

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Saint Ladislaus procession in Győr, NW Hungary

MTI/Csaba Krizsán

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Plenary session of parliament**

**Coronavirus updates**

**Stats office releases March-May jobs report**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: HUNGARY VALUES ITS OFFICERS

Hungary will never abandon its “uniformed officers”, the prime minister told a graduation ceremony of new police, disaster management and prison officers at the National University of Public Service over the weekend.

“The future for those in uniform doesn’t seem like it’s going to be simple,” Viktor Orbán said, adding that the world was witnessing “surprising and upsetting developments”. “Wealthy countries have seen their health-care systems collapse within a matter of days, rich countries are on the way to financial collapse and major cities are seeing unprecedented waves of violence,” Orbán said. Law enforcement and armed forces “are being humiliated both on the streets and in politics”, the prime minister said. “But Hungary isn’t and will never be that kind of country,” Orbán said. Hungary’s finances are in order, its economy is healthy, the people are willing and able to work and the country’s growth potential is strong,” he added. The prime minister also said that “all lives matter” in Hungary. “We prefer a world in which there is order, where common sense prevails, where the law protects the innocent rather than the criminals, a world in which we protect ourselves from migration, and where resources are invested into families and children,” he said.

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## **ORBÁN: LAW AND ORDER 'AT THE HEART OF HUNGARY'**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, addressing a graduation ceremony of new police, disaster management and prison officers at the National University of Public Service in Budapest, spoke about the importance of patriotism, saying that lawfulness, law and order were at the heart of Hungary. "Everyday patriotism means feeling that the country one lives in is one's homeland of which there is only one," the prime minister said. "If this [one homeland] is lost, one can only continue their life in a place that belongs to someone else and where we could only ever hope to be tolerated, or, in a best case scenario, accepted."

"So we're ready to preserve it, and if necessary, fight for it from generation to generation, because this is the most valuable thing we can pass on to our children," Orbán said, adding that the feeling of patriotism "binds us to a shared fate that is great and unique". This sentiment is especially strong in Hungarians, he said, adding that without patriotism, Hungary would hardly have been able to survive for as long as it has. The prime minister added that if the newly graduated officers aimed to be good policemen, firefighters and disaster response officers, they would also need self-esteem.

## **THREE DIE, FOUR NEW CONFIRMED CORONAVIRUS CASES IN HUNGARY**

Three patients have died in the past 24 hours and the number of registered novel coronavirus infections has risen by four to 4,142, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Sunday morning. Fully 581 people have died and 2,685 have made a recovery, while the number of active infections stands at 876. Altogether 2,551 people are in official home quarantine and 271,194 tests have been carried out. A total of 172 coronavirus patients are in hospital, 9 of whom are on ventilators. Fully 38% of active infections, 60% of fatalities and 48% of recoveries have taken place in Budapest.

The threat of an epidemic has not disappeared and a state of medical preparedness is in effect, the website said. It is compulsory to wear a face mask in shops and on public transport. Budapest has the highest number of infections (1,975), followed by Pest County (617), and the counties of Fejér (376), Komárom-Esztergom (307) and Zala (262). Békés and Tolna counties have the fewest, with 13 each.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ OFFERS HUNGARY'S HELP TO FLOOD-HIT UKRAINE**

Hungarian troops of the multinational Engineer Battalion Tisza stand ready to be deployed at the call of Ukrainian authorities to help in the flood-hit

western regions of Ukraine, the foreign minister said on Facebook. Hungary has offered to help its neighbour with rescue operations and flood defence, Péter Szijjártó said. The Hungarian-Romanian-Slovak-Ukrainian Tisza Battalion's task is to help rescue people and participate in defence operations in the instances of natural and ecological disasters. The flood has affected Ukraine's western regions including Ivano-Frankivsk where it has claimed three lives.

## **JUSTICE MIN: 'DECEITFUL' SARGENTINI REPORT PASSED BY 'PRO- MIGRATION EP MAJORITY'**

The "deceitful" Sargentini report critical of the rule of law in Hungary was pushed through by the European Parliament's "pro-migration majority" in an attempt to try to influence the country's immigration policy, Justice Minister Judit Varga said on Facebook. In her post, Varga noted that the European Court of Justice is scheduled to hear Hungary's legal challenge against the report on Monday, with the complaint that the EP had violated voting rules when adopting the report. The minister noted that on Sept. 12, 2018, the EP adopted the report with 448 votes in favour, 197 against and 48 abstentions.

The report calling for the Article 7 procedure to be launched against Hungary needed a two-thirds majority to pass, meaning at least 462 supporting votes, Varga

said. "This is simple mathematics." However, the EP arbitrarily decided that abstentions would not count as votes and ignored them in the final vote count, she said. "It's also simple arithmetic that it's easier to secure a two-thirds majority this way," she added. Varga insisted that the EU's founding treaties and the EP's rules of procedure all supported Hungary's argument.

Whether an MEP voted in favour of or against the motion, voted to abstain or chose not to vote at all was a conscious decision, the minister said. The EU's interpretation of the vote renders abstention votes meaningless and does not count them as votes, she argued. "This not only goes against the law and common sense, but also raises the issue of the restriction of an MEP's mandate."

