

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTVA/Lajos Szócs

The reconstructed horse-riding hall on Buda Castle

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**President attends Arraiolos Group meeting in Rome**

**Foreign minister on official visit to Slovenia**

**Stats office releases July construction figures**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

# SZIJJÁRTÓ: MIGRATION PRESSURE ON EU GROWING

Europe is under migration pressure from multiple directions which is likely to grow in the coming months due to the European Union's "irresponsible" migration policies, Hungary's foreign minister said in Finland.

In addition to the migration pressure from the south and southeast of the continent, Europe is now also struggling with a flow of migrants from the east, the foreign ministry cited Péter Sziijártó as saying at a forum of the Visegrad, northern and Baltic states in Hämeenlinna, in southern Finland. Lithuania and Poland feel threatened by the flow of migrants from the direction of Belarus, Sziijártó said according to the ministry's statement, adding that this also had a direct impact on northern Europe. The migration pressure on these parts of the EU is likely to increase over the coming months, he said, pointing out that some four million Afghans had already fled their country and "certain people in western Europe are encouraging them to set off for the continent".

Sziijártó said northern Europe today was facing the same challenge central Europe had been dealing with since 2015, adding that this was changing those countries' approach towards the issue of migration and border fences like the one Hungary built in 2015 were no longer uncommon in the EU.

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## **ORBÁN: HUNGARIANS' MISSION TO PROTECT CARPATHIAN BASIN**

Whereas Hungarians have a mission to protect the Carpathian Basin, the West has lost sight of its own mission, according to the text of a speech Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gave recently. Noting that Timothy Garton Ash, professor of European Studies at Oxford University, had criticised the Hungarian government for ideas he called dangerous for the EU, Orbán insisted there were indeed cultural, spiritual and political differences mounting between central Europe and western Europeans. In a speech last Thursday at Budapest's Mathias Corvinus Collegium, Orbán said the West had bestrode the globe for 400 years with a sense of exceptionalism and a mission which gave it inspiration and self-confidence. But at the start of the 21st century Western civilisation had started to confront serious challenges.

A "woke" neo-Marxism, he said, was taking hold in America, while Europe was beset by a Muslim demographic, political and economic tide, creating a new state of affairs in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria. The West, said Orbán, was not up to the task of providing adequate political solutions to such problems. In the English-language post available at <https://primeminister.hu/vikstories/samizdat-no-12>, Orbán wrote: "In my view, there is a Central European

cultural, intellectual and political entity that is growing more and more different from Western Europe; but this is not hazardous, it is not a threat. It is, in fact, a blessing for the European Union and even Western Europe."

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## **HUNGARY, FINLAND SIGN SPACE INDUSTRY COOPERATION MOU**

Ministers of Hungary and Finland have signed a space industry deal under which companies and universities of the two countries will have the chance to tighten cooperation, Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's minister of foreign affairs and trade, said in Helsinki. Szijjártó signed a memorandum of understanding with Finnish Economy and Labour Minister Ilona Lundström concerning space research and astronautic activities. The Hungarian minister said that "while an agreement like this could have passed for a joke just a few years ago to the superficial observer, by now utilisation of space in modern technologies has in fact become general practice". Under the agreement, companies and universities will have the basis for creating closer ties in the areas of space research, Earth surveillance, as well as developing navigation technology for vehicles, Szijjártó said, adding that the results could contribute to efforts aimed at restarting the Hungarian economy.

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## **PRESIDENT ÁDER LEAVES FOR ROME MEETING OF ARRAIOLOS GROUP**

János Áder, Hungary's president, has started a two-day official visit in Rome to attend a meeting of the Arraiolos Group. The group, named after the Portuguese village where it first met in 2003, was originally established with the aim of creating a forum for European presidents without executive power to discuss European affairs. This year the participants will focus on external factors that may influence the future of the European Union in the post-pandemic period, the president's office told MTI on Monday. On Thursday, Áder is scheduled to hold separate talks with presidents Sergio Mattarella of Italy and Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany. The president will be accompanied by his wife, Anita Herczegh, during the visit, the office said.

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## **CENTENARY OF BRITISH-HUNGARIAN DIPLOMATIC TIES CELEBRATED IN LONDON**

The 100th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the United Kingdom and Hungary was celebrated in London on Monday evening. Prince Charles addressed the reception held in the Hungarian embassy in a video message, sending his best wishes to President János Áder and the Hungarian people in Hungary.

