

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/György Varga

Algae spots in Lake Balaton

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Szijjártó inaugurates GMD Group factory**

**Countdown to International Eucharistic Conference begins**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: HUNGARY HAS DELEGATED 'EXCELLENT MAN'

In László Trócsányi, Hungary nominated an excellent man as its European commissioner, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio.

In his regular interview to Kossuth Rádió, the prime minister said his critics could at best claim from their point of view that Trócsányi came from "the wrong place because he is Hungarian". "But we are so many of us Hungarian that we cannot accept this objection," he added. Commenting on the importance of the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policy, he noted that Trócsányi's duties would cover relations with the Western Balkans, Ukraine, the Caucasus and north Africa, which, he added, were all important from the point of view of migration. Orbán said that in the course of Trócsányi's European parliamentary hearing "further hot moments" were expected, but his personal aptitude was the key issue. He praised Trócsányi's "intellectual ability" and noted Trócsányi's achievements such as his many years of experience in the Venice Commission, the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters.

Orbán said that trends in diplomacy in recent months had been good for Hungary's national interests and the Visegrád countries had gained in strength.

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## **ORBÁN: EU ENLARGEMENT IMPORTANT ISSUE**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio that western Europe had tired of EU enlargement and explained away their own political and economic failure by blaming it on the previous round of enlargement. Had the EU integrated Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, illegal migrants would not have reached Germany in 2015, he argued, adding that he sought to convince EU leaders of the importance of enlargement, noting a joint statement by the Visegrád group's prime ministers at their recent Prague summit in its favour.

Commenting on the post of commissioner for the protection of the European way of life, Orbán said it was "sad" that some people were attacking the portfolio. The chief responsibility of every politician, he insisted, was to protect people's way of life. He added that the debate was over nature of migration and most Europeans saw it as a threat.

Asked about outgoing commission president Jean-Claude Juncker's description of Orbán in a recent interview as a nationalist rather than a European politician, Orbán said: "I'm European because I'm Hungarian; if I were not Hungarian I wouldn't be able to be European." The EU, he added, must be built on nations, their identities and their pride.

He said the starting point of Hungary's strategy was to create stability, and this involved strengthening the Visegrad Group and its strong relationship with other neighbouring countries. Further, alliances must be made with "old" EU member states in order to achieve goals such as border protection. Austria, he added, had been just such a country and "hopefully after the Austrian election the old situation will be restored".

He said Italy was also a key player in protecting the bloc's maritime borders. He said Matteo Salvini, the former interior minister, was "a great friend of Hungary" who had been forced out of his position, but his absence was keenly felt since Italy had returned to "a dangerous leftist policy of taking in migrants and demanding their relocation".

Asked about graft in Hungary, Orbán said that "if there were corruption there would be no economic development". He added that whereas "corruption is everywhere", the problem was not decisive.

On family policy, the prime minister said he was considering the details of a second and third family protection action plans.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: BORIS JOHNSON 'KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING'**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is an exceptionally good politician who knows what he wants and is working to fulfil the will of the people, Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's foreign minister,

said in an interview to public television M1. Szijjártó said the Hungarian government regretted that Britain was leaving the European Union, adding that Brexit represented a serious loss in political, economic, strategic and security terms. At the same time, its decision is something to be respected, he said, adding it was only the British people who could decide on their own future, adding that Hungary had never considered it its job to criticise other countries when it came to matters that solely concern the country in question.

The minister said that anyone who contradicts the mainstream today comes under serious pressure in the international media. He called the attacks against Johnson "unbelievable and unseemly", adding that no politician should be criticised for enacting the will of the people. Szijjártó said, at the same time, nothing should be allowed that would further hinder cooperation between Britain and the EU up until the point of Brexit. Britain, he noted, is among Hungary's top 10 investors and trading partners. "Obviously, it's in our interest that as few obstacles as possible are in the way of economic cooperation." Szijjártó said the aim was to achieve a deal as close as possible to a "free-trade agreement".

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## **'ALTERNATIVE CLASSES' HELD DURING NATIONAL STUDENT STRIKE**

Alternative classes were held during a national student strike held in the cities of in Budapest, Pécs and Szombathely.

The strike was announced at a student demonstration held in late August in protest against an amendment to the law on public education. All students were asked to stay home today as an expression of their protest against the changes to the law.

Támás Szűcs, head of the Democratic Trade Union of Teachers (PDSZ), told a press conference that today's education structure characterised the heyday of the Communist-era Kádár regime. Centralisation of the system is ongoing and innovation is being "stifled", he added.

He said that many more teachers were dissatisfied than the number of those who had openly talked about their grievances, adding that it was even harder to persuade teachers to take action. PDSZ's aim, he said, was to provide students the help they had asked for rather than dominate proceedings. Students' demands, he added, were similar to those made at the time of the 1989-1990 regime change. "Let today be the start of new collaboration highlighting the enormous problems in education", Szűcs said, adding that Hungary's education had suffered a greater setback after 2010 than at any time since the democratic change of regime.

