

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Hungary's week-long Covid vaccination campaign gets under way

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**V4 leaders discuss migration in Budapest**

**EU affairs ministers meet in Brussels**

**Finance ministry releases detailed budget report for Jan-Oct**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

# HUNGARY 'TO HONOUR ENVIRONMENTAL PLEDGES'

Hungary is prepared to honour its environmental commitments for 2050 and has undertaken investments to improve its energy efficiency and to increase the ratio of its sustainable energy resources, the innovation and technology minister has said.

In his address to a central European conference on energy in Bratislava, László Palkovics said solar energy was in the forefront of Hungary's plans to boost sustainable energy resources. Solar energy production capacity is currently at 2.6 GW, and the government is planning to ramp it up to 6 GW by 2030, he said. Palkovics also called for "clean, fully carbon-free nuclear energy" to be recognised as green energy. Nuclear and solar energy production is key in improving the efficiency of Hungarian energy production, he said. Hungary will continue to resist the European Union's aim to expand its emissions trading system to areas directly impacting private users, such as heating private homes and the use of private cars, he said. The issue is one of the most important topics of the Bratislava conference, he said. Palkovics also noted that KPMG's Net Zero Readiness Index has put Hungary at 13th place, with the regulatory environment among the top 5 worldwide. Hungary's economy, industry and society are ready to fulfil the 2050 commitments, he said.

**ORBÁN CALLS ON EC TO SUSPEND INFRINGEMENT PROCEDURES ‘UNDERMINING INTEGRITY, SECURITY’**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has called on the European Commission to suspend all infringement procedures “that undermine Member States’ actions aiming at the protection of their territorial and national integrity, as well as the security of their citizens”. In a letter sent to EC President Ursula von der Leyen on Monday, Orbán said “the situation that is unfolding on the eastern borders of the Union from hour to hour and the debates that have been going on between the Commission and Hungary have left some crucial questions unanswered.” In the current extraordinary situation, which threatens the bloc’s security and territorial integrity, “Member States cannot be challenged and punished for providing viable – yet proportionate – solutions for crises that threaten us all,” Orbán said.

Orbán noted that in its conclusions of October 21-22, the European Council invited the EC to propose changes to the EU’s “inoperable and obsolete” legal framework, to enable the member states’ “immediate and appropriate response” in migration issues. “We can perhaps all agree that the current legal framework does not provide adequate means that Member States under pressure can apply in a crisis situation,” Orbán

said. He cited as “the weakest link” EU regulations which require member states to allow free entry for anyone arriving from other member states, enabling asylum seekers to move between states before the asylum procedure is completed. This, in turn, “encourages other Member States to perpetuate internal border protection contrary to the Schengen Borders Code,” he said. Since 2015, when the crisis mainly affected the EU’s southern borders, “Hungary has rigorously defended the security of Europe and the safety of its citizens by raising a physical barrier and doing her best to differentiate between those who required international protection and those who were only seeking the economic advantages that life in Europe represents,” Orbán said.

Referring to the crisis on the EU’s border with Belarus, Orbán said: “Now, we are facing new realities. Our economies are struggling and migration is on the rise not only in the south but also at our eastern borders and we must acknowledge that the severity of the current crisis even exceeds the challenges that we have faced when discussing our economic recovery [from the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic].” “In the light of the urgent and severe crisis, I ask the Commission to propose adapting the legal framework to the new realities and most urgently, discontinue enforcing the obsolete and obstructive regulations in place and suspend all infringement procedures

that undermine Member States’ actions aiming at the protection of their territorial and national integrity, as well as the security of their citizens,” Orbán said.

**SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY IMPLEMENTING LARGEST INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN UGANDA**

Hungary is implementing its largest ever international economic development scheme in Uganda in an effort to halt migration, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Monday in Budapest. He told a joint press conference with Ugandan counterpart, Abubaker Jeje Odongo, that “migration and terrorism, which are closely interlinked, pose the greatest threat to the security of Europe” and Africa represents the primary source for both. The Hungarian government believes in enabling locals to stay in their homelands. African countries that want to retain their citizens are important allies in this effort, he said.

“It is a vested interest of European countries and people that the European Union, Brussels, should support these countries in these efforts,” he added. Instead of “constantly increasing the funding for migration”, European resources should be used for stopping it, he added. The government’s position is that help must be taken to where it is needed, he said. As a result,



a 5.2 billion forint (EUR 14.4m) economic development scheme is being implemented with Hungarian financing and by Hungarian participants in Uganda, a country which receives one of the largest number of refugees and migrants in the world, he added.

