

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tibor Rosta

An agent of counter-terrorism force TEK demonstrating an AR-15-MX rifle at state-owned defence industry company Arzenal's event

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coronavirus updates

Events marking the Day of Hungarian Opera

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: TOUGH SITUATION, OUTLOOK POSITIVE

The situation regarding the coronavirus epidemic is severely difficult in some parts of Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio.

"We'll manage the situation and together we'll succeed once more," Orbán told Kossuth Rádió, adding that: "Our chances are good". Fully 2,240 intensive-care beds will be needed on Nov. 21 and 4,480 on 10 Dec, according to the latest official assessment, he said. "That's pretty much the limit of our capacities," he said, noting that an estimated 4,480 patients in intensive care units would mean around 32,000 coronavirus patients are hospitalised. If the infection reaches beyond this threshold, the authorities have designated locations where adequate medical care can be provided, even outside hospitals if needed, he said. Orbán said that within days or even hours, a decision may be made to reschedule certain low-risk operations and to release more hospital beds.

Also, efforts are being made to ensure schools stay open for as long as possible, he said, adding that when students are in school, they are in a controlled environment. He noted that the average age of Covid deceased was 76.1, and young people should "think not only of yourselves, but also of your parents and grandparents".

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ORBÁN: GOVT CONTINUALLY ASSESSING WHETHER TO TIGHTEN RESTRICTIONS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio that the government was constantly assessing whether to tighten restrictions. "But the world has changed a lot since Monday," he said, adding that the vast majority was complying with mask-wearing rules. If shop and restaurant owners do not follow the rules, they will be closed down, he noted. Referring to the resumption of the "special legal order", Orbán said lawmakers had debated mask-wearing rules for two weeks before the opposition refused to vote in favour of tightening restrictions. "This doesn't make sense." He said parliament was "sacred", but quick decisions were called for at this time, adding that there could be serious consequences whenever the opposition hindered measures. Orbán said lawmakers convened on a regular basis. "Of course the liberals of the world will talk about dictatorship again," he said. "But the government has the right to decide on issues that would normally be decided through legislation." he said, adding that the government had not sought an extension to the special legal order beyond 90 days, not because the opposition had insisted on a deadline in the spring, but because "we now see the end of the tunnel" in light of reports that vaccines were becoming

more reliable. "Ninety days will be enough," he said.

Meanwhile, referring to the terrorist attacks in Nice and Vienna, he said they were "warning shots to remind us of the dangers other than the coronavirus pandemic that threaten Europeans." Migration is at the root of Europe's problems, not a solution to its future, Orbán said, calling the approach of many European leaders "suicidal". "Migration solves nothing but is itself the source of the trouble," Orbán said. Hungary, he added, "doesn't want to fall into that trap". That is why Hungary is "fighting" and refuses to change its practices, Orbán said.

He noted that Hungary does not allow migrants to submit their refugee application upon entry before "letting them go" due to European regulations. Applications, he added, must be submitted at the Hungarian embassies in surrounding countries. Without approval, migrants cannot gain entry, he noted. This arrangement, he said, "will prevent hundreds of thousands of migrants applying for asylum ... and from moving and acting freely in Europe," Orbán said, adding that among them were potential perpetrators of terrorist attacks. The prime minister said that through its adherence to Christian values, the government's duty was to ensure peace and security.

Commenting on the plan to link EU funding to the rule of law, Orbán said the top priority was to handle the epidemic, and troubled southern countries must receive funds as soon

as possible. He said Hungary was less affected since the country already had the resources needed to keep the economy functioning for the next two years. Referring to financier George Soros, he said journalists and politicians were being "fed from the palm of George Soros's hand", adding that four years ago Soros had had called for budget support to be denied to countries that refused to admit migrants. "Hungary cannot be blackmailed," he said, adding that the country would have access to "the money it deserves". Commenting on the US presidential election, the prime minister said that unlike his Democratic predecessors, Donald Trump had not berated Hungary. He called Trump "a friend of Hungary", adding that US-Hungary relations had been on top form during his presidency. This is why, Orbán added, that he had "always been for Trump". "The outcome will be what it will be; it's the right of the American people to decide who governs America," he said, adding that it was up to Hungarians "to decide who governs Hungary and how".

