

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/János Váida

Anchors made from recycled plastic at a floating exhibition in Sárazsadány, in north-east Hungary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Anniversary of crushing of 1956 revolution marked**

**Stats office prelim report on home constructions in Q1-Q3**

**Events related to war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# COURT: GRAFT LAW CONSTITUTIONAL

A recent legislative amendment making it possible to raise corruption cases in court is in line with Hungary's constitution, according to a top court ruling.

The amendment proposal was submitted to parliament as part of a package of bills aimed at facilitating an agreement with the European Commission on EU funding for Hungary.

Parliament initiated a preliminary constitutional review of the bill with a view to determining whether it was in line with the monopoly on the power to prosecute cemented in the constitution, the court said. The new provision in question amends the criminal proceedings law by establishing a new separate procedure for priority criminal offences relating to the exercise of public authority or the management of public assets. The amendment gives the court the power to correct a decision by an investigative authority or prosecutor against opening or continuing criminal proceedings in the case of a priority offence concerning the exercise of public authority or the management of public assets. The amendment also guarantees the petitioner for legal remedy the opportunity to make a motion for prosecution, it added.

**SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY-LAOS PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS BOTH COUNTRIES**

The reliable and predictable partnership between Hungary and Laos benefits both countries, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Thursday, adding that this was even more important “under the current challenging international circumstances”. Addressing a joint press conference with his Laotian counterpart, Saleumxay Kommasith, Szijjártó said the negative impacts of the war in Ukraine were being felt worldwide. “Although we are thousands of kilometres apart, we both want the same thing, which is peace,” he said. “It is in both of our interests that the war in Ukraine ends as soon as possible.” He said decisions and remarks that risk escalating the war were “extremely harmful” to both Hungary and Laos. “We respectfully ask the international community to stop making statements and decisions that risk escalation and instead concentrate on peace,” he added.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó praised bilateral economic cooperation, which he said could mitigate the “difficulties caused by the war and the failed sanctions policy”. Hungarian businesses are carrying out investments worth 80 billion forints (EUR 196.4m) in Laos’s food industry, water management and IT sectors as part of a tied aid scheme launched in the South-East Asian country, the minister said, adding that preparations were under way for a fourth such programme. Hungarian

companies are investing around 10 billion forints in the development of Laos’s electronic ID system, 30 billion in the establishment of a comprehensive food safety system and 40 billion forints in the construction of a water treatment plant for the capital, he said. Hungary and Laos have also concluded an investment protection agreement, he said. Szijjártó said he and Saleumxay had signed a higher-education cooperation agreement for 2023-2025, adding that Hungary will continue to offer scholarships to 150 Laotian students looking to study in Hungary each year.

In response to a question about gas purchases, Szijjártó said prices on the gas exchange were highest when demand is high, as had been the case in August. But now that everyone has filled up their gas storage facilities, demand is down and prices have fallen, he said. He added, however, that countries would begin stocking up on gas again once the heating season was over, which would drive up gas prices. “There is some delay in the pricing of long-term agreements when compared with the current price on the gas exchange...” Szijjártó said. “Everyone should clam down; the current low prices will be reflected in Hungary’s purchase agreements.”

Concerning ties between Hungary and the United States, Szijjártó said Hungary had applied the same openness to its relations with the US over the last nearly 13 years, adding that bilateral ties were changing in accordance with the leadership in the

White House. “The remarks that we have seen from some representatives of the United States in the recent period are about anything but mutual respect,” he said.

**AGMIN: FOOD SECURITY DEPENDENT ON REDUCING ENERGY PRICES**

Food price inflation is driven by high energy costs linked to European Union sanctions against Russia, an agriculture ministry official has said, arguing that sanctions policies should be changed to curb high food prices with a view to boosting food security. The sector increasingly hinges on knowledge-intensive technologies, and the future and competitiveness of Hungarian agriculture largely depends on providing further relevant training opportunities for rural inhabitants, Oszkár Ökrös, the ministry’s deputy state secretary for international relations, told an OECD meeting of agriculture ministers entitled Building sustainable agricultural and food systems in a changing environment.

The deputy state secretary said common challenges included boosting agricultural productivity while jointly implementing climate protection measures. This requires adapting to climate conditions by making better informed planting choices. But doing so requires close social cooperation between farmers and consumers, including changing consumption and production habits, he added. A well-trained workforce and the successful



transfer of skills is key to the success of Hungary's agricultural sector, Ökrös told the meeting. Hungary is paying higher advances on EU direct subsidies, making cheap working capital loans available for agricultural enterprises, and postponing loan repayments linked to working capital and investments from September 2022 to December 2023, among other measures, the statement said.

