

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

Mist envelopes Salgótarján, N Hungary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coronavirus updates

TOP STORY

ÁDER: LET US STRENGTHEN OUR WILL TO ACT

President János Áder, in his New Year's address, urged Hungarians to strengthen their will to act in 2022.

"Let's not only reaffirm, but also strengthen, our will to act in the new year, and let's not allow apathy and resignation to get the better of us," Áder said in his speech televised at midnight. Quoting Hungarian-American psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, Áder said: "We can live our lives as chess pieces, controlled by outside forces, or we can take the reins ... We can see ourselves constantly as victims but there is also the option of gaining satisfaction from immersing ourselves in work." The president said many had succeeded in overcoming feelings of helplessness and despair this past year. Many see the new year as a clean slate, the president said, warning however that when "we look to mark holidays, family events and important deadlines ... our plans are often altered by reality." The president also referred to the times of war experienced by past generations "whose lives diverged from their natural course". "The situation today is similar in the second year of the pandemic."

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ÁDER: VACCINES EASED PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS IN 2021

In his New Year's address televised at midnight on Friday, President János Áder said 2021 had been similar to 2020 in many ways, with fluctuations between better and worse periods depending on the status of the pandemic. He said the main difference between the two years had been that there had been means at people's disposal to defend against the pandemic this past year. "Vaccines made it possible to save lives and endure the pandemic with fewer restrictions," he said. The president noted that Hungarian biochemist Katalin Karikó, who helped develop the technology at the root of mRNA coronavirus vaccines, was "the most celebrated scientist in the world today".

Áder asked viewers to spare a thought for the essential workers "whose names we don't even know", but who "administered thousands of vaccines a day, held the hands of those who were dying, ran social institutions, guarded our safety, protected our borders, farmed the land and provided services". He said it was not yet clear when exactly "we will finally be free of the depressing and threatening burden of the pandemic", but he urged patience, attentiveness and perseverance to ensure that "we get there as soon as possible". Concluding his speech, Áder quoted Hungarian writer Sándor Márai with the words:

"Things don't just happen to people. People also do what happens to them."

GOVT SPOX: HUNGARY 'UNBROKEN' AMID PANDEMIC

Hungary has "stayed unbroken despite all difficulties" amid the coronavirus pandemic, government spokesperson Alexandra Szentkirályi said in a video published on the government's website on New Year's Day. The spokeswoman said that the health services had been able to take care of each patient, and "there is enough vaccine for everyone, and by now the a large part of the population have been vaccinated, with the majority having received a booster jab". Thanks to the government's measures, the national economy has continued to grow, and the number of jobholders has grown, she said.

In another video posted on Sunday, Szentkirályi said the government was ploughing 800 billion forints (EUR 2.2bn) into wage hikes for public servants, and tax cuts worth 750 billion forints will help the private sector in raising the minimum wage at the beginning of 2022, in line with regulations.

Nurses' wages will grow by a further 21% from January, she said. Doctors' wage hike will also continue, in line with the scheme launched in 2020 to raise doctors' salaries two-and-a-half-fold on average, she said. Employees working in the social and cultural sectors, as well as in crèches, will see a 20% raise, she said. Teachers' wages will grow by

10%, as will that of those working in law enforcement, she said. Law enforcement employees will also get a one-off salary supplement of six months' salary in February, she added. The minimum wage and the minimum wage for skilled workers will also grow by 20%, she said.

NEARLY 200 CUBIC METERS OF WASTE COLLECTED IN BUDAPEST AT NEW YEAR

Budapest's FKF waste management company collected nearly 200 cubic meters of waste after the New Year's Eve celebrations in the city, the company said on Saturday. Using 20 vehicles, 90 employees cleaned traditional venues of the festivities, underpasses and large thoroughfares in the city, FKF said. The waste will be used to produce heat and electricity, the statement said.

TEMPERATURE RISES TO RECORD HIGH FOR DEC 31

Temperatures in Budapest and Hungary rose to record highs on December 31, according to the Hungarian Meteorological Service (OMSZ). The mercury hit 18 C. in the village of Fertőrákos in north-western Hungary on Friday, OMSZ said on its Facebook page. The previous record of 16.5 C. had been measured in the city of Sopron in the northwest in 1920. The temperature in Budapest's 18th district reached 15.4 C. on Friday, breaking a 19-year Budapest record of 14 C., OMSZ said.