

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Czeglédi

President Áder visits boat involved in project to clean River Tisza

UPCOMING EVENTS

Deputy PM Semjén addresses Budapest Forum for Christian Communicators

Foreign Minister Szijjártó attends Krynica Economic Forum

Australian ex-PM Tony Abbott gives lecture on immigration

Stats office releases July retail prices

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR MIGRATION POLICY CHANGES

The European Union has “fully delivered the continent” to illegal migrants through “practically handing them invitations to Europe”, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told MTI on the sidelines of a conference in Slovenia’s Bled.

The EU’s migration policy must be changed, Szijjártó said. He added that “the only protection” against illegal migration was provided by the EU-Turkey agreement. “Should that agreement fail for some reason, hundreds of thousands and millions will flood Europe and the Western Balkans will certainly not be able to stop them,” he insisted.

Stopping illegal migration requires protection of the borders, but “the EU has done nothing to that end south of Hungary. Moreover, it has encouraged hundreds of thousands to violate and cross the borders,” Szijjártó said. Rather than “advocating the permeability of borders” the community should concentrate on border control, he added.

As a further measure, Szijjártó called for accelerating the European integration of countries in the Western Balkans. The sooner Serbia and Montenegro join the EU the more likely it will be that illegal migrants can be stopped before they reach Hungary’s borders, he said. Integrating the Balkans equals shifting the EU’s line of protection further south, the minister added.

SYRIAN CHARGED WITH TERRORISM, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Hungarian prosecutors said they have charged a Syrian national alleged to have been a member of the Islamic State terrorist organisation with carrying out acts of terrorism and crimes against humanity. The 27-year-old man, Hassan F., is alleged to have commanded an armed group of the Islamic State and was arrested in Hungary in March this year and now faces a sentence of life in prison, Tibor Ibolya of the municipal prosecutor's office of investigation told MTI. According to the indictment, the man was ordered to carry out multiple executions in his homeland in May 2015. Hassan F. is suspected of having ordered the occupation of Al-Sukhnah in the Syrian province of Homs and drawing up a "death list" of those who rejected Islamic State's goals. The executions included the public beheading of the local imam and killing at least 25 people including women and children in the town. Hassan F. is also suspected of having personally participated in the execution of the imam and at least another two people. He also allegedly shot another person, Ibolya said. The prosecutors questioned Hassan F. over 29 hours since his arrest in March, he said, adding that in the meantime ten other people including witnesses have also been questioned in Malta and Belgium. An investigation with

the involvement of Hungary' counter terrorism force TEK was under way in several EU member states, including in Malta, Belgium and Greece, Ibolya said. Cooperation among the countries' law enforcement agencies has been coordinated by the Hungarian office of Eurojust, he said.

SZÁZADVÉG: MAJORITY IN BUDAPEST SUPPORTING TARLÓS

Fully 57% of respondents in a Századvég survey said they had a positive view of Budapest Mayor István Tarlós, while 41% said they preferred Gergely Karácsony, the opposition's candidate in the upcoming municipal election.

The pollster said that supporters of Tarlós, the candidate of the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance, consider the incumbent mayor as an "integrative politician" who is preferred not only by right-wingers. Karácsony, on the other hand, is seen by his opponents as an "unsuccessful (district) mayor", who has been "the central character" in the opposition's pre-selection rounds "burdened with internal fighting".

Concerning other candidates, the survey found that independent Róbert Puzsér was not popular on either side, with 73% of respondents rejecting his candidacy. The report added that Krisztián Berki, another independent, was even less popular, with only 3% of all respondents supporting him.

Three quarters of respondents said they did not expect an opposition win in the election, 71% voicing the opinion that Tarlós would be re-elected for the next five-year municipal cycle.

JOBBIK PRESENTS LOCAL ELECTION PROGRAMME

Opposition Jobbik leader Tamás Sneider presented his party's programme for the upcoming municipal elections at a press conference, calling his party's plan a "vision of national solidarity". Sneider insisted that neither the government nor the rest of the opposition had a valid programme, adding that "there is no strong Hungary without strong ideals". Concerning details of Jobbik's programme, Sneider said that the "appalling demographic crisis" in small towns should be tackled by building kindergartens, schools, hospitals and churches and providing resources for their operations. Jobbik would restore management rights of outpatient clinics and community schools to the municipality, and rebuild a "strong county system" to run local public transport, waste collection, as well as homes for the elderly, Sneider said.

He said that by repairing roads and improving transport services Jobbik would increase the mobility of people in small villages, while it would set up police stations in segregated areas to tackle drug problems, he said.

Sneider said it was important that candidates for local mayor should be

literate, have basic mathematics skills, and free of a police record of violent or economic crimes. Jobbik would increase normative financing for local governments, and would leave 8% of personal income tax and the whole of the vehicle tax with the municipalities where they are generated, Sneider said, adding that all that would add up to an annual 150-200 billion forints (EUR 452-604m) in extra financing.

DK CALLS FOR BUDGET CTTEE SESSION TO DISCUSS WEAKENING FORINT

The Democratic Coalition (DK) chairman of parliament's budget committee has called for a special session of the body to be convened to discuss the "forint crisis".

