

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



President Áder at Warsaw event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of WW2

MTV/Szilárd Koszticsák

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office releases industrial producer prices for July 2019**

**Szijjártó at opening of new BAT production line in Pécs**

**Áder grants credentials to ambassadors to Afghanistan, Jordan, Belgium, Czech Republic**

**Szijjártó addresses event where ALDI announces new investment**

## TOP STORY

### GOVT BOOSTS EDUCATION SPENDING

In next year's budget, the government will be spending 645 billion forints (1.95bn) more on education than in 2010, Gergely Gulyás, the prime minister's office chief, has said.

The government was carrying out the biggest school development programme of the past thirty years, with 110 billion forints of European Union funding combined with 46 billion forints of state support, Gulyás said at an event of Reformed Church colleges of the Carpathian Basin held in Pécs, in southern Hungary. He said fully 158 projects are being carried out from domestic sources. The projects include the renovation of gyms and classrooms and the construction of new schools. Further, this year all pupils from the first to the ninth grade attending both state and church schools will receive free textbooks, he said.

Gulyás noted that 14% of schools are run by the church, twice as high as nine years ago. He said church schools catered to all segments of society, from manual labourers and the needy to the well-to-do, as well as believers and those seeking faith. He said today's Hungarian government recognised and respected the role of churches in society and considered it essential. Churches offer an education "based on Christian values and knowledge, as well as the seeking and strengthening of faith."

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 'FOUNDATION OF HUNGARY'S FUTURE'**

Gergely Gulyás, the prime minister's office chief, said that whereas the state does not have a monopoly over anyone's faith, the state and government must have a clear social image and promote values that provide "the foundation for the preservation of the Hungarian future, national identity, survival and prosperity." This, he added, cannot be achieved without the involvement of the historic churches. Speaking at an event of Reformed Church colleges of the Carpathian Basin held in Pécs, in southern Hungary, Gulyás said Europe today must recognise that "by giving up Christian culture and renouncing faith, everything that has characterised the continent for generations and centuries may be lost." Citing Robert Schumann, one of the "founding fathers" of the European Union, he said: "Democracy owes its existence to Christianity ... anti-Christian democracy will be a caricature that either sinks into tyranny or anarchy."

Meanwhile, Gulyás on Friday addressed the opening of the International School of Debrecen (ISD). He said Debrecen's transformation into a cross-border regional centre would be impossible to sustain without such a high-level international school, which he noted has been built with 3.8 billion forints (EUR 11.5m) support from the central budget. There are

few educational institutions in the region that have the International Baccalaureate (IB) certificate and ISD "will be a great opportunity for the city and also for Hungary", he said. He also said that talented students from Debrecen and its region whose parents cannot afford to pay for the international school can apply for scholarships from the local council. The school will start operations with 56 students this year which is expected to increase to 500 in five years.

## **NATIONAL STUDENT STRIKE ANNOUNCED AT DEMO AGAINST EDUCATION LAW AMENDMENT**

A demonstration organised by secondary school students took place in Budapest in front of Parliament on Saturday to protest against an amendment to the law on public education, with a national student strike announced for Sept. 13. All students have been asked to stay home as an expression of their protest against the changes to the law.

Tamás Szűcs, head of the Democratic Trade Union of Teachers (PDSZ), said the government was intent on telling people what to do in every sphere and on holding back those who want to innovate in schools. He said all legal means must be used to protest against the government. He also called for teachers to be paid for overtime.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International Hungary head Dávid Víg said the

government's idea of a good scientist was one who adapted their research to political goals. The cabinet, he added, did not trust parents, teachers or civil society.

Márton Asbóth, a lawyer for the TASZ human rights organisation, insisted that the government was "deliberately destroying public education", and called the cabinet an enemy of free-thinking and acting citizens. He said the amendments to the law were "unconstitutional and severely restricted rights". TASZ, he added, would appeal against the law at the Constitutional Court.

In a call on Facebook to followers, the organisers said they would not remain idle while the government set about "destroying the public education system" and dismantling alternative schools. Further, they said it was "unacceptable to systematically lower the standard of education" and "to deprive teachers of their freedom".

Meanwhile, the parliamentary groups of five opposition parties are turning to the Constitutional Court, seeking to have amendments of the public education law the parliament accepted in July annulled. At a joint press conference of the Socialist Party, the Democratic Coalition (DK), nationalist Jobbik, green LMP and Párbeszéd, Socialist Ágnes Kunhalmi said the amendments "do not comply with the requirements of the rule of law" and are "unconstitutional", harming the basic right to freedom of information, the freedom of opinion and children's right to education.

