

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Szegedvári

President gives talk on climate change in Budakeszi secondary school

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Foreign minister visits Bratislava, later attends security policy forum in Warsaw**

**V4, Slovenia, Austria interior ministers meet, give presser**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

# CENTRAL ASIA 'GROWING IN IMPORTANCE'

The role of Central Asia in the world has grown more important both in terms of security and the global economy, the foreign minister said after talks with Kyrgyz counterpart Ruslan Kazakbaev in Budapest.

The European Union should devote greater attention to the region, Péter Szijjártó said. "The failure" of the international military campaign in Afghanistan means that the security of Central Asia has a greater impact on global security than ever before, Szijjártó said. Yet certain EU leaders continue to make "irresponsible comments" that could easily lead to a migration wave bigger than the one Europe experienced in 2015, the minister warned. The opinions of the Central Asian countries, he added, should not be ignored, namely that the problems arising in Afghanistan should be addressed locally. "This is exactly why it is irresponsible and dangerous for EU institutions to encourage Afghans to migrate," he said. "This would destabilise the whole region, which would also have a serious impact on Europe's security situation." Szijjártó said it was also important for Hungarian businesses to benefit from Central Asia's economic growth through the government's strategy of opening to the East. Trade turnover between Hungary and Kyrgyzstan is up 62% this year, he noted.

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## **DEAL ON KYRGYZ- HUNGARIAN INVESTMENT FUND INKED**

An agreement on the establishment of a 16 million US dollar Kyrgyz-Hungarian fund to support investments by Hungarian companies will enter into force in the coming week, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said. "We Hungarians are more understanding of Central Asia than perhaps any other European country," he said. "Therefore we are happy to act as a bridge ... and would prefer if the EU devoted greater attention to this region." Szijjártó also noted that Hungary opened an embassy in Bishkek last year. The embassy issues visas to six EU countries, and more member states have expressed interest, he said.

Meanwhile Szijjártó and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbayev jointly opened the Kyrgyz embassy in Hungary in Budapest on Monday. Szijjártó said countries in the West had censured Hungary for its policy of opening up to the East because "our Western friends didn't want competition in Eastern markets". But it was by now clear that Hungary's strategy had borne fruit, he added.

Commenting on Hungary-Kyrgyzstan ties, the minister said there were no unresolved political issues and ties are supported by a stable financing such as a fund to boost bilateral trade. Also, 150 Kyrgyz students come to Hungary each year and study with

scholarships, a programme which is vastly oversubscribed, he added.

Alongside his Kyrgyz counterpart, Szijjártó also participated in a ceremony marking the Day of Turkic Cooperation and Unity at the mission of the Turkic Council in Budapest. Hungary, he said at the event, is a Christian nation and a state reaching back more than a thousand years. In the course of its history, Hungary has been closely bound up with Eastern cultures, he added. Szijjártó said a nation could only be "strong" if it was "proud of its national identity" and refused "to give in to pressure to abandon its values, heritage and history."

Notwithstanding their geographical remoteness from Hungary in many cases, he said ties with Turkic nations were "fraternal", and this could be felt in everyday life.

The value of trade with Turkic countries worth more than 4 billion US dollars last year has doubled in ten years, he said, noting that Hungary's Eximbank has opened a 500 million dollar credit line, while the government is backing the establishment of a Turkic investment fund.

Fully 870 scholarships are available to Turkic Council member states for the purpose of studying in Hungarian higher education this year, with applications for places exceeding 5,000. Szijjártó also welcomed the help Hungary received last year from "Eastern countries" in terms of the country's efforts to procure health-care equipment.

## **HUNGARY TO HOLD EUROPEAN JUSTICE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**

The digitalisation of justice and the use of artificial intelligence will take centre stage at a conference of European justice ministers Hungary is organising this week, Justice Minister Judit Varga said. The conference starting on Tuesday is being organised as part of Hungary's chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE) and will allow the 38 participating countries to share their experiences in digitalisation with each other, Varga told public news channel M1. The minister said that although digitalisation made administrative processes simpler, it was crucial to ensure that it did not infringe on fundamental and privacy rights.

Varga said the pandemic had helped advance the digitalisation of justice in Europe, adding that this proved there was untapped potential in digitalisation. Meanwhile, asked about a visit to Hungary by a delegation of the European Parliament's civil liberties committee (LIBE) last week, Varga said the delegation's assessment of the state of the rule of law in the country was part of a political witch-hunt against the country, adding that this was reflected in the makeup of the delegation. She said only two of the delegation's three right-wing members were "truly right-wing", adding that this meant that "they

have different views on the family and the issue of migration". "Our job is to provide the most precise legal answers possible, no matter the allegations," Varga said.

