

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Chef Bence Dalnoki, bronze award winner of Bocuse d'Or, holds presentation in Budaörs

MTI/Zoltán Balogh

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU Defence Ministers Meet in Stockholm

Plenary session of parliament

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

'PEACE ONLY WAY TO SAVE LIVES'

The only way to save lives is through peace, not weapons deliveries or sanctions, Péter Szijjártó told MPs in parliament, calling on them to adopt a "pro-peace declaration" submitted by the ruling parties.

In a speech ahead of the debate, the foreign minister said the war had so far proved "disastrous", with "hundreds of thousands dead, millions displaced, hundreds of thousands of families torn apart and thousands drafted forcefully, while whole regions are in ruins." Although regional, he said, the war had global implications. He added that time was running out to stop it from turning into a world war. "Meanwhile, the European economy is floundering." Szijjártó insisted that Europe and "the transatlantic region" were "in a state of war psychosis". Some in Brussels, he said, saw weapons deliveries to Ukraine as a competition between the US and Europe in terms of who could provide more. Given that the war is situated in Europe, it is Europe that felt its negative effects "directly", he added. As a neighbouring country, Hungary has firsthand experience of the suffering the war has caused. "This war cannot be won, it can only have losers", Szijjártó said. The Hungarians of Transcarpathia are being drafted into the Ukrainian military, and some have already died, he said.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY ALREADY PAID HIGH PRICE FOR WAR

Although Hungary is not responsible for the war, the country and its citizens have already paid a high price for it, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told MPs in parliament. "No one can expect us to sacrifice even more," he said in parliament. "The international community should focus on saving lives, but that is only possible through peace rather than delivering weapons and imposing sanctions," he said. Sanctions have failed nine times, "and you would think we shouldn't try it a tenth time," he said. The EU, however, is preparing to do just that, he said. The global majority is on the side of peace, and Hungary is part of that majority, he said. Peace requires open channels of communication so peace talks can remain a possibility, he said. Sustainable results will be "impossible" without direct talks between the US and Russia, he said. Meanwhile, Hungarians in Ukraine are losing one minority right after the other and are suffering provocations at a time when Hungary is in the midst of the largest humanitarian operation of its history to help Ukrainian refugees, he said. "Even as 1,247 Hungarian schools have accepted Ukrainian children, Ukraine is preparing to close minority schools from September, to strip [minorities] from the possibility to do their school-leaving exams and university admissions in their mother

tongue, and take away universities' right to choose the language of education," Szijjártó said. Hungary stands by Transcarpathian Hungarians and will use all international forums to aid them, he said. Szijjártó called on lawmakers to "become a part of the global pro-peace majority" and adopt the pro-peace resolution of the ruling parties.

NOVÁK GIVES SPEECH ON HUNGARY'S CHRISTIAN ROOTS IN NEW YORK

President Katalin Novák arrived in New York on Sunday, where she gave a talk about the Christian roots of the Hungarian state and politics, and the religion's social impact, at an event organised by the Bonum Commune Foundation.

Hungary is a Christian country "by definition and by its fate", and that is reflected in its way of life and traditions, Novák told an audience of Christian intellectuals. The country's efforts to help persecuted Christians worldwide have reached some 1 million people, she added. Hungarian politics is founded on the respect for work and human dignity, and the protection of family and children, she said. Hungarian family policy is rooted in Christian values. The government "doesn't attempt to tell anyone how they should live" but supports young families in having children, as well as traditional families and values, she said. Families are also the ones to sacrifice the most in war-torn Ukraine, Novák

noted. All the more reason to end the war "in the name of Christian values," and move towards a ceasefire and peace talks, she said. Novák is scheduled to address a meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in which she will focus on the importance of families.

