

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Sándor Ulvári

World Bread Day celebrated in Szentes in SE Hungary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Two-day EU summit begins in Brussels

World Water Summit ends

Assoc. of Innovative Pharmaceutical Manufacturers organises forum on innovation

Govt official addresses conference on SME financing

TOP STORY

HUNGARY, RUSSIA GEAR UP FOR SUMMIT

Hungary and Russia will sign several key economic, social security and sports-related agreements when Russian President Vladimir Putin visits Budapest on Oct. 30, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Moscow.

After talks with Gazprom chief executive Alexei Miller, Russian Industry and Trade Minister Denis Manturov, Energy Minister Alexander Novak and Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov, Szijjártó told MTI that the two countries had identified several joint projects that Russian and Hungarian companies would be able to carry out together in third markets. Among these he noted a contract worth over 1 billion euros signed by a Hungarian-Russian consortium on the delivery of 1,300 railway carriages to Egypt. On another subject, Szijjártó said Hungary had reached an agreement with Gazprom that will see the Russian state-owned gas giant start to transport gas necessary for guaranteeing domestic supplies for next winter starting in April. "We're currently in talks about increasing the supply to three billion cubic metres," he said. Concerning the expansion of Hungary's sole nuclear power plant in the city of Paks, Szijjártó said the recent approval of the project's technical plan constituted a milestone in cooperation between Hungary and Russia's Rosatom, the general contractor for the project.

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PROTECTION OF MIDDLE EASTERN CHRISTIANS TO BE HIGH ON AGENDA OF HUNGARY-RUSSIA SUMMIT

The protection of Middle Eastern Christian communities will be a key topic during the October 30 visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Moscow. Hungary has also invited the leaders of the biggest Middle Eastern Christian churches to the summit, where they will get a chance to brief Hungarian and Russian officials on their respective situations, the minister added.

"Hungary's interest lies in maintaining fair and honest relations with Russia," Szijjártó said. "We can see that the leaders of the most influential countries are all meeting Hungarian prime minister either by inviting him or visiting Budapest themselves." Szijjártó said these bilateral meetings were a vindication of Hungary's achievements. "[Prime Minister] Viktor Orbán has become a central European leader in the world who is worth listening and paying attention to and worth meeting even for the biggest world leaders. The next chapter of this story will be written on October 30 in Budapest." The minister stressed that the Hungarian government will continue to shape its foreign policy according to national interests.

Szijjártó attended a meeting of the Hungarian-Russian intergovernmental committee together with its other co-chair, Russian Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova.

KARÁCSONY: NEW LEADERSHIP SEEKS PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVT

Budapest's new leadership is ready to develop a partnership with the government, mayor-elect Gergely Karácsony said. Karácsony told an international press conference that he would ask for a personal meeting with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán after he enters office on Friday. He also said that he would invite all opposition mayors in October to set up a so-called alliance of free cities. He also said that he would ask the rector of the Central European University in writing to keep as many activities in Budapest as possible under Hungary's higher education law. Karácsony said he was planning to maintain partnerships and that outgoing Mayor István Tarlós was an "extremely correct partner" during the preparations for handing over his post.

The inaugural meeting of the new General Assembly is expected to discuss a package based on the recommendations of anti-corruption NGOs focusing on transparency, social and green issues, Karácsony said. Following the example of other large cities around the world, Budapest plans to declare a climate emergency as a symbolic measure, he added. Budapest's new leadership will pay significantly more attention to climate change than its predecessor, he said. As part of the social package, preparations will be started to make public transport free of charge for

young people under the age of 14, Karácsony said. Before the end of this year public transport will be made free for children under 7 as against the current age limit of 6 and registered jobseekers will also be allowed to travel free of charge, he added. He said municipal companies would be prohibited from exercising provisions in the "slave law", referring to amendments to the Labour Code affecting overtime approved by lawmakers last December. He promised to initiate the establishment of a conciliation council for the capital.

