

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTVA/Balázs Mohai

Back to school shoppers

UPCOMING EVENTS

Metropolitan council extraordinary meeting

EU defence ministers meet in Helsinki

Stats office prelim report on employment in May-July

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY TO RESUME BALTIC AIRSPACE MISSION IN 2022

Hungary will resume its duties as part of the Baltic airspace mission from September 2022, Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's foreign minister, said in Siauliai, Lithuania.

Szijjártó visited the Siauliai air base at the conclusion of Hungary's current mission to protect Baltic airspace which started in May this year, involving 92 Hungarian soldiers, including 7 pilots and four Jas-39 Gripen aircraft.

The troops were scrambled 43 times and spent a total of 456 hours in the air, he added. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkecius and Deputy Defence Minister Vytautas Umbrasas thanked the Hungarian forces for their mission.

Some 1,000 Hungarian soldiers are serving abroad in missions coordinated by NATO, the European Union and the UN, Szijjártó noted.

Szijjártó also said Hungary's military contribution to various international missions would soon be expanded, by 130 men in Kosovo and 70 in Afghanistan, both NATO missions. The country is also sending a 60-strong unit to the UN's mission in Lebanon, he added.

Hungary complied with NATO's requirement to channel 20% of its defence spending into development already in 2019, and will raise defence spending to 2% of GDP ahead of the 2024 deadline, he said.

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COOPERATION KEY TO ROMA COMMUNITY CATCH-UP EFFORTS, SAYS INTERIOR MINISTER

Efforts to help Hungary's Roma communities catch up with the rest of the country will require cooperation between the state and the communities themselves, the interior minister said in the village of Tiszabura, in eastern Hungary, on Tuesday.

The government has decided to provide help to 300 struggling villages as part of its Emerging Municipalities scheme in the coming year, Sándor Pintér told a briefing of local council leaders of the first 31 municipalities involved in the scheme. The programme will be implemented in those places this year, he added. The scheme is being coordinated by the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service. It will be carried out with the help of the major church charity groups and NGOs active in the municipalities in question, Pintér said.

Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler told the briefing that helping all peoples and persecuted groups was a tradition of the state of Hungary. The country could not have prospered without the combined efforts of the people living here, he said.

LIBERAL LEADER RESIGNS POST

Hungarian Liberal Party leader Gábor Fodor has announced his resignation,

said a statement by the party sent to MTI on Tuesday.

The statement quoted Fodor as saying that "a new kind of opposition cooperation" against the "authoritarian system of (ruling) Fidesz" calls for leaders "unburdened by the disputes of years past".

A board of Liberal deputies unanimously accepted Fodor's resignation on Monday. His successor will be elected before the end of November, the statement added.

JOBBIK PROPOSES SUBSIDISED RENTAL SYSTEM TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE

The opposition Jobbik party has proposed that property owners renting homes to students should be granted a tax incentive while the tenants could benefit from a housing subsidy.

Jobbik deputy leader Dániel Z. Kárpát told a press conference on Tuesday that under the proposed system, dubbed Hunbnb, students under 30 could receive a monthly subsidy between 20,000 and 50,000 forints (EUR 61-152).

The press conference was held in Budapest's central District 6, in which Z. Kárpát said the situation had been made "intolerable" by exorbitant rents, increased partly in response to a high demand by tourists for Airbnb accommodation, partly because of a "passive attitude" by the ruling parties.

Milán Töreki, Jobbik's local leader, called for a "well-functioning and

strong" municipality, which he said should impose a supertax on owners of multiple Airbnb properties. The revenues could be used to grant housing subsidies and finance municipal rental construction, he insisted.

LMP CALLS FOR SPECIAL PARLT SESSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The opposition LMP party has suggested that parliament should have a special session and question the government concerning Hungary's commitments aimed at fighting climate change, LMP deputy group leader Erzsébet Schmuck told a press conference on Tuesday.

Schmuck noted that the United Nations was scheduled to meet on September 23 to discuss "the climate disaster which it has called the greatest threat facing the world". She said that the government should report on the preparations it has made ahead of that conference.

Hungary is sensitive to climate change and extreme weather conditions can be experienced daily, Schmuck said. LMP expects the government to take "a lot more serious commitments" than before, she said. For instance, Hungary should increase the ratio of renewable energies from the currently planned 20% to 50% by 2030. She also said that the government should shut down Hungary's northern Mátrai thermal power plant by 2026.

SZANYI SETS UP NEW LEFT-WING MOVEMENT

Socialist politician Tibor Szanyi is setting up a new movement called Igen, though he has said the new formation will not become a political party. Tuesday's Magyar Nemzet newspaper cited Szanyi as saying earlier that the reason he was establishing the movement was because Bertalan Tóth, the Socialist Party's leader, was unfit to lead a party that addressed the concerns of people of a radical left-wing bias. Szanyi, until recently a Socialist MEP, said that the Socialists around the globe should still be able to count on having a branch in Hungary. "The precise goal is to stay alive," he said, according to the paper.