The Hungarian government, on the other hand, will show up for Monday's hearing with firm and strong legal arguments, Varga said, adding that hopefully, EU institutions would respect the principles of the rule of law "the same way they expect others to".

**IT MINISTER: THREE-PARTY RESEARCH CENTRE SET UP WITH HUF 4 BN FUNDING IN SZEGED**

A three-party research centre for petroleum and the development of renewable fuels has been established with funding of 4 billion forints (EUR 11.3m) in the Szeged Science Park, the innovation and

technology minister said at the site over the weekend. Set up by the University of Szeged, Hungarian oil and gas company MOL and Audi Hungária, the Sustainable Green Chemical and Mobility Competence Centre will be tasked with providing the industry partners a state-of-the-art facility for basic and applied research and experimental development, László Palkovics told reporters. Hungary aims to become a major player in innovation by 2030 and the government has decided to gradually increase spending on R&D to achieve this goal, he said. The EU will have over 80 billion euros available for R&D projects in its next seven-year budgetary period in which Palkovics said Hungarian universities had to have an increased share.

László Rovó, the rector of Szeged University, said the main focus of the centre's research will be on developing new technologies for the extraction of oil from already explored fields. Zsolt Hernádi, the CEO of MOL, said that the centre would be unique in exploring ways to develop new types of fuel with a team of some 30 researchers. Zoltán Les, a board member of Audi Hungária, said that as a third party signing a cooperation agreement with Szeged University and MOL in 2018, Audi will test MOL's low emission petrol and diesel fuels on the engines it is producing. The Competence Centre is scheduled to be fully operational by late 2022.

**HUNGARY SENDS VACCINES TO TRANSCARPATIA**

Ministerial commissioner István Grezsa handed over a contingent of 22,500 vaccines to the local chapter of the Red Cross in Chop (Csap), in Ukraine's Transcarpathia region, on Friday. The vaccines, against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, influenza and poliomyelitis, have been donated as part of a 5-year Hungarian assistance programme, Grezsa said at a ceremony attended by Transcarpathia Governor Oleksiy Petrov. In the past three years Hungary has sent 80,000 vaccines to Transcarpathia, Grezsa said in his address. Petrov said that the vaccines would be distributed between hospitals of the region and provided to children free of charge.

**SOCIALISTS CALL FOR PARLT PROBE INTO GOVT'S CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE MEASURES**

The opposition Socialists have said they will initiate setting up a parliamentary investigative committee to look into the government's decisions made in response to the novel coronavirus epidemic. Addressing an online press conference over the weekend, Socialist lawmaker Ildikó Borbély Bangó said the body should investigate the suspension of basic health-care services, the order for hospitals to vacate a proportion of their beds, "how hospitals became coronavirus clusters", the delayed

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delivery of protective equipment and the 300 billion forint (EUR 844.3m) order for ventilators. Borbély Bangó said that if Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler was “confident in what he’s doing”, he should agree to setting up the committee and appear before it for a hearing.

Ruling Fidesz said in response that the Socialist Party had “continuously tried to hinder the epidemic response efforts and used the epidemic for nothing but cheap political posturing”. Thanks to the government’s timely and effective measures, Hungary handled the first wave of the coronavirus epidemic well and is prepared to handle any new infections and treat patients, the party said in a statement.

### **GOVT OFFICIAL: COUPLES SHOULDN’T BE DISADVANTAGED BY HAVING CHILDREN**

The Hungarian government does not want to see couples who decide to have children be at a disadvantage compared to those who choose not to have any, the state secretary for

family and youth affairs said over the weekend. Because the government wants couples who choose to have children gain an advantage, they will see an increase in the scale of the infant-care benefit, paid during the first six months after birth, from July 1, 2021, Katalin Novák told public broadcaster Kossuth Radio. With the infant-care benefit, known by its Hungarian acronym CSED, rising from 70% to 100% of the gross salary, not only will new mothers not have to give up a part of their income, but it will in fact increase, she said. The policy will cost the budget 14 billion forints (EUR 39.4m) every six months and will help some 80,000 families, Novák said. And since mothers who have at least four children are exempt from personal income tax, a fourth child allows them to keep their gross salary in full, the state secretary added.

As regards the opposition’s criticisms of the government’s family policies, Novák said: “No one is interfering in anyone’s private life choices.” The government wants young people to be able to have as many children as they want whenever they want, she said.

### **HUNGARY OUTGOING CONSUL-GENERAL TO KRAKOW RECEIVES HIGH POLISH STATE AWARD**

Adrienne Körmendy, Hungary’s outgoing consul-general to Krakow, received a high Polish state award in Warsaw. Körmendy, a historian serving as a diplomat since 1990, was awarded the Order of Merit of the Polish Republic, Officer’s Cross by President Andrzej Duda in recognition of her achievements in nurturing and enhancing Hungarian-Polish relations. Lauding her, Polish state secretary for energy and a member of Sejm, Piotr Naimski said: “Professor Körmendy has added something unique to the art of diplomacy, namely her own personality.” He added that the consul-general has been “an excellent envoy” of Polish-Hungarian friendship. At the event, Körmendy was also handed over a letter of thanks by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of Poland’s ruling Law and Justice Party.