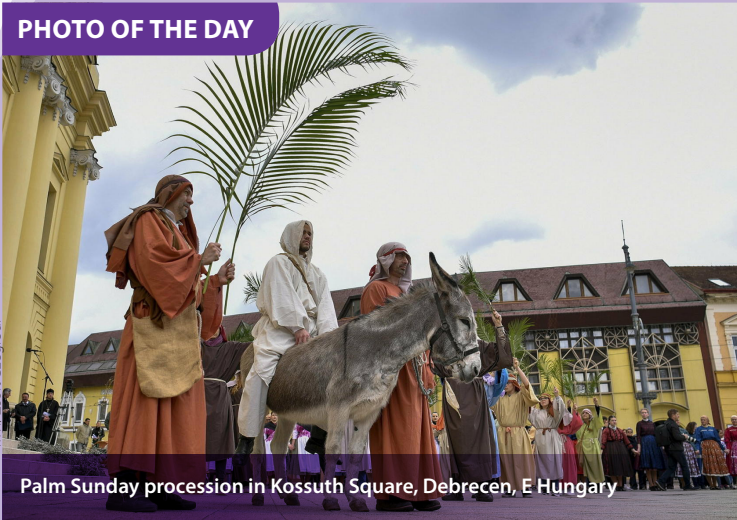


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Palm Sunday procession in Kossuth Square, Debrecen, E Hungary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**FM Péter Szijjártó addresses  
Budapest LNG Summit**

**Plenary session of parliament**

**Events related to war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# LEADERS LOBBY BRUSSELS OVER UKRAINE GRAIN

The leaders of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria have turned to European Commission over Ukrainian grain imports that are upsetting the European market.

The leaders appealed to EC president Ursula von der Leyen, asking her to take immediate steps to “handle the untenable situation caused by growing imports of Ukrainian grain into Europe”, Agriculture Minister István Nagy noted. The letter signed by the Bulgarian president and the prime ministers of the other four countries noted that the markets of neighbouring countries have been swamped by unprecedented amounts of grain and nuts from Ukraine. Due to “failed Brussels sanctions”, farmers in those states have already been hit hard by growing energy prices and input costs, the letter noted. Large quantities of poultry, eggs and honey are also being imported from Ukraine, which are exempt from customs on all farm products, depressing prices below Hungarian producers’ production costs, he added. The signatories proposed that the EU funding be raised for struggling regions and new resources added to bolster the costs the CAP cannot fund, he said. The EC should also consider buying the grain from regions near the Ukrainian border to help farmers struggling to sell their produce, Nagy added.

## **FIDESZ GROUP LEADER WARNS OF POSSIBLE NUCLEAR WAR**

If more and more countries engage in the war in Ukraine, the greater the likelihood is of a world war involving nuclear weapons, the group leader of ruling Fidesz said in an interview. Máté Kocsis vowed that the ruling parties would “fight” to make sure movement is made towards peace and negotiations. Meanwhile, Hungarian leftist parties represent pro-war interests at odds with Hungarian interests, whereas the government is fighting against the escalation of war with a pro-peace parliamentary resolution and by pushing for negotiations, he said in an interview to public radio.

Leftist parties promoted the cause of war during the general election campaign, calling for weapons and soldiers to be sent to Ukraine, Kocsis said. Hungarians leftists “have the task, in exchange for dollars, to represent a pro-war stance in Hungary, because that’s what is in the American interest,” he said, adding that many European countries appeared to be going the same direction.

He said the war had widened, and instead of using their power, influence and military superiority to an immediate ceasefire, Western powers “are drifting further and further into the war by supplying ever more effective and powerful

weapons”. “We are steps away from western European or other Western countries sending soldiers to Ukraine, which we think is something we should avoid at all costs,” he said.

Put to him that leftist parties had suggested that Hungary should adopt a similar UN resolution, Kocsis said the Hungarian parliament should prioritise Hungarian interests. Kocsis said the ruling parties would work strenuously for peace negotiations and the prevention of the war’s escalation. The opposition rejected backing the pro-peace declaration in the same way they rejected the government’s stance on migration, coronavirus vaccines and energy sanctions, he insisted.

The resolution is the strongest political response to the pressure and challenges Hungary faces, he added. Regarding the NATO integration of Finland and Sweden, Kocsis noted that Fidesz lawmakers supported Finland’s accession. The ruling parties are still divided on certain issues regarding Sweden joining the alliance, so talks are ongoing, he said.

## **MINISTER: HUNGARY NEEDS 500,000 ADDITIONAL WORKERS**

Hungary’s labour market is in need of 500,000 additional workers who should preferably be found on the national market before the

country turns to guest workers, the economic development minister told a meeting of the National Council for Sustainable Development. Detailing the industrial development strategy, Márton Nagy said Hungary’s economy should be built on investments, which required a constant stream of foreign capital, modernisation and research and development. He said Hungary’s investment rate was 27.2% last year, the third-highest among OECD countries. The government, he added, was committed to Hungary’s convergence despite the negative effects of the war and the energy crisis. He said Hungary’s GDP per capita reached 77.5% of the European Union average last year, rising from 75% a year earlier. “Those who say Hungary’s convergence was interrupted in 2022 aren’t telling the truth,” he said. “The indicators prove that this was the biggest jump in convergence in a decade.”