HUNGARY ATTRACTING MORE INDIAN INVESTORS, SAYS FINANCE MINISTER

Hungary's economic attainments are attracting a growing number of Asian investors, including Indians, Mihály Varga, the finance minister, said after talks with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar late on Monday. Over the past few years, Indian companies have invested over 2 billion euros in Hungary, a finance ministry statement quoted Varga as saying. The minister called India one of Hungary's major partners in Asia, adding that economic, cultural and educational cooperation is continually expanding. Varga noted that two-way

trade had increased by 17% in 2017 and by 11% last year.

The two ministers agreed that Hungary, with its advanced infrastructure and improving business environment, can be an ideal springboard for Indian companies wishing to gain a foothold on the broader European market. Hungary supports efforts to develop closer ties between Europe and India, Varga said, adding that the new EU-India Strategy approved by the EU Foreign Affairs Council last December may boost cooperation in the economy, global security and sustainable development.

POLICY MAKERS KEEP BASE RATE, O/N DEPOSIT RATE ON HOLD

The Monetary Council of the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) decided to keep the central bank's base rate at 0.90% and the O/N deposit rate at -0.05% at a monthly policy meeting on Tuesday. The decision was in line with expectations.

In a statement released after the meeting, the council again noted the upside risk to inflation of strong domestic demand, contrasted with the downside risk of weakening external activity, but said "downside risks have strengthened" with regard to persistent inflation trends.

"Lower-than-expected underlying inflation data for recent months and the ongoing deterioration in external activity indicate strengthening in downside risks to the longer-term

inflation outlook," the council said. It noted that the NBH's measure of core inflation excluding indirect tax effects, a bellwether indicator of underlying inflation, had fallen to 3.2% in July, while inflation of industrial goods as well as services had slowed. "Persistent inflation developments were overall lower even than expected," the policy makers said, reiterating that core inflation excluding indirect tax effects "is likely to decline gradually to 3% from the end of 2019". The council acknowledged a deterioration in sentiment on international financial markets since the previous monthly policy meeting, mentioning also the impact of trade policy developments, central bank measures, domestic political tensions in Italy and news on Brexit. The council repeated that it "applies a cautious approach" to monetary policy decisions, and that future developments in the outlook for inflation would be "a decisive factor in the necessity of further measures".

Factors impacting the outlook for inflation include the spillover of disinflationary effects of a slowdown in Europe, changes in the monetary policies of the world's leading central banks, the effect of the new Plus retail government security on savings, and the economic consequences of counter-cyclical fiscal policy, the council said.

NUMBER OF JOBSEEKERS DOWN IN JULY

There were 247,800 registered jobseekers in Hungary at the end of

July, down by 3.7% from the same period a year earlier, the National Employment Office (NFSZ) reported on Tuesday. The NFSZ said that 28.3% of the total, or around 70,200 people, had been seeking work for more than one year. The ratio was up by 4.9 percentage points from a year earlier.

Around 136,700 jobseekers, or 55.2% of the total, were eligible for some kind of unemployment or social support during the month.

POLISH-HUNGARIAN SUMMER UNIVERSITY STARTS IN SE POLAND

A summer university in the southeast Polish town of Krasiczyn started on Monday, with some 400 Hungarian and Polish students attending. The five-day event organised by the Waclaw Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation will feature lectures and discussions on the challenges facing the two countries, the European Union and central Europe, as well as concerts and other cultural events. Discussion topics will include the Three Seas

initiative, the new leadership of the European Union and challenges of the digital era.

The event was opened late on Monday by Hungarian Deputy House Speaker János Latorcai, and Ryszard Terlecki, the speaker of the Polish lower house.

NEW OLYMPIC SPORTS TO DEBUT AT BUDAPEST WORLD URBAN GAMES

New sports set to be introduced at next year's Olympics in Tokyo and the 2024 Games in Paris will be making their debut at the World Urban Games in Budapest between September 13 and 15.

Budapest has been selected by the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) from among 50 bidders to host the inaugural edition of the World Urban Games, the organisers noted in a statement on Tuesday.

Disciplines to be contested at the event include 3x3 basketball, BMX freestyle cycling, parkour,

breakdancing, freestyle flying disc, inline freestyle, laser run and indoor rowing.

Of these, 3x3 basketball will be making its debut as an Olympic sport at next year's Games in Tokyo, while breakdancing will be introduced in Paris in 2024.

RATE OF POPULATION DECLINE INCREASES IN FIRST 6 MONTHS

The rate of population decline increased in the first six months of 2019 after 2.8% fewer births and 1.0% more deaths were registered compared with the same period last year, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. In the first six months of the year, 41,902 children were born, 1,201 fewer than in the same period last year, while 67,741 died, 691 more than in Jan-June 2018. The rate of natural population decline was 7.9% higher than in the same period a year earlier, KSH said. The number of marriages increased, with 24,020 couples tying the knot, 7.9% more than in the same period last year.