

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Unique mail box in Tiszafüred

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases industrial output figures for Nov 2018

State secy assesses 2018 family support schemes for Hungarians beyond borders

Hungarian team for Bocuse d'Or final gives presser

TOP STORY

SYRIAN TO BE EXPELLED FROM HUNGARY FOR PART IN MIGRANT RIOTS

A court ruled that Syrian national Ahmed H., convicted earlier for his participation in migrants' clashes with police at Hungary's border in 2015, will be put on probation and expelled from Hungary.

Court spokesman László Sörös told MTI that Ahmed H., convicted for "illegal border crossing committed as member of a rioting crowd as well as complicity in a terrorist act" last year, has already served two-thirds of his five-year term in pre-trial detention. Ahmed H. was sentenced to ten years in prison in the first instance, in 2016. According to the indictment, the defendant had "threatened to pull down a cordon and attack police; he spoke to the crowd through a loudspeaker several times, and threw objects in the direction of the officers in three instances and illegally crossed into Hungarian territory". In its justification for the sentence, the court said that Ahmed H. had carried out terrorist activities through illegally crossing the border in a violent crowd and through violence against the police. An appeals court in southern Hungary overturned the sentence in 2017 and ordered a retrial, as a result of which H.'s term was halved in September last year.

ORBÁN TO UNVEIL FAMILY POLICY MEASURES AT STATE OF NATION ADDRESS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is expected to unveil further government measures supporting families at an annual state of the nation address on February 10, daily Magyar Idők said on Saturday. The paper noted that the prime minister said at a press briefing on Thursday that government measures decided on the basis of a national consultation on family policy conducted in November and December would be among the topics he would speak about at the annual address. Orbán is also expected to speak about what is at stake in the European Parliament election coming up in the spring, the paper said. On Thursday, he said Hungary's goal is to see an anti-immigration majority in all European Union institutions after the election. A meeting of MPs of the governing Fidesz-KDNP alliance will take place on February 13-14, the paper said. The prime minister will deliver an assessment to lawmakers behind closed doors on the evening of February 13. On the following day, family policy related tasks will be assigned, and MPs will discuss preparations for the EP campaign and the topic of migration. The legislative programme for the spring session of parliament is also on the agenda. The two-day meeting will not take place this time in Visegrád, north of

the capital, as in earlier years, Magyar Idők said. The location has not been revealed for security reasons, it added.

FIDESZ: SOROS'S PEOPLE 'PULLING THE STRINGS OF EC LEADERS'

Fidesz believes George Soros's people "are pulling the strings of the European Commission's leading politicians" and demands an explanation, Fidesz MEP Tamás Deutsch said at a press conference on an unrelated topic in Budapest on Saturday. Deutsch noted that daily Magyar Idők learnt that US billionaire Soros had met for talks with the EU leaders on at least 20 occasions. Soros held talks with Jean-Claude Juncker, Frans Timmermans, Emmanuel Macron and Dimitris Avramopoulos, he added. Deutsch said it was "absurd" that a person claiming to be a philanthropist who represents the official viewpoint of not a single country can meet with EU leaders more frequently than the prime minister or head of state of any EU member state. Fidesz will ask for explanations, in writing, on the subject matter of all of these meetings, he added.

OPPOSITION HOLDS PROTEST IN BÉKÉSCSABA

Opposition parties that do and do not have seats in parliament protested against the government as well as amendments to the labour code in Békéscsaba, in southeast Hungary, on Saturday evening.

The crowd formed a procession, waving opposition party flags and banners on which "Resist!" was written. Chanting "We are not afraid!", the protesters walked along the city's main street to the city hall where they listened to opposition politicians who had arrived for the demonstration. Independent MP Ákos Hadházy said already 400,000 signatures had been collected supporting Hungary's joining the European Public Prosecutor's Office. Anett Bósz, the head of the Liberals and an independent MP, said the opposition is bound together by the needs of the "true republic". Opposition parties, civil organisations and unions will continue joint demonstrations to bring about "a new change of system", she added. Democratic Coalition lawmaker Ágnes Vadai asked people to challenge the government on the labour code amendment passed in a year which was dedicated to supporting families. Conservative Jobbik MP Andrea Varga-Damm said the "slave law" had brought together the diverging ideologies of the opposition to achieve a common goal. "The European parliamentary elections will be the day of the new change of system", she added. LMP board member Kálmán Kis-Szeniczey called for a boycott of the "slave law". Bence Tordai, of Párbeszéd, said the opposition should pit single candidates against each Fidesz representative in the upcoming local council elections. Anna Donáth, the deputy leader of Momentum, said the crowd gathered in Békéscsaba was evidence that people are not afraid and are again expressing

their political views. István Nika, a leader of union MADOSZ, said at most two in a hundred workers agree to work overtime and only because they can't earn enough to provide for their families.

The amendments to the labour code, approved by parliament in December, raised the annual threshold for overtime from 250 to 400 hours.

SO FAR 241,000 WOMEN AVAIL OF EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME

Some 241,000 women have benefited from the government's "Women 40" scheme allowing early retirement over the past eight years, the human resources ministry's state secretary said on Saturday. The programme introduced in 2011 allows women the option to retire early with a full pension after 40 years of employment, Bence Rétvári told a press conference. The scheme was introduced as a family support measure to recognise women for their roles in the workforce and in raising children, he said. Around 30,000 women chose the scheme each year, accounting for about one-sixth of all women retirees, Rétvári noted.

BUSINESS CHAMBER, UNIONS SEE DOUBLE- DIGIT WAGE RISE THIS YEAR

Private sector wages in Hungary could rise in the double-digits this

year, well over the 8% increase in the minimum wage, the head of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in Saturday's issue of daily Magyar Idők. The labour shortage is continuing to impact wage growth, László Parragh told the paper. While the 8% minimum wage increase may be the benchmark for pay rises at SMEs, bigger companies can put more into their payroll, he added. Magyar Idők learnt from union leaders that ongoing wage talks with the management of companies suggest wages will rise over 10% this year. Employers and unions reached an eleventh-hour agreement in December on the scale of the increase for this year's minimum wage for skilled and unskilled labourers. Both wages will rise by 8% in 2019 and again in 2020.

EMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG HUNGARIANS WITH REDUCED WORK CAPACITY REACHES 40%

The employment rate among Hungarians with reduced work capacity reached 40% at the end of last year, up from just 18% in 2011, the prime minister's commissioner for priority social affairs said on Sunday. In absolute terms, the number of Hungarians with reduced work capacity who held jobs was over 80,000 last year, up from 15,000 in 2011, said Zsolt Nyitrai. More than 600,000 Hungarians live with some form of disability, he added.

Hungarians living with disabilities are a social group of strategic importance for the government: as equal members of society, they need support to live their daily lives with the greatest possible degree of independence, Nyitrai said. Since the Fidesz-KDNP government came to power in 2010, budget funding allocated for organisations that deal with matters affecting Hungarians living with disabilities has doubled, he added.

MEMORY OF HUNGARIANS DEPORTED TO SOVIET LABOUR CAMPS HONOURED

Commemorations were held in Nagymaros, north of Budapest, on Sunday, marking the anniversary of the deportation of some 500 Hungarians to forced labour camps in the Soviet Union in the aftermath of WWII. The 500 residents from the villages of Nagymaros, Kismaros and Zebegény, on the Danube Bend, were among almost 800,000 Hungarians deported to the forced labour camps in the Soviet Union, said Bence Rétvári, who represents area residents in parliament. The deportations started in the autumn of 1944 and took place over a period of several months. The first survivors did not return to Hungary until nearly a decade later, in November 1953.