

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Szilárd Koszticsák

Olympians, Paralympians decorated

UPCOMING EVENTS

CÖF-CÖKA EuCET congress in Budapest

Budapest Central Europe Fashion Week

International Margó Literary Festival

TOP STORY

HUNGARY 'MUST MAINTAIN UTILITY PRICE CUTS'

Hungary must defend the achievements of its public utility cost reduction scheme, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said.

In a regular interview with public broadcaster Kossuth Radio, the prime minister said Brussels wanted to raise electricity and fuel prices on the grounds of fighting climate change. Brussels wants to introduce "a complex system" to tax families with cars and homes but the Visegrad Group countries are resisting such a step and will not approve at next week's European Union summit any decision that would raise electricity and gas prices, he said. Orbán said that though it was important to fight climate change, its costs should be borne by the world's top emitting companies rather than households. This, he said, required an energy price regulatory framework and the elimination of speculative elements, and warned that "when we allow money into areas where it has no place ... there will always be a problem." Orbán said the previous Socialist-liberal governments had given multinational energy companies permission to raise prices about 15 times, adding that the leftist opposition in parliament "is again demanding that the government introduce market prices for gas and electricity".

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ORBÁN: FOURTH WAVE OF PANDEMIC INEVITABLE

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Friday said a fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Hungary was inevitable and urged the public to get vaccinated. "The booster shot is akin to a life insurance policy," the prime minister told public broadcaster Kossuth Radio, adding that he will receive his third dose over the weekend. "The fourth wave of the pandemic will soon have Hungary surrounded, certainly from the east," Orbán said, noting that while 59% of Hungarians were vaccinated against Covid, Romania's vaccination rate was just 29% and the situation there was "alarming". He added that Hungary has decided to take 50 coronavirus patients from Romania into its two hospitals near the border. He urged the public to consider wearing face masks again, adding, however that it alone did not guarantee protection against infection. Orbán said the vaccines worked, as less than one percent of those inoculated were falling ill with Covid. He urged people to get vaccinated, warning that the Delta variant of the virus was far more aggressive than the previous variants. Over the summer Hungary made the necessary preparations to manage a serious wave of the pandemic in the autumn without bringing back lockdowns, the prime minister said, adding that the country had enough vaccines, hospital beds, ventilators, medicine, nurses and

doctors to tackle the coming wave. He noted, however, that the fourth wave was not yet as strong in Hungary as in many other countries. Hungary has a good chance to develop its own coronavirus vaccine in its own vaccine plant, Orbán said. But because this is not yet certain, Hungary must make sure that it orders enough vaccines developed elsewhere while making the necessary preparations to produce its own jabs, he said in connection with the recent announcement that Hungary's national vaccine plant could receive the technology from Russia to produce the Sputnik coronavirus vaccine as early as this year.

ORBÁN: WESTERN EUROPE HAS GIVEN UP ON RESOLVING DEMOGRAPHIC WOES

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, in an interview with public broadcaster Kossuth Radio on Friday, said western European countries had "given up hope that their own women and men" could solve their countries' demographic woes. "They've said that if they aren't bearing enough German, Belgian or French children, they need to be substituted," Orbán explained. "They say a German child can be substituted with an African or an Asian one." Orbán said this kind of attitude was "shocking" to Hungarians. Hungary, on the other hand, is fighting to clear the obstacles that have led to the decline in the birth rate, he said.

Meanwhile, Orbán said the West's intention of "forcing their migration policies onto Hungary" could be chalked up to "Western arrogance". "The West isn't happy just being successful, they also insist that they are correct," the prime minister said. "It's not enough for them that they're free and get to live how they want and enact decisions their peoples want; they also want everyone else to acknowledge that their decision is the only right one and to adopt it. So they want to tell us how to live."

Orbán said that though Germany was a friend of Hungary, when it came to the issue of migration, it wanted to put in place a "German Europe where they get to say what Europe should be like". But Hungary is resisting this, the prime minister said, noting that 12 countries had written a joint letter on steps Europe should take to protect its external borders instead of introducing mandatory migrant resettlement quotas, he said. "The borders can't be protected with flower bouquets, teddy bears and welcoming committees," Orbán said. "Migrants who storm the border and try to breach the border fence must be stopped."