103 CORONAVIRUS PATIENTS DIE, 4,709 NEW INFECTIONS

Fully 103 Covid-19 patients, most of them elderly with underlying illnesses, have died in Hungary over the past 24 hours, while 4,709 have been officially diagnosed with Covid-19, bringing the total number of registered infections to 99,625, koronavirus.gov.hu said on

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Friday. The death toll has risen to 2,250 while 23,213 have made a recovery. There are 74,162 active infections and 5,489 hospitalised Covid patients, 391 on ventilators. Fully 34,603 people are in official home quarantine, and the total number of tests carried out since the first outbreak has increased to 1,167,641.

The government on Tuesday evening announced new restrictive measures and a "special legal order". Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, in a video on Facebook, called on lawmakers to reintroduce the special legal order for 90 days and announced a curfew between midnight and 5am. Nightclubs have been ordered to close. Also, parking will be made free of charge once again with a view to reducing crowds on public transport, he said. The prime minister said sporting events, cinemas and theatres will have to restrict audiences to using every third seat, and face masks must be worn. The authorities will inspect all events and fine transgressors. Venues that fail to observe the rules will be shut down immediately, he added. Border controls and restrictions on entry are still in place and previous restrictions on visits to hospitals and social care facilities still apply. Most registered infections are in Budapest (25,595), Pest County (12,849) and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron (6,322), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (6,109) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (5,460). Tolna County has the fewest infections (1,108).

Meanwhile, Slovenia has listed Hungary among countries with "an

unstable epidemiological situation", requiring entrants from the country to quarantine for ten days or produce a negative coronavirus test no older than 48 hours. Other additions to the list include Austria, Croatia, Serbia and Italy, with the exception of Calabria region. The restrictions are expected to come into force on Monday.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: POISONING OF TIES WITH UKRAINE 'GOOD FOR NO ONE'

Hungary's foreign minister has said that relations with Ukraine had again become poisoned and that this was "good for no one", especially not for Transcarpathian Hungarians. Péter Szijjártó wrote on Facebook that positive signals, however, had emerged in recent days, such as a "fair" discussion between Hungary's ambassador to Kiev and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. He also mentioned Kuleba's "calm" interview on Thursday. "Also, this morning I got a kind text message from him and we then talked by phone," he added. Szijjártó said neither of them had broached the heightened tensions around Ukrainian municipal elections so as not to let their efforts to normalise relations "go to waste". He added they were returning to positive topics and developing cooperation. The pandemic, he noted, presented "grave challenges" to both countries, given the need to protect people's health and lives while also keeping the economy going.

RENOWNED POET GÉZA SZŐCS DIES AT AGE 67

Renowned poet Géza Sőocs, holder of the Kossuth and József Attila prizes and president of the Hungarian PEN Club, has died at the age of 67, PEN said. Born in Romania's Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) in 1953, Szőcs became an important voice in Romanian Hungarian literature in the 1970s. As an editor of "Counterpoints" (Ellenpontok), a samizdat paper in the 1980's, he fought to counter growing censorship against Hungarian literature. He penned two petitions to the Romanian government on the hardships of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, and alerted the UN to the situation. He lived in Switzerland between 1986 and 1990, to escape persecution in communist Romania. After the fall of the regime, he became one of the leaders of Romania's ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party and served in the Senate as the party's group leader. He worked as a state secretary for culture in Hungary's Human Resources Ministry between 2010 and 2012, and as an advisor in cultural affairs since. He was awarded the József Attila and Kossuth state prizes in 1993 and 2015, respectively.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán marked Szőcs's passing in a Facebook post, reciting the poet's Millennium Ode (Millenniumi óda), adding, "Farewell, Géza!". The cabinet office issued a statement saying Szőcs was "a prominent figure in Hungarian culture



and literature, determined to help the government's work in protecting and promoting Hungarian culture as a commissioner, a top advisor and earlier as state secretary". "His message, poetry, personality and humour stays with us. We deeply respect of his life and work. May he rest in peace." Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony praised Szőcs as "an extraordinary man and a great poet. We are mourning one of the greats of Transylvanian Hungarian literature," he said in a Facebook post.

