

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

The International Space Station passes in front of the Sun

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NATO defence ministers meet in Brussels**

**Szijjártó marks 30th anniversary of dismantling Iron Curtain on Hungary-Austria border**

**Stats office releases March-May employment data**

**Cbank releases Inflation report**

## TOP STORY

# SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY WANTS STRONG ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

As an exporter, Hungary has a vital interest in boosting economic ties with Turkey, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said after the 6th meeting of the two countries' economic joint committee.

Energy is the main pillar of Turkey-Hungary economic relations, Szijjártó said. He noted the opportunity to import gas from the south as well as deepening cooperation in the area of nuclear energy. He said the Turkish Stream pipeline, soon to bring gas from Azerbaijan to central Europe, would enhance Hungary's energy security. The minister said the government will open a procedure in September for booking capacity for the pipeline on the Serbian-Hungarian border.

Szijjártó said cooperation on the use of nuclear energy was expanding and both sides attached great importance to peaceful applications. He noted that Turkey plans to build dozens of reactors, adding that Hungary will help train professionals in the sector and share its nuclear expertise.

The minister said that with a view to increasing Turkish-Hungarian trade turnover last year of more than 3.1 billion dollars, Hungary's Eximbank has opened a 220 million dollar credit line.

Turkey, he said, would soon be among the global top ten economies, adding that an absence of any unresolved political issues was to be welcomed.

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## **KARÁCSONY WINS OPPOSITION PRESELECTION FOR BUDAPEST MAYOR**

Gergely Karácsony, the Budapest mayoral candidate of the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance, has won the preselection process organised by some opposition parties ahead of the autumn local election, György Magyar, head of the committee coordinating the ballot, said. The second round of the preselection process was held between June 20 and 26. Fully 68,240 Budapest residents participated. Karácsony garnered 33,355 votes. Fully 25,093 voters supported Olga Kálmán, the leftist Democratic Coalition's candidate, while 9,792 voted for Momentum's Gábor Kerpel-Fronius.

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## **POLICE STOP AND ESCORT 50 MIGRANTS IN S HUNGARY**

A total of fifty migrants travelling in three separate groups were stopped by police in Csongrád County, in southern Hungary, on Wednesday morning, the spokesman of the county police headquarters said. Six Iraqi border violators were stopped within the Szeged administrative area shortly after midnight, Szilvia Szabó said. Two hours later, police stopped and checked a car with Serbian licence plates on the M5 motorway. In addition to the driver, four people were in the car and they declared

themselves to be migrants who had entered Hungary illegally. Proceedings have been started against the driver, Szabó said. Shortly before 6am, police stopped a group of forty men outside Ásotthalom near highway 55. They said they were Afghan citizens, she added. The illegal migrants were escorted back to the border fence.

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## **SZÁZADVÉG: DEMOCRATIC COALITION SUPPORTED BY FORMER SOCIALIST VOTERS**

A part of the Socialist Party's voter base has come to support the Democratic Coalition (DK), according to a recent survey by the Századvég Foundation, adding that DK's support comes mostly from the over-60 age group in which the Socialists used to enjoy high support. Due to DK's success at the recent European Parliament election the party and its leader Ferenc Gyurcsány have "come closer than ever before to becoming the dominant leftist force." Századvég said, however, that DK "does not have a political message to convince undecided voters", adding that the party could "only benefit from the gradual erosion of other opposition forces and integrating left-leaning voters." Gyurcsány, it said, is working to "completely destroy other opposition forces and stage a comeback to frontline politics". DK's promotion of personalities like Klára Dobrev and Olga Kálmán is aimed at neutralising Gyurcsány's "unprecedented" lack of

popularity, the think-tank said. Dobrev, who has won a seat in the European Parliament, and Kálmán, a popular TV anchor whom DK supports as an independent candidate for Budapest mayor, could win voters "who reject Gyurcsány but identify with DK's general direction", the report said.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ VOICES SUPPORT FOR EU ENLARGEMENT**

During a visit to Tirana, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó voiced regret that a recent meeting of his European counterparts had postponed the start of EU accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia. Hungary not only supports the community's enlargement but "considers it a key EU policy", Szijjártó said, calling the European Commission's decision not to accept any new members until 2025 "incomprehensible". Szijjártó added that Hungary would continue working together with Albania to stem illegal migration.

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## **ORBÁN TO NOMINATE JUDIT VARGA FOR JUSTICE MINISTER**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is nominating Judit Varga, the state secretary in charge of European relations at the Prime Minister's Office, for the post of justice minister, the PM's press chief said. The incumbent minister, László Trócsányi, is leaving his post to

become a member of the European Parliament. Trócsányi is also the Hungarian government's candidate for European commissioner, a post which will become available in the second half of this year, Bertalan Havasi said. After consulting with Varga, Orbán decided to propose that President János Áder should appoint her to justice minister. He will also initiate with speaker of parliament László Kövér that Varga be heard by the parliamentary committees in charge, he added. EU affairs will also belong to the justice ministry's scope after Varga's appointment, Havasi said.