Hopefully Hungary would do its part in tackling the dual crisis caused by climate change and the erosion of biodiversity, he said. The UK is home to the largest Hungarian-born community outside the Carpathian Basin, he noted. Chain Bridge in Budapest, he added, handily symbolised the ties of friendship between the two peoples. Charles noted that his father, the late Prince Philip, had visited Hungary three times, taking part in various equestrian contests. He also referred to Queen Elizabeth's visit to Hungary in 1993 in recognition of Hungary's change of political system in 1989. Péter Fekete, state secretary for culture of the Ministry of Human Resources, who represented the Hungarian government at the event, told MTI that cultural relations between the two countries could be traced back far further than the start of diplomatic ties one hundred years ago. Fekete also said that with Brexit, Hungary had lost a great partner. "Still, I think the various links in cultural life can be maintained," he said. Ferenc Kumin, Hungary's ambassador to London, told MTI that as a result of Brexit, certain unanticipated barriers to trade had emerged, but Hungarian companies were able to adapt quickly and a more severe shock had been avoided. He added that whereas it was still too early to tell for sure, Hungarian companies had so far reacted well to the new state of affairs and there were opportunities to further improve trade relations.

### **FIDESZ MEP: EP RESOLUTION ON LGBTQ RIGHTS 'LEFTIST MAJORITY'S IDEOLOGICAL RAMPAGE'**

Balázs Hidvéghi, an MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, criticised a resolution passed by the European Parliament calling on member states to lift all obstacles facing LGBTQ people when exercising their rights, saying that the EP's "leftist majority is continuing its ideological rampage and interfering in issues it has nothing to do with". Member states, he said, could not even refer to their own constitutions when it came to the issues of family or marriage, but were "required to accept the latest folly from Brussels". "We are now at the point that the European Parliament wants to decide for us what we should consider a family and marriage, how we should raise our children and what we should teach them in school," Hidvéghi said.

In a video posted on Facebook before the EP plenary session, Hidvéghi said the legislative body was threatening member states that were unwilling to "submit wordlessly" to "this ideological rampage" with the withholding of funding. "Hungary is a reliable and predictable partner in European cooperation when it is based on mutual respect. We accept others' opinions on their own issues but won't allow Brussels or the European Parliament to instruct us on issues that are solely our business," Hidvéghi said.

### **CARDINAL ERDŐ: POPE'S VISIT SHOWED HUNGARIANS' LOVE FOR HOLY FATHER**

It was clear during the pope's visit on Sunday the love Hungarians feel for the Holy Father, Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, told public news channel M1. Erdő said Pope Francis had expressed his joy at meeting such a large community of believers after a hiatus of nearly two years. The pontiff said he had felt the love of the people, Erdő added.

Francis celebrated Mass in Budapest, concluding the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress. Press chief of the congress Tünde Zsuffa said the concluding Mass had attracted several hundred thousand participants.

Erdő said the outcome of the congress had been "pure catharsis" and the feeling that "Jesus is with us", giving hope and meaning to life among all the hardships, even when humanity is grappling with problems and threats, such as the destruction of the environment, climate change and economic issues. "Many questions emerged for which the answers are not yet evident," he said. "We know that Christ is with us and God loves us, and that we must show each other love," he added. Erdő said whether people faced such problems as a cohesive community or with a grudge against each other was not a matter of indifference. Identifying with this notion would be a "blessed gift" for everyone, he added.

**CONSULTATIONS START ON NEXT YEAR’S MINIMUM WAGES**

Consultations have started on next year’s minimum wage and the minimum wage for skilled labourers at the VKF, a forum of employers, unions and the government, the innovation and technology ministry said. The social partners agreed at Tuesday’s round of talks that the minimum wage should be raised in one step to 200,000 forints (EUR 571) next year. As regards the minimum wage for skilled labourers, the employers’ side suggested that it should be increased in two steps, first from next year and then from Jan 1 in 2023, the president of the employers’ organisation told MTI. The extent of the increase will depend on what compensation the government would offer to employers, Zoltán Szőke Zs. said.

On behalf of the employee side, Melinda Mészáros of the Liga Unions said they will need to see what subsidies the government would provide to businesses because if these are significant, then she believes the minimum wage for skilled labourers should be raised in one step, along with the minimum wage. She noted that the number of people earning a minimum was between 200,000 and 300,000 in the past years while of those receiving a minimum wage as skilled workers was between 700,000 and 800,000.

The ministry cited state secretary for employment policy Sándor Bodó as

saying that the government planned to increase the amount of the minimum wage to 200,000 forints, in line with the opinion of the Hungarian people expressed in the latest National Consultation public survey. The consultations will continue within a few weeks, the ministry said in a statement.