ORBÁN IN TALKS WITH MONGOLIA PRESIDENT

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga discussed the coronavirus pandemic among other topics in a videoconference on Friday. Orbán congratulated the Mongolian president on the country's effective epidemiological measures. Whereas Mongolia has registered only a few hundred cases so far and zero fatalities, it is nevertheless keeping its borders closed and maintaining strict protection measures, the statement noted. Once the pandemic is over, "we'd like to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations," Orbán told the president. Mongolia, the statement added, is a key partner of Hungary in the north-eastern region of Asia, with "exceptionally good" bilateral political and cultural ties. Hungary is keen to boost economic cooperation,

the statement noted, adding that the Hungarian embassy in Ulaanbaatar reopened in 2015 as part of Hungary's policy of opening to the East.

ORBÁN: LEADERS STRIVING TO PROTECT PEOPLE, KEEP ECONOMY GOING DURING PANDEMIC

Leaders have the dual responsibility to protect lives and people's health while keeping their countries functional during the coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in a video message to the China International Import Expo. At the event held online this year, Orbán noted the pandemic presented enormous challenges to health-care systems as well as the economy. Although Hungary is integrated into the West, it has strong historical, cultural, economic and political ties to the East, he said, adding that Hungarians were "unsurprised" when the region's importance on the global stage skyrocketed. In the critical phase of the first wave of the pandemic, "the whole world queued up" for China's medical equipment, he said, thanking China for the 185 plane-loads of essential medical supplies delivered to Hungary in that period. The prime minister said the pandemic had sparked global competition in the re-distribution of production and service capacities. Orbán noted Eastern countries funded 45% of global investments last year, up from 17% ten years ago.

Hungary's success in competing globally was partly thanks to its policy of opening to the East, which the government embarked on ten years ago, he said. In the past decade, Hungary's trade volume with the region has grown by 25%. In 2019, 60% of Hungary's foreign investments and 40% of new jobs came from eastern investors, he said.

Addressing Chinese President Xi Jinping, Orbán said Hungary was committed to cooperation with China and other partners of the Belt and Road initiative, which is "more relevant now than ever". "The pandemic is forcing us to pool our resources and efforts to live up to one of the greatest challenges of our time," he said. The 3rd China International Import Expo runs between November 5 and 10.

INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT UP 2.2% YR/YR IN SEPT

Hungarian industrial output was up an annual 2.2% in September, based on a first reading of unadjusted data, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Adjusted for the number of working days, annual industrial output fell by 1% in September. It increased by 2.3% from the previous month. In Jan-Sept, output dropped by an annual 9.2%. Takarékbank analyst Gergely Suppan said Hungary's industry had recovered from the pandemic crisis by September and may continue to stabilise in the coming months. He said he expects full-year industrial output to contract

by around 6.5-7% this year, forecasting output growth of up to 13-14% in 2021 due to the low base. Péter Virovác of ING Bank said he expected the industrial sector to continue to put in a positive performance in the fourth quarter, considering the expanding stock of orders, but he noted risks related to the disruptions to global supply chains caused by pandemic-related measures.

HUNGARY EXPORTS UP 4.6% YR/YR IN SEPT

Hungary's exports rose by an annual 4.6% to 10.139 billion forints in September, according to a first reading of data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH). Imports fell by 2.4% to 8.998 billion euros. Hungary posted a trade surplus of 1.141 billion euros in September, widening from 477 million in the base period.

GUEST NIGHTS DOWN 59.2% IN SEPT

The number of guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary fell by an annual 59.2% to 1,061,000 in September, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The number of guest nights spent by domestic travellers fell by 16.2% to 931,000, while the number spent by foreign visitors plunged by 91.3% to 130,000.

ADDITIONAL HUF 1BN ALLOCATED TO SUPPORT SME EXPORTS

The government will support the expansion of SMEs onto foreign markets with an additional 1 billion forints, bringing the total allocation for the initiative to 3 billion, Minister of

Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijártó said on Facebook. The minister said with the expansion of the scheme, 84 companies will receive financial support. Funding for small businesses is capped at 50 million forints. The companies can use the support either to enter foreign markets or to strengthen their market positions abroad, he said.

NBH INTL RESERVES FALL BY ABOUT EUR 2 BN IN OCT

International reserves of the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) stood at 30.223 billion euros at the end of October, down 1.990 billion from the end of the previous month, data released by the central bank on Friday show. No big FX government bonds matured during the month. The reserves were up 1.837 billion euros from the end of last year.