

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTVA/Audi Hungária

New solar installation on rooftop of Audi's logistics complex

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Government presser**

**Parl justice cttee hears nominee for next Kúria president**

**Budapest mayor's presser on Biodom investment audit**

**EU interior ministers hold online conference**

## TOP STORY

# AUDI SOLAR PLANT UNVEILED

Hungary is in the forefront of the fight against climate change, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Győr, in western Hungary, attending the inauguration of a rooftop solar plant, Europe's biggest, built by car maker Audi Hungária.

Szjártó noted Hungary's commitment to increasing the share of solar energy within its total energy production to 90% by the 2030s, adding that the government's approach was "realistic and reasonable". "We all want a greener future, cleaner water and air while also retaining jobs and boosting the country's competitiveness," he said.

Addressing a separate press conference held by a cargo company that serves Audi, Szjártó presented the first of its newly developed electric lorries.

"The Innovative Group has developed and put into service a 40-tonne, fully electric lorry," he said, adding that the lorry was "unique". He noted that by 2022, all of the company's ten lorries delivering cargo between Audi's plants will be fully electric. The vehicle will reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to its weight, contributing to the city's environmental protection targets, Szjártó said. "Hungary has taken a new step forward in fighting climate change," the minister said.

## **OPERATIVE BODY: ENTRANTS TO ROMANIA FROM HUNGARY TO UNDERGO QUARANTINE**

Entrants from Hungary to Romania must self-quarantine for 14 days under a decision that came into force late on Tuesday, the operative body responsible for handling the novel coronavirus epidemic said. Róbert Kiss, a member of the operative board, said that people commuting across the Hungary-Romania border to work, international cargo transport and those on business trips were exempt from the Romanian regulations. People entering Romania in possession of a negative coronavirus test taken within the past 48 hours and intending to stay fewer than three days are also exempt, Kiss said. Quarantine may be lifted after ten days at the request of the traveller, Kiss added.

Regarding the situation in Hungary, Kiss said the authorities took action on Tuesday in 69 cases of breaches against quarantine regulations nationwide. They also monitored mask wearing on public transport, and handed out three on-the-spot fines and 25 warnings, Kiss said. The police have acted on 904 breaches against epidemic protection measures since September 21, he added.

## **REGISTERED CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS UP 816 IN HUNGARY**

Twenty-four Covid-19 patients have died in the past 24 hours, while the number of registered coronavirus infections in Hungary has risen by 816 to 33,114, [koronavirus.gov.hu](http://koronavirus.gov.hu) said on Wednesday morning. The number of fatalities stands at 877, and 9,149 people have made a recovery. There are 23,088 active infections and 656 Covid-19 patients are being treated in hospital, 41 on ventilators. Altogether 20,319 people are in official home quarantine and 781,023 tests have been carried out. The website warned Hungarians to observe social distancing guidelines and hygiene regulations. Entry restrictions for travellers from abroad remain in force. In addition to shops and public transport, wearing a mask is now mandatory in cinemas, theatres, health and social institutions and public offices, and clubs have to close by 11pm to curb the spread of the virus. Most infections have been registered in Budapest (11,572), followed by Pest County (4,324) and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron (1,805), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (1,672), Hajdú-Bihar (1,498), Fejér (1,402) and Csongrád-Csanád (1,398). Tolna County has the fewest infections (313).

## **HUNGARY, ANDORRA CONCLUDE TALKS ON TAXATION AGREEMENT**

Hungary and the Principality of Andorra have concluded talks on a taxation agreement to avoid double taxation and prevent tax evasion, the finance ministry said. After internal approval on both sides, the agreement is expected to be signed in early 2021. The agreement will cover regulations pertaining to the exchange of information on income taxes between the tax authorities of the two countries. It will also facilitate uncovering attempts at tax evasion and cut red tape in taxation matters, it said. Hungary currently has taxation agreements with 83 countries, which effectively curb the room for manoeuvre of those attempting tax fraud, the ministry said.

## **CIVIL ORGS DEMAND PROTECTION FOR LAKES**

Seventy-three civil organisations have called on the government in a joint statement to ensure protection for Hungary's Balaton, Velencei and Fertő Lakes, as well as the Old Lake in Tata. The petition is aimed at preventing further construction, whether state-financed or private, in natural heritage areas, according to a statement the signatories sent to MTI, arguing that the sites in question were important natural assets and endangered habitats of protected

species. The signatories, including Greenpeace and WWF Hungary, as well as the Hungarian Ornithology and Environment Protection Association, warned that planned development projects were in contravention with the state's constitutional obligation to protect those assets.

### **FIDESZ MEP: BUDAPEST MAYOR 'SIDING' WITH OFFICIALS WHO 'ATTACK THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'**

Fidesz MEP Tamás Deutsch has accused the mayor of Budapest, Gergely Karácsony, of "siding" with European commissioner Vera Jourova and Katarina Barley, a European Parliament vice-president, who, he insisted, had "insulted and attacked the Hungarian people". Deutsch told journalists in Brussels about an open letter that several Hungarian city mayors had signed in support of the two EU officials. The Fidesz MEP accused Karácsony in particular of "arrogance" and lying to people abroad about domestic affairs, adding that his behaviour was unworthy of his office. "Hungary rejects lies as firmly as possible," Deutsch said.

