

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamás Vasvári

Anna Viktória Kemecesei, the belle of the 197th Anna Ball in Balatonfüred, W Hungary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office releases May figures on wages**

**War in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: PEACE ONLY SOLUTION TO UKRAINE WAR

Because Hungarians are the only ones besides Ukrainians to have “shed blood” in the Russia-Ukraine war, Hungary has a right to say as a neighbouring country that peace is the only solution, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said over the weekend.

Addressing the 31st “Tusványos” Summer University in Băile Tușnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, Orbán cited official data indicating that 86 Hungarians have died in the war so far. The Hungarian government’s main responsibility is to ensure that Hungarians do not have to grieve for lost parents or children, he said. At the same time, Orbán said, countries critical of Hungary had said it was not committed enough to the Ukrainian side. “But they’re far away and at best they are providing weapons and financial support,” the prime minister said. Hungary is therefore sticking to its stance that “this isn’t our war”, Orbán said. Hungary is a member of NATO and acts under the assumption “that Russia will never attack the much stronger alliance”, he said. Orbán added, however, that Russia had found itself in a “delicate situation” after the EU had decided to impose severe economic sanctions on it and send weapons to Ukraine. He said this meant the EU was “practically part of this conflict, which poses a huge risk.”

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## **ORBÁN: HUNGARY CAN BE 'LOCAL EXCEPTION' TO GLOBAL RECESSION**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told the "Tusványos" Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, that it was understandable that "post-Western people" could not torment themselves with "the toxic idea that everything is lost", adding that there was no need for them to be confronted with this, either. "All we ask is that they do not try to force onto us the fate which we see as a nation's doom," he said. The prime minister said the "claim by the internationalist left" that Europe had always been home to mixed-race peoples was an illusion and a deliberate conflation of ideas. The "mixed-race world" of Europeans and those coming to the continent from the outside cannot be compared to the intermixing of peoples living in Europe, he said.

"We in the Carpathian Basin, for example, aren't mixed-race people, but simply a mix of the peoples living in their European homeland," Orbán said. "Hungarians don't want to become mixed-race," and future generations must be prepared to thwart the expansion of Islamic civilisation towards Europe not just from the south but from the west as well, Orbán said. At the same time, Hungary must be prepared to take in Christians fleeing the West, he added.

Orbán identified the issue of gender as another challenge facing

Hungarians. This, he said, was an issue over which Hungary had been taken to court, but an agreement has been reached on keeping the matter separate from the debates on EU funds. Orbán said the gender issue was one on which Hungary had once again "made an offer of tolerance". "We don't want to tell others how they should live; we only ask that they accept that in our country the father is a man, the mother a woman, and we want them to leave our children alone and make [US financier] George Soros accept this as well," Orbán said. He said the issues of demographics, migration and gender were a "historic battle between the right and left", arguing that these would be the issues that shape the future. He highlighted the importance of forming alliances to defend against these issues, adding that this was why the "post-Westerners" were doing everything they could to upset the unity of the Visegrad Group.

Orbán said the war had shaken the cooperation between Hungary and Poland in spite of the fact that the two countries shared the same strategic interests. Poland, he said, wanted to ensure that Russia did not advance westward and that Ukraine remains a sovereign democratic state. But whereas Hungary wants to stay out of the war between the two Slavic peoples, "the Poles feel that this is their war", Orbán said, adding that Hungary and Poland should save what they could from their strategic alliance for the post-war era.

## **ORBÁN: WESTERN STRATEGY IN UKRAINE BACKFIRED**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told the "Tusványos" Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, that Russia had made it clear that it wanted it guaranteed that Ukraine would never join NATO, insisting that the war would not have broken out "if Donald Trump were the US president and Angela Merkel the German chancellor". He said the West's strategy had been based on the belief that Ukraine could win the war with "Anglo-Saxon training and weapons, that Western sanctions would destabilise the leadership in Moscow and that the West would be capable of managing the impact of the sanctions and enjoy the backing of the rest of the world". "But the opposite is happening right now," he said. "We're sitting in a car with a puncture on all four tyres," he said, adding that when it came to the war, Europe needed a new strategy that aims not to win the war but to formulate "a good peace offer". "War is a game of strength, and those who are stronger get to decide," Orbán said. "It's not worth cherishing the illusion that Hungary can influence the war and western strategy with excellent advice; but in every debate we must try to voice our standpoint and convince the West to develop a new strategy," he said.

