

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Szegedváry

The recording of a theatre performance for online streaming at Pesti Magyar Színház

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

Coronavirus updates

TOP STORY

HUNGARY TO RECEIVE RUSSIAN VACCINE SAMPLE

Hungary is set to become the first European country to receive a sample of Russia's coronavirus vaccine next week, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó has said.

Hungary has concluded talks on purchasing the vaccine with a Russian government delegation, the minister said. The samples Hungary receives will undergo laboratory testing so that the authorities can make a safe decision about whether the vaccine can be put to use in the country, Szijjártó said. He added that the talks had also touched on the possibility of manufacturing the vaccine in Hungary. The Hungarian company designated to manufacture the vaccine has received all the necessary preparatory documentation from Russia, he said. Next week, the developer will be in a position to give a clear picture of the schedule for manufacturing the vaccine and the capacities it would need to devote to it, the minister added. In a statement, Russia's ministry of industry and trade said Minister Denis Manturov confirmed that the samples would be sent to Hungary next week. It also confirmed that preparations were under way to produce the vaccine in Hungary, the first EU country involved in the production of the Russian vaccine.

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**ÁDER, SZIJJÁRTÓ SEND
CONDOLENCES
TO ROMANIA PRESIDENT
OVER HOSPITAL FIRE**

President János Áder has sent a telegram of condolences to Klaus Iohannis, his Romanian counterpart, over a fire that broke out on Saturday at the intensive care unit of a hospital in Piatra Neamț (Karácsonkő), in eastern Romania. Áder expressed Hungary's sympathy to family members of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to those that sustained injuries in the fire. Ten people died in the fire at the hospital, where Covid patients were also treated, while at least seven others are in a critical condition. On Sunday, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó sent a letter to Bogdan Aurescu, his Romanian counterpart, expressing condolences and offering help. Szijjártó said he had offered Hungary's help as well as condolences. "We have to stand together and help each other in trouble," he said.

**ORBÁN ATTENDS POET
SZŐCS'S FUNERAL**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán attended the funeral of poet Géza Szőcs, former state secretary and the prime minister's chief cultural advisor, who died on November 5. In his eulogy, Orbán said the deceased poet had been "more than a friend, a mentor, strategist, and spiritual support". He had "more ideas than politics could bear, more words

than his poetry needed, and more stories that could fill textbooks," Orbán said. Born in Transylvania, Szőcs "defied Romania's and Hungary's communists, and gave directions in chaotic times of transition as a poet with quiet but weighty words," the prime minister said.

Born in Romania's T rgu Mureș (Marosvásárhely) in 1953, Szőcs became an important voice in Romanian Hungarian literature in the 1970s. 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.

**107 CORONAVIRUS
FATALITIES, INFECTIONS
UP 4,238**

Fully 107 Covid patients, mostly elderly and suffering from an underlying illness, have died in the past 24 hours and coronavirus infections have risen by 4,238 to 140,961, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Saturday. Altogether 3,097 Covid patients have died since the appearance of coronavirus in Hungary, while 31,599 have made a recovery. There are currently 106,265 active infections and 7,013 patients are in hospital, 569 on ventilators. Fully 36,411 people are in official home quarantine,

while the number of tests stands at 1,354,742.

On Tuesday, lawmakers extended the government's special powers by 90 days, allowing the government to suspend the application of some legislation, diverge from legal provisions and take other extraordinary measures by decree. A major new rule is that face masks must be worn in public spaces in localities with more than 10,000 residents, though it is up to local mayors to decide which spaces the rule applies to. Among other measures recently introduced: school classes from the eighth grade as well as universities are now holding lessons and lectures online. Also, a curfew is in force between 8pm and 5am, and work carried out beyond the home must be justified. With the exception of pharmacies and petrol stations, shops can be open until 7pm. Hairdressers, masseurs and personal trainers must observe general curfew rules. Restaurants are limited to offering takeaways, while hotels are not allowed to cater to tourists, only guests arriving for business, economic or educational purposes. Sports events must be held behind closed doors. Also, leisure facilities such as fitness gyms, indoor swimming pools, museums, libraries, cinemas, zoos and skating rinks must suspend their services. Events, including cultural events and Christmas fairs, cannot be held under the special rules. The government has asked religious communities to make sure their conduct during ceremonies aligns with general coronavirus safety

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rules. The authorities have ordered the total suspension of classroom teaching in 208 kindergartens and 37 schools, while 22 schools have returned to digital education. Most infections have been registered in Budapest (34,384), followed by Pest County (18,635), and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron (10,538), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (7,357), Hajdú-Bihar (6,486) and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (6,443). Tolna County has the fewest infections (1,976).

