

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Szilárd Koszticsák

Lions of Budapest Chain Bridge under restoration

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Govt members address Fidelitas congress**

**LMP group leader's presser marking World Children's Day**

**Minorities state secy addresses German minority self-govt cultural award ceremony**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

### ORBÁN: HUNGARY 'DEEP IN FOURTH WAVE'

Hungary is deep in the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic, with "the hard part still to come", Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in his regular weekly interview on public radio on Friday, adding that "the only thing that ensures protection is the jab".

Those that are not inoculated are in "mortal danger", Orbán said, but warned that the unvaccinated "pose a danger not only to themselves but to all others". He warned that restrictive measures could not provide protection against the virus, just slow down its spread among the population. Four to six months after the second shot immunisation will decrease, and it is justified to take a booster, he said. "If everybody were inoculated, there would be no fourth wave or it would be just a small one," the prime minister said. With everybody inoculated there will be no fifth wave, he said, adding that "we cannot avoid that everybody should be inoculated at the end of the day". "In the end even the anti-vaxxers will realise that they either get the jab or die," he said, and noted that next week 101 hospitals would offer the vaccination with no prior registration to anyone turning up. People against vaccination could be convinced that they have no more reason to distrust coronavirus vaccines than the ones they received in childhood, such as against mumps or measles, the prime minister said.

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## **ORBÁN: VACCINATION OF 5-12 YEAR OLDS TO BE ASSESSED**

Orbán said that health experts were expected to determine “around December” if children between 5-12 could be inoculated and in case of a positive answer parents would have an opportunity to vaccinate their children.

Hungary currently has 10 million doses of vaccine, sufficient to provide “not only booster jabs but fourth shots to everybody”, Orbán said.

On another subject, the prime minister said that “nobody is happy” with a recent ban introduced in law enforcement and health services preventing staff from quitting their jobs, but argued that “now we have a situation in which certain positions must not be abandoned”. Orbán said that the infectious diseases hospital in Kiskunhalas would not currently be reopened unless “some bigger problem occurs” or if other hospitals become overcrowded.

In another development, Orbán said that well above 80% of Hungarians welcomed the recently introduced cap on fuel prices. Orbán said “we are in a fight with the Left about reducing public utility fees” recently expanded to include fuel prices. “Changing petrol prices has been left to the market so far and it is best if the government does not need to interfere but there are certain situations when government involvement becomes necessary,” Orbán said.

“One must not sit idly when prices go sky high”, and when all experts project prices to remain high for a longer period, a government reaction is needed, he said. High fuel prices not only affect the cost of driving but also make their way in other prices, he added. Calculations have been made about what the market can tolerate and the result was 480 forints per litre, so “we stepped on the break there”, Orbán said. The Left has always called for market-based utility fees but “we say that there should be fixed prices and not market prices in areas belonging to the subsistence of households”, he said.

“When the market cannot resolve problems, we need to interfere, keeping in mind that this can only be a temporary measure,” Orbán said.

A government decision could be made next week about “rescuing small businesses from the weight of higher utility fees” so that they, too, could get the lower prices, Orbán said.

He added that Brussels bureaucrats “vomit blood” from Hungary’s utility fee cut scheme because “multinationals dictate” in Brussels. He said Hungary’s government was on the side of the people, whereas the left wing was on the side of multinationals. Commenting on GDP growth, he said negative developments in global economy, especially disruptions in supply chains in car manufacturing, prevented Hungary from achieving 7-8% growth, or even 10%. At the same time, Hungary’s good economic performance enables offering personal

income tax exemption to people under 25 next year and paying a full 13th month pension in mid-February to pensioners, he added.

## **PUTIN AWARDS ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP TO SZIJJÁRTÓ**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has awarded the Order of Friendship to Péter Szijjártó, Hungary’s minister of foreign affairs and trade, in recognition of his “great contribution to developing bilateral relations and industrial and investment cooperation”. The related decree was published on Russia’s official portal of legal information.ken stands at 7,954,654.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: PREPARATIONS START FOR IMPLEMENTING HUNGARY’S SPACE STRATEGY**

Preparations have started for the implementation of Hungary’s space strategy with the aim to send a Hungarian research astronaut to the International Space Station (ISS) by the middle of the decade, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Porto on Friday. The ministry said Szijjártó had told a ministerial meeting of the European Space Agency (ESA) that earlier this year, the Hungarian government approved the country’s national space strategy for the next ten years. The selection of a Hungarian astronaut has started, with an application deadline set at the end of January. The mission will be part of a comprehensive scientific programme,

he said. The astronaut's tasks will include carrying out tests in dosimetry, materials science, space biology and pharmaceuticals. Additionally, the astronaut will be tasked with the installation of a device currently being developed in joint Hungarian-Russian cooperation for improved weather forecasts in space. Preparations have also started for the launch of a Hungarian telecommunications satellite to orbit around the Earth and for the development of its land segment. Starting in 2024, Hungary will have the rights to operate a geostationary track for twenty years and it will therefore have its own telecommunications satellite, the statement added. Szijjártó also said that the government had set up a fund to support companies operating in the sector. Additionally, seventeen universities have cooperated in launching an educational programme on space science.