"It's not the European Union's job right now to stand either on the side of the Ukrainians or the Russians, but

to stand between Ukraine and Russia," he said. "What's happening right now will only serve to prolong the war," Orbán said. Russia wants to advance far enough west so that Ukraine cannot strike Russian territory, he said, arguing that the better weapons Ukraine gets, the longer the war could go on.

The prime minister said that peace would depend on negotiations between Russia and the US. Europe "played its hand" in attempting to influence the events in 2014, when the Minsk accords were brokered without the US, and then were not enforced. "So, the Russians don't want to talk to us anymore but to those who can get Ukraine to comply with the agreement," he said.

**ORBÁN: 'PILLARS OF WESTERN CIVILISATION CRACKING'**

At the "Tusványos" Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said the world had undergone a "major shift" since he last addressed the event in 2019. The pillars of Western civilisation that had been thought to be unbreakable "have started to crack", he said. "We used to think we lived in the protective bubble of science, and then we got Covid," the prime minister said. "We used to think there couldn't be another war in Europe, but there's a war in Hungary's neighbourhood. And we used to think the Cold War could never return, but many world leaders

right now are working to organise our lives into a world of blocs."

Orbán said that while the impression given by a host of indicators was that the world was supposed to be an increasingly better place, "the people feel otherwise". The reason for this, he said, was a feeling that the strength, performance, authority and power of Western civilisation were waning.

Life expectancy has risen to 70 years, 80 years in Europe, and the death rate among children has fallen by two-thirds in 30 years, he said. Compared with 1950, the number of undernourished people has fallen to 15% from 50% and the number of those living in poverty has fallen from 70% to 15%, he said. Literacy has grown to 90%, and weekly work hours have gone down to 40 from 52, he added. "Nevertheless, the general feeling is that the world is becoming worse," he said. "A sense that the end of the world is nigh" is spreading, he said.

He said what was hurting the West the most was that it had lost control of its energy sources. Rival civilisations including the Chinese, Indian and Russian orthodox cultures have adopted Western technology and financial systems but "have no intention" to do the same with Western values, and see it as humiliating when the West tries to spread its values, he said. Orbán said the rejection of Western "democracy export" was "understandable". While the US and Europe controlled 75% of oil, coal and natural gas resources in 1950, their share has fallen to 35% by now, he

said. Russia has 20% of resources and the Middle East holds 30%, he said. Further, the US introduced fracking in 2013, a new technology to mine energy resources, and adopted a strategy of "weaponising" it, he said. They have stepped up sanctions policies and "strongly encourage" their allies to buy their products, he said. The "German-Russian energy axis" is being dismantled, he said. Switching to renewable energy resources remains non-viable, he added. "Energy and raw materials key for economic development are not in Western hands now. What they have now is capital and military power. The question is what they can do with it under these circumstances," he said.

**ORBÁN: POPULATION DECLINE GREATEST CHALLENGE IN HUNGARY**

Regarding the challenges facing Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told the "Tusványos" Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, that the greatest challenge was that deaths still outstripped births, with no change of the tide in sight. "Our situation has improved but there is still no turnaround, and without a turnaround Hungary and the Carpathian Basin will sooner or later be 'repopulated' away from us," he said. Migration has divided Europe, he said. "The West is split in two", with one half comprising countries where European and non-European peoples live together. "Those countries are no

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longer nations," he said. "In a spiritual sense, the West has moved to central Europe," he said. The two halves of Europe are locked in a battle, he said. The West has rejected central Europe's desire to allow each nation to live as they like, "and they continue to fight central Europe with the aim of changing us to be like them," he said. Orbán said the West was fighting against central Europe together with Brussels and financier George Soros's "troops" to "force migrants on us".

