

PHOTO OF THE DAY



PM Viktor Orbán delivers a commemoration speech marking the March 15 national holiday in front of the Hungarian National Museum

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

EU foreign ministers meet in Brussels

Events related to the wars in the Middle East, Ukraine

TOP STORY

EP VOTE 'TO DECIDE BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE'

Voters in the European Parliament elections on June 9 will have to decide “between war and peace, between Brussels’ leash and Hungarian freedom,” the prime minister said in his speech marking the March 15 national holiday.

“If we want to retain Hungary’s freedom and sovereignty, we must occupy Brussels and bring change to the European Union,” Viktor Orbán told a crowd in front of the National Museum. Since 1848, “the time always comes for every generation and each Hungarian youth when they must make a decision,” he said. One must make a decision “if you are on the side of truth or join the herd of globalist bleaters,” Orbán said. “Brussels is not the first empire that had designs on Hungary, but in the past 500 years all such empires realised that oppression, bribery or violence ... would not get them anywhere,” he said, referring to the Ottoman and Habsburg empires as well as the Soviet Union. “We’re the David that Goliath had better avoid,” Orbán said. He also added, however, that “Hungary demonstrated through the Compromise [of 1867, with Austria] that if we are given respect, we will also give the respect that is due.” “Brussels alone would not grasp that ... but we will march up to Brussels and we ourselves will bring change to the European Union,” Orbán said.

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**ORBÁN: BRUSSELS HAS
'TURNED AGAINST
EUROPEANS'**

"We cannot accept that Brussels has abandoned Europeans, moreover, turned against them," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in a speech marking Hungary's March 15 national holiday. "We cannot tolerate their destroying our farmers, impoverishing the middle classes, driving European companies to bankruptcy, cribbing the rights of nations, making our children the slaves of their debts and tossing the whole of Europe into war." "Hungary can only benefit from peace and we do not want war," he told commemorators in front of the National Museum. "We in Budapest know what war is like ... hundreds of thousands of dead, disabled, widows and orphans, destroyed bridges ... tens of thousands of people that have lost everything ... the life of a generation was destroyed in the latest war," he insisted.

According to Orbán, "what Brussels has given Hungarians was war instead of peace, fuss around the rule of law instead of security, and financial blackmail instead of prosperity". "They have deceived us and it is time we revolted and restored the self-assurance and self-esteem of European people," the prime minister said. "Hungary is not alone, because though the Poles have been caught up in the torrent of Soros's left, the Slovaks

have risen, the Czechs are awakening, the Austrians are getting ready, the Italians are facing the right direction, the Dutch are ready to go and the Americans are in protest," he said.

Meanwhile, he said, Europe, as well as the United States were "ahead of a sovereigntist turnaround", which could "restore normal life and open a new, great epoch for Western nations, in which everybody could prosper ... with the exception of those that breached their oath to serve their nation... that have worked in Brussels to take away funds from teachers ... that would open the gates wide before migrants ... and deliver our children into the hands of frenzied gender activists." Those that "sold themselves out by the kilo to gain power ... will meet the fate of traitors," Orbán added.

Concerning the events of 1848, Orbán said the Hungarian revolution was "constructive, rather than destructive, it did not deny but create, it was true and beautiful, and it was not concluded in death but yielded life." In March 1848 "Europe was engulfed in flames, there was blood in the streets of its capitals, and people were fighting on barricades in Vienna," Orbán said. Hungarians, however, were "writing poems, wording the 12 points [of the revolution], and marched over from Pest to Buda ... we freed political prisoners without a gunshot, we went to the theatre to see a patriotic play ... and won a victory by the evening ... that's what revolution is like when it is led by young Hungarians," he said.

