

PHOTO OF THE DAY



President Katalin Novák with former president János Áder and former first lady Anita Herczegh at the annual Pentecost Pilgrimage in Şumuleu Ciuc

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

Stats office reports on Q1 investment figures

EU General Affairs Council meets

President Novák receives Hungarian Special Olympics World Games team

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY, SERBIA 'HISTORIC FRIENDS'

A once historic enmity between Hungary and Serbia has turned into a historic friendship between the two countries, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said at a rally in Belgrade.

Addressing a gathering of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), Szijjártó said in Serbian: "The Hungarian nation today considers the Serbian nation their brother." Szijjártó said the friendship that had developed between the two nations was thanks to Aleksandar Vučić, "your president". "Under the leadership of your president, Serbia is treating the Hungarian community in Vojvodina in such a way that serves as a model for the whole world," Szijjártó said. He said both countries faced similar challenges, including "unrestrained attacks by the international liberal mainstream" over their perseverance in standing up for their national interests. "They are attacking us because we want peace in Ukraine and reject participation in increasing the risk of the war's escalation, and ... reject any diktats from abroad over our affairs," Szijjártó said. He said the attacks would not stop in the future, because the liberals "cannot digest that we Hungarians and Serbs follow our own national path and we are successful". "But we are not going to yield to them, but will endure..." he said.

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FIDESZ MEP: RECENT EP REPORT 'ABSURD ATTEMPT AT BLACKMAIL, PRESSURE'

The European Parliament resolution declaring Hungary unfit to hold the European Union's rotating presidency "is absurd", an MEP of ruling Fidesz told public radio, saying it was "yet another attempt to blackmail and put pressure on Hungary". "The latest attack is all about Hungary not deserving any European Union funding, and [about how the country] is not worthy to take on the EU's rotating presidency in 2024," Balázs Hidvéghi said.

The proposal submitted by MEPs from several party families, including Katalin Cseh of Momentum, will be discussed in the EP next Wednesday and a vote will be held on Thursday, he said, adding that it was being rushed through. Hungary, he said, was a "reliable and good partner" when it came to talks on accessing EU funds, but the EP "did not want an agreement to come about". Hungary, he said, showed that "member states can do things" in a way that diverges from the Brussels consensus and that national, Christian Democratic politics "can succeed in a way that people understand and support".

Hidvéghi also said the European Union was gripped by "war psychosis", and "everyone is talking about weapon deliveries and military involvement". Hungary's pro-peace stance, he added, had deepened the rift further.

He said the institution of the rotating presidency was "a pillar of the EU", and the EP had "no business deciding or even consulting" over which country served at the helm.

Meanwhile, the Fidesz MEP said that the EU was discussing energy policy plans that would force Hungary to abandon its policy which guaranteed some of the "cheapest utility costs in the EU". He called the plan "utterly illogical". The EU proposals in response to the war, he said, sacrificed European interests, resulting in skyrocketing energy prices. At the same time, it was "impossible to see" how the sanctions were weakening Russia, he added. Hungary's government has declared its commitment to protecting its utility price caps, he said. "We will not give in to EU proposals," he said. Hidvéghi said the EU should work to allow Hungary access to the funds "it is entitled to". Its policies should also prioritise Europeans rather than other countries and considerations, he added. The ruling party MEP said dissatisfaction in the EU had been widespread lately, and demonstrations against high utility prices were an example of this. An increasing number of countries "will probably return to normality and realistic decision-making", and treat energy security as the priority it is, Hidvéghi added.

NOVÁK ATTENDS PILGRIMAGE IN ȘUMULEU CIUC

President Katalin Novák, attending Pentecost mass in Șumuleu Ciuc

(Csíksomlyó), in central Romania, said it was "uplifting to experience the togetherness of the nation". The open-air mass is part of the largest pilgrimage of Hungarian Catholics, drawing hundreds of thousands of believers from Hungary and the diaspora every year. Talking to Hungarian public media, Novák said the pilgrimage united Christianity and Hungarian identity. This year's attendees prayed for peace, which seems even more valuable with the war in a neighbouring country, where Hungarian nationals have also lost their lives, she said. After mass, the president visited the church in Șumuleu Ciuc, and the statue of the Virgin Mary which the Catholic Church declared miraculous statue in 1798. Former President János Áder and Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén also attended.

SÁNDOR PALACE: ROMANIA'S PROTEST OVER HUNGARY PRESIDENT'S ȘUMULEU CIUC VISIT 'EXAGGERATED'

The Romanian foreign ministry's protest of the Hungarian president's remarks in connection with her attendance of the annual Pentecost Pilgrimage in Șumuleu Ciuc (Csíksomlyó), central Romania, is "exaggerated and unjustified, but not unusual", the presidential Sándor Palace told news portal Mandiner on Monday. Romania's foreign ministry contacted the Hungarian embassy in Bucharest in connection with what it called "inappropriate public messages"

conveyed during the president's visit to Romania. Asked by Mandiner.hu to comment on the matter, the office of the president said the Romanian ministry's objection was "exaggerated and unjustified, but not unusual". The Sándor Palace said the social media post in question, a video showing the singing of the Szekler Anthem at the Şumuleu Ciuc pilgrimage, can still be viewed in its original form on the president's social media platforms. In her Facebook post of the video, President Katalin Novák highlighted the line in the anthem "Let Transylvania fall not, O Our God!"