SZIJJÁRTÓ TURNS TO BURGENLAND GOVERNOR OVER AUSTRIA-HUNGARY BORDER TRAFFIC CONSTRICTIONS

Hungary-Austria border traffic on the Burgenland side has become constricted at several crossing points, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Monday, noting that he has talked to Burgenland governor Hans Peter Doskozil by phone with a view to lifting the constrictions so that locals can continue to enjoy normal living conditions. In a social media post said the governor was a "constructive and fair person", and he had not been disappointed in the progress of their talks. Professional discussions will get under way and a proposal will be prepared on how to ensure free-flowing traffic at the border.

The mayor of Sopron, Farkas Ciprián (Fidesz-KDNP), turned to Szijjártó after the mayor of Schattendorf in Austria indicated that traffic at the road crossing between Agfalva and Schattendorf would serve as a footpath but for exceptional cases. Also, the Austrian

side wants to limit traffic at the Sopronkohida-Sankt Margarethen crossing. The two crossings ensure that Hungarians working in Austria can reach their workplaces. Cipirian said the measures violated basic freedoms of the European Union, namely the right to free movement and employment.

PARLT SPEAKER PAYS OFFICIAL VISIT TO KENYA

László Kövér, the speaker of parliament, has travelled to Kenya on an official visit at the invitation of Moses Masika Wetangula, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, the press chief of parliament told MTI on Sunday evening.

Kövé is the first house speaker to visit Kenya since the 1989/90 democratic transition, Zoltán Szilágyi said. Prior to his bilateral talks, Kövé delivered an address to Hungarians living in Nairobi at an event hosted by the Hungarian embassy to mark the upcoming March 15 national holiday. In his speech, Kövé drew a parallel between Hungary's 1848/49 revolution and freedom fight and Kenya's liberation from colonial oppression and becoming independent sixty years ago. "March 15 is for us, Hungarians, irrespective of where we live in the world, the birthday of our freedom in modern times," Kövé said. He asked the event's participants to "tell your Kenyan friends that

March 15 is the celebration of freedom of a country that had never had an ambition to colonise any other country in its thousand-year history in Europe". "March 15 is a celebration of a nation that was has been treated as a colony within Europe many times. But the Hungarian nation has always resisted such attempts and, even at the cost of sacrifices and suffering, it has always defended its own freedom," Kövé said.

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such attempts and, even at the cost of sacrifices and suffering, it has always defended its own freedom," Kövé said.

CSÁK: MORE THAN 126,000 STUDENTS APPLY FOR UNIVERSITY PLACES

More than 126,000 secondary school-leavers have applied to study at Hungarian colleges and universities from September, János Csák, the minister of culture and innovation, told a press conference. The number has increased from 99,000 last year, he said, adding that the rising number of applicants indicated that Hungary's higher education system "has become more attractive". He said the government implemented many changes in the past 5 years with the aim of developing a nation of "economically strong, culturally confident, self-sufficient families here and in the Carpathian Basin".

Csák welcomed that more students than ever applied from disadvantaged regions, and that many indicated a desire to become school and kindergarten teachers. State Secretary Balázs Hankó attributed the increase in the number of applicants to a revamped entrance system, noting that 20% of applicants chose majors in engineering, science, maths and computer technology. Hankó also noted that 11 Hungarian universities were among the world's top 5%.

ORBÁN: HUNGARY PRO-PEACE, 'KEEPING POWDER DRY'

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gathered information about the Hungarian armed forces' defence capabilities at the joint forces command control centre in Székesfehérvár on Monday, his press chief said. Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky briefed Orbán about the standing of the defence and armed forces development programme, the related training of personnel and achievements in capability development, Bertalan Havasi said. Orbán reiterated to the army leaders that in the current era of dangers, protecting Hungary is the government's most important aim. As a result, the development of the army and the defence industry must not slow down despite the economic crisis caused by sanctions, he added. "We, Hungarians are pro-peace but we must keep our powder dry," he said.

