesn't just talk about this but takes action too," he said. "Despite being a small country, there are some small tasks that Hungary can gladly undertake." Szijjártó cited helping Christian communities facing difficulties as an example, adding that the government scheme dubbed Hungary Helps has so far provided 8 billion forints (EUR 24.8m) of aid to 35,000 people. He said the government held the Ecumenical Charity in high esteem for the work carried out in Hungary and around the world, supporting people living under difficult circumstances.

The charity's head, László Lehel, said the aid programme had been executed in cooperation with Hungary, Germany, France and Spain. Great advances have been made in the past three years, he added. Instead

of focusing on rapid and immediate aid, the programme has sought ways to help people get jobs and create a secure livelihood, he said. Gábor Zupkó, the head of the European Commission's representation in Hungary, said that at times Hungarians had been forced to leave the country and seek refuge elsewhere for the sake of the safety of their families and their own safety. Volker J. Oel, department head in charge of central and eastern Europe in the German economic cooperation and development ministry, said the current scheme was especially important because it focused on education, training, job creation and social cohesion.

HUNGARY OPENS BUSINESS CAMPUS IN WASHINGTON TO FOSTER ENTRY INTO US MARKETS

The Hungarian embassy in Washington DC on Wednesday opened a campus on its compound for businesses that want to make inroads into the American market. The embassy will use the campus to act as a liaison between Hungarian companies and potential American business partners with the help of a US consultancy. Some 22 million forints (EUR 68,300) has been earmarked for the initiative this year to support companies in the health-care, cybersecurity, drone and space technology industries. László György, state secretary of the innovation and

technology ministry, which partnered with the foreign ministry to set up the campus said the first arrivals at the campus in Washington are expected in the autumn. László Szabó, Hungary's ambassador to the US, and US ambassador to Hungary David Cornstein attended the opening ceremony.

HUNGARY TO BOOST ROLE IN INTL MILITARY MISSIONS

Hungary is set to increase its role in international military missions, a government resolution published in the latest issue of the official gazette Magyar Közlöny shows. According to the resolution, Hungary will increase its participation in NATO's KFOR mission in Kosovo and RSM mission in Afghanistan as well as in the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in Lebanon by a maximum of 260 troops between 2019 and 2022. The defence ministry is earmarking 1.5 billion forints (EUR 4.7m) in next year's budget, some 2.9 billion forints in 2021 and more than 2 billion forints in the 2022 budget for financing the missions. Defence Minister Tibor Benkő announced in February at a meeting of NATO defence ministers that Hungary would increase its number of troops serving in NATO missions from 1,000 to 1,200.

INDUSTRY OUTPUT UP 6.3% IN APRIL

Hungary's industrial output grew by 6.3% in April, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a second reading of data. In a month-on-month comparison, industrial output fell by a seasonally and working day-adjusted 1.1%. Growth in the automotive sector slowed to 9.3% in April, after expanding at the fastest rate in two-and-a-half years in the previous month. The automotive sector accounts for about 30% of manufacturing output. Output of the computer, electronics and optical equipment sector, which accounts for around 11% of manufacturing output, fell by 2.0%, showing a contraction for the first time in more than half a year. Output of food, drink and tobacco products increased by 10.9%.

Headline industrial output rose by an annual 6% in April, adjusted for the number of work days in the period.

POTÁPI: GOVT SUPPORTS HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE MEDIA OUTLETS BEYOND BORDERS

The Hungarian government supports Hungarian-language media outlets beyond the borders to create a "unified Hungarian media space", a government official said. Árpád János Potápi,

the state secretary for Hungarian communities abroad, addressed the conference of Hungarian media outlets in the Carpathian Basin in Visegrád, in northern Hungary.

Vojvodina broadcaster Pannon Rtv has moved to new headquarters with Hungarian government support, he said, adding that the government is also backing Hungarian media outlets in Transcarpathia, Slovakia and Transylvania.

The government will continue to develop the Hungarian media beyond the borders, Potápi said. Unless the Hungarian-language media is continuously modernised, ethnic Hungarians will switch to majority-language outlets, he said.

MOROCCO TO BE GUEST OF HONOUR AT 79TH OMEK

Morocco will be the guest of honour at the 79th National Agriculture and Food Exhibition (OMEK), Agriculture Minister state secretary Sándor Farkas has announced. Hungary and Morocco already cooperate in the farming sector and partnerships are developing quickly in the areas of food safety, horse breeding, farm digitalisation and research, education, and planting seeds, Farkas added. The OMEK farm and food fair, a biennial event, will take place at the Hungexpo fair grounds in Budapest between Sept. 26 and 29.