HOLLIK: FIDESZ TO START INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON WAR IN UKRAINE

Ruling Fidesz will launch an information campaign "on the dangers involved in a pro-war position", István Hollik, communications director of the party, said in a video statement. "We have long known that Hungary's left wing is on the side of war," Hollik insisted, adding: "If they were in government, Hungary would be at war ... they would send weapons or even soldiers to the war in Ukraine." This, he added, would be "extremely dangerous for peace and security in Hungary".

JOBBIK CALLS FOR RETRAINING SUPPORT INSTEAD OF GUEST WORKERS

Opposition Jobbik is calling for free retraining opportunities for Hungarian

labourers instead of "organised imports of guest workers", deputy leader Dániel Z Kárpát said. The costs of training could be financed from an "inflation premium" of several hundreds of billions of forints "collected by the government after the brutally high prices paid by Hungarian families", he said.

He also said the reasons why a portion of the population was inactive must be understood, adding that if normal wages and fair working conditions were offered, some of them could also be involved in employment. The companies importing guest workers should instead focus on finding ways to motivate the economically inactive to enter the labour market, he said, adding that an earlier Jobbik proposal to offer non-refundable support to companies that employ at least 90% of workers from Hungary or the European Economic Area could improve the situation. In Hungary, Hungarian workers and Hungarian small businesses should come first, he said.

KARÁCSONY: CHAIN BRIDGE REVAMP TO WRAP UP EARLY

The reconstruction of Budapest's Chain Bridge will be completed some six weeks earlier than originally planned, in the summer rather than autumn, Gergely Karácsony, the mayor of Budapest, said. The revamp, "postponed for many years", will be finished early, within cost, according to the original plans and with full transparency, "and that,

unfortunately, is unique in Hungary", he said in a video posted on Facebook. If the authorities issue the relevant permits on time, the bridge can re-open for pedestrians as early as on August 20, he said. Whether motorists will be allowed on the bridge after the reconstruction will be decided in an online vote by Budapest citizens, he said.

TLC INAUGURATES HUF 21 BN INVESTMENT IN W HUNGARY

German-owned steel structure maker Termelés-Logistic-Centrum (TLC) inaugurated a 21 billion forint (EUR 56.4m) investment at its base in Lier, in western Hungary, on Friday. The state supported the investment, which is creating 80 jobs, with 2.2 billion forints, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó said at the ceremony.

CARDINAL ERDŐ: 'POPE FRANCIS PAID ATTENTION TO OUR PROBLEMS AND SITUATION'

From all the speeches given by Pope Francis during his visit to Hungary, "it could be felt that he paid attention to our problems and our situation", Cardinal Péter Erdő, the Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, said on Monday at a lecture in Budapest, adding that Hungarians "got the encouragement we need" from the pontiff. "Pope Francis came for a pastoral visit, and he spoke to us keeping in mind the peculiarities of Hungarian history

and paying attention to our pastoral needs,” Erdő said. The cardinal said that Pope Francis likes to visit small nations, and although Hungary is in the middle of Europe, “our history shows that we have always been a borderland between East and West or even North and South”. This involved a lot of suffering, but also many lessons and many opportunities over time, he added. Erdő said he believes Pope Francis was much less strict than usual during his meeting with priests and bishops in St. Stephen’s Basilica, owing to Hungary’s history. Pope Francis could feel the state of the Hungarian church, which suffered so much during communism, “he could see before his eyes” when priests and monks were imprisoned, and although he gave advice to the Hungarian community, he was not as tough as he usually is with the clergy, the cardinal added.

ÓKOVÁCS TO REMAIN HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA GENERAL DIRECTOR

Incumbent Szilveszter Ókovács has won the tender to serve as director general of the Budapest Opera House for another five years, Culture and Innovation Minister János Csák told a press conference. By winning the tender, Ókovács will be the longest serving director in the Opera’s history, he said. “This is an enormous opportunity and is going at the same time with an even greater responsibility,” Csák said. Ókovács expressed thanks to his colleagues and to the government for “the 100 billion forints invested in the institution’s development, and the additional 150 billion allocated for its operation which the Opera could match with an amount of 30 billion”. He said

his aim was to make the Hungarian State Opera an institution up to the highest of European standards.

Ókovács, a former television host who graduated as an opera singer, worked as government commissioner and then interim director at the Opera in 2011-2012. He has served two terms since 2013.

OVER 10,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,017 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Sunday, while 6,402 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 58 people, ORFK said on Monday. No refugees travelled to Budapest by train.