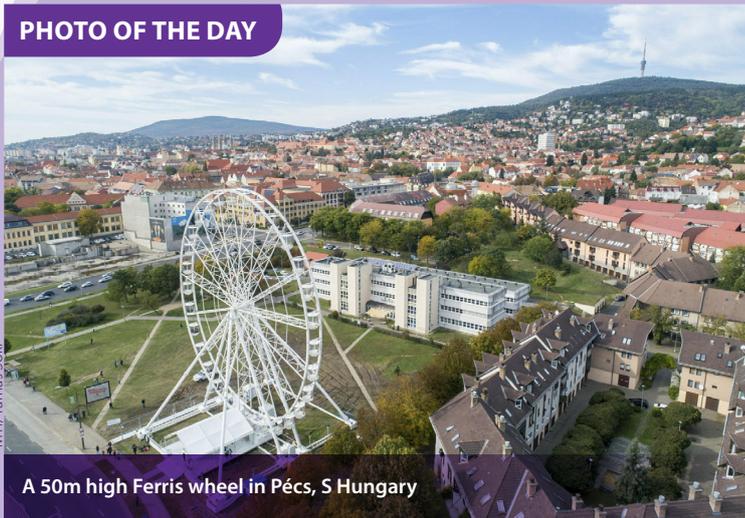


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamas Soki

A 50m high Ferris wheel in Pécs, S Hungary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases Jan-August demography reports

Budapest mayor inaugurates revamped southern stretch of metro line 3

Natl museum's Trianon exhibition opens

Coronavirus updates

TOP STORY

PALKOVICS IN TALKS WITH TIMMERMANS

Hungary will be among the first countries to join the hydrogen coalition planned by the European Commission, as it sees “serious opportunities” in the production of pure hydrogen, the innovation and technology minister has said.

In a statement issued after talks with Frans Timmermans, the commissioner responsible for the European Union’s Green Deal, László Palkovics noted the large expense of hydrogen production and storage, and called for uniform EU regulations and coordinated developments. Palkovics briefed Timmermans on Hungary’s climate goals, as well as discussing hydrogen production and environmentally friendly transport. The combined use of nuclear and solar energy will help Hungary attain its climate goals, he said. Hungary, he noted, is making strenuous efforts to decarbonise transport, having introduced the Green Bus scheme which aims to replace public transport buses in larger cities with electric ones. Palkovics said Hungary had reduced its carbon emissions by a third compared with 1990 levels and the country’s greenhouse gas emissions per person were less than three-quarters of the European average. The Budapest Climate Summit, held for the first time this year, was kicked off on Oct. 9, the statement noted.

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FINANCE MINISTER: ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS FIRM BASIS TO BLUNT EFFECTS OF EPIDEMIC

The budgetary and financial macroeconomic achievements of recent years have created a firm basis to blunt the negative economic and social effects of the novel coronavirus epidemic, Finance Minister Mihály Varga told parliament during the debate on the final accounts for 2019 budget.

Commenting on the implementation of last year's budget, he said the left wing had described the 2019 budget as unpredictable and unsustainable, but, he insisted, they have been proven wrong. Instead of introducing austerity measures, the government has been managing the crisis with the help of a comprehensive programme aimed at preserving jobs and supporting families, with a focus on guaranteeing the security of Hungarians, he said. One important condition for this in recent years, including last year, was pursuing disciplined and predictable economic policy that boosted the economy, he added.

László Domokos, head of the State Audit Office, said that an audit of the implementation of the 2019 budget showed that the institutional system ensured that public monies were spent in line with regulations. The bill on the closing of accounts is well-founded and all revenue and expense figures included were reliable, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: NEW SAUDI ECONOMIC STRATEGY OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUNGARIAN COMPANIES

The new economic strategy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers excellent opportunities for Hungarian companies in areas where they traditionally perform well, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Riyadh, after talks with Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, his Saudi counterpart.

The first results are already clear to see, Szijjártó said. The Hungarian government works to create opportunities for as many Hungarian companies as possible on the Saudi market, he said. In view of changes in world economy and the increasing role of alternative, sustainable energy resources, oil-rich Saudi Arabia has launched a "grandiose" scheme to bolster its economic performance independently from oil, he said. Szijjártó cited the import of Hungarian water management technology as an example of potential investments. An investment protection agreement has been finalised and the Hungarian Eximbank has opened a 700 million dollar credit line for Hungarian companies in the region, he said. Szijjártó said that Hungary and Saudi Arabia had similar views on the importance of border protection, on eliminating the root causes of migration, the fight against people smuggling and against religious

extremism and radicalism. The two countries will continue to support each other in international organisations in issues regarding illegal migration, he said. Szijjártó also met Trade Minister Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi, Transport Minister Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Investment Minister Khalid A. Al-Falih, and Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, the minister for environment, water and agriculture.

HIDVÉGHI: BRUSSELS STILL APPLIES DOUBLE STANDARDS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS, RULE OF LAW

Brussels continues to apply double standards regarding human rights and rule of law issues, ruling Fidesz MEP Balázs Hidvéghi said. Commenting on a plenary debate in the European Parliament about police violence, he said that it would have still to be clarified under what circumstances Slovak citizen Jozef Chovanec had died in Belgian police custody over two years ago. Nor has the EU taken the necessary measures to reveal the truth, he added. Hidvéghi cited Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as saying recently that there was systemic racism in his country. Hidvéghi noted that police action during Hungary's 2006 autumn protests depriving demonstrators of their eyesight had not even prompted a debate in the EP. Rule of law is used as a political weapon and standards are applied arbitrarily against countries that the EU has debates with about the set of

values they apply, he added. Instead of pursuing useless debates, the EP should focus on anti-pandemic efforts and ways towards economic recovery, he said.

