

PHOTO OF THE DAY



The premier of Tamás Szarka's Missa Missio at the Budapest Basilica, with soprano Erika Miklósa

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coronavirus updates

Heads of Three Seas initiative countries meet

Szijjártó meets Bulgarian counterpart

Plenary session of parliament

Szijjártó announces Chevron investment in Budapest

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ CHALLENGES BIDEN ON UKRAINE 'GRAFT'

Joe Biden should address corruption allegations in connection with Ukraine before resuming dealings with Hungary, the foreign minister has said.

Péter Szijjártó noted that the Democratic US election candidate had worked on central European issues for eight years during Barack Obama's presidency and the US had "attacked constantly and lectured" central Europe while also attacking Hungary when it adopted its new constitution. US embassy leaders, he noted, had taken part in anti-government protests in Budapest. Biden, he said, had been preoccupied with Ukraine and his visits coincided with his son's term on the board of directors of a Ukrainian energy company. This period, he added, was marked by endemic corruption in the Ukrainian energy sector. Biden, he said, should make clear how he had used his political influence to bring about profits for the energy company and his son. He should declare, he added, what pressure he put on the Ukrainian government to dismiss the Ukrainian Attorney General. Szijjártó slammed Biden for recently making "totally unjust and unworthy" accusations against Hungary and Poland at a campaign event.

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SZFE STUDENTS DOUBLE DOWN

Students of Budapest's University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE) have refused a call by the university's new leadership to vacate buildings of the central campus in Vas and Szentkirályi streets. They also rejected the management's proposal to bring the autumn break forward from its normal time between Oct. 22 and 28. They added that the students would challenge in the courts a decision to "modify the order of the school year". The students also refused a call by Gábor Szarka, the new chancellor, to vacate the buildings, accusing Szarka of making a political manoeuvre to silence the students. They accused him of abusing his powers and of threatening to suspending staff salaries unlawfully and cutting off internet services. The students vowed to guard "every room" and continue the blockade unless autonomy was restored.

The students were told to vacate the buildings by 6pm and start their autumn break earlier than scheduled. Szarka said time was needed "for everybody to calm down". "Students need to move out of this psychotic state, go home, talk to their parents, calm down and make decisions other than ones against their own university," he said.

Meanwhile, the university's teachers condemned the evacuation order in a statement, saying that the chancellor and the new vice-dean were using

the coronavirus pandemic "as a lame excuse" to make students give up their blockade.

ORBÁN OPENS NEW REFORMED CHURCH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Opening a new secondary school run by the Reformed Church in Budapest at the weekend, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said schools were central to the values around which children organised their lives, how they related to their family, to their sense of Hungarianness, and to their gender. "We cannot avoid the question ... what values should guide our children and their approach to their family, their nationality, even their own gender," Orbán said at the event held at the Rózsakerti Demjén István Reformed Primary School and Gymnasium in the 22nd district. Citing renowned Reformed Church priest Endre Gyökössi, Orbán said Christian freedom was "bestowed on us to ... raise children as Homo Christianus", committed to their faith, family, nation and their fellow human beings. Speaking at celebratory mass, the prime minister said state funding for church-run schools reaped dividends in terms of "the education and culture of all Hungarians as well as care for families, the vulnerable, the elderly, the poor and the ailing." Also, cooperation between church and state helped to "build the nation and Hungarian communities across the borders," he added.

He said the current generation had three tasks: saving and renewing all that Hungarians have created in the past millennium in the Carpathian Basin; reconstructing centuries-old churches, schools and community spaces; and building new churches and schools in Hungary and across the borders. Church and state, he added, were allies in "building a strong line of defence to preserve the next generation as Christians and Hungarians," he said. The current generation must carefully choose "what we pass on to the next generation ... to sustain the traditions linking us to the Hungarians of the past millennium," Orbán said. Schools are one of the most important venues for instilling a Hungarian identity in their pupils, he said. Orbán noted that Budapest's 22nd district was the first in the country where the Reformed Church set up a kindergarten. Then the Church took over the elementary school, and now, "we can give thanks for a secondary school," he said. The last time a Protestant secondary school had been inaugurated in Budapest was 77 years ago, he noted.

FIDESZ: LEFTIST MEPS 'REGULARLY PLOTTING AGAINST HUNGARY IN BRUSSELS'

Fidesz MEP Tamás Deutsch has slammed left-wing opposition MEPs for "making it their mission to organise attacks against Hungary in Brussels". Deutsch told a press conference that

Momentum Movement MEP Anna Donáth had “happily admitted” to holding regular talks with European Commission Vice-President Věra Jourová, insisting that Donáth was on tape as saying that her aim was “to turn the EC against Hungary by spreading misinformation”. He noted that Donáth rejected the accusation.