Hungarian water treatment solutions are being used to provide daily 160,000 litres of drinking water in a refugee camp, mobile health containers have been supplied and a hospital in Kampala is being supplied with Hungarian cardiology equipment, he said. Hungarian companies have set up a cyber security centre and biometric registry for refugees and migrants, and Hungary supports developments in the tourism sector, he added. The security, hygienic and economic developments are planned to enable Ugandan people and migrants in Uganda to stay in place, Szijjártó said. The scheme is planned to continue, with Eximbank opening a 46 million dollar credit line to support Hungarian companies to get involved, he added. In cooperation with Germany, Hungary is participating in a development programme dubbed Sanitation for Millions which involves a 300 million forint contribution to improving hygienic conditions in schools and hospitals, he said. Szijjártó also said that Uganda needs long-term economic development and the modernisation of agriculture is an important area of bilateral cooperation. Hungary

has started agricultural training in Uganda to offer competitive skills to local experts. Additionally, twenty Ugandan students can attend Hungarian universities each year with the help of state scholarships. Some 122 applications were submitted for the positions this year, which demonstrated significant interest, he added.

Jeje Odongo thanked Hungary for its support and expressed appreciation of the southern and eastern opening strategies which he said contributed to global cooperation to resolve common challenges. He said vaccination was the most important means in the fight against coronavirus pandemic but warned that vaccines were still not equally available around the world.

### **SZIJJÁRTÓ ATTENDS CORNERSTONE LAYING OF BELGRADE-BUDAPEST RAILWAY SECTION**

Péter Szijjártó, Hungary's minister of foreign affairs, attended the cornerstone laying ceremony for the Novi Sad-Kelebia section of the Belgrade-Budapest railway in Novi Sad, in northern Serbia, on Monday. Addressing the event, the minister said that those arguing against the construction of the high-speed railway and establishing a transport route between the Greek ports and western Europe want to deprive Hungary and Serbia of their competitive edge. The opponents of the project want to play into the hands of other countries

and act against Serbia and Hungary's national interests, he said.

Szijjártó noted that 2020 had been the first year when China's trade with both the European Union and the United States exceeded the EU-US turnover. "More and more Chinese commodities arrive in the Greek ports and need to be transported to central and western Europe. There is a sharp competition for providing a transit route for them," he said. "Serbia and Hungary have entered the race by deciding to construct a modern and safe railway line." By 2025 both the Hungarian and the Serbian sections of the over-300-kilometre line will have been completed, enabling the two countries to win the race, Szijjártó said. The project is financed by China, Serbia and Hungary.

### **FIDESZ MP: EU UNITY MUST BE RESTORED**

The most important task in the European Union is to restore unity after a period of division, the head of parliament's foreign affairs committee, of ruling Fidesz, said on Monday. Zsolt Németh said after a committee meeting that Gergely Gulyás, the chief of staff of the Prime Minister's Office, had briefed the participants about the political situation in Germany following the elections and the diplomatic and bilateral effects expected.

Bilateral relations had undergone "spectacular economic development" in recent years, with 30% of Hungary's foreign trade represented by trade

with Germany. German investors play a very important role in employment policy, with more than 300,000 Hungarians working for German-owned companies, he added. "The most important priority" of upcoming years for Hungary is to be able to maintain "deepened and intensive ties despite changing circumstances in diplomacy and economic policy", and the Visegrad Group countries could play a role in this, he said.

Cooperation with the Visegrad Group is a basic interest for Germany and central Europe could be a priority region for German capital as a result of the need to shorten value chains due to international economic policy trends, he said. The digital switchover and green developments could set an important direction for Hungary-Germany economic cooperation, he said.

Commenting on EU policies, he said Germany can rely on Hungary's support in efforts to keep Europe together. Following a period of division, solutions must be found for European cooperation instead of sharpening conflicts and disputes between East and West, he added.

He added that cooperation is hoped to also continue under the arrangements of NATO. Significant progress has been made in recent years in the defence industry, with Hungary carrying out a serious development programme of its armed forces, "partly with a significant acquisition of German military equipment", he added.

