

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Lajos Soós

Legendary Ferenc Puskás's 15th death anniversary commemorated in Budapest

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Regular govt presser

Coronavirus updates

Budapest Eurasia Forum 2021  
E-conference

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN HOLDS TALKS WITH SPANISH VOX LEADER

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán held talks with Santiago Abascal, the leader of Vox, the largest Spanish conservative party, in Budapest, Orbán's press chief said.

Orbán, the leader of ruling Fidesz, discussed with Abascal their common vision about Europe's future, issues around protecting national sovereignty and families, and the protection of borders, Bertalan Havasi told MTI. They also discussed steps to be taken towards future cooperation of European conservative parties and joint action against the globalist Left, he said. Fidesz has close ties with Vox which is member of the European Parliament's European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group. At the meeting it was noted that Vox's deputies have always stood up for Fidesz in Brussels, Havasi said. He noted that the Hungarian prime minister had discussed establishing a new European political alliance with Matteo Salvini, the head of Italy's League party, and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on November 3. Orbán will pay a visit to Warsaw on December 3-4 at the invitation of Poland's ruling PiS party to attend a meeting of representatives of European conservative parties that had signed a joint declaration on the future of the EU in July, Havasi said.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: ITALY BECOMES HUNGARY'S SIXTH LARGEST TRADE PARTNER**

Italy-Hungary trade increased by an annual 32% so far this year and it is expected to hit a record high by the end of the year, making Italy Hungary's sixth largest trade partner, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said. Szijjártó met Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio and reviewed bilateral relations in Strasbourg on the occasion of Italy taking over from Hungary the presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

Szijjártó said on Facebook that Italian companies had shown loyalty to Hungary during the pandemic, with 28 Italian companies investing 12 billion forints (EUR 33m), creating 3,400 jobs. "A Hungarian investment project is under way in Italy, where the development of an area purchased by Hungary in the port of Trieste is under way, which as soon as it is completed will offer considerable help to Hungarian companies in speeding up export transportation," he said. The two countries maintain close military cooperation, with a Hungarian commander and his Italian deputy working together in the coming year at NATO's Kosovo mission, he added.

Europe is "under unprecedented migratory pressure" which is "directly felt by the Italians as well as by us", he said. "Even if we think differently about the mandatory settlement

quotas, we certainly agree that migrants setting out towards Europe should be stopped as far from us as possible," he said. "The protection of maritime borders and land borders are equally important, and countries that protect external borders should receive support instead of lectures from Brussels," he added.

## **GOVT TO PAY FULL ANNUAL PENSION BONUS IN 2022**

Hungary's government will pay a full month's worth of extra pension benefits, dubbed the 13th month pension, next February, Katalin Novák, the families minister, said on Facebook on Wednesday. Payments will be made to 2.5 million eligible recipients such as pensioners and others receiving pension-type benefits, Novák said. The government reintroduced the first "week" of the annual pension bonus -- equivalent to a full month's pension -- in 2021 and had planned to add the second week to the bonus in 2022. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said early in October: "We can certainly return two weeks [of the pension bonus] at the beginning of next year. But, if we don't make any mistakes, and if the government's growth-driving economic policy is successful in the coming three months, ... then I see a chance early next year to return not just two weeks, but a full month of the pension bonus sometime around early February."

## **PALKOVICS: NATO TO SPEED UP AI INTRODUCTION**

NATO has been "a bit slow" to react to new developments in artificial intelligence but "it is never too late to speed up the application of new solutions", László Palkovics, Hungary's minister of innovation and technology, told MTI by phone from Rome, where he attended this year's NATO-Industry Forum. "The main question is how AI solutions for civilian life could be used in the defence and military industry, and how NATO as an alliance, rather than member states separately, reacts to AI developments," Palkovics said.

The forum is about NATO's staying competitive against other military powers, Palkovics said. He noted that 15 out of the 20 best universities of the world are in NATO countries, while a large part of the innovative start-ups are also in those countries. "There is no reason to think that NATO should not be competitive in that area," he said.

## **HUNGARY RECORDS 178 COVID DEATHS, 10,265 NEW INFECTIONS**

Altogether 178 patients died of a Covid-related illness during the past 24 hours, while 10,265 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday. So far 6,008,226 people have received a first jab, while 5,780,925 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 1,668,000 Hungarians

have received a booster jab. The number of active infections stands at 115,383, while hospitals are treating 5,852 Covid-19 patients, 565 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 976,432 infections have been registered, while the number of fatalities has risen to 32,514. Fully 828,535 people have made a recovery. There are 46,530 people in official quarantine, while the number of tests taken stands at 7,909,782.

### **GOVT LAUNCHES VAX CAMPAIGN FOR NEXT WEEK**

All 101 hospitals in Hungary will offer the coronavirus jab without any prearrangement from next Monday until Sunday, István György, state secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, told a press conference.

Anyone can get their first, second, or booster shots without making an appointment or registering electronically, the official said, adding that "the point is to inoculate as many people as possible". With the delta variant's "aggressively infectious" nature it is crucial that the vaccination rate of the population should increase, he said, urging all the unvaccinated to participate.

