

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Noémi Bruzák

Archbishop Piero Marini celebrates mass at the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

52nd Eucharistic Congress events

Stats office releases prelim July industrial output data

Coronavirus updates

Hungarian Paralympic team returns to Hungary

TOP STORY

HUNGARY 'VIGILANT AGAINST CYBER-ATTACKS'

Hungary's intelligence services will make every effort to protect the country against cyber-attacks and trace every possible threat, the foreign minister told an international security conference in Budapest.

The digital revolution in recent decades has redefined all areas of people's lives, Péter Szijjártó told the Parliamentary-Intelligence Security-Forum, an event established by former US Congressman Robert Pittinger in 2014. Data has become the most important resource, almost as important as the steam engine was when it was invented in the 18th century or hydrocarbons discovered in the 20th century, Szijjártó said, noting a six-fold jump in the number of broadband mobile subscriptions from 820 million to 5.2 billion over the past ten years. "At the same time, the number of cyber-attacks has increased with hackers posing a serious threat to private and corporate users and state organisations as well," he said. Szijjártó said cybercrimes have so far cost the global corporate sector 6,000 billion dollars this year alone and are estimated by experts to cost over 10,000 billion in 2025.

Hungary's national security strategy "places great emphasis on this type of threat," Szijjártó said, noting that the European Union and NATO will soon adopt a new cyber security strategy.

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HOUSE SPEAKER: INTELLIGENCE, FAST ACTION CRUCIAL FOR DEMOCRACIES

The superiority of intelligence services and resulting ability for fast action is crucial for democratic states as opposed to non-democratic countries and terrorist organisations, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér told the Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum held in Budapest. Security has become a primary factor in terms of competitiveness in all areas of life, Kövér said in his address in Parliament, and mentioned recent developments in Afghanistan, which showed that “it could be a matter of life and death if the intelligence services make mistakes or deliver false information to decision makers”. Military, financial, or technological advantages are not enough if they are not coupled with better intelligence for political decision making or if politicians fail to appropriately use the information received, he argued.

Former US congressman Robert Pittenger, the founder and president of the Forum, said that the United States considered international cooperation of countries of paramount importance, stressing that working together could make the intelligence services much more effective.

Marc Dillard, Chargé d’Affaires of the US embassy in Budapest,

said it was important that the economic advantages of new technologies should be exploited, and warned that security should not be compromised for short-term economic advantages.

CARDINAL MARINI ADDRESSES EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN BUDAPEST

“We need to learn that the future of our faith is not determined by how we celebrate the liturgy but by how we can use that liturgy in our life,” Cardinal Piero Marini said in a mass celebrated on the second day of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress now under way in Budapest. Marini is the president of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses. “It is a mission for Christians to be apostles of Scripture, but the disciples must not preach Jesus in an abstract sense only,” the cardinal said. “They must make a testimony through a personal example.” Showing that example takes “effort, discomfort, and suffering” but “we are happy to pay that price because it contributes to completing God’s beatific scheme”, he said.

PRESIDENT URGES HUNGARIANS TO GET VACCINATED

President János Áder urged Hungarians to register for vaccination against Covid-19, stressing that

this was the only way to shield themselves from the virus which will “find everyone”, in his latest environmental Blue Planet podcast. In the programme, the president welcomed that the number of people inoculated in Hungary is getting close to 6 million which he said has eased the burden on the country’s hospitals and allowed everyday life to get back to normal.

“However, the next wave of the pandemic is around the corner which is why I urge those who have not been vaccinated yet to go and register to get their first jab since the course of this disease is hard to predict,” the president said, noting that Hungary has sufficient supplies of Covid-19 vaccines in stock.

Speaking on the programme as the president’s guest, Béla Merkely, the rector of Budapest’s medical Semmelweis University, said he expected the new Delta variant of the virus to be aggressive and affect most seriously those who have not received any vaccine at all. “I expect the coronavirus to disappear one day, but this autumn its spread will certainly pick up in Hungary again,” he said. He attributed the favourable pandemic situation in Hungary compared with other countries in Europe partly to the use of eastern vaccines. The professor said he would advise those aged under 18 to get inoculated, adding that his advice to pregnant women is to get either Pfizer’s or Moderna’s jab.

ORBÁN MARKS JEWISH NEW YEAR

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has wished a “happy and sweet” new year to Hungary’s Jewish community, the PM’s press chief said. “Darkness is replaced by light, rain is followed by sunshine and sweet days will come after bitter ones,” Orbán said in his letter marking Rosh Hashanah. “We are saying good-bye to a year of many ominous clouds and bitterness, but I trust that the sound of the shofar will mark the beginning of times with more happiness.” The letter was sent to leaders of Hungary’s Jewish organisations.

KARÁCSONY GREETES BUDAPEST JEWISH COMMUNITY ON JEWISH NEW YEAR

Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony greeted the city’s Jewish community on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, in a Facebook message on Monday. Though Budapest’s Jewish community is looking back on a difficult period that also involved sacrifices, the year ahead will be one of reconciliation and reassurance, Karácsony said. “Rosh Hashanah is an inherently peaceful and intimate holiday, with Jewish communities around the world taking this time to look back on the past year and await the arrival of the new year filled with hope,” the mayor wrote.