### **GUEST NIGHTS DOWN 33% IN AUG**

The number of guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary fell by an annual 33.2% to 3,136,000 in August as the pandemic

continued to impact the tourism industry, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The number of guest nights spent by domestic travellers fell by 2.1% to 2,530,000, that spent by foreign visitors plunged by 71.3% to 607,000.

### **PEOPLE SMUGGLER RING HEAD ARRESTED IN BUDAPEST**

A Syrian national suspected of operating a people smuggling ring was arrested in Budapest, police.hu reported. The gang is believed to have transported illegal migrants, mostly Syrians and Afghans, from the Hungary-Serbia border to Austria on at least 33 occasions between October last year and January 2020, the website said, adding that the migrants had been organised in groups of 3-6 people. The police earlier detained one of the drivers and a coordinator of the gang.

### **POLICE DISCOVER 45 SYRIANS IN TRUCK**

The police discovered 45 illegal migrants crammed in a truck driven by a Turkish national near Tata, in western Hungary, local police reported. According to the report 42 men and three women were travelling in the truck, which had Romanian plates. The 29-year-old driver is facing legal proceedings on charges of people smuggling, while the migrants will be questioned and escorted back to the border.

### **ROMANIAN PEOPLE SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT**

The district court of Szombathely, in western Hungary, handed a prison term of two years and eight months to a Romanian national who had attempted to help four migrants cross into Austria illegally in September. The court, in its appealable decision, also ruled that the Romanian taxi driver should be expelled from the country for four years, once he is released from prison. According to a spokesman for the court, the smuggler had carried the four migrants, believed to be Palestinians, from the southern border to western Hungary, and was to pick them up again on the Austrian side of the border and carry them on to Vienna. He expected to receive a sum of 500 euros for his services. Three of the migrants were captured in Hungary, while the fourth managed to run away from the police. The driver was arrested by Hungarian police on Austrian territory.

### **CORONAVIRUS - KARÁCSONY: BUDAPEST MULLING 0.5% BUSINESS TAX FOR RECOVERY**

Budapest is mulling the introduction of a 0.5% "recovery" tax on larger businesses until Budapest emerges from the economic crisis caused by

the coronavirus epidemic. The city's mayor, Gergely Karácsony, said in a presentation to the Metropolitan Interest Coordination Council carried live on Facebook that Budapest's ability to function was in the national economic interest, and new ways to share the public burden in a crisis needed to be considered on a temporary basis. Businesses from sectors that are less affected by the epidemic should pay the tax, he added.

The mayor said Budapest was set to lose three times the amount of tax revenue than the central budget. Fully 70% of the capital's revenue comes from the business tax, which has fallen to 139 billion forints (EUR 386m) this year from 165 billion in 2019, he added. The capital's operating budget of 300 billion forints has a 69 billion forint "hole" this year, Karácsony said, adding that tight revenues were expected to loosen by 2022-2023. The mayor added that his administration wanted to renegotiate central withdrawals from the capital's budget with the government.

### **CORONAVIRUS - GOVT OFFICE SUES BUDAPEST'S TRANSPORT AUTHORITY OVER AIRPORT BUS TICKETS**

The central government office which deals with Budapest is suing the capital's transport authority (BKK) for allowing the sale of

tickets for the suspended airport bus service. In a statement, the government office said it had turned to the courts after its consumer protection department received a complaint.

The 100E service between Budapest's Deák Ferenc Square and Liszt Ferenc International Airport has been suspended due to the coronavirus epidemic. Even so, tickets were sold online, via a mobile app and from ticket machines during the period of the suspension.

Passengers have unwittingly bought 16,000 tickets, spending 14 million forints (EUR 39,000) in all, the statement said. The authority has been asked to provide information about how passengers were alerted to the suspension of the service and the measures BKK is taking to reimburse consumers, it added.

BKK said on Saturday that the software of ticket machines has been updated to rectify the issue. It added that customers were told about the suspension of the 100E service in the spring, but as the shutdown was planned for a short period time, tickets could still be purchased in advance. Customers were first informed about the suspension in July, and full refunds were offered, it added. BKK said it acknowledged its responsibility and it would refund 14 million forints from the sale of unused tickets to customers, while any remainder would be donated to charity.

### **EVENTS TO COMMEMORATE SPANISH DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED OVER 5,000 JEWS**

Commemorations will be held in Budapest on Thursday to honour Spanish diplomat Ángel Sanz Briz, who saved the lives of some 5,200 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust, the Spanish embassy said. Briz (1910-1980) served as charge d'affaires in Hungary in 1944, and without prior authorisation from Madrid, he rescued Hungarian Jews, housing them in the protected Spanish mission and by providing them with Spanish papers. The diplomat was awarded Israel's highest honour, the Righteous Among the Nations, on October 18, 1966.

On Thursday at 10am, Spanish Ambassador Anunciada Fernández de Córdova and József Tóth, the mayor of the 13th district, will unveil a plaque at 48 Pannonia Street, a house put under the protection of Spain during WWII, the embassy said in a statement. The ambassador will then plant another maple tree in the Park of Peace and Understanding at a memorial erected in memory of Briz in 2015 in the street named after him. The event will be joined by László Kiss, the mayor of the 3rd district.

In Zaragoza, Briz's home town, an online conference on the methods of teaching the Holocaust will be organised on Oct 22-23 at the local university. The events mark the anniversaries of the Spanish diplomat's 110th birth and 40th death, the embassy said.