SZIJJÁRTÓ: ONE MILLION DOSES OF FAVIPIRAVIR DELIVERED TO HUNGARY

Hungary has received another one million doses of favipiravir, an agent used to treat coronavirus patients, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó has said. The medicine was delivered from the East again, from Japan this time, Szijjártó said. The delivery will be enough to treat some ten thousand people hospitalised with Covid-19, he said. He noted that the number of people with severe symptoms and in need of hospital treatment was rising, adding that "the medicine will be welcome indeed". Szijjártó has been quarantined since he tested positive on November 4.

ORBÁN: STUDENTS IN DIGITAL EDUCATION TO GET FREE INTERNET

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has signed a government decree granting internet services free of charge to secondary

school students partaking in digital education. Last Tuesday, Hungarian schools above the eighth grade reverted to digital education as part of a series of restrictions ramping up the coronavirus protection efforts in the country. In a video message on Saturday, Orbán said the decree guaranteed free internet access to those students for the next 30 days. "Those studying in digital education, and so use the internet for that purpose, will receive free access for that period. This is going to be a cause for debate with the providers, but the priority right now is that the families receive help," Orbán said on Facebook. He also called on students to continue to study rather than thinking of digital education as vacation.

LMP CALLS ON GOVT TO WITHDRAW BILLS UNRELATED TO CORONAVIRUS

Opposition LMP has called on the government to withdraw its recent proposals that are not related to the coronavirus epidemic, Erzsébet Schmuck, LMP's co-leader, told an online press conference on Sunday.

Schmuck insisted that the government's recent bills were aimed to "loot public funds" rather than to assist jobholders and small businesses. She went on to say that the constitutional amendment before parliament was designed to ensure that "oligarchs associated with ruling Fidesz" could "channel

tax-payers' money into foundations". The government also seeks to sell protected nature reserves rather than "use all its strength to rein in the epidemic" and raise the wages of health and welfare employees, she said.

Máté Kanász-Nagy, the party's other co-leader, said that health and welfare staff quarantined due to Covid-19 should be given their full wages rather than a sick benefit, which is 60% of their monthly income.

JUSTICE MINISTER: HUNGARY 'BLACK SHEEP FOR REJECTING MIGRATION' - DIE WELT

Justice Minister Judit Varga said that Hungary was treated as a "black sheep just for rejecting migration", in an interview published in the German daily Die Welt. Varga praised the work of the European Union's German presidency, saying its "balance is positive ... despite the coronavirus epidemic" ravaging the continent. The priority now should be distributing the 750 billion euro recovery fund, allocated to offset the fallout of the pandemic, as quickly as possible, she said. She noted that under German presidency, the Council and the European Parliament have concluded an agreement on making EU funding conditional on adhering to rule of law regulations. Varga called the agreement a "bad compromise" that endangered the rule of law rather than protecting it. One consequence of

the agreement could be that Brussels could employ “ideological blackmail” against member states by forcing them to adopt its political views, she said.

Varga noted that the European Council had in July adopted an agreement saying that the EU’s multiannual budget and the recovery fund could not be tied to rule of law issues. The Hungarian government views all packages running afoul of that agreement as unacceptable, she said. The core values of the EU should be protected by open debate and “unanimous amendments to the EU treaty,” she said. “We want to protect our Christian roots. We don’t want a multicultural society. We want to keep marriage as a bond between a woman and a man ... Certain issues are decided by the states,” Varga said.

KOVÁCS: COMMISSIONERS JOUROVÁ, REYNDERS ‘UNDERMINE’ EC’S REPUTATION’

European Commission Vice President Věra Jourová and Commissioner Didier Reynders bring their ideological convictions to office, which undermines the reputation of the EC, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications, said on Twitter. Kovács said Vice-President for Values and Transparency Jourová had “compromised herself” and shown that she is “too small” for the role of commissioner. “When it’s about media freedom in Hungary, she knows nothing and is lying b/c she’s on the

Soros payroll,” he added, referring to US financier George Soros. Kovács said EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders was “similarly lame, totally unhelpful to member states in the pandemic”. “The two bring their ideological convictions to office, which undermines the reputation of the Commission,” he added. Kovács also said that the Hungarian government continued to call for Jourová’s resignation.

