

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Excavations in the Baradla Cave at Aggtelek

MTI/Péter Komka

UPCOMING EVENTS

President Áder holds talks with Slovak counterpart Zuzana Caputová

Stats office report on commercial lodgings in May

Judiciary office chief marks 15th anniversary of Debrecen Court of Appeals relaunch

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ SLAMS ROMANIA STATEMENT ON TALKS

A statement released by Romania on recent talks between the Hungarian and Romanian foreign ministers regarding unresolved bilateral issues will make it more difficult to improve ties, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó has said.

The statement released by the Romanian ministry cited Szijjártó as having asked “for the decisions of Romania’s judiciary institutions to be ignored and for the state to interfere in the justice system” during talks with his Romanian counterpart Teodor Meleşcanu, Hungary’s foreign ministry said. The ministers met on the sidelines of an informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers in Slovakia on Tuesday to discuss Romania’s recently adopted administrative code and developments at a recent commemoration in the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) military cemetery. Meleşcanu was quoted in the statement as having said that the government could not interfere in the decisions of the judiciary, citing the principle of the separation of powers. Szijjártó called on the Romanian parliament and government to do everything in their power to create the legal conditions for Romania’s minorities to exercise their rights. Further, he said, no one should be allowed to slap “exorbitant fines” on members of national minorities just for the use of their symbols.

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HUNGARIAN MEPS ELECTED EP COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRS

Hungarian MEPs Tamás Deutsch and Kinga Gál (ruling Fidesz) as well as István Ujhelyi (Socialist) have been elected vice chairpersons of committees of the European Parliament. According to an EP statement, Deutsch has been appointed fourth vice chairman of the budgetary control committee, Gál has been given the post of second vice chairperson of the security and defence policy committee, while Ujhelyi is third vice chair of the transport and tourism committee.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, government spokesman István Hollik slammed Hungary's opposition MEPs for their attempts to block the ruling alliance's MEPs from obtaining leadership positions on the committees. Speaking to reporters in Budapest, Hollik called the situation "unprecedented", accusing the "pro-migration Hungarian opposition" of acting against the will of the Hungarian people and national interests. The spokesman accused the MEPs of the Democratic Coalition, the Socialists and the Momentum Movement of "openly scheming" to prevent the appointment of the ruling parties' MEPs to committee leadership positions. He said that by doing so, the opposition was "going against the will and representation of the

Hungarian people". Hollik noted that in the May EP elections, Hungarians had voted to give the majority of the country's European parliamentary seats to the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance, which won 53% of the vote. He said that Fidesz-KDNP's 13 seats had earned them a total of five committee vice-chair nominations within the European People's Party.

GOVT ESTABLISHES ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING BODY

Hungary's government has issued a resolution for setting up a body of experts to make anti-money laundering recommendations and measures to combat terrorism funding. The members of the Anti-Money Laundering Coordination Council will include government ministers as well as the heads of the tax office, the police, the TEK counter-terrorism centre and the Central Statistical Office, according to the resolution published in the latest issue of the official gazette Magyar Közlöny. Members will also be delegated by the central bank, the chief prosecutor and the Hungarian Chamber of Accountants, among others. The Council, whose members will receive no remuneration, will meet at least three times a year. Recommendations the Council makes must be reviewed by the National Competitiveness Council.

ORBÁN: HUNGARY, US COMMITTED TO SAME VALUES

Hungary and the United States today support and protect the same values, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said at a reception hosted by the US Embassy to mark Independence Day in Budapest. Concerning Hungarian-American relations, the prime minister said that over the past several years there had been "highs and lows, good and bad times" in the two countries' ties. Hungarians, however, believe bilateral relations are on the right track now, he said, thanking David B. Cornstein, the US Ambassador to Hungary. Orbán said the state of Hungarian-US ties generally depended on whether there was an overlap in the values supported by the US administration in power and those being protected by Hungary. "The answer to this question today is a resounding 'yes,'" he said.

Orbán said Americans and Hungarians were right to believe that their countries should come first. The two countries mutually respect each other's "patriotic viewpoints", he said. Orbán said both Hungary and the US considered it a duty to guarantee the safety of their citizens and were committed to safeguarding the value of gender equality. Equally, the prime minister added, "the foundations of our nations rest on families consisting of a father, a mother and children".

Orbán also said neither country was ready to accept "the modern

political hypocrisy” which he said ignored the fact that Christianity was the most persecuted religion in the world today. Hungary and the US are working closely together to help Christian communities in need, he added. The prime minister also said that as a central European country, Hungary had learned the lessons of history: whenever there was a conflict between East and West, central Europeans always lost out. This was why, he said, Hungary’s interests lay in a peaceful and stable CEE region, the best guarantee for which he said was membership in NATO. Orbán, who last attended the US Embassy’s Independence Day reception nine years ago, reassured the US that it can count on Hungary in the struggle for the two countries’ shared values.

Cornstein in his address praised Hungarian-US relations, calling Orbán a “partner” and a “friend”.