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## **ÁDER DECORATES FORMER SPEAKER OF SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL**

President János Áder presented František Mikloško, the former speaker of the Slovak National Council, with the Order of Merit of Hungary, Medium Cross with Star in Budapest on Monday. Mikloško was recommended for the award by Speaker of Parliament László Kövér for his role in the changes of regime in central and eastern Europe in 1989-90, his contributions to boosting relations between Hungary and Slovakia, as well as his endeavours towards reconciliation between the two nations.

In his acceptance speech, Mikloško underlined the importance of camaraderie among the countries of the region. The nations of central and eastern Europe have had to "endure enormous trials", but the tensions among them had "brought their civilisational charismas to the surface". He said it was the CEE countries' commitment to their nations, Christianity and freedom that had allowed them to triumph over communism and could also help them "in the present conflict with the West". As a civil rights activist in 1989, Mikloško fought for the free exercise of religion and the enforcement of fundamental human rights in Slovakia. He was elected speaker of the Slovak

National Council after the country's first free elections in 1990. From 1992, he was an MP of the Christian Democratic Movement.

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## **OPPOSITION PARTIES SET UP JOINT CAMPAIGN COUNCIL**

The opposition Democratic Coalition, Jobbik, LMP, Momentum, Párbeszéd and Socialist parties as well as the Everyone's Hungary Movement (MMM) have set up a joint campaign council to coordinate preparations for the general election scheduled for next spring. In a meeting chaired by Péter Márki-Zay, the opposition alliance's prime ministerial candidate, the party leaders all agreed that they would launch a joint election campaign, the parties said in a statement on Monday. Further, they agreed on a framework for joint decision making and implementation. The next meeting of the opposition alliance's leaders is scheduled to take place in early December.

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## **HUNGARY RECORDS 392 CORONAVIRUS DEATHS, 27,209 NEW INFECTIONS**

Altogether 392 patients died of a Covid-related illness over the weekend, while 27,209 new coronavirus infections were registered, [koronavirus.gov.hu](http://koronavirus.gov.hu) said on Monday. So far 6,024,568 people have received a first jab, while 5,794,499 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 1,834,000 Hungarians have received a booster jab. The

number of active infections stands at 144,533, while hospitals are treating 6,451 Covid-19 patients, 649 of whom need respiratory assistance.

Since the first outbreak, 1,025,697 infections have been registered, while the number of fatalities has risen to 33,172. Fully 847,992 people have made a recovery. There are 50,429 people in official quarantine, while the number of tests taken stands at 8,134,310.

**NATIONAL COVID VACCINATION CAMPAIGN GETS UNDER WAY**

Hungary launched a national coronavirus vaccination campaign on Monday, letting people turn up at any of the country's 101 designated vaccination points without having to pre-register or make an appointment. A total of 51,000 jabs were administered by noon on Monday, István György, the state secretary for regional administration of the Prime Minister's Office, told public media. Of them, 42,000 were booster jabs,

7,000 first jabs and the rest second jabs, he added. The 7,000 first jabs administered on Monday morning is by far the highest number of first vaccinations registered in the last "one and a half to two months", the state secretary said. Five types of Covid jabs are available at the vaccination points, he said. The vaccination points are open from 7am to 7pm.

**ÁDER CALLS FOR CURBING TRANSPORT EMISSIONS IN PODCAST**

Transport emissions have grown significantly in the European Union and Hungary over the past 30 years even as total carbon emissions have fallen, President János Áder said in his Blue Planet (Kék bolygó) podcast on Monday.

"If we are to take [EU climate goal] carbon neutrality by 2050 seriously, we will have to reduce the carbon footprint of transport," Áder said in a discussion with Dániel Kőszegi, the owner of Electromega, a company

manufacturing electric garbage trucks. Kőszegi said the zero emission vehicles can complete a shift without having to recharge. Although they cost almost double the price of diesel trucks, the investment is returned in 6-8 years, with fuel and servicing significantly cheaper than that of traditional trucks, he added.

**METOXIT ANNOUNCES HUF 2.5 BN INVESTMENT IN HUNGARY**

Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, on Monday attended an event where Swiss company Metoxit announced a 2.5 billion forint (EUR 6.8m) investment in Székesfehérvár, central Hungary. Metoxit will start production at a plant in the city in January, creating 80 jobs. The company makes ceramic components for dental, orthopaedic and industrial applications. Szijjártó noted that some 900 Swiss-owned companies employ over 31,000 people in Hungary.