Reynders said in Brussels that it was important in every country, including in Hungary, that the approval of legal and constitutional amendments should be preceded by comprehensive debate. Jourová said concerning the situation of the media in Hungary that some serious concerns had been raised affecting the freedom of speech and working conditions for the independent media.

JUSTICE MINISTER REJECTS ‘BRUSSELS’S THREATS’

The Hungarian government firmly rejects that “Brussels should threaten with financial sanctions against Hungary or any other state aimed at protecting the institutions of marriage and the family and their key roles in society,” the justice minister has said. Judit Varga said that Hungary “will not give in to blackmail under the pretext of some foggy rule-of-law arguments”, noting the Hungarian government’s commitment to protecting “the institution of marriage as a voluntary community between a

man and a woman”. The government rejects any accusations of “identifying the highest level protection for marriage with curbing the rights of sexual minorities”, she insisted. The minister slammed EU Commissioner Didier Reynders for “attacking” the Hungarian government’s introducing a special legal order with regard to the coronavirus epidemic, and said that the EU should re-allocate funds and make financing available to member states to allow rapid responses.

SOCIALIST MEP: FIDESZ MEPS VOTE AGAINST EP POSITION ON EU BUDGET

Fidesz MEPs were the only group in the European People’s Party to reject voting in favour of the European Parliament’s position on the European Union’s budget for the 2021-2027 financial cycle, a Socialist MEP has said. István Ujhelyi told an online press conference that the proposal, voted down by Fidesz, had been aimed to increase funding for job protection and expanding employment, the Erasmus programme, research and a “European Health-care Union”. Ujhelyi noted that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had threatened to veto the budget and the recovery fund designed to offset the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic should EU funding be tied to rule of law regulations. The MEP insisted that Fidesz “didn’t care” if Hungary, and other member states, would be left without EU funding, because “their priority is to avoid being held

accountable for keeping democratic values ... and transparent use of EU funds". "Fidesz MEPs are again in opposition in Europe," he said. Ujhelyi pledged to support the proposal when it is sent back to parliament after cross-institutional examination, if the sectors he represents -- the health-care union, tourism and transport policy -- are not harmed by it.

TEACHER UNION DEMANDS CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

The national board of teacher union PDSZ demanded that all public educational institutions in Hungary should be closed without delay.

PDSZ said in a statement that schools are being closed in Austria from Tuesday until December 8 as a result of the novel coronavirus epidemic. Referring to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's remarks about Austria being a laboratory for Hungary in terms of pandemic developments, PDSZ said now that "Orbán's laboratory, where epidemic data are better than in Hungary" is closing

schools, "time has come to demand that he follows the example". PDSZ said that during the closure, all workers of public educational institutions should be tested by the state, as previously promised. Additionally, workers should only be allowed to return to the educational institutions when they are reopened if they hold negative test results. PDSZ also said that parents forced to stay at home with their children as a result of the closure should be offered sickness benefit with wage supplement.

POTÁPI: PERMANENT HUNGARIAN CONFERENCE, DIASPORA COUNCIL TO MEET ONLINE

The next meetings of the Permanent Hungarian Conference (Máért) and the Diaspora Council will be held online due to the coronavirus pandemic on November 26, State Secretary Árpád János Potápi has said. Potápi said that the two waves of the epidemic "confined Hungary and the diaspora within four walls" and programmes needed to be reorganised online.

He added, however, that modern technology facilitated reaching out to another 10,000 ethnic Hungarians, with whom, he said, ties would be maintained in future. So far, 45,000 ethnic Hungarians have been involved in the government's programmes, Potápi noted.

TRANSYLVANIA PRINCE BETHLEN'S STATUE INAUGURATED IN TARGU MURES

A monument of Gabriel Bethlen was inaugurated to mark the 440th anniversary of the Transylvanian prince's birth in Targu Mures (Marosvásárhely). Árpád János Potápi, a state secretary of the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office, in his speech praised Bethlen as a ruler who had brought prosperity to Transylvania after a period of "destruction, cruelty and lawlessness." Bethlen ruled Transylvania between 1613 and 1629, with the support of the Ottoman Empire. He established enlightened absolutism in the country, and developed its industry and trade.