NAGY: AGRIFISH REACHES DEAL ON CAP

A deal on the new Common Agricultural Policy has been reached in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council during a marathon round of discussions, István Nagy, the minister of agriculture, has said. He said after “a big battle” during two-and-a-half days of talks in Luxembourg, the agreement reached would determine financial support and the conditions for production of Hungarian agriculture in the 2023-2027 period and ensure its competitive development. “The good news for livestock and arable farmers is that direct funding and transitional national subsidies will be maintained,” he said. Nagy told MTI that a proposal that would have made conditions impossible for small farmers was narrowly avoided, and the majority of member states rejected it. He added that the new deal would balance safeguarding the environment against the needs of competitive production of Hungarian farmers.

FORTY-EIGHT CORONAVIRUS PATIENTS DIE, INFECTIONS UP 1,423

Forty-eight Covid-19 patients, mostly elderly and suffering from an underlying illness, died in the past

24 hours, and registered coronavirus infections rose by 1,423 to 50,180, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday. The death toll rose to 1,259, while 14,905 people have made a recovery. There are 34,016 active infections, while 2,023 Covid patients are hospitalised, 201 on ventilators. Fully 25,203 people are in official home quarantine, while the number of tests carried out stands at 919,481.

Border controls and entry restrictions remain in place and citizens have been asked to avoid participating in large events. Wearing face mask is obligatory in shops, on public transport and in cinemas, theatres, shopping malls, as well as in health and social-care facilities. Restaurants and entertainment venues must close at 11pm. Visits to hospitals and nursing homes are banned and temperature measurements are being carried out at school gates. Fully 64 kindergartens and 31 schools are officially under full suspension, while 176 classes and 17 schools are carrying out teaching online. Budapest (15,173) and Pest County (6,387) have the most infections, followed by the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron (3,133), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (2,939) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (2,523). Tolna County has the fewest infections (516).

DK URGES ASSISTANCE FOR EUROPE'S POOR

The European Union “must remember its most vulnerable, those with no prospects” when it plans for recovery

after the coronavirus pandemic, Klára Dobrev, MEP of the opposition Democratic Coalition (DK), told a plenary of the European Parliament, adding that “Europe must learn from the mistakes it made during the 2008-2009 economic crisis”. Dobrev commented on the euro zone’s 2020 employment and social policy report, and urged introduction of a European minimum wage as well as uniform rules across the community. DK seeks to ensure “much more” money for education, welfare developments and health care, she said. DK supports the idea of a European health union, as well as ensuring “fair and sufficient” pensions to the elderly living below the poverty line, she added. Dobrev also urged tax changes in member states aimed at reducing the social gap. She said that member states’ access to community funding needed to be linked to the rule of law because “it is the rule of law that can protect the most vulnerable against those powerful”. István Ujhelyi, MEP of the Socialist Party, said that “certain challenges cannot be resolved without coordination between member states” and added that the coronavirus pandemic had “clearly demonstrated” the gap between the level of services in member states. He said he hoped MEPs of ruling Fidesz “who attacked the European health union earlier” would now support that initiative.

Enikő Győri, MEP of Hungary’s ruling Fidesz, said that the uniform minimum wage proposal was not backed by funds. She said that a debate on the

subject was under way but insisted that resolving issues regarding the minimum wage was a national competency.

POTÁPI: HUNGARIAN HISTORY SHAPED BY ALL ITS NATIONS

Hungarian history is the history of all nations that once shared a homeland in Hungary and built it together, the state secretary for Hungarian communities beyond the border said in Zagreb. Speaking to representatives of the Hungarian community in Croatia at an exhibition on Hungarian-Croatian history, Árpád János Potápi said Hungary had a vested interest in European cooperation. The Visegrad Group should stand together on European platforms, he said, adding that Hungary also had a special interest in procuring the support of Croatia and its other allies. Then Hungary can also support the goals of the region, he said. The state secretary welcomed that Hungarians living in

Croatia have a strong parliamentary representation, and said that Hungary was doing all in its power to make its Croatian community "feel that Hungary is its homeland, as it has been in past centuries". Marking the upcoming anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Potápi noted that many of the freedom fighters fled to what was then Yugoslavia to avoid persecution, and thanked Croatian people, organisations and families for sheltering the refugees. The exhibition "Ars et Virtus - Croatia and Hungary. 800 years of common heritage" was opened in Zagreb on September 24. Later this year it will move to Budapest to open in the Hungarian National Museum on December 16.

NEW REGULAR AIR SERVICE TO START BETWEEN CHINA, HUNGARY

A new air service is operating between Zhengzhou and Budapest

three times a week to help relaunch fast and unhindered trade between China and central Europe, an official of the ministry of innovation and technology has said. The first flight operated by Universal Translink Airline (UTA) has already landed in Liszt Ferenc International in Budapest, State Secretary Tamás Schanda said in a statement. The service will help the acquisition of products from China for protection against the novel coronavirus and also provide access for Hungarian companies to the Chinese markets, he added. The flights will start from Zhengzhou and the return services from Budapest will enable the transport of Hungarian goods to the Far East, he added. There will be three weekly flights between October 2020 and the end of 2021 and an additional fourth service will operate between early November and late January. During the entire period, a total of 170 flights will be in service between China and Hungary.