

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



First border patrollers take oath in Budapest

MTI/Szilárd Koszticsák

## UPCOMING EVENTS

War in Ukraine

Onion festival in Makó

Szeged International Airshow

## TOP STORY

# NOVÁK ANNOUNCES 'ALLIANCE OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY PRESIDENTS'

Hungarian President Katalin Novák announced to set up a network of family-friendly presidents, at a press conference held after talks with her Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vučić on Friday.

The network will comprise "family-centered, family-friendly heads of state", she told a joint press conference in Belgrade. She praised Vučić for showing "how important families are for him, as a person and as a president."

On another subject, Novák said the European Union's sanctions against Russia and the arising energy crisis impacted Serbs and Hungarians alike, with ramifications reaching far beyond Europe. She warned of upcoming difficulties adding that the war was not likely to end soon. "That is why we support peace and call for the war to be stopped as soon as possible," she said. The president thanked Serbia for its efforts to prevent masses of migrants from reaching Hungary. "We must do everything to preserve Europe's security," she said. On the subject of Serbia's endeavours to become an EU member, Novák said that country would add to the wealth of the EU, and insisted that "the EU also needs Serbia, not just vice versa". Hungary will continue supporting "all decisions aimed at (Serbia's) integration", she said.

## **ORBÁN: 'SECURITY STARTS AT BORDER'**

"Security starts at our borders, thus Hungary's security will start with its border patrollers," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told a ceremony inaugurating the border patrol unit in Budapest on Friday. Orbán told the new patrollers that the country "respects your commitment, your courage, and that you have agreed to do this task and we will appreciate the service you do for your homeland". "A whole country is behind you," the prime minister added. Despite the difficulties, "Hungary must not give up its goal to become Europe's safest country", he said, adding that eliminating risks arising from illegal migration was a top priority. Millions have arrived illegally from Africa and the Middle East since 2015, Orbán said. When the crisis "exploded", Hungary "decided not to budge on security issues, and to protect its borders and build a fence", he said. The police and the military have stood their ground and protected the country, he said. At the same time, those forces will have other duties, and the border patrollers will take up the baton, he said. "Hungarians want Hungary to remain Hungarian, and migrants at the border must be made to understand that they cannot cross these borders... Border patrollers have the task to stop them and firmly escort them out," he said.

## **ORBÁN EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES TO TRUSS ON QUEEN'S DEATH**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has sent a telegram to his UK counterpart, Liz Truss, expressing his sympathies to her and the people of the United Kingdom over the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the PM's press chief said on Friday. Orbán said he was "shaken and saddened" to hear of Queen Elizabeth's passing. "Her commitment and service sets an example to us all," Bertalan Havasi cited Orbán as saying. The Queen's visit to Hungary (in 1993) "remains a fond memory which further strengthened ties between our countries," Orbán said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the people of the United Kingdom," he said.

## **JUSTICE MIN: HUNGARY MAKES 'IMPORTANT PROGRESS' TOWARDS AGREEMENT WITH EU**

Over the recent period Hungary has made "important progress" towards reaching an agreement with the European Commission, Justice Minister Judit Varga said on Thursday. The minister said on Facebook that over the last two days she had held intensive discussions with European Commission representatives. "We have consulted on specific issues and concrete commitments," Varga said. It was agreed, she added, that

the efficient and transparent use of EU funds is a common interest, for which Hungary is "ready to provide far-reaching guarantees". "The Hungarian government is committed to mutually respectful dialogue and is working to ensure that Hungary and the Hungarian people have access to the resources they deserve," she said.

## **MI HAZÁNK PROPOSES STRICTER PUNISHMENT FOR VIOLENT ACTS**

The opposition Mi Hazánk party has proposed changes to the penal code to allow stricter punishment for members of violent or rowdy armed groups, deputy party leader Előd Novák said on Friday. The proposal is aimed at fighting "gypsy crime" in the country, Novák said. Under the changes, police would automatically arrest groups causing serious injuries to others, he said. He cited a recent case in which a leader of a militant right-wing group was stabbed in northeastern Hungary. Mi Hazánk also seeks to broaden the right of carrying weapons, Novák said, adding that they would allow off-duty police officers, soldiers and security guards, as well as huntsmen and sports shooters to carry arms. He added that licensing procedures should be decentralised, with regional government offices issuing licences rather than the national police. "Citizens should have the right to protect their own lives and the life of their peers even with weapons," Novák insisted.

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## **HUNGARY RECEIVES 14,435 REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE ON THURSDAY**

Fully 6,519 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Thursday, while another 7,916 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 262 people, ORFK told MTI on Friday. 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. Fully 117 people, 34 children among them, arrived in Budapest by train, ORFK said.

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## **HUNGARY RECORDS 71 MONKEYPOX INFECTIONS**

Hungary has so far confirmed 71 cases of monkeypox, with one new infection recorded in the past week, the national public health authority (NNK) said on Friday. The new patient is a 36-year-old male, NNK said. Local authorities are investigating each recorded case, including contact tracing, NNK said.

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## **HUNGARY'S FIRST TESLA MEGAPACK ELECTRICITY STORAGE FACILITY OPENED**

Hungary's first Tesla Megapack battery electricity storage facility has been opened in Dunamenti Erőmű power station in Százhalombatta on Friday.

Minister of Technology and Industry László Palkovics told the event that it was vital to develop energy storage capacities in order to maintain the balance of the electric grid and serving consumption in peak times. The investment received a government grant of over 1 billion forints (EUR 2.45m), he added. Hungary has significantly increased the proportion of electricity generated with the help of solar power plants within the energy mix, producing the third fastest increase in Europe recently, after Poland and Finland, he said. However, plenty more effort is needed with the spread of photovoltaic systems, he added.

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## **CHARGES RAISED FOR MONEY LAUNDERING IN CASE INVESTIGATED BY OLAF**

The Pest central county court has charged eight people with money laundering of over 210 million forints (EUR 510,000) committed in a criminal gang, in a case that had also been investigated by the European anti-fraud office OLAF, the chief prosecutor's office said on Friday. According to the charges, two criminal gangs operated in 2019-2020 and their activities were connected to the sale of Chinese products in Europe. One of them was involved in submitting 5-10-times lower customs values for products than the real value in order to reduce the costs of customs clearance, the statement said. In an effort to maximise profits, the Chinese products

were distributed throughout the EU with the help of fictitious companies in order to avoid paying VAT.

The other criminal gang led by a 37 year-old Chinese man organised the transfer of cash income from Spain through France, Italy, Slovenia and Budapest to Turkey where the money was deposited in Chinese bank accounts. Money transporters travelled by car to Budapest and then flew to Istanbul. An investigating team was set up by the authorities of Italy, Slovenia, France and Hungary, with the participation of Eurojust. OLAF and Europol also got involved in the work. Charges have been raised against three Hungarian and five Chinese men for money laundering and the production and use of counterfeit documents.

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## **INSURERS PAY OUT CLOSE TO HUF 7.5 BN ON STORM DAMAGE CLAIMS**

Hungarian insurers paid out almost 7.5 billion forints on claims for storm damages in May-August, the Hungarian Insurance Association (MABISZ) said on Friday. Payouts were under last year's levels, but policy holders got an average 120,000 forints per claim, up 20-40%, MABISZ said. The association attributed that increase to the greater intensity of storms as well as the higher costs of reconstruction. It noted that storm damage claims came to 63,000, just half to two-thirds of the number in the same period a year earlier.