**OPPOSITION TURNS TO TOP COURT TO ANNUL CLIMATE LAW**

Hungary’s opposition parties are turning to the top court with a request that it annul the country’s law on climate protection, which they say “lists inadequate goals”. The parties also want more stringent measures to be legislated for, the co-leader of the green LMP party told a press conference. At the press conference attended by representatives of LMP, Párbeszéd, the Democratic Coalition (DK), Jobbik, Momentum and the Socialists, Erzsébet Schmuck of LMP said the current legislation aimed to cut carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 while only increasing the ratio of sustainable energy resources by 21%. The law does not tackle climate adaptation tasks at all, she added.

The opposition plea to the Constitutional Court was signed by 49 lawmakers, she said. Although the opposition accepted a climate law proposal in 2021, the law was then “neutered” by the ruling parties so it now “cannot fulfil its purpose”, Schmuck said.

Bence Tordai of Párbeszéd, the party to submit the original proposal of the contested law, noted that the opposition’s proposal had been changed “to the point that it bears no resemblance to the original text”. “In an act of outrageous cynicism”, Fidesz’s ruling parliamentary majority “ditched” three of the four climate goals and 10 of the 14 areas where the proposal said an action plan was necessary, Tordai said.

Anett Bósz of the Liberal Party, who sits in DK’s parliamentary group, said the adverse effects of climate change were already being felt and action was necessary “in 2021, not in decades’ time.”

**HUNGARY RECORDS 4 CORONAVIRUS DEATHS, 246 NEW INFECTIONS**

Four patients died over the past 24 hours of a Covid-related illness, while 246 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Tuesday. So far 5,843,502 people have received a first jab, while 5,549,383 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 525,000 Hungarians have already received a booster jab. The number of active infections stands at 6,635, while hospitals are treating 300 Covid patients, 43 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 815,851 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,102. Fully 779,114 people have made a recovery. There are 2,842 people in official quarantine, while 6,724,821 tests have



been officially carried out. So far, most infections have been registered in Budapest and Pest County, followed by the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Győr-Moson-Sopron and Hajdú-Bihar.

### **BUDAPEST TRANSPORT CENTRE FILES COURT PROCEDURE OVER FAILED E-TICKET PROJECT**

The Budapest transport centre BKK has filed a court procedure against German company Scheidt and Bachmann (S and B) over a failed e-ticket scheme for the city. BKK said on Monday that the dispute with S and B is expected to be concluded by the arbitration court of the International Chamber of Commerce, in line with a contract signed in 2014. BKK wants the German company to pay for the costs and damages caused in connection with the failed implementation of the e-ticket scheme dubbed AFC Projekt. An audit carried out during the previous city leadership revealed that the planning and implementation of the e-ticket project was insufficient. BKK cancelled the contract in November 2018 after the German company had failed to provide financial guarantees.

### **HUNGARY SENDS NEW POLICE UNITS TO SERBIA, N MACEDONIA, SLOVENIA**

Hungary has dispatched new police contingents to help local forces patrol the border regions in Serbia, North Macedonia and Slovenia, the national police (ORFK) said. The national police headquarters has sent a 30-strong contingent to North Macedonia, a 20-member unit to Serbia and a group of three to Slovenia, ORFK said on police.hu. The police officers will be tasked with patrolling the three countries' borders and helping to arrest people smugglers and illegal migrants, ORFK said. Some of the Hungarian officers will be posted in the inner parts of the three countries, it said.

### **HUNGARY INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT UP 8% IN JULY**

Industrial output in Hungary grew by an annual 8% in July, reaching levels last seen before the pandemic, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) confirmed in a second estimate. Working day-adjusted data showed output up an annual 10.2%, while

compared with the previous month it was 0.5% lower, based on seasonally and working day-adjusted data. Most manufacturing sectors contributed to the growth, though vehicle production fell by 6.7%. Output of electrical equipment, however, jumped by 57.9%. Industrial exports grew by an annual 7.2%, though exports of vehicles fell by 8.6%, while exports of computer, electronics, and optical products fell by 3.9%.

### **ZSIGMOND FILM FESTIVAL TO START ON SEPT 21**

The 5th Zsigmond Vilmos International Film Festival will get under way in Szeged, in southern Hungary, next Monday, the festival's director told a press conference. The festival will be held in the city's Belvárosi cinema, opening with Ildikó Enyedi's 2021 film *The story of my wife*, based on a well-known novel by Milán Füst, Andrea Éva Szabó said. The programme's 11 feature films include Szabolcs Hajdu's *Békeidő* (Peace times) and Cecília Felméri's *Spirál*, as well as *Fűzfa* (Willow) a Macedonian-Belgian-Hungarian coproduction directed by Milcho Manchevski.