At a news conference, László Varju noted that the Hungarian currency is at a "historic low". This means higher prices for fuel and retail goods, he said, adding that not only should ordinary people be concerned, but so should be companies and the government too. The current weakness will affect the reading of the country's public debt figures and could endanger the budget, he said. Varju wants the head of the central bank, the finance minister and the head of the Debt Management Centre to give evidence at the special session. He said the only long-term solution to the problem would be to adopt the euro as soon as possible. Until then, neither the public finances nor next year's budget will be safe, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: BRIDGESTONE CREATING 100 JOBS IN HUF 9.2 BILLION DEVELOPMENT IN TATABÁNYA

Japanese tyre manufacturer Bridgestone unveiled a 9.2 billion forint (EUR 28m) investment to increase capacity with the aim of producing 7.2 million tyres a year by 2020 at its plant in Tatabánya. It also inaugurated a 10,000-square-foot warehouse with a capacity for 180,000 tyres. The investment is creating 100 jobs. Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, noted at the opening ceremony that the government had provided 826 million forints in support of the development based on the company's use of state-of-the-art digital technology. Szijjártó said Japan is the biggest Asian investor in Hungary, with 160 Japanese companies employing 35,000 people in Hungary. Last year, trade between the two countries was worth 2 billion US dollars.

TRÓCSÁNYI NOT TO RUN FOR EP CTTEE VICE-CHAIR POST

László Trócsányi, MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, has decided not to run for the post of vice chairman of the European Parliament's constitutional affairs committee (AFCO), he said in a letter to AFCO Chairman Antonio Tajani. A Monday statement by MEPs of Hungary's ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance quoted Trócsányi

as referring to his duties related to his status as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's official nominee for Hungary's European commissioner. AFCO was scheduled to vote on Trócsányi's position on Tuesday. The European People's Party, of which Fidesz is a member, will soon nominate another Fidesz MEP for the AFCO post, the statement said.

HUNGARY, SERBIA SIGN MEDICAL EDUCATION AGREEMENT

Hungary and Serbia have concluded an agreement on cooperation between medical universities, as well as in medical post-graduate training and public health. The agreement was signed by Miklós Kásler, Hungary's human resources minister, and Serbian Health Minister Zlatibor Loncar in Budapest. Cooperation in public health will focus on prevention of diseases and on oncology, Kásler told a press conference, adding that Serbia has now joined the Central-Eastern European Academy of Oncology. The agreement envisages cooperation between the universities of Szeged and Novi Sad (Újvidék), including post-graduate training for physicians in Vojvodina, Serbia's northernmost region.

ARMY TO GET FOUR NEW HELICOPTERS THIS YEAR

Four new H145M helicopters will join the Hungary Army's fleet this

year and the training of pilots and technical staff is already under way in the company's German plant, Airbus Helicopters programme manager Martin Keller said. Next year, an additional 12 and in 2021 another six H145M helicopters will be added to the fleet, Keller said at a press presentation at the plant in Donauwörth.

Head of the Hungarian air force's development directorate László Nagy said the production of 14 helicopters had already started, six were in the final stages of production and two had already made their first flights. Two Hungarian pilots and ten technical staff are currently getting their training in Donauwörth where a total of 50 pilots and 60 technical staff will be trained, he said. They will have to complete around 50 training sessions before they get all the necessary permits, he added. In line with the contract, simulator training for pilots could be moved to Hungary but a decision has yet to be made, Nagy said.

HUNGARY JUNE TRADE SURPLUS REVISED DOWN TO EUR 488 M

Hungary's trade surplus in June was revised down to 488 million euros in a second reading of data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH). In the first reading, KSH had the June surplus at 556 million euros. Revised figures show imports fell by an annual 2.3% to 8.377 billion. Exports were down 7.3% at 8.866 billion. The trade surplus narrowed by 500 million euros from the same month a year earlier. In volume terms, exports dropped by 6.7% and imports were down 1%.

HOME SALES DECLINE BY 16% IN AUGUST

Home sales in Hungary came to 11,945 in August, down 16% from the same month a year earlier, real estate broker Duna House estimated. For the period January-August, home sales were down 3% year-on-year at 102,104.

HUNGARY TO NOMINATE POST-HOLOCAUST DRAMA FOR ACADEMY AWARD

Hungary has chosen director Barnabás Tóth's post-Holocaust drama *Those Who Remained* as its official entry in the Oscars' International Feature Film category, the Hungarian Film Fund said in a statement. A lyrical story of the healing power of love in the midst of national conflict, loss and trauma, *Those Who Remained* reveals the healing process of Holocaust survivors through the eyes of a young girl in post-World War II Hungary, the IMDB said. The members of the Hungarian Oscar Committee which decides on nominations include film director Ibolya Fekete, Hungarian Film Fund CEO Ágnes Havas, film distribution expert András Kálmán, university lecturer András Bálint Kovács and directors István Kovács, Pál Sándor and Ferenc Török, the statement said.