### **UJHELYI ASKS COE TO MAKE HUNGARY CORRUPTION REPORT PUBLIC**

Opposition Socialist MEP István Ujhelyi asked the Council of Europe (CoE) to make its annual corruption report on Hungary public. Ujhelyi said he had written to Marin Mrčela, who heads the CoE's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), to make the report on Hungary corruption public or allow him to view the document. Hungarian people have the right to learn about the findings of the report, he added. "Viktor Orbán's government once again prevented GRECO from publishing its annual corruption report on Hungary," Ujhelyi said. "This is not the first time for [ruling] Fidesz to block the publication of the report which would be clearly humiliating

to Hungary due to the Orban government's mafia-style operation," he added.

### **LMP: HUNGARY'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 'SLIDING DOWNHILL'**

Environmental protection in Hungary will continue to "slide downhill" next year, opposition LMP lawmaker Erzsébet Schmuck said, after parliament's sustainable development committee voted down opposition proposals connected to next year's budget aimed at increasing environmental spending. Schmuck said that the environmental sector would get 100 billion forints (EUR 309m) less in 2020 than this year if parliament passed the government's budget bill unchanged. The MP noted that the government had eliminated an independent environment ministry in 2010, and "has made continual efforts to weaken environmental authorities ever since to ensure enough greenfield for multinational development projects".

Schmuck criticised the budget draft for allocating a mere 90 million forints for a scheme aimed at reducing air pollution, while ensuring a subsidy of 800 million forints to the state-owned tobacco distribution company. She also slammed the draft for ploughing 63 billion forints into the Budapest-Belgrade rail reconstruction project, insisting the scheme exclusively served Chinese interests. Schmuck also called

on the government to set up a climate cabinet to coordinate between the ministries and come up with a climate bill.

### **HUNGARY, ROMANIA START TALKS ON VALEA UZULUI CEMETERY**

Talks on the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) memorial cemetery in Romania, a resting place of Hungarian WW1 soldiers, started between Hungarian and Romanian authorities, Colonel Vilmos Kovács, the head of the Hungarian delegation, said.

In April this year, the council of Dărmănești (Dormánfalva) erected a memorial site for Romanian soldiers fallen in the second world war within the cemetery. 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. Hungary has slammed the incident as "blasphemous, in violation of laws and international agreements and also deeply immoral" and demanded the site's restoration, where they said the memorial had been erected over the ashes of Hungarian soldiers.

At the meeting of officials from the two countries' authorities responsible for war grave maintenance, the Hungarian party reiterated its request for restoration. The talks will continue in September, with the officials' visit to the cemetery, Kovács, who also heads the Hungarian Institute and Museum for Military History, said. He added

that hopefully the September talks will bring “a professional and mutually satisfying solution”.

**RATE OF POPULATION DECLINE INCREASES IN FIRST FOUR MONTHS**

The rate of population decline increased in the first four months of 2019 after 2.7% fewer births and 0.8% more deaths were registered compared with the same period last year, Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. In the first four months of the year, 27,734 children were born, 757 fewer than in the same period last year, while 47,929 people died, 378 more than in Jan-Mar 2018. The rate of natural population decline was 6% (1,135) higher than in the same period a year earlier, the KSH said. The number of marriages increased, with 9,669 couples tying the knot, 2.2% more than in the same period last year.

**INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION NUMBERS CONTINUE TO CLIMB IN Q1**

The number of internet subscriptions in Hungary rose by 4% in the first quarter of 2019 from a year earlier and reached 9.98 million, according to data published by the Central Statistical Office (KSH). The number of internet

subscriptions has been continuously rising since 2011 when it stood at 4.33 million. The internet service providers’ market continues to be highly concentrated as 10 companies were still responsible for more than 96% of subscriptions just like in previous years. At the end of last year 80% of subscriptions were for private customers and 20% for business customers. Of all subscriptions 68.8% are for mobile internet services, basically unchanged from a year earlier, but most data traffic still takes place using wired internet connections.

Net revenue of internet provider companies was 66.6 billion forints (EUR 205m) in Q1 2019, up an annual 12.2%. Revenue for fixed-line internet service provision was 32.6 billion forints and for mobile internet service provision 32.1 billion.

**NATIONAL GALLERY OPENS EXHIBITION ON SURREALISTS**

An exhibition featuring some 120 works by surrealist artists from the beginning of the 20th century opened at the Hungarian National Gallery (MNG). The exhibition is running until October 20. It focuses on the year 1929, when several events shaped Surrealism to become one of the longest-living and widest

spread artistic movements of the century, Didier Ottinger, a curator of the show and deputy director of Paris’s Pompidou Centre, told a press conference. Paintings, statues, films, photos and other works by artists such as Dalí, Magritte, de Chirico, Picasso, Miró and Giacometti are featured at the exhibition. Works by Hungarian photographers Brassai and André Kertész are also shown. Many of those pictures are integral parts of our visual culture but were radical agents of change at the time of their creation, deputy MNG head György Szücs said.

**GOVT SUPPORTS BID TO HOST 2022 JUDO WORLDS**

Hungary’s government declared its support for a bid by the Hungarian Judo Association to host the 2022 World Judo Championships, a resolution published in the latest issue of the official gazette Magyar Közlöny shows. The resolution earmarks up to 3 million dollars a year in 2020-2021 and up to 2 million dollars in 2022 for payment of concession fees. It allocates an additional 155 million forints in funding in 2020, 285 million forints in 2021 and 3.2 billion forints in 2022 to cover organisational costs. Hungary hosted the World Judo Championships in 2017.