Further, Deutsch accused all left-wing Hungarian MEPs of working against their country by “badmouthing others, spreading fake news ... lecturing, writing letters and reports to their leftist comrades, and drawing on the constant support of Soros organisations,” he said, referring to NGOs funded by financier George Soros. “The attacks of opposition MEPs cast a shadow over all Hungarians, not only those who support the government,” he said. The Fidesz MEP said leftist MEPs voted for every EU proposal that was at odds with Hungary’s interests while failing to submit a single one that favoured their own country, all the while calling their “campaign of blackmail” a fight for the rule of law. He noted that in the spring, left-wing politicians had accused the Hungarian government of using the coronavirus pandemic to pass laws that undermined parliament, adding that their warnings Fidesz was building a dictatorship had been since proven to be unfounded. Deutsch accused Hungarian left-wing MEPs of making it their mission to harm their homeland as much as possible. The Fidesz-Christian Democrats, on the other hand, regard Hungary’s prosperity as their priority, he said.

KARÁCSONY: USE OF EU CORONAVIRUS AID SHOULD BE DECIDED BY REFERENDUM

Gergely Karácsony, Budapest’s mayor, has said the way EU aid is used should be decided in local referendums held by municipalities up and down the country. Local councils should receive at least half of the EU funding for handling the economic effects of the coronavirus epidemic, and the aid should be distributed in proportion to the respective local populations, Karácsony said after meeting local government leaders on Saturday, adding that popular votes could be held next spring. He said the referendum results would show that “the people’s voice is the strongest”. Karácsony, who co-leads the opposition Párbeszéd party, said localities were “in trouble” and needed EU recovery money. “No one knows better than local mayors what to spend European funds on.” The “local referendum movement”, he said, presented a “historic chance” to build a “new Hungary”.

LMP CALLS ON ORBÁN NOT TO VETO STRICTER EU CLIMATE TARGETS

The Hungarian opposition LMP party has called on Prime Minister Viktor Orbán not to veto EU climate targets. Erzsébet Schmuck, the green party’s co-leader, said Orbán should instead

back stricter proposals to reduce carbon emissions. The European Council meeting on Thursday ended with no agreement on stricter climate targets, so a decision will be deferred to its next meeting in December, she said. The outcome largely hinges on Orbán’s stance, she added. The European Parliament recently proposed cutting emissions by 60%, she noted, adding that the Council had discussed a 55% threshold. The prevailing view of scientists is that CO2 emissions should be reduced by 65% by 2030, she added.

33 FATALITIES, REGISTERED CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS UP 1,474 IN HUNGARY

Fully 33 Covid-19 patients have died in the past 24 hours, while the number of registered coronavirus infections in Hungary has risen by 1,474 to 46,290, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Sunday. The number of fatalities stands at 1,142, and 14,088 people have made a recovery. There are 31,060 active infections and 1,712 Covid-19 patients are being treated in hospital, 179 on ventilators. Altogether 25,734 people are in official home quarantine and 894,385 tests have been carried out. 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. Regulations include a ban on visiting hospitals and elderly

care homes which have to take every possible measure to prevent infections, the site said. Most infections have been registered in Budapest (14,434), followed by Pest County (5,989).

IT MINISTRY: GOVT ESTABLISHING UNIT TO HELP COMPANIES APPLY AI

A key aim of the government's AI strategy is to boost the productivity of Hungarian small and medium-sized firms by employing AI technologies, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (ITM) said on Sunday. The goal is to increase productivity by 26 percent over the next ten years. The AI Innovation Centre will introduce SMEs to various technologies and help identify the appropriate suppliers.

DUNAFERR UNIONS PROTEST FOR WAGE PAYMENTS, NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Unions of steelmaker Dunafer in Dunaújváros, in central Hungary, have staged a demonstration demanding that the company should pay employees' wages and negotiate a new collective agreement. The

company unilaterally terminated the collective agreement on August 14, has not started talks on a new deal with employees, and has delayed payment of last month's wages. Some 300 union members also held a demonstration in Budapest, in front of company headquarters and at the Russian embassy. Union leader László Molnár said that the company was "dying due to a lack of responsible leaders" and insisted that the management was trying to resolve financial difficulties to the detriment of its workers. Dunafer currently employs 4,500 people.

GOVT PUTS DIALOGUE WITH HUNGARIAN DIASPORA 'ON NEW FOOTING'

The government has put dialogue with representatives of Hungarians beyond the border and the diaspora on a new footing, and it is working to ensure that, as widely as possible, Hungarians feel like members of a unified Hungarian nation living in a unified Carpathian Basin, a government official has said. Speaking at the unveiling of a memorial to the Treaty of Trianon in Magyaralmás, in central Hungary, Péter Szilágyi

noted that many Hungarians were forced to leave their homeland in hope of a better life elsewhere after Hungary lost much of its territory to its neighbours after the first world war. The Orbán government has supported Hungarian communities across the border in reconstructing kindergartens, schools and churches, Szilágyi noted. The government has also supported companies that invest to preserve and create value within communities across the borders, as well as Hungarian jobs and sustainable institutions.

HUNGARIAN BOCUSE D'OR TEAM QUALIFIES FOR WORLD FINAL

At the Bocuse d'Or European championships held in Tallinn, Estonia, Hungary's team of chefs led by István Veres qualified in ninth place for the finals to be held in Lyon in June 2021, the head of the Hungarian Bocuse d'Or Academy, Zoltán Hamvas, has said. Hungary has competed successfully against "gastronomical superpowers" such as Italy and Spain, Hamvas said. "The competition was fierce" this year, he added. In Lyon, Hungary will face 23 national teams from around the world, he said.