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### **FIFTEEN INDICTED IN CENTRAL BUDAPEST PROPERTY SWINDLE**

Budapest's municipal prosecutor has indicted 15 people on the charge of "unfaithful handling" of public assets

in connection with the privatisation of properties owned by the local government of 6th district back in 2003-2004, the municipal chief prosecutor told MTI. Tibor Ibolya said in a statement that the suspects, as local council members, had violated rules of competition and pricing by supporting plans to sell the properties. The deputies had "accepted an appraisal presented by the buyer without any criticism" and supported a decision to sell an apartment block in upmarket Jókai Street for the sum of 5 million forints (EUR 15,000) and a deal to buy out tenants, the statement said.

According to the statement, the local government later modified the original agreement under which two parts of the property were sold to the buyer, who agreed to renovate the building. The buyer, however, failed to meet that latter obligation and the district government terminated the contracts without suffering losses, the statement said. By supporting the original plans, the suspects had risked causing the municipality losses of up to 58.5 million forints (EUR 176.000), the indictment said.

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### **BANGLADESHI SIAMESE TWIN UNDERGOES RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY**

One of the Siamese twins recently separated by Hungarian doctors in a Dhaka hospital has undergone skull reconstruction surgery, the foundation managing the operations

told MTI on Friday, adding that the other twin sister was convalescing from serious complications following the separation surgery. Gergely Pataki, András Csókay and Marcell Csapody, doctors of the Foundation for Defenceless People, are back in Dhaka to perform reconstruction operations and rehabilitation of the two girls. Rabeya underwent a five-hour skull reconstruction operation and cosmetic surgery on Sept. 11, the foundation said. Her sister Rokaiya, however, suffered brain bleeding 33 days after the separation operation and was in a serious condition, though she is now conscious and can move her limbs, the statement added. The 3-year-old twins were separated on Aug. 2.

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### **OPPOSITION SECURES SPECIAL PARLT SESSION ON GOVT CLIMATE COMMITMENTS**

Parliament will hold a special session on Sept. 18 to debate the government's climate change commitments ahead of a key UN climate summit later in the month. The session was called for by opposition green LMP with the backing of the parliamentary groups of the Párbeszéd, Democratic Coalition (DK) and Socialist parties as well as independent MPs. LMP deputy group leader Erzsébet Schmuck said earlier that Hungary was sensitive to climate change, and extreme weather conditions can be experienced daily. She said LMP

expected the government to take "its commitments a lot more seriously", including increasing the ratio of renewable energy from the currently planned 20% to 50% by 2030 and shutting down Hungary's northern Mátrai coal-fired power plant by 2026, she said.

The session is scheduled to start at 10am, according to the agenda published on parliament's website. The UN summit is scheduled to take place on Sept. 23.

### **HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR TO SLOVAKIA SUMMONED OVER FOOTBALL CHANTS**

Hungary's ambassador to Slovakia was summoned to the Slovak foreign ministry over events at Monday's Hungarian-Slovak soccer match. The Slovak foreign ministry in a statement rejected the anti-Slovak chants shouted during the match. Such events may disturb the relations of the two countries, the statement said. The ministry asked the ambassador to have authorities focus on preventing similar cases.

Szijjártó told public television M1 on Friday that he had watched the match together with Slovak House Speaker Andrej Danko, who gave an "honourable" interview afterwards praising cooperation and the atmosphere at the match. Szijjártó said fair play and respect of the opponent were important to him. He said Bratislava's move to summon Hungary's ambassador had been an "overreaction" and "hysterical". "If I were to invite the Slovak ambassador to the foreign ministry after every event where Slovak fans behave disrespectfully towards Hungarians, Hungarian athletes and the Hungarian nation at a sporting event, the Slovak ambassador would be in the ministry fulltime," he said.

### **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OUTPUT CLIMBS 32.9 PC IN JULY**

Output of Hungary's construction sector grew by an annual 32.9% in July, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Output of the buildings segment was up 32.2%, lifted by

construction of residential, cultural and industrial buildings, KSH said. Civil engineering output increased by 34.1%, supported by road, utilities and railway projects, it added. In a month-on-month comparison, construction output increased by 9.6%, adjusted for seasonal and working-day effects.

Analyst András Horváth of Takarékbank told MTI that construction sector performance could remain inconsistent in the coming months due to varying utilisation of capacities, even though the momentum seen early in the year returned in July. Reasons for this include the shortage of qualified workforce, the phasing out of the preferential VAT rate on home construction and other uncertainties, especially in the residential and office building segments, he said. State, infrastructure and other industrial investments, however, will remain drivers of growth in the sector and could maintain the outstanding momentum, he added. Horváth predicted full-year construction industry output growth of around 30% in 2019.