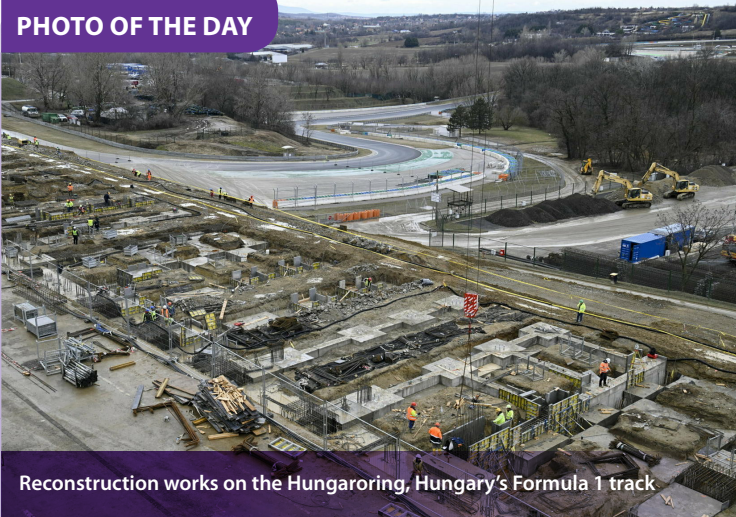


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Szilárd Koszticsák

Reconstruction works on the Hungaroring, Hungary's Formula 1 track

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office releases
2nd reading of Dec 2023
industrial output**

**Events related
to the wars in Ukraine,
Middle East**

TOP STORY

NOVÁK SUBMITS RESIGNATION TO PARLIAMENT

Katalin Novák, who announced her decision to resign from the post of president on Saturday, has tendered a written statement of her resignation to parliament, according to parliament's website.

Under the law, the president can resign by submitting a written statement, while the resignation requires parliament's approval to be complete. Parliament is allowed 15 days to request the president to reconsider her decision. If the president maintains her decision, parliament cannot deny its approval. The mandate of the president expires 15 days after the signing of the resignation statement, or on the day parliament approves the resignation. Under the constitution, parliament shall elect a successor within 30 days of the expiry of the previous president's mandate.

Novák announced her resignation on Saturday, in connection with her decision to grant clemency to a person convicted of helping to cover up child abuse. Former justice minister Judit Varga, who countersigned the pardon, resigned from all her positions and said she would retire from public life a few hours later. Máté Kocsis, the Fidesz parliamentary group leader, said their decisions showed that "on the right, mistakes have consequences." He said that Novák's resignation had been "a straightforward decision".

SZIJJÁRTÓ ATTENDS REBUILT SCHOOL INAUGURATION IN CROATIA

It is natural for Hungary to provide help to a neighbouring country when it is in trouble, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Croatia's Petrinja, addressing the inauguration of a school damaged in a devastating earthquake and rebuilt with 8.7 billion forints (EUR 22.5m) of Hungarian government support. The earthquake hit Croatia on Dec 28-29 in 2020, killing seven people and leaving another 28 injured. "We laid the cornerstone of the school 18 months ago and pupils could return to the 5,500sqm facility with 20 classrooms last month," Szijjártó said, adding that the school "provides high-level education to 350 children". He called the fully rebuilt school "proof of the friendship between Hungary and Croatia and their people". The minister noted that the Hungarian government had also supported the refurbishment of a school in Topolovac with 60 million forints and the rebuilding of a church in Sisak with 750 million forints.

KÖVÉR MEETS KYRGYZ COUNTERPART IN BUDAPEST

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér met his Kyrgyz counterpart, Nurlanbek Turgunbekovich Shakiev, in Budapest on Monday, and said that Hungary continued to see "developing the

eastern network" as a priority. Hungary is ready to step up its ties with Kyrgyzstan, the country's strategic partner since 2020, he said. Besides shared cultural and historical roots and varied political ties, educational and economic cooperation are also thriving, Kövér said, according to a statement of the parliament's press office. That cooperation had been boosted by opening embassies in each other's capitals, and the two countries have set up a joint economic committee headed by the two foreign ministers, he said.

The Organization of Turkic States has opened a representation in Budapest, further boosting cooperation with the region, he added. Kövér said Kyrgyzstan and Hungary both valued the freedom they had achieved more than 30 years ago, and wouldn't sacrifice it "for any cooperation". Hungary envisions the European Union as a community of sovereign states, "despite recent attempts to turn it into a centralised empire", he added. Just as Kyrgyzstan, Hungary valued traditional values such as the family, the nation and religious roots, he said. "Based on those shared values, Hungary is ready to represent and help the central Asian country's attempts to forge closer ties with the EU."