**ORBÁN: HUNGARIANS
MUST PRESERVE WHAT
THEY INHERITED FROM
ANCESTORS**

"Everything we have we received from our forebears, including the mission to preserve and pass it all on," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in a speech marking Hungary's March 15 national holiday, adding that "this is the essence of Hungarian freedom." He said that millions of people in the Western world went through life with the notion that "they come from nowhere and are going nowhere, therefore they believe it is not necessary to be considerate of anybody or anything". "They start wars and destroy worlds, they redraw country borders and devour everything like locusts," Orbán said. "They neglect to respect the dead and they take away the rights of the unborn," he added. "We Hungarians live differently and want to continue living differently; we come from somewhere and are heading somewhere," Orbán said. "The meaning of freedom for Hungarians is that we are building a country with no landlord overseeing us". "Nobody else in the world thinks it is important that something Hungarian should survive," he added.

"We know that a Hungarian quality of existence is a unique and unmatched, high-level form of human life, and it is the greatest thing to be born a Hungarian," he added. "In the Western world, people believe they live as individuals and it is



up to their free choice to decide which country's citizens they should be and whether to be a boy or a girl," he said. "We Hungarians know that if you stand alone in the world, you are lonely, not free," he added. The youth of March 15 proclaimed to the world that "we Hungarians are companions, not only in friendship and family, but we are also companions in the homeland", he added. "And we are also companions with those before us and after us," he said. "The life of Hungarians forms a continuous chain, from Saint Stephen to King Mathias and Petőfi, and the Hungarians of '56, all the way to us and beyond."

He said people today feared for their freedom because of Brussels, just like at the time of 19th century revolutionary poet Sándor Petőfi. "They want to pressure us into something that Hungarians cannot bring themselves to do ... which is damnable for the Hungarian spirit, and ... alien from Hungarian life". "They want to pressure us to get involved in a war, they want to force us to take in migrants, and they want to change the upbringing of our children, but we will not enter the war, we will not let the migrants in and we will not give them our children," Orbán said. "This is simple like algebra and clear as the Sun, because Hungary is a free and sovereign country, and it will stay so."

PRESIDENT SULYOK CALLS FOR 'FIGHT FOR NATIONS' SURVIVAL'

Hungary's survival "is not a given, so we have had to fight for it and

we must continue fighting for it by means of law, the achievements of culture and the results of science," President Tamás Sulyok said at a ceremony during which high state awards were handed over on the eve of the March 15 holiday.

At the ceremony held in Parliament, Sulyok quoted a well-known line from the revolutionary poet Sándor Petőfi: "'Rise, Hungarians!' is not a simple exclamation but an imperative spanning centuries: an order to fight for rights and freedom given at a time when [Hungarians] were stripped of their rights and oppressed," he said. "We learnt how to dance with legs tied up, and steadily rebuilt the country, improved our language, strengthened our institutions and communities, while our scientists were always at the forefront of innovation, even in the hardest of times," he said. "Our culture is not just a guarantee for our survival but an incentive, an infinite set of values, which will not only nourish us but inspire us to do great deeds, to brilliant achievements and fantastic discoveries," the president said. Hungarian culture is universal "in the sense that it is a part of the national identity ... should we disappear, the world will be smaller," he said.

Referring to recipients of the Kossuth and Széchenyi prizes as well as those of the Hungarian Order of Merit present at the ceremony, the president called them "architects of Hungarian culture and science who have enriched the European and global human treasury with

their achievements." The awardees' achievements "strengthen the nation, and everybody benefits ... the prizes are a respectful recognition of the results of perseverance, commitment, decision, talent, and knowledge which took decades to accumulate," he said. "Those with a talent have an obligation to cultivate it to the utmost so that they can bring the most benefit to their peers, because every person is worth as much as the good they can provide to their fellow humans and homeland," Sulyok said. Meanwhile, the president said the lesson of 1848 was that "we cannot be successful without exercising rights ... we will need enthusiastic lawyers in all times, because ... homeland is where people have rights."