### **DK: FIDESZ TRYING TO INVIGORATE 'VOTER TOURISM'**

The opposition Democratic Coalition has accused the ruling Fidesz party

of attempting to "invigorate voter tourism". DK's deputy group leader Gergely Arató told an online press briefing that parliament had passed Fidesz sponsored legislation that "basically means that election fraud is enshrined in law". Henceforth, a place of residence is regarded as a contact address only, and it will no longer be necessary to live there in order to cast a vote.

In 2018, he added, "dozens of Ukrainians" were registered in run-down, uninhabited houses near the border.

The DK politician said his party expected voter tourism to ramp up in the 2022 general election. Opposition parties, he added, would mount a campaign to verify the authenticity of the addresses of those on the electoral roll in each individual constituency. Also, DK wants all opposition parties to jointly appeal to the Constitutional Court with the demand that it repeal the law, Arató said.

### **KARÁCSONY: BUDAPEST TO CELEBRATE 150TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2023**

Budapest is preparing to celebrate 150 years of its unified existence in 2023 with a diverse range of programmes that presents the capital's history, Gergely Karácsony, the city's mayor, told a news conference on Wednesday.

On this very day 148 years ago, Pest, Buda and Óbuda were united

to form the capital city as it is broadly known today, he noted. The celebrations in 2023, he said, would hopefully coincide with the handover of the renovated Chain Bridge. Erzsébet Gy. Németh, the deputy mayor for culture, said Budapest's strength derived from its tolerance and pride in its own diversity. Since its very beginnings, the city has been inclusive, she added. Péter Fodor, the head of the capital's Szabo Ervin Library, said the Book City programme running in 2023 sought to make the connection between people and reading even closer.

### **BUDAPEST MAYOR AWARDS HONOURS ON DAY OF THE CAPITAL**

Gergely Karácsony, the mayor of Budapest, on Wednesday handing awards to public figures on the Day of the Capital, said the future of the nation's capital could not be bound up with any one political party or power interest.

In his speech marking the occasion, Karácsony said that in the past cities were protected by walls encircling them. "Today, we are protecting the city by tearing down the walls of hatred, lies, and privilege for the few and opening up a path to freedom, truth, and the majority," he said. The city's leadership is determined for Budapest to be a green, liveable, and safe place, he added. He said the custodians of these goals

were “world-class designers, brave artists, determined innovators and entrepreneurs” who embraced good causes. The city, he added, expressed its gratitude to them on this day because their work, expertise and enthusiasm put up a shield against malign interventions.

The title of honorary citizen of the capital went to lyricist Anna Adamis, five-time Olympic champion swimmer Ágnes Keleti, Kossuth Prize-winning actor Gyula Bodrogi, head of the Hungarian Evangelical Brotherhood Gábor Iványi, and choreographer Ferenc Novák. The title of posthumous honorary citizen went to Kossuth Prize-winning cinematographer Mihály Ráday, architect and preserver of historical monuments Anna Perczel, and Kossuth Prize-winning poet and literary translator Dezső Tandori. Pro Urbe Budapest was awarded to the actor Judit Hernádi, the Kossuth Prize-winning actor Gábor Máté, the writer and director Béla Pintér, as well as to president of the Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association Péter Kirschner and president of the 100-member Gypsy Orchestra Nándor Farkas.

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### **CHARGES PRESSED AGAINST MAN FOR PREPARING ATTACK IN SIÓFOK**

The Budapest Prosecutor’s Office of Investigations has pressed charges against a 22 year-old man for preparing to carry out a terrorist act in Hungary “aimed at intimidating European residents”. The man converted to Islam in a Budapest mosque in June 2020 and became a follower of radical, Jihadist Islam by the spring of 2021, supporting the Islamic State terrorist organisation, the prosecutor’s office said. He took an oath to the terrorist organisation, prepared an Islamic flag and displayed it in his home, and started looking for potential targets for an attack. Between March and May he communicated with people on various online platforms about carrying out terrorist attacks. He received written materials and advice about preparing a pipe bomb and started acquiring the necessary materials to prepare one, ordering a remote controller from a webshop. He agreed with someone online to commit simultaneous attacks

in Siófok, in western Hungary, and in Budapest with the aim of attracting publicity and intimidating the European public. The prosecutor’s office has asked the court to hand down a prison sentence, excluding the possibility of a suspended sentence. The man is currently in custody.

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### **UEFA REDUCES PUNISHMENT OVER ROWDY HUNGARIAN FANS**

European football association UEFA has reduced its earlier sanction under which the Hungarian national team was to play three European matches behind closed doors to two matches, with the restriction concerning the second match suspended for two years, Hungarian association MLSZ said on its website. UEFA passed its original decision on July 9, over “discriminative behaviours” by fans of the Hungarian team. The European federation also fined MLSZ 100,000 euros. MLSZ appealed against the July decision saying that fans during the contested matches in Budapest and Munich had “mostly” behaved decently.