Shakiev said the energy sector, infrastructure development and tourism offered opportunities for closer cooperation with Hungary. He said a direct Budapest-Bishkek flight would have beneficial effects on those sectors. Kyrgyzstan sees Hungary, its

only strategic partner among EU member states, as "the gateway to the EU", he said. He thanked Hungary for a grant programme offering stipends for 200 Kyrgyz students wishing to study in Hungary. The talks were also attended by Deputy Speaker of Parliament Sándor Lezsák and lawmaker Sándor F Kovács, the head of parliament's Hungarian-Kyrgyz friendship group.

GULYÁS: HUNGARORING UPGRADE TO COST LESS THAN F1 RACE HOSTING FEE DISCOUNT

The ongoing upgrade of the Hungaroring race track is set to cost less than the hosting fee discount Hungary negotiated last year for the extension of the track's contract to host the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix, the head of the Prime Minister's Office said on Monday. The Hungarian state will save 107 billion forints (EUR 276.2m) with the hosting fee discount negotiated with F1's commercial rights holder for the contract extension until 2032, Gergely Gulyás told Hungarian GP organiser Hungaroring Sport's press conference. The public procurement to upgrade the Hungaroring's infrastructure, primarily the paddock, by 2026 was won by a 78.9 billion forint bid, Gulyás noted. So far, 12 billion forints has been paid out, and the upgrade is currently in its second phase, he said, adding that a total of 9,000 people will be working at the track over the

course of the project. Hungaroring Sport chairman and chief executive Zsolt Gyulay said the paddock will be expanded by 3,000 square metres to 8,300sqm, while the paddock building's floor area will increase to 31,017sqm, explaining that the pit lane also has to be extended to comply with the FIA's regulations.

APPEALS COURT FINDS FORMER MOMENTUM HEAD GUILTY OF ASSAULT ON OFFICER DURING DEMO

A Budapest appeals court has found András Fekete-Győr, the former head of the Momentum party, guilty of assault against persons in official capacity, the court said on Monday. According to the charges, Fekete-Győr acted as an accomplice of Koppány Bendegúz Szarvas on Dec 13, 2018, when they threw smoke bombs at police during a demonstration in Kossuth Square. The court sentenced Fekete-Győr to 1 year in prison, suspended for 2 years. The court saw Fekete-Győr's clean record, as well as the fact that he had acted as an accomplice, as mitigating circumstances, spokesman József Tamás Szabó said. Szarvas, the primary defendant, had been accused of assaulting officers on two consecutive days, Dec 12 and 13, and sentenced to 2 years in prison, suspended for 3

years. Fekete-Győr has appealed the sentence. The primary defendant and the prosecution are mulling the same, and so the procedure is set to continue at the third-instance court, Szabó said.

MI HAZÁNK NOMINATES ECONOMIST MAGDOLNA CSATH FOR HUNGARY PRESIDENT

The opposition Mi Hazánk has named economist Magdolna Csath as their nominee for Hungary's next president, according to a social media post published by party leader László Toroczkai on Monday. "It is high time Hungary's president is no longer a political party stalwart," Toroczkai said, adding that Csath "meets that requirement". Csath's career has earned her "broad recognition", Toroczkai said, suggesting that she could be supported by the other parties.

JOBBIK CALLS FOR PRESIDENT TO BE ELECTED DIRECTLY

The opposition Jobbik-Conservatives have said they are calling an extraordinary session of parliament to propose a bill on directly electing the president of the republic. The right-wing party last year proposed to MPs changing how the head of state is elected, but the ruling Fidesz majority

voted it down, Brenner Koloman, who is Jobbik's mayoral candidate for the capital, told a press conference on Sunday. Noting the outcry over Katalin Novák's decision to pardon the deputy director of a children's home who was found complicit in child abuse, he said it would have been preferable had a president been elected by Hungarian citizens rather than by Fidesz MPs, adding that a figure who truly embodied the unity of the nation should be elected as head of state.

STELLANTIS TO MAKE HUF 45 BN E-MOBILITY INVESTMENT IN W HUNGARY BASE

Multinational automaker Stellantis is investing 45 billion forints (EUR 116.2m) in moving the "key element" of its electromobility strategy to Hungary, securing the future of the Opel plant in Szentgotthárd, in western Hungary, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said on Monday. Stellantis, which designs, manufactures and sells 16 automotive brands, will begin manufacturing electric engines at the Szentgotthárd plant, Péter Szijjártó said, adding that the company is also relocating its related R&D and testing activities there. The investment, which is being supported with a 10 billion forint government grant, will create 110 jobs, the minister said.