**ORBÁN: WARTIME ENERGY SITUATION BENEFITS RUSSIA**

Concerning the issue of energy and the economy, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told the "Tusványos" Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), Romania, that the key question was who benefitted from the wartime situation. "Those with their own energy sources are the ones that benefit," he said. The situation benefits Russia because their energy revenues are not only dependent on the volume sold, but also energy prices, Orbán argued. It also benefits China, "who in the past was dependent on the Arab world, but can now also buy Russian energy", he said. And, he added, the conflict also benefitted American corporations which have "multiplied their profits". But the wartime situation hurts the EU, Orbán said, arguing that its energy deficit had tripled. Regarding the government's household energy price caps, Orbán

said that system had worked well for a decade, but the war and wartime energy prices "tipped it over". The government is working to protect the scheme as far as average consumption goes, he noted.

Hungary can preserve its economic achievements only if it "stays out of the war, migration, gender madness, the global [minimum corporate] tax and general European recession", the prime minister said. Hungary emerged strengthened from the crises in 2010 and 2020, he said. To sustain its achievements, it will have to adapt to the new situation and broker new agreements with all its important partners: the European Union, Russia, China and the United States, he said. If all those agreements are shaped to respect national interests, the country could be back on the "old growth and development track" by 2024, he said. Orbán said the Western world's woes were expected to "multiply" by 2030. The US will face an economic crisis, the euro zone will be ailing, and the EU will see a reshuffling of power lines as central European countries will become net contributors in the bloc.

Orbán said Hungary could be "a local exception" to a global recession. The prime minister listed several factors that could shield Hungary from an economic downturn, including the country's border protection policy, its "family-based society", a major military development scheme and the diversification of its energy sources. Orbán also said Hungary could use ongoing technological shifts as well

as foreign capital inflows from both the West and the East to its advantage. "We're a transit country and we want to remain a transit economy, and for that we have to oppose any re-emergence of blocs," the prime minister said. He also underscored the political stability provided by ruling Fidesz' two-thirds parliamentary majority, and noted a recent generational shift on the "nationally minded side". "Hungary still has its national thought, its national feelings and culture," Orbán said. He also emphasised the importance of the country's ambitions at the community and national levels. "To preserve those national ambitions in the coming difficult period, we must stick together," Orbán said. "The motherland, Transylvania and the other parts of the Carpathian Basin with Hungarian populations must all stick together". "The concept that we have always given more to the world than what we were given ... that we have outstanding invoices, and that we are better, more diligent and more talented than where we stand and how we live; and the fact that the world owes us and we will collect that debt. That is our strongest ambition," Orbán concluded.

**JUSTICE MINISTER IN BĂILE TUŞNAD: MOOD OF RECESSION 'ENABLES DEBATE ON FUTURE OF EUROPE TO TURN TOWARDS REAL PROBLEMS'**

The mood of recession caused by the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis

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enables the debate on the future of Europe to turn towards real problems, the justice minister said at the 31st Bálványos Summer University in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), in central Romania, on Thursday. She told a panel discussion held with Hunor Kelemen, deputy prime minister of Romania, that it had been a good initiative to start a debate about the renewal of the EU. However, there was a lack of genuine willingness to ask the opinions of EU citizens, but instead, Brussels bureaucrats wanted to force their ideas on the people. But the emerging crisis has “knocked on the window”, she said. The current mood of recession enables the debate on the future of Europe to turn towards real problems affecting people, she added, citing the mutual recognition of university degrees as an example.

“When we talk about war and peace, or about whether we have heating or not, then perhaps we will get the opportunity to sit at the negotiating table,” she said. If Hungary ever expresses strong opinions about the future of the EU, they are motivated by concern and the guiding principle that “I am upset for you and not at you”. “Were the entire EU institutional system about to collapse, the Hungarians would be there to hold the last beam,” she added. Varga criticised the European Commission’s “concealed attempts to expand their powers”, saying that the treaties should be expanded to precisely define what areas belong to a national sphere of authority and

what areas are under shared authority. The minister cited proposals to get rid of unanimous voting in some areas and have transnational electoral lists in European parliamentary elections as the two main sources of danger in terms of amending the treaties.