He also said that Hungary had recently signed a strategic agreement for space research cooperation with French-Italian joint venture Thales Alenia Space which will enable Hungarian companies to participate in the operation of one of the world's largest satellite fleet.

### **ÁDER: PLANTING TREES COULD REDUCE FOOTPRINT ON ENVIRONMENT**

President János Áder on Friday attended an event organised under the auspices of the upcoming Planet

Budapest 2021 Sustainability Expo and world conference, in which 700 trees were planted along the M7 motorway southwest of Budapest. The trees are planted to counterbalance the impact of the world expo on the environment, Áder said in his address. He said that organisers of the event, starting on November 29, laid great emphasis on applying recycled materials at the venues, but it would still leave a footprint depending on the number of participants. Áder said that further trees would be planted, adding that the strips along motorways, a total of 20,000 hectares nationwide, could not be used for agricultural production and the goal was to use those areas for the purpose.

### **HUNGARY, CHINA SIGN GREEN, DIGITAL ECONOMY MOUS**

Hungarian Innovation and Technology Minister László Palkovics and Chinese Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao have signed memoranda of understanding on cooperation to accelerate the transition to a digital economy and advance green developments, the Innovation and Technology Ministry said on Friday. China initiated the signing of similar agreements with 50 countries after a consensus was reached at the China-CEE summit in February on working to expand cooperation in the areas of digital and green economy. Hungary was the first to sign MoUs covering both areas. Under the agreements,

the sides will work together to speed up the digital transition in all branches of the economy, through the adoption of new business forms and models, digital skills in education and digital technology in innovation. Mutually advantageous cooperation will be established and deepened in the areas of green economy and clean energy, too, dovetailing with sectoral strategies and policies and advancing green developments. Palkovics said Hungary could become a logistics and distribution hub in Central Europe if it can participate in a bigger share of trade volume between Asia and Western Europe. He noted that a hundred container trains from China have arrived in Záhony, on Hungary's eastern border, while work on the upgrade of the Budapest-Belgrade railway, which is set to become part of a corridor for Chinese goods bound for Western Europe, has started. "The future of the economy, around the world, is high tech and green," Palkovics said.

### **VOLNER: PROBE STARTS INTO ALLEGED GRAFT AROUND BUDAPEST TRAM PURCHASE**

The National Office of Investigations has launched an investigation into plans to purchase trams from Frankfurt for Budapest's public transports, independent MP János Volner told a press conference on Friday. Volner, the head of the extra-parliamentary Volner Party, said that he

had earlier filed a criminal complaint on suspicion of graft involved in the public procurement procedure. He insisted that he had evidence that the city management had “made prearrangements” with the public transport company of Frankfurt (VGF). Budapest leaders had selected the seller in advance, thus limiting “the freedom and transparency of competition, excluding other players”, Volner suggested. Volner said he was outraged that Mayor Gergely Karácsony “wishes to buy trams scrapped in Germany, whereas the earlier leadership had purchased brand-new vehicles”.

Volner said his testimony in the case would be heard on November 24, adding that he would present “revealing documents” at the hearing.

### **FORMER FIDESZ MEP GYÖRGY SCHÖPFLIN DIES AT 81**

György Schöpflin, a former MEP of ruling Fidesz, has died aged 81, the party’s group in the European

Parliament said on Friday. Schöpflin, a former university teacher and professor of political science, was a Fidesz MEP between 2004 and 2019. “Over three parliamentary terms, he represented Hungarian interests successfully and with outstanding dedication,” the statement said.

### **CORONAVIRUS - 135 DEATHS, 11,289 NEW INFECTIONS**

Altogether 135 patients died of a Covid-related illness during the past 24 hours, while 11,289 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Friday. So far 6,017,807 people have received a first jab, while 5,788,775 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 1,765,000 Hungarians have received a booster jab. The number of active infections stands at 128,124, while hospitals are treating 6,122 Covid-19 patients, 613 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 998,488 infections have been registered, while the number of fatalities has risen to 32,780. Fully

837,584 people have made a recovery. There are 59,177 people in official quarantine, while the number of tests taken stands at 8,006,581.

### **SEMMELWEIS UNIVERSITY 55TH BEST GLOBALLY IN CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEMS**

Semmelweis University has improved its positions in several areas in the US News Best Global Universities 2022 ranking, the university said on Friday.

The university improved 32 places and stood at 55th place in the subject ranking of cardiac and cardiovascular systems, the statement added.

The university improved its position by 24 places and was ranked at 121st place globally in endocrinology and metabolism, at 321st place in biology and biochemistry, 202nd place in cell biology, 200th place in clinical medicine, 345th place in molecular biology and genetics, 324th place in neuroscience and behaviour, and 218th place in oncology, the statement said.