

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/György Varga

Flying Dutchman European Championship on Lake Balaton

UPCOMING EVENTS

Szijjártó meets Indonesian counterpart

Zsolt Nemeth meets Latvian foreign affairs committee head

Siemens, Technical University sign cooperation agreement

TOP STORY

JUSTICE MINISTER: EU HEARING 'PRO-MIGRATION REVENGE CAMPAIGN'

Addressing concerns that Hungary was at "risk of a serious breach" of core EU values, Hungary's justice minister attended a meeting in Brussels, the first formal hearing on Hungary.

Judit Varga told Hungarian journalists after the hearing that it had been "yet another stage in the revenge campaign by pro-migration forces". She said that Hungary had been the target of a "witch hunt" for over a year due to its insistent "rejection of migration". The Hungarian government has taken "a great step forward" in protecting Hungary, the minister said.

"We have rejected every accusation and false claim. We have clarified all legal issues. We have rejected double standards, and I once again have called attention to the fact that the resolution in question is in itself a violation of the rule of law," the minister said.

Last September, the European Parliament approved a report prepared by Dutch Green MEP Judith Sargentini triggering an Article 7 procedure against Hungary which could ultimately strip the country of its EU voting rights. MEPs voted to launch the procedure because of the "existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded".

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ORBÁN: FIDESZ, AUSTRIA FREEDOM PARTY STRATEGIC COOPERATION SET TO CONTINUE

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has congratulated Norbert Hofer on his election as the leader of Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ), the prime minister's press chief, said. "I trust that strategic cooperation between [ruling] Fidesz and the Austrian Freedom Party ... will continue in the future, and we can maintain friendly ties based on mutual confidence and Christian-Conservative values," Bertalan Havasi quoted Orbán as saying in a letter to Hofer. Orbán said that Europe, including Austria and Hungary, faced major challenges such as Europe's "diminishing role in the global economy" and "the threat of migration endangering our borders".

Hofer, who has acted as the party's interim leader, won 98% of votes at a party congress in Graz last weekend.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY PLAYS KEY ROLE IN BOOSTING NUCLEAR SECURITY

Hungary plays an important role in boosting nuclear security, the foreign minister told the general assembly of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on Monday, commenting on a request that Hungary preside over the Nuclear Security Working Group for another

year. "Terrorism and the threat of terrorism are growing worldwide with the emergence of uncontrolled migration waves," Péter Szijjártó said. "This also increases nuclear threats, which is why it is important that Hungary has been asked to preside over the Nuclear Security Working Group for another year." In addition, Budapest will host a conference on global action against nuclear terrorism, the minister said, adding that these developments were an acknowledgement of Hungary's position as a leader in efforts to boost nuclear security. He also said that as of this month, Hungary is a member of the IAEA's Board of Governors.

On another subject, Szijjártó said the use of nuclear energy also contributed greatly to energy security, which he called a "critical issue" for central Europe. Nuclear energy covers around 50% of electricity demand in Hungary, and this share will increase with the expansion of the Paks nuclear power plant, he said. For Hungary, this is a matter of competitiveness, Szijjártó said, arguing that increasing the use of nuclear energy meant the country would be less vulnerable to uncertainties on the international energy markets.

PALKOVICS: US INVESTORS SUPPORT HUNGARY'S R+D

US investors are supporting the strengthening of Hungarian R+D, while the government is increasing funds in the budget devoted to innovation by

25% next year, László Palkovics, the minister of innovation and technology, told an AmCham event. Boosting the standard of R+D is a priority when it comes to foreign companies operating in Hungary, those planning to invest here and domestic enterprises, he said at the American Chamber of Commerce event, adding that Hungary's global ranking in this area is still somewhat poor.

Several US multinationals such as GE and IBM are already innovating in Hungary but the government wants to see more of this type of activity, he said.

Palkovics noted that companies carry out research and development independently and largely using their own financial resources, while the state has a guiding role in university research and the activities of state research institutes. He said three R+D areas needed improvement: R+D infrastructure, the financing of innovation and improving cooperation. When it comes to universities and research institutes, greater stress should be put on cooperation and performance in connection with competition structures, he said. Institutions, he added, receive support and resources when they cooperate with each other. Palkovics said that next year the government was increasing central funding for R+D+I by 32 billion forints (EUR 97m) to 165 billion compared with this year. Research institutes can boost by applying for EU funding, too, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARIAN GROWTH LARGEST IN EU

Hungary's economy is the fastest growing in the European Union, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said, at the topping out of a TBZ Táp feed plant near Böhönye, in southwest Hungary. Agricultural company TBZ Táp, a member of the Claessens Group, topped out a 3.1 billion forint (EUR 9.3m) feed production plant. Claessens was awarded a 1.24 billion forint government grant for the plant which will turn out 100,000 tonnes of feed a year, a large part of which will go to the group's own livestock, said co-owner Peter Claessens. The plant will raise headcount at the group from 250 to 300, he added. At the inauguration, Szijjártó noted that while Hungary had been on the "brink of insolvency" in 2010, it is now a "European champion" with an annual growth of 5.1%. Full employment is "within reach", and the country ranks 34th on the global exports performance list, even though it is 92nd regarding population, he said. The excellent performance of Hungarian people and companies was key to that success, as was the government's economic policy which introduced the lowest tax rates in the EU, he said. In Somogy county, where the plant is located, the value of investments doubled in the first quarter of 2019 to 20 billion forints compared to the same period last year, he said.