### **ORBÁN MEETS ETHNIC HUNGARIAN LEADERS IN BĂILE TUŞNAD**

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met leaders of ethnic Hungarian organisations in the Carpathian Basin on the eve of the speech he is scheduled to deliver at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), his press chief said. The meeting was attended by presidents Hunor Kelemen of RMDSZ (Romania), Krisztián Forró of MKP (Slovakia), István Pásztor of VMSZ (Serbia), Róbert Jankovics of HMDK (Croatia) and Ferenc Horváth of MMONK (Slovenia). Hungary’s government was also represented by Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, State Secretary János Nagy and head of parliament’s foreign affairs committee Zsolt Németh. It was established that the protracted war in Ukraine was hitting not only Hungary, but ethnic Hungarian communities beyond the border, too. For this reason, there is a pressing need for coordinating efforts to avert economic and social dangers. The participants expressed their intention to retain even amidst the current crisis what Hungary’s policy towards Hungarian communities abroad had achieved over the past twelve years, the press chief said.

### **OPPOSITION PARTIES SLAM ORBÁN OVER BĂILE TUŞNAD SPEECH**

Hungarian opposition parties slammed Prime Minister Viktor Orbán over his speech at the 31st summer university in Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő), in central Romania. In a statement, the leftist Democratic Coalition said: “It is not advice that an ill person needs, but medicine.” Liberal Momentum accused Orbán of “pitting people against each other” when he “should be concerned with the livelihoods of the Hungarian people and the social crisis plaguing our country”. Last week it “became clear to everyone that the prime minister has long built his policies on lies while staying silent on the true economic situation in Hungary”, Momentum said in a statement. “His ‘Tusványos’ speech today was no different as he ... incited against our allies but made no mention of those affected by the changes to the small business tax rules or rising utility costs,” the party added. The Socialists said that after 12 years in power, “Orbán’s only vision for the country” was that “we are waiting for 2030 not because Hungary will catch up with the West by then, but ... because the West will fall apart in exactly eight years”. In a statement, they said that in his speech, Orbán had made sure “not to admit that his government’s flawed policies are the reason why Hungary is severely affected by the economic and cost-of-living crisis”. The Orbán



government has made Hungary “the second most corrupt country in the European Union”, the party said, adding that inflation was “brutal” and that the government was to blame for the delay in the payouts of EU funds to Hungary. Péter Ungár, group leader of green LMP, said he was “surprised to hear” the prime minister criticise multinational companies over their excessive profits resulting from the war. “This begs the question: If he has a problem with this, then why is he defending with all his might the international corporations that pay no taxes in Hungary?” Ungár said on Facebook. He said LMP welcomed Orbán’s stance that Hungary must end its dependence on gas. “Better late than never, but if the prime minister hadn’t been doing the exact opposite of this over the last ten years, we’d be in less trouble right now,” he added.

## SZIJJÁRTÓ: PEACE IN UKRAINE, STABILITY OF AREAS SURROUNDING EUROPE HIGHLY IMPORTANT

In addition to peace in Ukraine, preserving the stability of areas surrounding Europe is highly important for Hungary, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Friday after talks with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. He said on Facebook that Iran’s role had changed and the country’s importance had grown as a consequence of crises that developed in “this part of the world”.

This is demonstrated by the talks on the nuclear agreement and the Russian-Turkish-Iranian summit held in Tehran in recent days, he added. “In this part of the world, we are facing a serious food and energy supply crisis, and Iran playing a constructive role could help resolve them,” he added. “Hungary supports talks on enabling nuclear cooperation and Ukrainian grain exports,” he added. Szijjártó told his Iranian counterpart that “for us, being a neighbouring country, the war in Ukraine is very bad, we want peace because unless peace arrives soon, the war will have increasingly tragic consequences”. The food crisis threatens the stability of several areas in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, resulting in the threat of severe migratory pressure, Szijjártó said. Bilateral cooperation between Iran and Hungary has developed significantly in the recent period thanks to some 2,000 Iranian students attending Hungarian universities, he said.