The new regulation would make it mandatory for children to start school at the age of six, Kunhalmi noted. Up to now, experts decided whether a child was ready for school. Kunhalmi also called on parliament to comply with an earlier ruling of the top court and create a system considering individual cases of children struggling with learning or behavioural difficulties.

DK deputy group leader Gergely Arató said that the new legislation would bar parents from determining how their children should be taught and stop teachers from exercising their professions freely. It also curbs private schools' possibilities in outlining their education programmes, he said.

Commenting on the press conference, ruling Fidesz said the opposition "has the upcoming local elections and their own power games at heart, not the interests of the children." They would have otherwise voted for the government's family protection schemes and the budget, which allocates 645 billion forints (EUR 1.9bn) more to education than "the left" did, the statement said. The amendments of the law on education are in place to protect children's interests, Fidesz said.

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### **PALKOVICS: MORE CHOOSE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THAN REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL**

For the first time in ten years, more children started their studies in

vocational schools than in regular secondary schools last year, indicating that "vocational training is the way of the future", the minister of innovation and technology said on Saturday. Last year, 8.5% more students started their studies in vocational schools as against regular schools. László Palkovics said at the opening event of the school year in a Nyíregyháza vocational centre that the government's major achievement of the past year to approve a strategy dubbed Vocational Training 4.0 which has been developed with the involvement of market players and is based on an Austrian model.

Developing a flexible and modern vocational training system adjusted to the demands of the labour market will benefit all, Palkovics said. It will give more opportunities to students to learn and receive further training, as well as providing companies with skilled workers that meet their demands, he added. The system will also cater for those who want to continue their studies in higher education, he said. Vocational secondary schools will be transformed and will provide development opportunities to young people who were unable to prove their skills in a conventional educational environment, he said. The aim is to reduce the proportion of school-leavers from 12% to below 10%, he added. A new state scholarship system will also be introduced to guarantee financial support to students who opt out of dual education, he said,

adding that teachers, meanwhile, will be offered a viable career model and salary system.

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### **DK: TEACHER SHORTAGE 'THREATENS ENTIRE EDUCATION SYSTEM'**

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) has said that an "increasingly pressing shortage of teachers" poses a fundamental threat to the whole of Hungary's education system. DK lawmaker Gergely Arató on Sunday said the government should come clean and admit that the model for a centralised education system had failed. In the past, when local councils were in charge of managing schools, such a shortage of teachers would have been unimaginable, the leftist politician told a press conference. Information from trade unions and public sector job ads suggest there is a shortage of thousands of teachers, he said, citing an example of one school that he said was searching for applicants to fill an entire department. Teacher wages have not kept up with pay hikes elsewhere while their administrative tasks have increased, he added.

Arató said schools in the past had given parents a say about their children's education. If the government refuses to admit this, it is a clear indication that city mayors who simply agreed to hand over schools to the central government must be replaced at the upcoming local elections, he added.

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## **FIDESZ GROUP LEADER: GYURCSÁNY IGNORING WILL OF HUNGARIANS**

Ferenc Gyurcsány, the leader of the opposition Democratic Coalition (DK), is ignoring the will of the Hungarian people, who, in two elections and a referendum on border protection, voted against the immigration policies of Brussels, Máté Kocsis, the ruling Fidesz party group leader, told public radio in an interview on Sunday. Asked about Klára Dobrev, an MEP of the leftist party, who has said the EU should not pay the costs of Hungary's border protection measures, Kocsis said Hungarians were "no longer surprised" that Gyurcsány or his wife Dobrev represented a type of politics "brutally against the nation". He said it was clear that the political bloc led by Gyurcsány had not changed its political priorities and continued to campaign to promote immigration quotas and to dismantle the border fence against the will of Hungarians who had made their views clear in recent elections.

Put to him that Gyurcsány called Fidesz politicians fools in his Facebook entry claiming that no one had any intention of demolishing the fence, Kocsis questioned why Gyurcsány had travelled to the border with a bolt cutter when the fence was being built. Kocsis further noted that DK had gathered signatures in favour of the European Union's migrant quota system. "Ferenc Gyurcsány is a serial

liar who denies what is clearly evident," he added.

The Fidesz politician said "we are launching an information campaign since every Hungarian has the right to know what left-wing policies drawn up by Ferenc Gyurcsány and his wife mean."