HUNGARY TRADE COMMISSIONER MEETS KAZAKH DEPT FARM MINISTER

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's commissioner for development and coordination on foreign markets has met the deputy farm minister of Kazakhstan in Nur-Sultan, the foreign ministry said. After a meeting with Gulmira Isayeva, Gyula Budai said Hungary and Kazakhstan expect to sign an agreement on closer cooperation and joint development projects in the agriculture sector in November. Kazakhstan plans to import 1 million head of cattle in 2018-2027 while pumping 800 million dollars into farm developments, he added. So far this year, Hungarian companies have exported 294,490 chicks, 340 goats and 53 head of cattle to Kazakhstan.

TARLÓS MAINTAINS LEAD TO STAY BUDAPEST MAYOR, SAYS NÉZŐPONT

One month ahead of the local elections, incumbent Budapest Mayor István Tarlós maintains his lead at 50%, followed by 42% support for joint opposition candidate Gergely Karácsony, pollster Nézőpont Institute said. The poll prepared by interviewing 1,000 Budapest residents over the phone between September 4 and 14 showed that Tarlós, who is supported by the ruling parties, could perform even better than in 2014 when he

received 49%, Nézőpont said. The majority of Budapest residents, 51%, said they were satisfied with Tarlós's work, it added. The poll showed 90% of Fidesz supporters in Budapest were in favour of Tarlós, who has been the mayor of the city for nine years. Even 22% of opposition voters expressed satisfaction with the mayor's work. A total of 42% of decided voters expressed support for Karácsony, followed by 7% for Róbert Puzsér and 1% for Krisztián Berki.

GOVT OFFICIAL: OVER 50,000 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR NEW FAMILY SUBSIDIES

More than 50,000 families have applied for some kind of subsidy provided via the government's family protection action plan since it was launched on July 1, the state secretary for youth and family affairs said on Monday. More than 32,000 applications have been received for state-subsidised prenatal baby support loans, Katalin Novák told a press conference, adding that over 22,000 couples had already signed their loan contracts. She also added that a total 217 billion forints (EUR 653m) had been paid out to winning applicants. Some 13,000 families have applied for grants to buy a car, Novák said, noting that a family could receive up to 2.5 million forints (EUR 7,500) to complete their budget for a 7-seat vehicle. Fully 3,000 families have reduced their mortgages, Novák said, and noted that one million forints

can be deducted from a family's debt after the birth of their second child, 4 million forints after the third, and another million for each further baby.

Senior financial market analyst Erika Trencsán said the prenatal baby support loan was the most popular subsidy, adding that two-thirds of applicants were saving for housing, but many used the loan to pay off an earlier mortgage.

MIGRANTS ATTEMPT TO ENTER HUNGARY IN RUBBER DINGHY

Hungarian border authorities on Monday apprehended a group of migrants attempting to enter Hungary by sailing up the River Tisza in an inflatable dinghy, a spokeswoman of the Csongrád County police department said. The fourteen migrants, including eight who claimed to be Iraqi and three Syrian citizens, were caught near the border town of Röszt, in southern Hungary, Szilvia Szabó told MTI. The migrants are set to be escorted back to the border fence by authorities, Szabó added. In 2009, a

group of Kosovan migrants died trying to cross into Hungary by boat on the Tisza.

NBH STARTS BUYING BONDS UNDER BGS

The National Bank of Hungary (NBH) announced its first purchase on Monday under the recently launched Bond Funding for Growth Scheme (BGS), an initiative to beef up Hungary's relatively small corporate bond market. The NBH did not reveal the issuer but said it would publish the parameters of bonds it purchases on its website at the end of each month.

The NBH launched the 300 billion forint BGS on July 1, 2019. The programme rules limit the NBH's purchases to 70% of a series and caps its exposure to any corporate group at 20 billion forints. Participants in the BGS are alternative energy company Alteo, construction company Market Építő, auto parts seller Unix Auto, property developer Wingholding, listed holding company Opus Global, biorefinery business Pannonia Bio, real estate investor Proform, food

businesses Bonafarm and Pick Szeged, road builder Duna Aszfalt, building material maker Masterplast, property developer Cordia International and gas distributor TIGAZ.

SZOKOLAY WINS BARTÓK WORLD COMPETITION

Hungarian pianist Ádám Szokolay won the Bartók World Competition and Festival in Budapest, organisers told MTI after the gala concert closing the event late on Sunday. At the grand final on Saturday, Szokolay played Bartók's 1st piano concerto, the organiser Hungarian Liszt Academy of Music said. Ádám Balogh, who was awarded second prize, played Bartók's 3rd piano concerto, and third place winner Peter Klimo from the US performed Liszt's piano concerto in A major, they said. The competitors worked with the National Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Zsolt Hamar. The Bartók World Competition will resume with a competition for composers in 2020 and one for string quartets in 2021, they said.