## FITCH AFFIRMS HUNGARY ‘BBB’ RATING WITH STABLE OUTLOOK

Fitch Ratings affirmed Hungary’s ‘BBB’ investment grade rating with a stable outlook at a scheduled review on Friday. “Hungary’s ratings are supported by strong structural indicators relative to ‘BBB’ peers and by its record of stable economic growth fueled by investments,” Fitch said. “These are balanced against high public debt, a record of unorthodox

fiscal-and-monetary policy moves, and a worsening of governance indicators in recent years,” it added. Fitch said the stable outlook reflects its expectations of sustained economic growth, gradual improvement in external balances and fiscal consolidation resulting in an improvement of the state debt ratio in the next three years.

Finance Minister Mihály Varga welcomed the rating, in spite of the war in Ukraine and fears of a European recession. In a Facebook post on Saturday, Varga noted that rating agencies had downgraded the outlooks on Czechia’s and Slovakia’s ratings in recent months. “Fitch Ratings considers Hungary’s growth potential to be strong compared with countries with similar ratings,” Varga said, adding that the agency expects the Hungarian economy to grow by more than 5% in 2022. He said Hungary having investment grade status from all three major credit rating agencies after the pandemic and during the war was a testament to the work done over the last decade.

## MI HAZÁNK CALLS ON GOVT TO REJECT ‘POSSIBILITY OF UKRAINIAN INTERVENTION IN MOLDOVA’

The radical Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) party has called on the government to reject any possibility of a Ukrainian intervention in Moldova. Party leader László Toroczkai reacted to a statement by Ukrainian defence intelligence head

Kyrylo Budanov, who said Ukraine was prepared to intervene in Moldova to push out some 1,500 Russian peacekeepers from the Transnistria region.

Such an operation could trigger a domino effect, Toroczkaï said. Expanding the war could destabilise the region "and could be the preamble to the third world war", he said. The step could also "embolden" Romanian political forces that "have been long preparing to unite Moldova and Romania", he said. An increase of Romania's territory, population and strength would pose a serious security risk and "create a precedent by feeding Romanian territorial ambitions," he said. Toroczkaï called on Hungary's foreign ministry to "make it clear that Romania can unite with Moldova only when Transylvania is reunited with Hungary."

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## **PRIDE MARCH HELD IN BUDAPEST**

The 27th Budapest Pride March, the closing event of the Budapest Pride month events, was held in the capital on Saturday. The march organised by the Szivárvány Misszió, an NGO advocating for equality for LGBTQ people, started from Carl Lutz Wharf on the Danube. Marchers walked

along the embankment to Liberty Square. The march was accompanied by more than ten floats, including those of the opposition Socialist, Momentum and Two-tailed Dog parties. Marchers waved rainbow and European Union flags while dancing and singing. The march ended at Liberty Square. Luca Dudits of the Háttér LGBTQ group and Máté Vig of Amnesty International gave speeches protesting legislation they said harmed the rights of transgender citizens and made adoption by same-sex couples impossible. Amendments to the child protection law last June "conflated paedophilia and homosexuality," they said. Kyiv Pride organiser Edward Reese also greeted participants, and called on them to demand an end to Russian aggression in Ukraine. Counter-demonstrators tried to disturb the event from atop Margaret Bridge, which the march passed underneath, with a banner saying "Stop LGBTQ, Paedophilia". Others shouted abuse from the bridge and Margaret Island.

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## **NEW HEAT RECORD IN HUNGARY**

July 23 was the hottest on record in Hungary, according to the National Meteorological Service

(OMSZ). The mercury hit 41.5°C in both Kiskunfélegyháza and Hódmezővásárhely, in southern Hungary, on Saturday, OMSZ said on Facebook. The highest temperature ever recorded in Hungary on July 23, before today, had been 39°C in Békéscsaba, in the south, and Felcsút, in the north. Hungary's all-time heat record of 41.9°C was recorded on July 20, 2007 in Kiskunhalas, in the south. A heat alert originally issued by the chief medical officer from Wednesday until Saturday midnight has been extended until midnight on Tuesday.

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## **POLICE: 14,330 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SATURDAY**

Fully 7,307 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Saturday, while another 7,023 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 300 people, ORFK told MTI on Sunday. Holders of such permits must contact a local immigration office near their place of residence within thirty days to apply for permanent documents, it added. Budapest received 388 people, 186 children among them, by train, ORFK said.