DOBREV ADVOCATES 'DREAM' OF BEING PART OF EUROPE

"Belonging to Europe has been a thousand-year dream of ours and we must not give it up," Klára Dobrev, MEP and shadow prime minister of the opposition Democratic Coalition, told a rally of her party in Miskolc, in northern Hungary. When Hungarians supported the 1989-1990 change of

political system they wanted to ensure that "prosperity is not conditional on snuggling up to the party state but on talent and hard work." Hungarians, their local governments, chambers and unions want to be consulted when making decisions about their future rather than accept "decisions made over our head", she said. "We are at home in Europe. By joining the EU and NATO Hungarians wanted to achieve a decent, predictable, European life," she said. Dobrev insisted that since 2010 the country had "received as much European funding as would have made two countries rich". "We could have adopted the euro, tidied up health care, and education," she said. "There is no 'sanctions-related' inflation; what people pay in shops and at filling stations is the price for the Orbán regime ... the consequences of bad governance," she said. "Hungary has a future in Europe ... even if the prime minister thinks that he has no more air in the EU and outside could be better; he can go but we will stay in Europe," Dobrev said.

US YOUNG REPUBLICANS 'MUCH INSPIRED' BY HUNGARY GOVT

The New York Young Republican Club takes a lot of inspiration from the activities of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his government, Gavin Wax, the club's 76th president, said in the latest instalment of The Bold Truth About Hungary, the podcast of the state secretary for international

communications, Zoltán Kovács. Referring to the Republican youth organisation recognising Orbán with their John Foster Dulles Award last year, Wax said it had been a step in their efforts to build links between conservative movements, which he saw as key in Transatlantic cooperation. He said the Hungarian government's activities were unique in Europe in the broader Western world in general. Wax said Hungary's For Fundamental Rights Centre (Alapjogokért Központ) and similar institutions were crucial in building a "counter-narrative" to leftist trends. He said it was "refreshing" to see that countries like Hungary embraced such values as supporting families and child birth or reinforcing their borders.

Wax was in Hungary as an organiser of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) Hungary, which will take place in Budapest in May.

CENTRE FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: 'NATIONAL CONSENSUS' ON NEED TO PROTECT CHILDREN

Fully 95% of respondents in a recent survey by the Centre for Fundamental Rights said it is unacceptable that an assistant in a school "should engage in a sexual relationship with an underage student", the centre said. The survey showed that 70% of those asked rejected "classes informing about various sexual orientations held without the parents' consent".

The phone survey was conducted on Feb. 27-28 with a sample of 1,000 adults after "recent scandals", including one involving child pornography. The analysts slammed the leftist parties for their "vehemently opposing the child protection law which they consider mere propaganda", and warned that over 55% of leftist voters participating in the survey condemned classes "promoting sexual orientations" at school. "Hungary's public opinion sees the child protection law as a guarantee for the well-being of children as opposed to the left's view if it as hate-mongering propaganda," the centre said. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they would make the law more stringent, while 19% would maintain it in its current form and 9% would prefer changes to make it more lenient, it said.

DK: RULING PARTIES BOYCOTT WELFARE CTTTE MEETING

MPs of the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance boycotted a meeting of parliament's welfare committee on Monday, Zoltán Varga, the committee's head delegated by opposition Democratic Coalition said. Varga told journalists that the agenda of the meeting, thwarted for the second time, would have included opposition proposals such as tackling the "catastrophic" situation around Hungary's health services such as "the serial dismissal of doctors and the shuttering of hospital wards".

The opposition parties invited Interior Minister Sandor Pinter to the meeting, but he said he "could only attend towards the end of the year", Varga said. At the press conference, DK politician Erzsébet Gy. Nemeth demanded that retirees receive a 1.5% pension increase retroactively from January 2022, while those whose payments are lower than last year's median pension should receive a supplement of 100,000 forints.

UKRAINE CRISIS - MORE THAN 9,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,126 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Sunday, while 4,992 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 51 people. Budapest received 15 people, 8 children among them, by train.

RETAIL SALES DOWN BY 4.5 % IN JAN

Retail sales in Hungary fell by an annual 3.9% in January, or 4.5% when adjusted for calendar-year effects, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Retail sales dropped for the second month in a row, KSH said. Adjusted food sales fell by 4.8%, non-food sales by 1.5% and vehicle fuel sales by 9.7%. In absolute terms, retail sales came to 1,333 billion forints (EUR 3.5bn). Food sales

accounted for 48% of the total, non-food sales for 34% and sales at petrol stations for 18%.