KÖVÉR: ENSURING RIGHT TO NATIONAL IDENTITY VITAL

Ensuring the right to national identity is vital for every European nation and state, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér said on Friday. In a speech opening the plenary session of the

Forum of Hungarian Lawmakers from the Carpathian Basin (KMKF), Kövér said private powers such as multinational companies presented a new challenge to the power of nation states. At stake in the fight between states and multinationals is control over countries' financial, economic, natural and human resources, he added. Kövér said private powers were looking to weaken and even eliminate national identity in order to establish a new global world order. Ensuring, codifying and enforcing the right to national identity could be "an effective weapon of self-defence" for nation states against private powers, he said.

Addressing the plenary session, Justice Minister Judit Varga said Hungary regarded its national minorities as an asset and considered its neighbours a partner. "These two basic principles describe best how Hungary views Europe's future," she said. She said good neighbourly relations were highly important for Hungary, which Varga said was determined by the situation of ethnic Hungarian communities in neighbouring countries. The minister said that in addition to strengthening cultural, economic, social and educational activities, supporting organisations that represent Hungarian interests was also important for the Hungarian government. "We are, however, doing all this not with a hostile intent, but by respecting and consistently representing European principles," Varga said.

HUNGARY SELLS 800,000 COVID VACCINES TO VIETNAM, THAILAND

Hungary has sold 400,000 coronavirus vaccines each to Vietnam and Thailand at purchase price, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Facebook. Szijjártó noted that he agreed on the sale with his Vietnamese and Thai counterparts at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York last month. The vaccines were delivered to Vietnam on Wednesday and to Thailand on Thursday, the minister said. Hungary's vaccine purchase scheme has allowed it to avoid the kind of vaccine shortage that many other countries now face, Szijjártó said. "In addition to having enough vaccines to administer three doses to everyone, we've also been able to help several other countries," he said.

ORBÁN DECORATES MEDAL-WINNING OLYMPIC, PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

"We will only survive and be successful if we win," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in Parliament on Friday where he together with President János Áder decorated Hungary's medal-winning athletes at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. In his speech to the athletes, coaches and sporting officials, Orbán praised Hungary's Olympians and Paralympians for the example

they had set in perseverance. "This is very much needed because Hungary once again faces difficult tasks," he said. "Our athletes make all of us proud and show us how good it feels to be Hungarian," Orbán said. He said Hungary's champions embodied the nation's best characteristics and deserved special respect.

"We Hungarians like the Olympics and sports the way they are, with women competing in women's events and men competing in men's events," he said, adding that it was wrong if attention was focused on things other than athletic performance. Orbán said the best thing about sports was that it brought out the best in athletes, whose "mission to be the best", he added, "also urges us to be the best we can be so that we don't get comfortable being mediocre". "We greatly value our athletes because we have a country that has been deprived of most of its natural resources, so everything we have is the result of individual performance and work," Orbán said.

Hungary won six gold, seven silver and seven bronze medals at the Olympics and fetched seven gold, five silver and four bronze medals at the Paralympic Games.

HUNGARY, SERBIA EXPAND COOPERATION AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Hungary and Serbia have expanded their cooperation against illegal migration by setting up joint patrols

on the Serbia-North Macedonia and the Hungary-Serbia borders, Interior Minister Sándor Pintér said on Friday. Speaking at a press conference he held jointly with his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vulin at Röszke at the border, Pintér said Hungary and Serbia shared the same views on the need to stem illegal migration. Hungary and Serbia aim to persuade other European Union members to take part in these joint operations the way the Czech Republic and Austria have, Pintér said. The EU's landlocked countries have recognised that Hungary "is on the right track by protecting its borders with fences", Pintér said. Today Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and other countries with land borders are also building similar fences, he added.

Vulin said the launch of the joint patrols showed that relations between Serbia and Hungary were "at their highest ever level". The effects of illegal migration must be managed, as it presents social, health and security risks, he said. Strengthening the Hungarian border section is important for Serbia as well, Vulin said, arguing that if migrants know that a section of the border is well protected, they will not try to cross it.