With a targeted GDP growth of 1.5% this year, Hungary’s development level is approaching 80% of the EU average, Nagy said, adding that there was a “realistic chance” of reaching 90% by 2030. Nagy said evidence of the success of the government’s policy of opening up to the East could be found in FDI and noted a “significant” expansion of the share of Asian investors. He said Hungary’s role as a bridge between

German vehicle makers and their battery making partners in the East “suits the country well”. He added that with the construction of new capacity, Hungary was set to become the fourth-biggest battery maker in the world.

### **POLL: LARGE MAJORITY OF VOTERS STILL BEHIND ORBÁN**

A large majority of registered voters still support Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, according to a fresh poll by the Centre for Fundamental Rights. The think-tank’s survey found 58% of registered voters in favour of Orbán as against 18% who preferred his one-time challenger, Péter Márki-Zay. “The prime minister in power since 2010 enjoys more support in all social groups than his one-time challenger...” the think-tank added. Its report cited Orbán’s “pro-peace posture” in respect of the war in Ukraine, policies to protect jobs, new family policy measures, more generous pensions and measures to combat inflation among the reasons for his popularity. It also referred to the government’s explicit promotion of national interests in contrast to the way in which the opposition lay itself open to foreign influence on the back of “dollars from abroad”. The phone poll was conducted with a representative sample of 1,000 adults between March 27 and 29.

### **CHRISTDEM MEP: EU SHOULD RETHINK SYRIA STRATEGY**

The European Union must rethink its approach to Syria, and the situation after the earthquake there presents an opportunity to reconsider its sanctions policy against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, Christian Democrat MEP György Hölvényi said on Saturday. Hölvényi is visiting earthquake-hit areas in Syria as part of a humanitarian mission to assess the most pressing humanitarian needs there.

He said in a statement that the world soon “forgot the thousands of victims” of the earthquake, adding that reliable data on how many people were injured in the disaster were scant. More than 77,000 Syrian families were displaced and 4 million people were directly affected by the earthquake there, he noted. He warned that suffering would deepen and there would be an increase in emigration in the absence of a change of approach by the international community. Hölvényi is scheduled to visit St. Louis Hospital in Aleppo, which was built with Hungarian help and meet Cardinal Mario Zenari, the apostolic nuncio of Syria, as well as the Syrian director of the Jesuit refugee service, among other religious leaders. He noted that he will then write a report for European decision-makers dealing with Syria. The Hungarian politician said it was necessary to

“find a way” for sanctions to achieve their political goals without increasing suffering, and a new strategic approach was in order to achieve this.

### **SZILÁGYI: TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY STRONG, PEACE THE ONLY SOLUTION**

Hungary is providing the Transcarpathian Hungarian community will all the support it possibly can to ensure that Hungarians living in western Ukraine can stay where they are, Péter Szilágyi, the deputy state secretary for the policy for Hungarian communities abroad, said in Toronto at a fund-raising event.

Szilágyi said the relationship between the diaspora and Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin was deepening thanks to the work of the past years. He said that Hungary in 2023, “the year of the caring nation”, was dedicated to nurturing national values and looking after Hungarian communities in neighboring countries and in the diaspora. Regarding the war in Ukraine, he said at the event held on Saturday local time that Hungary was determined not to get dragged into it, and it called for a ceasefire and peace negotiations. Hungary continues to give priority to supporting schools and organisations of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, he said, thanking the National Alliance of Hungarians in Canada for organising the fundraising event.

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## **PÁRBSZÉD FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST ORBÁN FOR ‘SCARE- MONGERING’**

Opposition Párbeszéd said it is filing a complaint against Prime Minister Viktor Orbán “and his Fidesz associates” for “scare-mongering”. Addressing a press conference, Tímea Szabó, the party’s group leader, noted that in an interview with public radio earlier in the day, the prime minister had said that “the left wing remains pro-war”. Szabó called Orbán’s remark a “blatant lie”, pointing out that under Hungary’s penal code, those who “spread false information that causes anxiety or confusion among the public during a state of emergency” faced a penalty of up to three years in prison. She said Orbán’s and ruling Fidesz’s insistence that the opposition, including Párbeszéd, was pro-war constituted scare-mongering, leaving the party with no choice but to file a complaint. “A prime minister cannot act so irresponsibly with such nefarious political goals in such a tense situation when there is actually a war going on in a neighbouring country,” Szabó said, calling on Orbán to “stop spreading fake news”.