SZIJJÁRTÓ MARKS 1848 ANNIVERSARY IN SFÂNTU GHEORGHE

The message of Hungary's 1848 revolution is that Hungarians must join together and "each of them is counted on in improving our nation's future", the foreign minister said in Sfântu Gheorghe (Sepsiszentgyörgy), marking the 176th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848-49 revolution and war of independence, on Friday. Péter Szijjártó said Hungarians must join their forces in the interest of their nation and "act together, by helping each other in cooperation across the border", the foreign ministry said in a statement. At the same time, he said, there were "traitors paid by

large powers to divide Hungarians in the mother country and beyond the borders”, adding that “all of them will end up being washed away by history” because “the ideal of the Hungarian nation does not exist without Sfântu Gheorghe, Lendava (Lendva), Osijek (Eszék), Mukachevo (Munkács), Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely), Senta (Zenta) and without the diaspora”. “This is why it is our duty to firmly stand up for the rights of the Hungarian communities which we have done and will also do in future.”

At the commemoration of the battle of Simeria (Szemerja), Szijjártó said “we here stand together and declare that we are proud to be Hungarian”. “We are proud of what we have achieved through history. That we are the inheritors of a Christian culture which is older than a thousand years... we have continued to always exist as Hungarians amidst the big hurdles and uncertainties we faced in history.” “And above all, we Hungarians are proud to be free,” the minister said, calling for peace in Ukraine.

Addressing a commemoration in Oradea (Nagyvárad) later on Friday, Szijjártó said Hungarians’ freedom meant “we can decide about our own future”. He said the revolutionaries in 1848 had fought for “the obvious, clear and much desired goals of freedom, peace and consensus, goals that we want here, today, too,” “We have always been ready to fight for our freedom and independence, even when facing the biggest, most dangerous and brutal and massive forces including the

Ottoman and the Habsburg empires and later the Germans and the Soviets. We took up the fight against them, and stood our course,” Szijjártó said.

KARÁCSONY: BUDAPEST ‘A REPUBLIC RULED BY BUDAPESTERS’

Budapest is a republic ruled by Budapest citizens, Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsoy said on Friday, marking the anniversary of the 1848-49 revolution and freedom fight. At the event held together with NGOs and student organisations at Elizabeth Bridge in downtown Budapest, Karácsoy said Budapest “is giving refuge to the concept of republic”. The phrase Republic Budapest did not mean the city was turning its back on the rest of the country, he said. Speaking about the upcoming local elections in June, Karácsoy said many Hungarians were unhappy with the government, “but many were unhappy with the opposition, too”. Local elections were about local communities, not parties, he added.

“Budapest citizens will have an easy choice, because all the government has for them is a declaration of war,” he said. “Budapest is a host to the values the government built its politics on rejecting.” He called on all Budapest citizens to vote on June 9, and pledged to continue a “positive” politics focusing on health-care: “healthy streets, healthy housing and healthy air”. He said the country was run as a “company limited rather than

a republic”. The republic is “still present in NGOs, civil rights movements that stand up for important issues, and local authorities wanting to serve and not rule”, the mayor said. Meanwhile, Karácsoy said the government had abandoned “people in hopeless situation, such as teachers, students, the poor and the homeless”. “The regime has busted itself and is now teetering on the edge of ruin,” he said. At the same time, he warned that “Hungary is not yet Russia but is getting closer every minute”.

Yulia Navalnaya, the widow of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny, sent her greetings in a video message and said “democratic Hungary” had allies in the more than 10 million Russians who wanted to live in a democratic and free country. “We are behind you in your fight for your country. Be brave,” she said. Representatives of student organisations Adom, Fridays for Future and United Student Front also spoke at the event. Several opposition politicians were in the crowd.

OPPOSITION PARTIES MARK ANNIVERSARY OF 1848 REVOLUTION

“In a shared homeland the laws apply to everybody, while burdens and responsibilities are also shared; it is that common homeland that the incumbent regime has stripped us of,” Klára Dobrev, MEP of the opposition Democratic Coalition (DK), said in her speech marking the March 15 national

holiday and broadcast online on Friday. "The leaflets that upturned Hungary 176 years ago carried the words 'equality, freedom, brotherhood' and showed the world what the Hungarian nation wanted ... and we cannot be a nation with a homeland unless the same rules apply to everybody and nobody is above the law," Dobrev said.