KÖVÉR DISCUSSES SECURITY POLICY, MIGRATION IN VILNIUS

Hungary-Lithuania parliamentary ties, the coronavirus pandemic, security policy and the handling of the migration crisis were high on

the agenda of talks House Speaker László Kövér had with his Lithuanian counterpart and other officials in Vilnius. According to information from the Hungarian parliament's press office, Kövér thanked his negotiating partners for Lithuania's support for Hungary "against groundless attacks at international forums". Kövér visited Vilnius at the invitation of Viktorija Cmilyte Nielsen, Lithuania's parliamentary speaker, and met with President Gitanas Nausėda, Laurynas Kasciunas, head of the Lithuanian-Hungarian Friendship Group in the Lithuanian parliament, Zygimantas Pavilionis, the head of the Lithuanian parliament's foreign affairs committee, as well as Interior Minister Agnė Bilotaite.

During his talks, Kövér noted global challenges such as climate change, illegal migration and the threat posed by the appearance of new viruses, and said that "as the future of our nations, national identity and sovereignty, we must stand up for the values we deem important". Parties at the talks voiced hope that the two countries could further increase bilateral trade and strengthen their cooperation in areas such as laser technology, tourism and education, said a statement from parliament's press chief. The Lithuanian president thanked Kövér for Hungary's assistance to Lithuania's air space control and contribution to efforts aimed at stemming illegal migration as well as fencing off a hybrid attack at the Lithuania-Belarus border, the statement said. At his talks with the

president, Kövér assured Nausėda of Hungary's solidarity because "when we help you we also protect ourselves, protecting not only our national borders but guarding Europe's security, too".

Migration was also in the focus of talks with the interior minister, who thanked Kövér for the political and material assistance in border protection, and said that the migratory situation in Lithuania was now similar to that in Hungary in 2015.

PRO-GOVT CÖF-CÖKA: EUCET CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS EUROPE'S FUTURE

Threats to the freedoms of EU citizens, the sovereignty of families and nations and anti-Christian manifestations of open society ideology are the main topics of a two-day international conference organised in Budapest by the European Union Civil Cooperation Council (EuCET) set up by the pro-government Civil Unity Forum (CÖF) and associated foundation CÖKA, on October 15-16. EuCET, a civil umbrella organisation of Christian, conservative NGOs, foundations and trade unions representing the cause of national identity, has been established with a mission to "return Europe to the basic principles laid down by the founding fathers", the head of CÖF-CÖKA told a press conference prior to the event. The council will in this spirit address issues such as double standards applied by

Brussels, the threat of parallel societies emerging as a result of migration, the deteriorating demographic situation in Europe, possible measures to halt illegal immigration to Europe and the protection of its borders, László Csizmadia said. "A dictatorship of minorities and non-governmental organisations" will also be discussed at the event by the representatives of 13 European NGOs and trade unions, he said.

Tomasz Sakiewicz, editor-in-chief of Poland's weekly Gazeta Polska and co-founder of CÖF-CÖKA, said at the same press conference that convening the EuCET was timely in the current "critical moment" when Brussels had blocked EU funding Hungary and Poland were entitled to and "calls into question democratic constitutions". "Poland wants to remain a member of the EU, but will not accept rules imposed onto the country," Sakiewicz said. "European institutions should follow the model of Hungary and Poland, because these two countries represent the future of Europe."

According to its press release, participants at the EuCET conference support the council's objective of "changing negative developments in Europe". EuCET's primary objectives include preserving Europe's Christian cultural heritage, nurturing its traditions and defending the sovereignty of nation states. EuCET supports a Europe based on the cooperation of nation states as against a federal Europe, the press release said.