In response to a question, Karácsony said he would raise the issue of Budapest's underfinancing when meeting with the government. He added that Budapest suffered from high debt and state consolidation would be the only way out. He said he disagreed with stadium construction projects of the past and would not support new projects because of their "stellar costs" and because they took away areas from Budapest that should instead be "turned green". He promised to increase resources for homeless services and to set up new accommodation options in the medium term in order to provide better conditions than homeless shelters. Karácsony said a new strategy would be drafted to deal with overtourism in Budapest, adding that regulations on tourist buses and boats should be rethought. He said a prohibition on docking cruise ships in the city as well as on sight-seeing boats could be weighed.

In an interview to news portal Index, the mayor-elect said one of the new Budapest municipal assembly's first decisions will be to block any future construction permits for new buildings in Budapest's City Park. Karácsony said the assembly was scheduled to change the city's building code in its first session, and no further construction projects would be allowed in the park. It was through recent press reports that he had learned of a building permit issued for the Ethnography Museum in the park. But no permit for a new National Gallery has been granted, he added. Karácsony said he was happy about a new playground and the renovation of Olaf Palme House, a 19th century edifice -- the completed parts so far of the Liget Project -- but added that erecting new buildings in the area would be "colossal stupidity". Answering a question about an earlier pledge to ban the construction of new sports stadiums, Karácsony said the mayor of Budapest had a right of veto, and he would make use of it. On the topic of parking regulations, Karácsony noted that many district authorities had outsourced the collection of parking fees to private companies. Karácsony said he would work towards issuing a municipal decree forbidding districts from prolonging those contracts.

Karácsony said that downtown Budapest should gradually be made car-free. The first steps would be to build P+R parks and to "start a public discussion" on a congestion fee for cars in downtown Budapest, he said.

This, he added, should be introduced temporarily before a referendum is held on whether it should remain a permanent arrangement.

AGRICULTURE MINISTER IN TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF TURKEY, INDIA, IRAN

Minister of Agriculture István Nagy has held talks with the Turkish minister of agriculture and forestry, India's minister of water management and the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ministry said. Joint entry by Hungary and Turkey to third markets could offer great potential in seeds and meat products, Nagy said at a meeting with Turkey's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Bekir Pakdemirli, the statement said. Nagy proposed setting up a global seed distribution network which could supply products to developing countries, the ministry added. The sides also discussed financial support for local farmers, strengthening the role of integration, digitalisation in agriculture, and research opportunities at home and abroad. The ministers talked about opportunities linked to livestock and meat products, and innovative solutions, the ministry said.

At a meeting with Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, India's minister of water management, Nagy said agricultural ties with India need to be revived, and he discussed cooperation potential in water management. Hungary's government aims to significantly

increase the area of irrigated land, and Nagy told Shekhawat that Hungary would be glad to exchange experiences with India in this field. Shekhawat also called for the exchange of technology and know-how. Nagy offered the Hungarian ministry's help, adding that India is viewed as an important partner in Asia. During a meeting with Rajabi Yazdi Gholamali, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nagy said Hungary had significant grain output and was one of the main seed exporters in the world. Hungary produces excellent vegetables and fruit, as well as quality raw materials and processed goods, he added. The ministry considers it important to develop and expand trade links, Nagy told his negotiating partner. Hungary has technologies and experience in growing mushroom, herbs and animal feed that could be used in the Iranian market, the ministry said.

DK CALLS ON PARLT TO CONDEMN TURKISH AGGRESSION IN SYRIA

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) will submit a draft resolution calling on parliament to condemn Turkish aggression in Syria, the party's deputy group leader said. The resolution would condemn "Turkish bloodshed" and demand that Turkey immediately terminate its offensive, Gergely Arató told a press conference. It would also express solidarity with innocent victims of the incursion and

persecuted civilians, as well as making a stand for European security.

He said DK's move was in reaction to Turkey's manoeuvres in Syria since Oct. 9 "that have been condemned according to international law". Arató said it was "shameful" that Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had sided with the Turkish president, "a warmonger". He also chided the Hungarian government for "vetoing a timely statement" by the European Union condemning the Turkish attack. "Turkey's aggression obviously poses a direct threat to Europe as the fighting could trigger another wave of refugees heading to Europe," he said.