Karácsony said the coronavirus pandemic had not only challenged people’s relationships but also the solidarity found in communities. “Now that the success of the fight against the pandemic depends on the decisions people make, the strength of the community becomes more important again,” he said. “These decisions must be made not only for ourselves but also in the interests of our immediate and broader community.” However, empathy and respect for each other should not be limited to just the time of the pandemic, he said, adding that “this is the only way to a liveable future”.

JUSTICE MINISTER OPENS CENTRE HELPING CRIME VICTIMS IN SZOLNOK

Justice Minister Judit Varga attended the opening ceremony of a new centre aimed at providing assistance to the victims of criminal activities in Szolnok, in central-eastern Hungary, on Monday. In her address, the minister said that the individual could not process the shock of becoming a victim without appropriate legal and spiritual aid. When it comes to violence within the family, “it is not enough to provide sympathy, action is also needed”, she said. Varga said that the new centre was the eighth such facility in the country, while services for victims were also available at local government offices. She said all services, including a 24-hour hotline and website, were free of charge, adding that clients could not

only have access to therapy but also to financial aid in crisis situations. The justice ministry is aiming to roll out the system to all counties by 2025, Varga said.

PÁRBEZSÉD SUBMITS AMENDMENT PROPOSAL FOR REFERENDUM ON FUDAN CAMPUS

Opposition Párbeszéd has submitted to parliament an amendment proposal to the law governing referendums in Hungary with a view to changing a provision on deadlines, the party’s group leader said on Monday. The amendment would scrap the provision which bans holding a national referendum within 41 days prior to a parliamentary election, Tímea Szabó told an online press conference. Párbeszéd submitted the motion with the aim of ensuring that a national referendum can be held before next spring’s parliamentary election on the issue of whether to prevent a property transfer to the planned campus of China’s Fudan University in Budapest. Hungary’s National Election Committee approved last week a question submitted by the opposition mayor of Budapest for a referendum on Fudan University.

“But, if appeals are submitted to the committee’s decision, those will need to be evaluated by the Supreme Court, the Kúria,” Szabó said, adding that a referendum initiative would also have to go before parliament for a vote. “These procedures with their

timeframe and deadline rules would most certainly not allow for holding a national referendum until after the 2022 spring elections," she said. "If this were to be the case, it will be up to Hungarian voters to decide at next year's ballot whether they support having a Chinese elite university be built with a 450 billion forint (EUR 1.3bn) Chinese loan, or a student city to accommodate students coming from outside the capital," Szabó said.

HUNGARY RECORDS 9 CORONAVIRUS DEATHS, 648 NEW INFECTIONS

Nine Covid patients died over the weekend, while 648 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said. So far 5,817,481 people have received a first jab, while 5,519,838 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 404,000 Hungarians have already received booster jabs. The number of active infections stands at 5,382, while hospitals are treating 194 Covid patients, 23 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 813,688 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,070. Fully 778,236 people have made a recovery. There are 1,799 people in official quarantine, while 6,634,089 tests have been officially carried out.

SOCIALIST PARTY FOUNDER, HONORARY DK PRESIDENT VITÁNYI DIES AGED 96

Iván Vitányi, a founder of the Hungarian Socialist Party and honorary president of the Democratic Coalition (DK) has died, aged 96, DK told MTI in a statement.

Vitányi, a sociologist and philosopher of art, joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1945. He became member of the political reform movement of Imre Nagy in 1953 and was member of the 1956 revolution's intellectual committee.

In 1989 he was one of the founders of the Socialist Party and served as its lawmaker from 1990 until 2014. Vitányi joined the Democratic Coalition Platform established by former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány within the Socialist Party in 2010.

FOUR US RESEARCHERS STARTING IN BUDAPEST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR 2021-22

Four US researchers are starting in Hungary in September under the arrangements of the 2021-2022 Budapest Fellowship Program set up jointly by Mathias Corvinus Collegium

(MCC), Hungary Foundation, and the University of Public Service. Hungary Foundation director Anna Smith Lacey told a press conference on Monday that the programme had been set up because the founders believe it is strategically important that those forming opinions about Hungary internationally should possess reliable information and knowledge. Many people form opinions abroad without local Hungarian knowledge and language skills, she added.

The four US researchers, Kelli Buzzard, Michael O'Shea, Michael van Ginkel and Tate Sanders, will focus on Hungarian history and culture, and they will also get an opportunity to publish their research results. They will carry out their research at the MCC School of Social Sciences and History, at the Danube Institute, the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the University of Public Service. The research areas include preserving Hungarian national sovereignty and cultural identity, economic cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries, the security environment of the Black Sea area and Russia's role in the destabilisation of the western world.

The fellowship programme was launched last year for young US researchers interested in central and eastern Europe.