### **OFFICIAL: VISEGRAD SYMBOL OF COOPERATION**

Visegrad is a symbol of democratic international cooperation between equal partners which Hungary has held important over many centuries, an official of the Human Resources Ministry said, greeting a bureau meeting of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Eszter Vitályos, the state secretary in charge of European Union development policy, said Visegrád Group cooperation was a mark of joining forces and sharing a common past. The members are linked not only by a common past and the River Danube but also by the nationalities that live in the area, she added. The role of local authorities in the green economy will get special attention at the two-day meeting starting on Monday and Hungary is one of the main advocates of developing a green economy, she said.

President of the Chamber of Local Authorities Bernd Vöhringer said that relations with the Hungarian delegation were excellent and the fact that the meeting was held in Visegrad was a strong sign from the Hungarian presidency. Hungary holds the presidency of the CoE Council of Ministers between May 21 and Nov. 17.

### **NOVÁK: HUNGARY TO COOPERATE WITH BOSNIA'S REPUBLIKA SRPSKA ON CHILD PROTECTION**

Hungary will share its experiences in child protection with the Republika Srpska and help support youth in the region to encourage them to have children, Hungary's family affairs minister said after talks with the president of the Republika Srpska, an entity with independent legislative power within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Katalin Novák said Hungary would help develop a transparent, reliable and stable family policy in the region. Population decline is a key issue for Europe, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina alike, Novák told a press conference. Hungary's child protection policy has attracted attention because it improved demographic trends during a period of high economic performance by focusing on families, Novák said. "Hungary will be happy to share its experiences with the Republika Srpska, and to learn from them," Novák said.

President Zeljka Cvijanovic of the Republika Srpska said they were working to renew family support measures with a view to boosting the readiness to found families in the region. She thanked Hungary for its help during the coronavirus pandemic. Cvijanovic noted Foreign

Minister Péter Szijjártó's proposal at talks earlier to set up a foundation to boost the economy and investments. Those steps will also improve the will to raise children, she added. The Republika Srpska is ready to take over good practices from Hungary, and will remain a reliable partner in the future, she said.

### **HUNGARY RECORDS 1,492 NEW COVID INFECTIONS, 31 DEATHS OVER THE WEEKEND**

Thirty-one patients died of a Covid-related illness over the weekend, while 1,492 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said. So far 5,895,282 people have received a first jab, while 5,657,967 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 804,000 Hungarians have received a booster jab. The number of active infections stands at 7,909, while hospitals are treating 560 Covid patients, 87 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 824,876 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,230. Fully 786,737 people have made a recovery. There are 5,458 people in official quarantine, while 6,980,188 tests have been officially carried out.

### **ÁDER HOSTS DEVELOPER OF CITY COMPOSTER IN PODCAST**

President János Áder talked to the developer of an indoor composting

device in his Blue Planet (Kék bolygó) podcast on Monday, saying the widespread use of the “eco-robot” would contribute to a sustainable Hungarian economy. Compocity allows composting in city dwellings and offices where traditional garden composting is not an option, and composts leftover dairy and meat which are not used in traditional composting, they said. Emese Pancsa, the developer, said mass production is about to begin, with potential customers already showing interest in the device. Áder noted that Compocity will be presented at the Planet Budapest expo between November 29 and December 5.

### **FIRST LADY: FOUNDATION FOR CORONAVIRUS ORPHANS TO OFFER LONG-TERM SUPPORT**

The Regőczi Foundation set up by President János Áder and First Lady Anita Herczegh will provide long-term and personalised support to children orphaned by the coronavirus, the First Lady said. Speaking after attending mass at the Regőczi Chapel in Vác, north of Budapest, Herczegh, who is the head of the foundation’s board of trustees, said work was ongoing on the criteria system for providing help to orphans, adding that the Regőczi Foundation would also work together with other institutions and foundations. “There are many tragic stories, and over the past year and a half we’ve often felt helpless and

that we have no control over how things turn out,” the First Lady said in her speech. The foundation set up earlier this year was named after István Regőczi, a Catholic priest who took care of orphaned children throughout his life in the interwar period. Herczegh said Regőczi’s life had been about taking action to overcome problems. “It’s not enough to feel sorry and deep sympathy,” she said, adding that “nothing is impossible if there is unity”.

