

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI / Zsolt Czeleldi

An employee at machine manufacturer Krones's new plant in Debrecen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Turkic Council opens Budapest office

Foreign minister receives Azerbaijan state award

Rembrandt exhibition opens in Museum of Fine Arts

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY FASTEST GROWING EU COUNTRY

Hungary's GDP growth rate of 5% makes it the fastest-growing country in the European Union, the foreign minister said at a factory opening in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, on Wednesday.

Péter Szijjártó attended the inauguration of a 15 billion forint (EUR 45m) plant built by German packaging and bottling machine manufacturer Krones.

The investment, which created 500 jobs, was supported with a 5.5 billion forint grant by the Hungarian government, Szijjártó said at the ceremony.

Concerning the Hungarian economy, Szijjártó said that in recent years Hungary has gone from being a production-oriented economy to a technology-oriented one, adding that by bringing the unemployment rate down to 3.3%, the country has "practically achieved full employment". The minister called Hungary "one of the most competitive countries", pointing out that while it ranked only 92nd in terms of the size of its population, it was the world's 34th largest exporter. Hungary is one of 35 countries whose annual export volume exceeds 100 billion euros, he said. In the first half of the year, investors took decisions on implementing 43 major projects in Hungary with a combined value of 731 billion forints, Szijjártó said, adding that three of those projects would be implemented in Debrecen.

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HUNGARY MEP URGES STOPPING IS EXPANSION IN AFRICA

Addressing a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, an MEP of Hungary's co-ruling Christian Democrats urged stopping the Islamic State's expansion in Africa, saying that religious persecution in the region would lead to increased emigration. In a statement to MTI outlining his address to the debate on the security situation in Burkina Faso, György Hölvényi said he warned that the Islamic State, having lost its last territorial holdings in the Middle East, was now expanding in the less secure countries of the Sahel region.

Hölvényi noted that there has been a "dramatic rise" in the number of jihadist attacks committed in Burkina Faso this year. These have included the murder of Spanish Salesian missionary Antonio Cesar Fernandez and a total of 57 Christians, including three pastors. "In order to find the right solution, we must see that churches play a key social and security role in the region," Hölvényi said. "European institutions must end their excessive neutrality in the name of which they consistently turn a blind eye to the attacks on the various religious denominations."

GOVT, MED SCHOOLS TO SET UP COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY CLINICS

Hungary's four universities of medicine and health sciences and the Ministry

of Innovation and Technology will collaborate in setting up a Council of University Clinics, the innovation and technology minister said in Budapest on Wednesday. From 2021, an independent medical, health science and health industry research and development fund will also begin operating, László Palkovics told a press conference. The minister said his talks with the rectors of the medical schools focused on their plans for the development of their universities and specifically the higher education facilities specialising in medical training, research and health industry solutions.

OPPOSITION CALLS ON GOVT FOR JOINT ACTION ON CLIMATE PROTECTION

The opposition parties criticised the ruling alliance for failing to send representatives to a special session of parliament dedicated to climate protection and called on the government and ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrats (KDNP) to participate in joint efforts.

Politicians of LMP, the Socialists, Párbeszéd, the Democratic Coalition, Jobbik, and independent lawmakers held a joint press conference after the special session had to be adjourned because it lacked quorum.

Erzsébet Schmuck, deputy head of the LMP group which initiated the session, said the opposition had hoped that the heads of state and

government would attend and say that they were aware that climate change posed the greatest challenge of the current era.

Tímea Szabó, group leader of Párbeszéd, said a recent European Commission survey showed that 96% of Hungarians were concerned about climate change, yet no Fidesz representatives showed up to the session. Jobbik's Tibor Nunkovics accused Fidesz of trying to play down climate change and of placing the emphasis on fossil fuel use. He called for developing a joint position standing above party politics in the matter. Zita Gurmai of the Socialists said it was hard to tell whether the government's climate policy was based on "viciousness or plain ignorance".

DK deputy group leader Gergely Arató said climate protection and preserving a liveable planet and liveable Hungary were national issues and matters that concerned all humanity and Europe. Independent lawmaker Bernadett Szél called on Orbán to initiate a day of debate on climate change in parliament.

HOUSE SPEAKER RECEIVES POLISH STATE AWARD

László Kövér, speaker of the Hungarian parliament, received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Republic of Poland, the highest Polish state award non-Polish citizens could be given, in Warsaw. The order, given by President Andrzej Duda, was handed over by

Sejm President Elżbieta Witek. Kövér has been awarded in recognition of his "outstanding merits in promoting Polish-Hungarian parliamentary ties and relations between the two countries". At the ceremony, Kövér said that his accepting the order was a commitment to "stay worthy of the historical heritage of a thousand years of Polish-Hungarian friendship".

HÜBNER TOPS OUT HUF 3.4 BN EXPANSION IN HUNGARY

Germany's Hübner on Wednesday topped out a 3.4 billion forint (EUR 10.2m) expansion at its plant in Nyíregyháza, northeast Hungary, which makes gangway systems for articulated buses and rail vehicles. Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said the government is supporting the investment, which will create 125 workplaces, with an 844 million forint grant. An 8,600sqm production hall at the base will be completed by February 2020, said Ingo Heerd, managing director of the company's local unit. "This investment is also a clear sign that Hübner believes in the region and its potential," he added. Hübner plans further investments of 2.2 billion forints at the base. Hübner's headcount at the base in Nyíregyháza, its largest outside of Germany, stands at more than 850.

MOL STARTS OPERATING FUEL TERMINAL IN SERBIA

Hungarian oil and gas company MOL has started operating a fuel terminal in Serbia with capacity for 8,000 cubic metres of diesel and 4,000 cubic metres of petrol, MOL Serbia said. The terminal, to be supplied by MOL Group refineries, is located in Sremski Karlovci, not far from Novi Sad. The terminal is MOL's first in the country. Serbian Minister of Mining and Energy Aleksandar Antić said the terminal would increase security of supply and strengthen market competition. MOL is the second largest importer on Serbia's wholesale fuel market. It operates 65 petrol stations in the country.

MIGRANTS ATTEMPT TO ENTER HUNGARY IN RUBBER DINGHY

Hungarian border authorities apprehended a group of migrants attempting to enter Hungary by sailing up the River Tisza in an inflatable dinghy early on Wednesday, a spokeswoman of the Csongrád County police department said. The seven migrants, all of whom claimed to be Iraqi citizens, were caught near the border town of Röszke, in southern Hungary, shortly after midnight, Szilvia Szabó told MTI.

The migrants were taken back to the border fence by authorities, Szabó added. This was the second attempt by migrants to enter Hungary via the Tisza this week, after authorities caught another group attempting to enter the country in a rubber dinghy on Monday.

RÓFUSZ'S THE LAST SUPPER BEST ANIMATED SHORT FILM AT ARGENTINA FESTIVAL

Oscar-winning Hungarian animation director Ferenc Rófusz has fetched the award for best animated short film for The Last Supper at the Jesus Cine Fest international film festival in Argentina this year, the festival said on its website. The basic idea of the animation, a Biblical theme, is 40 years old, but could not be applied under the previous communist era, Rófusz told MTI earlier. He said the film was produced as originally planned, except that the technology used was up-to-date, including 3D animation, which practically meant that eight thousand drawings had been digitally made and coloured. One of the aims of the film is to draw attention to the critical state of Leonardo da Vinci's fresco in Milan, Rófusz said. Rófusz's The Fly received the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 1981.