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## **DONÁTH TOPS MOMENTUM’S EP LIST**

Opposition Momentum has decided that MEP Anna Donáth will top the party’s list in the 2024 EP elections

followed by MEP Katalin Cseh, according to a statement on Sunday after a meeting of party delegates on Sunday. Next year’s EP elections will be the first time since the general election that voters will have a chance to declare their view of the Hungarian government, the party’s statement said. Also at stake in the EP election is the formation in which the opposition tackles the 2026 general election and which party or parties dominate the field, it added.

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## **BUDAPEST POLICE SEEK ANOTHER THREE GERMAN NATIONALS OVER FEB VIOLENT ATTACKS**

Budapest police on Friday said they have issued arrest warrants for another three German nationals in connection with organised armed attacks against alleged participants of a far-right commemoration in the capital last month. The Budapest Police Headquarters (BRFK) referred to the incidents as “Antifa attacks” in a statement posted on the website police.hu. BRFK said earlier it was investigating assault and other crimes committed as a group against alleged participants of a far-right commemoration marking the anniversary of the Nazi breakout of the Castle District during the siege of Budapest on Feb. 11, 1945. It said the evidence gathered so far suggested that the perpetrators had attacked people unknown to them, whom they picked because they were

wearing clothing indicating far-right views. Police said that 7-8 people had carried out attacks using telescopic stun batons and knuckle dusters over a number of days in Budapest. Some attacked a group of Polish tourists, two of whom sustained grave injuries. In the other attacks, a man was assaulted on the outskirts of Budapest, a couple was beaten in downtown Pest and another, a German couple, in the Castle District.

BRFK said on Friday they are working in close cooperation with German police. Two of the four suspects in the case, a German and an Italian national, have been taken into custody. A third suspect, also a German national, has been placed under criminal supervision and the fourth, a Hungarian national, is out on bail, BRFK said. “The message is clear: we will not tolerate any attacks on people in the capital, whether they be on an ideological basis or not,” BRFK said, adding that they will use all legal means at their disposal to identify the perpetrators and carry out the necessary procedure against them. BRFK has already issued arrest warrants for another three suspects, all of them German nationals.

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## **PRESIDENT PRESENTS HIGHEST HUNGARY HONOUR TO SÁNDOR CSÁNYI**

President Katalin Novák decorated Sándor Csányi, chairman and chief executive of OTP Bank and head of

the Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ), with the Hungarian Order of St Stephen, the highest honour in Hungary, at the presidential Sándor Palace. Csányi received the award in recognition of his achievements in bolstering Hungary's reputation abroad and his paramount role in creating and developing a stable banking system which has served Hungary's economic competitiveness. The award also recognises Csányi's accomplishments as one of central Europe's most prominent business leaders, as well as his commitment to national values and interests. In addition, the award is a recognition of his exemplary achievements in supporting Hungarian culture, education and sport as well as talent management. He was nominated for the honour by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. In her laudation, Novák said Csányi was "unquestionably a part of and a source of Hungary's economic strength", noting that OTP Bank also held its own on the international market. She also praised Csányi's support for disadvantaged youth.

In his acceptance speech, Csányi said that over the past decades he had always put Hungary's interests before those of the companies and organisations he led. Csányi has been chairman-CEO of OTP Bank since 1992. He has been chairman of

the Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) since July 2010. He serves as president of the board of the Prima Primissima Awards presented annually to recognise artists, athletes, as well as representatives of academic life, popular culture, education and the press. The award ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Cardinal Péter Erdő, the Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, members of government, public dignitaries and past recipients of the award.

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### **MORE THAN 10,000 REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON SATURDAY**

Fully 5,757 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Saturday, while 4,629 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 72 people, ORFK said on Sunday.

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### **HUNGARY CITY SENDS BUSES TO UKRAINE**

Helping those in need in line with "our strength, size and abilities" is a basic moral duty, a government official said in Uzhorod on Sunday, at the arrival of six buses donated to Ukraine by the

city of Veszprem, in central Hungary. The buses are the first shipment of 14 used vehicles, to be delivered to Ukrainian cities where the war destroyed the public transport fleet, Levente Magyar said. One will serve in Transcarpathia, in western Ukraine, he added.

Hungary is willing and able to contribute to the reconstruction of Ukraine, he said. During the visit, Magyar said he would also aim to review current issues regarding Ukrainian-Hungarian ties, which he said had been "disturbed by regulatory issues regarding the Hungarian minority here which we couldn't agree on." He said he hoped for "good will and understanding" from Ukrainian partners to find a "reassuring, if not comprehensive, solution".

Magyar will also visit Hungarian-funded infrastructure developments in Bucha and Borodyanka, two localities near Kyiv, occupied and destroyed by the Russian army early in the war. "Despite the appearances some wish to maintain, Hungary has an active part in aiding Ukraine," he said. Magyar also met ethnic Hungarian leaders in Beherove (Beregszász) earlier in the day, and said he had hopes that the "issues around the use of the mother tongue, an extremely sensitive one for the local Hungarian minority, could be brought to a resting point."