Ágnes Kunhalmi, co-leader of the Socialist Party, spoke at a commemoration held at the monument of revolutionary poet Sándor Petőfi in central Budapest. In her speech, she said "rebuilding the faith in democracy and the rule of law" was of paramount importance. "Today's fight must be fought against an authoritarian regime dividing the country from within," she said. "Living in a civil democracy is not enough; freedom, equal rights, as well as welfare and employee rights and a radical reduction of the gaps in society are also needed," she said.

Erzsébet Schmuck, co-leader of the LMP party, said in a video message that the heroes of the revolution and war of independence should be in the focus of commemorations. "There are some that think this is the day to oust the ruling elite," she said, and called for a proper way to pay tribute to "those that fought for Hungary's independence, those that sparked the wave of revolutions in Europe".

Márton Gyöngyösi, the head of conservative Jobbik, said at his party's commemoration that "changes today could be achieved through peaceful means, by going to vote". "Hungarians

of today will have an opportunity to demonstrate that they are a European, freedom-loving people at the polls on June 9," he said.

MARCH 15 COMMEMORATIONS CONCLUDE WITH CEREMONY HELD AT WASHINGTON EMBASSY

The March 15 celebrations, marking the 176th anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848-49 revolution and war of independence, ended on Friday with an official commemoration organized for members of the local diaspora at the Hungarian embassy in Washington. Ambassador Szabolcs Takács noted that traditionally Hungarians living in and around the American capital are invited to celebrate on March 15, and this was also the case this year. At the ceremony, Emese Latkóczy, the director and one of the founders of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, received the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit, for her work.

Previously during the day, local Hungarian organisations held a commemoration at the Kossuth House in Washington, the leaders of the scout troop, the Catholic and Reformed communities, and the Kossuth Foundation laying a wreath at the memorial plaque of Lajos Kossuth. Péter Pál Schmitt, the deputy head of mission, laid a wreath at the Kossuth memorial on behalf of the Hungarian embassy. Sándor Végh, the president of the foundation that operates the

Kossuth House, noted that Lajos Kossuth had visited Washington in December 1851 to gain support for the Hungarian cause. The Tisza Dance Ensemble, made up of American and Hungarian members, gave a festive show at the Kossuth House.

The March 15 commemorations coincided with another commemoration held a few hundred kilometres from Washington, at the NATO command in Norfolk, where Hungary, Poland and Czechia commemorated the 25th anniversary of their NATO membership. At this event, Ambassador Takács drew attention to Hungary's commitment to the NATO alliance, and said Hungary's budget contribution to NATO serves the purpose of making the organisation a truly defensive alliance with a military force that is a deterrent, but one that is in service of peace. The March 15 commemorations began on Wednesday in the Capitol building, where Ambassador Takács and Congresswoman Carol Miller laid a wreath at the statue of Lajos Kossuth.

RULING PARTIES NOMINATE SZENTKIRÁLYI AS BUDAPEST MAYORAL CANDIDATE

The ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance has named Alexandra Szentkirályi, a government spokesperson, as their candidate for Budapest mayor in the upcoming municipal election. Zsolt Láng, the head of Fidesz's Budapest chapter,

accused the incumbent leadership of having driven the city to bankruptcy and called "for change". Under Szentkirályi's leadership the city could "gain new momentum and develop again", Láng said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ HAS PHONE TALKS WITH UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE HEAD

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó had talks with Andriy Yermak, head of the Ukrainian president's office, by phone on Thursday. Szijjártó said on Facebook after the talks that the two sides "confirmed their wish to continue consultations with the goal of restoring the rights of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia". The minister said agreement had been reached during the talks to open a new border crossing with Ukraine, between Nagyhódos in Hungary and Velyka Palad (Nagypalád), as well as to allow trucks to cross at Beregsurány. He added that a relevant agreement would soon be signed by Hungary and Ukraine.

MENCZER: HUNGARY 'REGARDS US WITH GREAT RESPECT'

Hungary regards the United States with great respect and has always done so, Tamás Menczer, the state secretary for bilateral relations, said on Facebook in connection with a speech delivered on Thursday by David Pressman, the

US ambassador to Hungary. "But today's speech was not worthy of an ambassador; it was rather a speech of a left-wing political activist," Menczer said. Pressman gave a speech in Budapest entitled "On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Hungary's accession to the NATO Alliance".