Meanwhile, Fidesz announced that it is launching an information campaign warning voters that DK wants to "tear down the border fence and let migrants" into Hungary. "The Hungarian people have to know what Gyurcsány and company are planning, since they're the ones controlling the entire opposition in the municipal election campaign as well," the party's group spokesman János Halász told a press conference. Halász accused DK of conspiring with the "pro-migration European left" to tear down Hungary's border fence, eliminate the government's border protection measures and implement migrant distribution quotas.

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## **KARÁCSONY'S CAMPAIGN CURTAIN-RAISER: 'LET BUDAPEST BE GREEN AND FREE!'**

Gergely Karácsony, the left-liberal opposition candidate for mayor of Budapest, opened his campaign on Saturday in the capital city with a speech calling for Budapest to be "green and free at last". Karácsony called on his followers "to take Budapest back from the hands of the privileged and return the city to its

true owners, Budapest's residents." He promised that after the election Budapest residents would win back the capital's money and self-esteem, and build a green city based on solidarity. He declared: "Let us say proudly ... that I, too, am a Budapest!"

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: MIGRATION MUST BE KEPT OUTSIDE EUROPE'S BORDERS**

The security of European people is paramount, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Sunday, commenting on the stabbings in Lyon the previous day. Migration, he said, must be kept outside of Europe's borders. "We sympathise with our French friends in these hours of grief and pain, and trust that this despicable attack does not claim any more victims," Szijjártó said in a statement wishing the injured a full recovery. "Hungary's position is clear: life in Europe must not be allowed to develop such that we fear for our lives when standing at a bus stop, in street market or at concert because some people living in Europe want to destroy us," he said.

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## **CONTINENTAL MARKS 30 YEARS IN BUDAPEST**

German automotive company Continental marked the 30th anniversary of its plant in Budapest at a celebration on Friday. Continental now has seven factories, a tyre sales business, a logistics base and an artificial intelligence development

centre in Hungary, Róbert Keszte, who heads one of Continental's local units, said at the event. Including contracted labourers, Continental has more than 8,000 people on payroll in Hungary, he added. Continental has invested some 500 million euros in Hungary in the past ten years.

Finance Minister Mihály Varga said at the event that Continental was at the global forefront of developing new technologies. He said German-Hungarian bilateral trade had been record high in recent years and German investors were bringing the latest technology to Hungary. The 6,000 German companies operating in Hungary employ some 300,000 Hungarians and several further large investment projects have been decided already this year, he added.

## **HUNGARIAN MUSEUMS AWARDED AT SHANGHAI MULTIMEDIA FESTIVAL**

The National Museum of Hungary (MNM) won the grand prize and a gold medal at a multimedia festival organised in Shanghai by AVICOM, the international committee for audiovisual and new image and sound technologies, a body of the International Council of Museums

(ICOM). The museum's exhibition of Hungarian aristocracy in the 17th-19th century, which drew some 700,000 visitors in the Shanghai Museum since June 2017, featured a five-meter interactive display dubbed the Magic Wall, allowing visitors to inspect the exhibited objects interactively. The wall, which won the grand prize at AVICOM's F@IMP 2.0 online festival, is a Hungarian innovation developed mostly in Shanghai. Currently, several Chinese museums and Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts own such interactive surfaces.

The MNM's documentary on a memorial to forced labour in the communist era, Hungarian National Museum Malenkij Robot Memorial Place, won the gold medal in its category. The open-air museum in Szentendre, near Budapest, was awarded silver medals for the short film I'm from Hungary and the documentary Hand/Craft/Art. The Petőfi Museum of literature won a bronze medal for its exhibition dubbed CSÁTH\* The sorcerer's garden.

## **PÁRBESZÉD CALLS ON GOVT TO ADOPT EURO**

The opposition Párbeszéd party has called on the government to

take steps to adopt the euro as soon as possible. Párbeszéd MP Sándor Burány noted at a news conference on Sunday the forint's record low against the euro and the weakening of the Croatian and Romanian currencies. He said the forint would be the region's most vulnerable currency in the event of an international financial crisis, with unpredictable consequences. "The forint will be the first casualty," he said, in the event of global financial turmoil.

## **ALMOST ALL STATIONS TO RECEIVE NEW AMBULANCES**

Almost all ambulance stations are getting new ambulances in 2019 and 2020, the state secretary for health Ildikó Horvath said. All ambulances come with state-of-the-art equipment. Some 2,500 pieces of ambulance equipment are being purchased, including defibrillators and breathing apparatus, with government support of 1.6 billion forints (EUR 4.8m), she added. A total of 254 ambulances will be acquired this year and next, resulting in a total of 1,000 new ambulances purchased since 2010, she said.