LISZT FERENC INTL VOTED BEST EUROPEAN AIRPORT IN 2022

Budapest's Liszt Ferenc International Airport has been voted the best European airport in 2022 among airports with 15-25 million passengers, based on passenger feedback, the Airports Council International (ACI) said. The award is given based on an international and independent survey, relying solely on the evaluation by passengers, ACI said. ACI assesses the quality of services at nearly 400 international airports worldwide each year, with a survey using more than 30 performance indicators. Overall passenger satisfaction scores were above 4 on a scale of 5 throughout the year and significantly higher overall than during the busiest year of 2019, ACI said.

It noted that the value of developments implemented by Budapest Airport in the last four years reached 90 billion forints (EUR 237m) by the end of 2022 and will exceed 100 billion this spring. The developments include capacity expansion and infrastructure, sustainability and other investments to enhance the passenger experience.

Meanwhile, it was announced that Chris Dinsdale, the airport's chief executive, will leave his position at the end of July to head the operator

of Calgary International Airport. Dinsdale's work has "contributed greatly to the development of the airport as a flagship of Hungarian tourism and a worthy gateway to Hungary", Budapest Airport said, adding that Dinsdale's replacement will be announced shortly.

HUNGARIANS CONTRIBUTING TO EUROPEAN QUANTUM COMPUTER DEVELOPMENT

The development of a 1,000-qubit quantum computer is under way with the participation of 28 research partners from 10 countries, including Hungary, the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) said on Monday.

Hungary is contributing research from the BME's natural sciences department and the Wigner Research Center for Physics to the 7-year OpenSuperQPlus (Open Superconducting Quantum Computers) project, the statement said.

OpenSuperQPlus is the continuation of the OpenSuperQ project, which also involved researchers from Hungary, France, Holland, Finland, Germany, Sweden and several startups specialising in quantum research.

The first phase of the project lasting 3.5 years is planned to develop a 100-qubit quantum computer. European Union's Horizon Europe programme is providing 20 million euros to the OpenSuperQPlus project, and BME will receive 274,000 euros for its related research.

GOOGLE STREET VIEW CARS TO REVISIT CITIES IN HUNGARY

Google Street View cars will start collecting fresh images in Hungary from Thursday, Google Magyarország said. The cars will visit the cities of Sopron, Szekszárd, Mezőtúr, Szentés, Tapolca, Karcag, Baja and Miskolc, among others. Google Street View launched in Hungary in 2013. Images have been refreshed a number of times since then.

MOULDTECH PARTNERS WITH UNI TO DEVELOP DRONE

Hungarian engineering services company MouldTech Systems and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) have developed a fixed-wing drone as part of a 1.5 billion forint R+D project which launched in 2019 and received 890 million forints of support from the National R+D+I

Fund. The drone is equipped with four, 120-degree viewing angle cameras, including two with night vision.

WEATHER SERVICE: WINTER SECOND WARMEST SINCE 1901

This winter has been the second warmest since 1901, after the winter of 2006/2007, the National Meteorological Service (OMSZ) said on Monday.

The average temperature in the winter months for the whole country was 3.1 C, 2.7 C warmer than in the 1991-2020 period, the service said. Average temperatures in southern parts of the country reached 4 C, while they stayed below 3 degrees in the northern hills and in the south-east. The number of winter days with sub-zero temperatures at night was 14, as opposed to 63 on average, while "winter days" with temperatures staying below zero all day numbered 3, as opposed to an average of 22. The warmest winter day, with a daily maximum of 20.6 C, was reported from Bába, in southern Hungary, on Feb. 21, while the coldest day was Dec. 13, at -15.3 degrees in Gagybátor, in the north. The OMSZ also said that in terms of precipitation, this winter had been better than previous ones, with 1.5 times more rain or snow than usual.