FIRST LADY: REGŐCZI FOUNDATION HELPS 630 ORPHANS

The Regőczi Foundation has so far distributed donations totalling 140 million forints (EUR 39,000) among 630 children that lost one or both parents to the coronavirus pandemic, First Lady Anita Herczegh said in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, on Thursday. The first lady added that another 177 children would receive a total 35 million forints under a decision to be passed next week. Answering a question by MTI, Herczegh said that the foundation aimed to provide support to "Covid orphans" until they are 18 or as long as they are students. Apart from one-off donations, the foundation is planning to provide a monthly allowance to the children, she said, but added that the foundation would need further resources. State secretary Miklós Soltész highlighted the Hungarian Red Cross, the Reformed Charity, the Catholic Caritas, the Maltese, Baptist and Ecumenical charities as organisations cooperating with the foundation.

HUNGARY RECORDS TEN CORONAVIRUS DEATHS, 1,249 NEW INFECTIONS

Ten patients died of a Covid-related illness over the past 24 hours, while 1,249 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Friday. So far 5,919,930

people have received a first jab, while 5,694,336 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 973,000 Hungarians have received a booster jab. The number of active infections stands at 12,118, while hospitals are treating 800 Covid patients, 124 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 833,115 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,351. Fully 790,646 people have made a recovery. There are 10,990 people in official quarantine, while 7,127,710 tests have been officially carried out.

INTL HUNTING, NATURE EXPO BREAKS VISITOR RECORDS

The "One With Nature" World Hunting and Nature Exhibition in Budapest broke visitor records in many aspects, the government commissioner in charge of the expo said. The expo, which ran between September 25 and October 14, drew a record daily 35,000 visitors on its last day, Zoltán Kovács said in a video message on Facebook. The expo's main venue at the Hungexpo fairgrounds attracted 616,000 visitors, the highest number to ever visit an exhibition dedicated to a particular theme, he said. Events organised on the expo's sidelines outside Budapest will be running in several locations until the end of the year, said Kovács. Programmes so far have been attended by 1,420,000 people, he added.

GOVT INVESTS HUF 5.6 BN IN VENTURE CAPITAL FUND TARGETING STARTUPS

The government is investing 5.6 billion forints (EUR 15.6m) in a new fund of venture capital fund manager Euroventures through state-owned venture capital fund manager Széchenyi Funds, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said. Széchenyi Funds will raise capital in Euroventures' latest, fifth fund, making it its largest investor. The new fund targets startups past their initial launch and in their growth phase, the minister said. Money will be provided primarily to technology companies engaged in information technology, biotechnology, or environmental technologies. Export capability will be an important factor, as they are looking for companies with products or services that can be competitive on the international market, Varga said. While restarting the economy the government wants to strengthen as many companies as possible that represent high value added and increase competitiveness,

he added. The minister noted that in July the government already initiated a 10 billion forint support scheme for local startups in their launch phase, through state-owned venture capital fund manager Széchenyi Funds. Varga said there are over 1,000 startups in Hungary with some 26,000 people on payroll.

CORNERSTONE LAID FOR BUDAPEST-BELGRADE RAIL LINE UPGRADE

The cornerstone for the Budapest-Belgrade railway line upgrade was laid in Kiskunhalas, in southern Hungary, on Friday. Railways will clearly be in the focus of Hungary's transport development endeavours in the next 10-15 years, with the upgrade and capacity expansion of the Budapest-Belgrade line as one of the priority investments, Innovation and Technology Minister László Palkovics said at the ceremony. Róbert Homolya, CEO of state-owned railway company MÁV, said the Hungarian state will finance 85% of the investment costs from a loan and the rest from its own resources.

FOOTBALL ASSOC BANS ROWDY FANS FROM SPORTS EVENTS

The Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) has banned fans identified as "renitent" at a recent Hungary-England match in Budapest, from attending further matches for two years. MLSZ spokesman Jenő Sipos told MTI that an investigation was under way to identify others that behaved violently during and after the Sept. 2 match in the Puskás Aréna, which England won 4-0. According to earlier reports, a group of Hungarian fans jeered at the British team taking the knee as a gesture against racism at the beginning of the match, while they threw plastic cups and other objects into the field after each goal. FIFA also launched an investigation into the incident and decided that the Hungarian team must play the next world championship qualifier behind closed doors, and suspended a similar decision for a further match for two years.