### **CHRISTDEM MP: REGIONAL COOPERATION TO BENEFIT C EUROPE IN LONG RUN**

Regional cooperation gives central Europe an opportunity to be one of the winners of the coming decades, Lőrinc Nacsa, a spokesman for the co-ruling Christian Democrats, told a conference in Warsaw on Monday. “Economic opportunity and growth in the European Union are called central Europe today,” Nacsa told the Three Seas Initiative conference of young lawmakers. Economic activity in central and eastern Europe has returned to pre-pandemic levels, but it could take months before the same could be said for western Europe, he said. Nacsa underscored the importance of regional cooperation, saying that the CEE countries needed to demonstrate their strength and competitiveness in the changing geopolitical and global economic landscape. He said security, political stability and economic growth had become competitive advantages

for the region. At the same time, the CEE countries need to make use of untapped opportunities and should think regionally about many issues, Nacsa said. This requires partnerships, infrastructure development and finding common ground, he added.

Nacsa said he was convinced that regional cooperation gave central Europe an opportunity to be one of the winners of the coming decades. “This is another reason why Hungary is a committed and active member of those initiatives,” he added.

The conference will cover topics such as infrastructure development, the role of national parliaments, energy supply, joint action on issues concerning the EU and cultural cooperation. The conference was opened by Elżbieta Witek, the speaker of the Polish Sejm, Zbigniew Rau, Poland’s foreign minister, and Estonian speaker of parliament Juri Ratas.

### **INTL HUNTING EXPO DRAWS OVER 180,000**

The “One with Nature” World Hunting and Nature Exhibition has drawn more than 180,000 visitors to the Hungexpo fairgrounds in Budapest by late Saturday, the organisers said. Including other expo events taking place around the country, visitor numbers reached 850,000. Around 100 countries are represented at Hungexpo, including 40 with stands. The expo runs until October 14.

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## **SYRIAN MAN HANDED ONE YEAR SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCE FOR ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSING**

A Szeged court has sentenced a Syrian man who attempted at the weekend to climb over the border fence with Serbia using a ladder to a twelve month prison sentence suspended for three years. The 28-year-old man told the court he had journeyed from Turkey through Greece, Albania and Serbia before arriving at the Hungarian border on Saturday morning with the intention of travelling on to Germany, the court said in a statement on Monday. At Ásotthalom he used a ladder to climb over the fence but was stopped by patrolling officers. The court also expelled the man from Hungary's territory for two years.

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## **BUDAPEST GUEST NIGHTS JUMP IN SEPT**

The number of guest nights in the capital came close to 600,000 in

September, quadruple the number in the same month a year earlier, business daily Világgazdaság said on Monday, citing the Hungarian Tourism Agency. Around 75% of those guest nights were spent by foreign visitors, up from 45% in September 2020, the agency told the paper. The number of guest nights during the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress, which the capital hosted on September 5-12, averaged over 20,000 a day. That number reached almost 25,000 on Sept. 11, the day before the arrival of Pope Francis in the city.

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## **LISZT ACADEMY CONCERT CELEBRATES CZIFFRA MEMORIAL YEAR, LISZT'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY**

A concert is being held in the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music Oct. 22 in celebration of the György Cziffra Memorial Year as well as the 210th birth anniversary of Ferenc Liszt. Cziffra, the great virtuoso pianist, meanwhile, was born 100 years ago, the academy said in a statement on Monday.

János Balázs, Kossuth Prize-winning pianist and artistic director of the Cziffra100 series, will reconstruct Cziffra's legendary concert on Oct. 22, 1956 together with the Academy of Music's symphony orchestra under the baton of Gábor Takács-Nagy, with Bartók's 2nd Piano Concerto performed by Balázs as well as List's 3rd Hungarian Rhapsody. Brahms's 2nd Symphony will conclude the concert. Also, the music academy is approaching its 150th anniversary, the statement said, quoting Andrea Vigh, the academy's rector. In the course of the evening, a commemorative coin dedicated to Cziffra minted by the National Bank of Hungary will also be presented, to be issued to mark the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth.

The centenary is an official anniversary in Hungary as well as figuring on the UNESCO list of anniversaries. The Cziffra Memorial Year is supported by the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Gábor Bethlen Fund Manager.