SZIJJÁRTÓ: STRONG RMDSZ TO BOLSTER ROMANIA-HUNGARY TIES

The stronger the ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party becomes in Romania, the easier it will be to lean on it in developing Hungarian-Romanian ties, the foreign minister said on Friday in Sfântu Gheorghe (Sepsiszentgyörgy), in Romania. According to a ministry statement, Péter Szijjártó told a joint press conference held with RMDSZ head Hunor Kelemen that Hungary had strategic and economic interests in strong ties with Romania. Bilateral trade hit a new record last year, making Romania Hungary's third largest exports market, he said. "We have more than doubled our trade volume as well as exports to Romania in the past decade," Szijjártó said.

Hungary also has a vested interest in Romania's integration into the Schengen Area as soon as possible, and will use its EU presidency starting on July 1 to do everything it can to speed up the procedure, he said. "That is in our economic interest, but contact between Hungarians in the homeland and in Romania's Transylvania region and Szekler Land will also become much easier."

Thanks to the lobbying of RMDSZ, the cooperation of Hungary's government and Wizz Air, and Romania's partial Schengen membership which allows easy travel by plane, Brasov will have a direct flight to Budapest from June, he said.

Noting that Romania will see four elections in 2024, Szijjártó said Hungary would "naturally" not try to influence the ballots, "but we maintain the right to root for candidates". "We will root for RMDSZ ... because the stronger RMDSZ is in Romanian political life, the stronger we can lean on it to improve and strengthen the ties between Hungary and Romania even further". "I respectfully ask Hungarians in Szekler Land, Transylvania and the whole of Romania to cast their ballots at all of the elections in as large numbers as possible..." He said he hoped the election campaigns would be free from incitement against the ethnic communities, especially Hungarians. "We Hungarians base our foreign policy on mutual respect, and hope that will be mutual."

Asked about President Klaus Iohannis' candidacy for the post of NATO's Secretary-General, Szijjártó said the results of the election were impossible to foresee. Hungary will "definitely not support" the candidacy of outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who called for Hungary "to be brought to its knees", the minister said. "At the same time, we are happy there is a central European candidate. NATO has never before had a central European Secretary-General," Szijjártó said.

AGRICULTURE MINISTER HAS TALKS IN AFRICA

Agriculture Minister István Nagy inaugurated a model farm set up with his ministry's support in Kenya's Mwea and held talks with Kenyan ministers on Friday. Hon Mithika Linturi, Kenya's minister of agriculture and livestock development, also attended the event. Speaking at the ceremony, Nagy underscored the importance of ensuring the local production of top quality products, "safe and healthy food" in times of crisis, also in a bid to cut dependence on big agricultural countries and multinational trading companies, his ministry said in a statement. In a post on Facebook, the Kenyan minister "expressed gratitude to the Hungarian government for establishing the demo farm in Kirinyaga County, showcasing Hungarian agricultural technology". He noted that "the farm will be starting trials on Hungarian seed varieties like capsicum, cucumber, green peas and corn, comparing them to Kenyan varieties, marking the beginning of a successful collaboration".

During the day, Nagy held talks with Mvurya Salim Mgala, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs. They identified possibilities in further developing cooperation in fish farming, education and science. Nagy noted that Hungary and Kenya had signed in 2020 a tied-aid agreement under which Hungary will support Kenyan fish farming

projects. The Hungarian minister also met Zachariah Mwangi Njeru, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, to discuss water management issues and offered sharing experience in irrigation technologies.