LMP PROTESTS PROPOSAL TO EXTEND MATRAI COAL PLANT’S LIFE CYCLE

Opposition LMP has called on the government not to extend the life cycle of the Mátrai Erőmű coal-based electricity plant near Gyöngyös, in northern Hungary. Green lawmaker Péter Ungár told a press conference that the plant emits about 14% of Hungary’s greenhouse gases. Keeping the plant operational will compromise the country’s ability to hit its climate protection targets, he added. Ungár said that whereas the plant produced

a big portion of Hungarian heat and electricity, it used outdated technology. The government is yet to decide on extending the plant’s life cycle, he noted, calling on it to find jobs for the plant’s workers in the green energy sector and to set a target date for Hungarian energy to become coal-free.

GOVT OFFICIAL: 2020 BUDGET SERVES SECURITY, FAMILY POLICY

Next year’s budget will serve Hungarian families and the country’s security, a defence ministry state secretary said. Szilárd Németh said the budget will allocate the Hungarian Armed Forces 616 billion forints (EUR 1.9bn), 103 billion more than last year. Those funds will go toward ensuring the country’s peace and independence and the security of the Hungarian people, and will cover the costs of technological development, recruitment and training, Németh said. The Hungarian army is also contributing to border protection efforts, Németh noted. Although that also means protecting the Schengen borders, the “pro-migrant” EU has not contributed “a cent” to the costs now exceeding one billion euros, he said.

Lawmakers are expected to take the final vote on the 2020 budget on Friday.

Among the challenges facing Europe, illegal migration is the most severe, and on the rise, Németh said. The outgoing leadership of the

European Union is bent on pushing through all “migrant-loving” measures, he added. Recently, the UN’s high representative for refugees also promoted an approach accepting all migrants and distributing them among the member states, instead of stopping migration and protecting the Schengen borders, Németh said.

JOBBIK SEES POTENTIAL FOR LOCAL ELECTION FRAUD

An opposition Jobbik lawmaker has raised the suspicion of potential fraud ahead of the autumn local elections in light of the recent purchase of T-Systems, a subsidiary of Hungarian Telecom, by 4iG. T-Systems had a role in administrating Hungary’s parliamentary and local elections in 2014. The transaction may pave the way for ballot-rigging, János Bencsik told a press conference.

Telecom and 4iG, which Bencsik called “a relatively small company”, signed the purchase agreement on Tuesday. Bencsik said Jobbik wants the matter to be considered with urgency by parliament’s national security committee. Further, Bencsik called on the National Election Office to publish a new IT public procurement tender for the autumn election. Any bidders linked to politicians of the ruling Fidesz party should be excluded from it, he said. Otherwise, Jobbik will not accept the outcome of the autumn ballot as legitimate, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: BAVARIAN COMPANIES TO INVEST HUF 45 BN IN HUNGARY

Bavarian companies are about to invest some 45 billion forints (EUR 138.1m) in Hungary, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said, after talks with company heads in Munich, Germany. Szijjártó met representatives of gas giant Linde and automotive industry supplier Schaeffler. He held talks with Hubert Aiwanger, the German region's deputy prime minister and regional minister of economic affairs, regional development and energy. "Bavarian companies trust Hungary as the country has the lowest taxes in Europe, a well-trained work force and quality higher education," Szijjártó told MTI by phone. The successes of the Hungarian and Bavarian economies are interconnected, the minister said. Hungary has a vested interest in the success of Bavarian companies so that they continue to invest in the country, he added.

The companies in question plan to develop and implement innovative technologies in Hungary, he said.

"Bavarian companies see Hungary as a place of political stability, safe legal environment and good investment opportunities," Szijjártó said. He noted that trade between Hungary and Bavaria reached 14 billion euros last year. Fully 35% of Hungarian exports to Germany flows into that state, he said. Currently, 150 Bavarian companies have facilities in Hungary. They have invested some 8 billion euros and employ 50,000 people, Szijjártó added.

EC RAISES HUNGARY 2019 GDP FORECAST TO 4.4%

The European Commission has raised its projection for Hungarian economic growth this year to 4.4% from 3.7%. The growth projection contained in its quarterly forecast released on Tuesday is above the government's target of 4%. In the first quarter, the economy grew by an annual 5.3%. The commission has left its forecast for growth next year unchanged at 2.8%. It sees average annual inflation of 3.2% in both 2019 and 2020. The commission's next economic forecast will be published in November.

HUNGARY MINISTER ANNOUNCES BUDAPEST BASED CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ONCOLOGY

Miklós Kásler, Hungary's human resources minister, announced the establishment of the Central-Eastern European Academy of Oncology headquartered in Budapest. Kásler, former head of Hungary's National Institute of Oncology, made the announcement in Lyon, where he attended the annual meeting of national cancer institute directors from around the world. The Academy, comprising leading professionals from 20 countries, was set up in Budapest in June, Kásler told MTI by phone. It aims to coordinate work and share knowledge in oncology to facilitate significant progress in prevention and treatment, he said. The Hungarian state has supported the academy with a 500 million forint (EUR 1.53m) grant, Kásler said, adding that the initiative has also been endorsed by the UN's World Health Organisation (WHO).