### **AZBEJ: PRESERVING CHRISTIANITY STATE TASK**

Preserving Christianity is a task enshrined in the Hungarian basic law, the state secretary for aiding persecuted Christians said at the inauguration of a new section of the Armenian Catholic Church's house in Budapest. Addressing the ceremony, Tristan Azbej said Christianity is "a power" that has been essential in preserving Hungary's statehood over the past thousand years. He noted the Hungary Helps programme launched by the government to aid persecuted Christians around the world and the 90 million forint (EUR 220,000) contribution to the new section.

Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest and head of the Hungarian Catholic Church, said at the ceremony that the Armenian Catholic community had long been an integral part of Hungarian society. The cardinal was joined by Patriarch Raphael Bedros (Peter) Minassian XXI, head of the Armenian Catholic Church, in consecrating the new section.

### **HUNGARIAN CONVICTED OF ASSAULT, AIDING PROSTITUTION ARRESTED IN GERMANY**

A Hungarian fugitive with six outstanding warrants for assault and aiding prostitution, among other crimes, was arrested in Chemnitz, in eastern Germany, according to police.hu. The man identified as László Csaba V was sentenced to 11 years in prison for assault resulting in lasting disability, for forcing women in his family as well as acquaintances into prostitution, and for fraud. Instead of reporting to prison, he disappeared two years ago, police.hu said. The National Investigation Bureau (NNI) contacted sister organisations through ENFAST, the European Network of Fugitive Active Search Teams. German officers arrested the man on Nov. 1.

### **OVER 12,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON WEDNESDAY**

Fully 6,659 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Wednesday, while another 5,505 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 317 people, ORFK told MTI on Thursday. 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 37 people, 14 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

### **TENS OF THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS PARTICIPATE IN MINISTRY SURVEY**

Several tens of thousands of teachers have participated in an online survey organised by the interior ministry, and their responses will be used as a guideline for the government when planning future wage hikes for teachers, the ministry said. The majority of teachers want teachers who work in poor areas with disadvantaged children to receive priority when it comes to wage planning, and they also expressed agreement with linking pay increases to performance assessments. The pay rises are contingent on the successful outcome of an agreement to unlock Hungary's European Union funding, the ministry said, adding the planned increases would be the biggest made since the post-communist transformation. Participation in the survey was voluntary and submissions were anonymous, the ministry said.

### **DK MAYORS PROTEST AGAINST 'NATIONALISATION OF DOCTOR SURGERIES'**

Local mayors allied to the opposition Democratic Coalition object to a government attempt to "nationalise" doctors' surgeries. The government is seeking to fold 80-85 doctor

surgeries “which they did not manage to nationalise” in 2012 into the state network, Sándor Szaniszló, DK’s group leader said. The surgeries in question have so far functioned successfully professionally and financially, he said, adding that the proposal was aimed at further curbing the autonomy of local councils.

### **SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT EXTENDS APPLICATION TIMEFRAME FOR COMPANIES SEEKING RESCUE MONIES**

The government is giving companies extra time to apply for central funding as part of a scheme to rescue plants that are under financial strain due to current economic conditions linked to the war in Ukraine, the minister of foreign affairs and trade has announced. The application window for the scheme which supports investments that boost energy efficiency is being extended by four months, Péter Szijjártó said. Fully 168 companies initially made requests for subsidies totalling 200 billion forints (EUR 488m) for 500 billion worth of investments. Another 214 companies began the registration procedure but were unable to complete it within

the original timeframe. Szijjártó said every company in Hungary and every job “is important to us”, adding that the 214 companies in question will be allowed to complete their applications -- most of which are from the food and metal industries, as well as vehicle manufacturing and the chemical industry.

### **MTA HEAD OPENS FESTIVAL OF HUNGARIAN SCIENCE**

The festival of science is the festival of reality, the president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) said, opening the Festival of Hungarian Science in Budapest. The one-day festival is being held for the 19th time on Nov. 3, the anniversary of Count István Széchenyi offering his annual income to fund the precursor of MTA in 1825. In a message read out at the event, President Katalin Novák said “global knowledge is marked by the work of Hungarian minds. Humanity would be much poorer without the momentous findings of Albert Szent-Györgyi, János Neumann, Dénes Gábor or Katalin Karikó.” President Tamás Freund said “the knowledge of reality as described by science, and common actions taken based on that,

are the only thing to bring solutions to pressing global crises, be it a new virus or the peaceful handling of social tensions.”

### **RENOVATION OF PARLIAMENT INTERIOR POSTPONED DUE TO BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS**

The renovation of the interior of Hungary’s Parliament has been postponed due to budgetary constraints. The government has suspended all investment projects which are not already under way, including the modernisation of Parliament’s interior, owing to the economic climate linked to sanctions against Russia, the ministry of construction and investment said. Wednesday’s official gazette notes the government decision to launch an assessment of the proposed multi-year refurbishment. The project itself will be undertaken when it becomes financially viable to do so, it added. The 120-year-old building’s energy and security systems must be upgraded as part of the investment, and the plan for the refurbishment must be ready by mid-2023, the ministry said.