On Saturday, Nagy held talks in Kampala with Ugandan Minister of State for Animal Industry Bright Kanyontore Rwamirama. After the talks, Nagy said an agriculture cooperation agreement between Hungary and Uganda could further strengthen the two countries' agriculture ties, opening up the African country to investors. Uganda offers serious opportunities for Hungary's farming sector and businesses, Nagy said at the talks, according to a ministry statement. The country is a leading producer of banana and coffee, he said, adding, at the same time, that its manufacturing sector required further development. Also, Uganda's growing population calls for improving the efficiency of its agricultural production, he added. Hungary is prepared to share its experience with Uganda, Nagy said, adding that the signing of a bilateral agriculture cooperation agreement could strengthen that process. Nagy also said they wanted to complete an aquaculture project that had been left unfinished, and take further steps in cooperation in science and education. The minister also held talks with the rector of Kampala's Kyambogo University, the statement said. Nagy noted that Hungary had

successfully launched agricultural consultant training programmes with the university. He said even more emphasis needed to be placed on launching joint courses and PhD programmes, supporting student scholarships and the exchange of professionals.

After meeting Chad's Minister of Production and Agricultural Transformation Keda Ballah in N'Djamena on Sunday, Nagy said Hungary was prepared to aid Chad's farm sector and stability with an agricultural consulting programme, a demo farm and cooperation in higher education. At the talks, Nagy underlined the importance of stability and predictability in Chad, his ministry said. That was why, he added, Hungary wanted to help the central African country in several areas. Nagy highlighted health care, agriculture and higher education cooperation as areas that Hungary can help strengthen. Hungary is prepared to launch a demo farm in the region to demonstrate irrigation development technologies and experiment with seeds, he said. The minister recommended Hungarian irrigation development technologies that can make farming more efficient. The statement emphasised Chad's role in maintaining stability in the region, as well as the importance of food security. It said Hungary was prepared to launch an agricultural consulting programme in the country with the aim of further improving farming competency.

INTEGRITY AUTHORITY SUBMITS ANNUAL REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

Hungary's Integrity Authority has submitted its first annual report, for the year 2023, to parliament, showing that its five closed cases and sixteen ongoing cases involved European Union support worth 120 billion forints (EUR 304m), the body said on Thursday. The statement citing Ferenc Bíró, the body's head, said that the establishment of the authority had been an important milestone, reflecting Hungary and the European Commission's determination in respect of the fight against corruption. "Being an independent body, the authority strengthens the separation of powers and leads efforts to whiten the economy," it added.

The president said the fact that a "credible institution" had been established within a year "demands respect". In January 2023, other than "a handful of dedicated employees", it had no own assets and no offices, "practically it had nothing", he added. He said the authority had identified "inefficient elements" and faults of

the public procurement and asset declaration systems. The authority has made its proposals to address problems and recommended cost-effective solutions which are easy to introduce, he added. The authority's reports and the establishment of a platform for anonymous reporting aim to restore public trust and promote a culture of accountability, he said.

Bíró said the authority also had plenty to do in the area of prevention. Its mission goes beyond execution, calling for cultural change in favour of zero tolerance, he added. In order to enable the authority to fulfil its goal, the issue of spheres of authority must be placed on the agenda, he said. "This is the number one priority of the Integrity Authority and it requests the support of the government, parliament and the European Commission accordingly," he added.

LMP: VITÉZY MAYORSHIP SOLUTION TO BUDAPEST'S 'INTELLECTUAL CIVIL WAR'

Opposition LMP has voiced its support for a run for Budapest mayor by Dávid Vitézy, a former state secretary for transport, saying his

election would "free Budapest from its intellectual civil war". Máté Kanász-Nagy, the party's deputy group leader, told a press conference on Saturday that over the past years, Budapest had become a "political battleground", adding that the identities of the two mayoral candidates -- incumbent mayor Gergely Karácsony and government spokeswoman Alexandra Szentkirályi -- "fuel these battles". He said that by nominating Szentkirályi as its mayoral candidate, ruling Fidesz "has made it clear that it wants Budapest to be the government's mouthpiece", insisting that if elected, Szentkirályi "would do what the prime minister tells her". Kanász-Nagy also said that at his commemoration of the national holiday on Friday, Karácsony "looked like he wants to be the leader of the opposition, a prime ministerial candidate again". He said the municipal elections were about deciding who should be entrusted with managing Budapest's affairs and making the city better. "LMP wants to free Budapest from this intellectual civil war," Kanász-Nagy said, adding they believed the solution was electing "a third way candidate" in the form of Dávid Vitézy.