SOCIALIST LAWMAKER TÓBIÁS TO RETURN MANDATE

Opposition Socialist lawmaker József Tóbiás, a former party leader, will return his mandate effective November 1, Socialist leader Bertalan Tóth said. Tóbiás said in the past that he would temporarily spend more time abroad because his son's respiratory illness forced the family to move away from Hungary, Tóth said on Facebook. Tóth said he had asked Tóbiás to make it clear before parliament's autumn session whether he would stay in his post or return his mandate. Tóbiás said on Wednesday that he would have to spend further time abroad in order to ensure that his son is fully recovered so he would return his mandate, Tóth added. Tóbiás was the Socialist Party's leader and parliamentary group

leader between 2014 and 2016, and he received his parliamentary mandate from the party list in 2018.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OUTPUT CLIMBS 5.9% IN AUGUST

Output of Hungary's construction sector grew by an annual 5.9% in August, data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) show. Output of the buildings segment was up 14.1%, lifted by construction of residential, cultural and industrial buildings, KSH said. Civil engineering output decreased by 3.5%. In a month-on-month comparison, construction output dropped by 10.5%, adjusted for seasonal and working-day effects. For the period January-August, output was up an annual 29.6%. In absolute terms, output stood at 382.3 billion forints in August and 2,618.5 billion in the first eight months. Order stock in the sector was down 12.1% at the end of August from twelve months earlier. Stock rose 49.8% in the buildings segment but were down 25.6% in the civil engineering segment.

ITM: AIM FOR HUNGARY TO BE STRONG IN INNOVATION

The government aims for Hungary to become strong in innovation, a Ministry of Innovation and Technology official told a conference. Tibor Gulyás, the deputy state secretary of innovation, said in his speech opening

the 7th Automotive Hungary Trade Exhibition in Budapest that Hungary is currently listed 23rd on the European Commission's Innovation Index.

He said state financing of R&D&I was being increased, adding that next year this would rise by 25%, or 32 billion forints (EUR 96m), compared with this year. Government funding for R&D will reach 1.8% of GDP by 2020 from the current 1.5%, he said.

Hungary's R&D system is undergoing reform, he noted, adding that this process is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year with the planned adoption of a new R&D&I law. In January next year, the National Science Policy Council will start its work with a discussion of a new R&D&I strategy, he said.

Gulyás said that innovation would be boosted thanks to the transfer of higher education to the innovation ministry as well as proposals to develop research infrastructure and create innovation centres of excellence and science parks. Industry 4.0 will have more than 2 billion forints in funding at its disposal in support of innovative re-industrialisation, he added.

MFB INVEST LAUNCHES FIRST EUROPEAN WATER FUND

MFB Invest, a unit of the state-owned Hungarian Development Bank (MFB), has launched the Water Impact Fund, the first European water fund investing in firms that contribute to alleviating global water-related crises. MFB CEO Levente Sipos-Tompa told a press

conference at the Budapest Water Summit that MFB Invest and Susterra Capital Partners were launching the fund with seed capital of five billion forints (EUR 15m), and they plan to set up venture capital fund worth 200 billion forints.

ÁDER VISITS WATER INDUSTRY EXHIBITION

Knowledge accumulated in the Hungarian water industry has become a marketable “export product”, the president said, after visiting an exhibition organised on the sidelines of the Budapest Water Summit. János Áder visited the exhibition showcasing Hungarian innovations and technological solutions to water-related challenges in the country and elsewhere in the world. “The drama of scarce water, too much water and polluted water is unfolding before our eyes,” Áder said. The exhibition presents a number of Hungarian technologies for effective water purification and to eliminate soil erosion, Áder said. It also demonstrates the effective cooperation of water authorities, the industry’s representatives and universities over the past years, the president said.

OCTOBER 23 COMMEMORATION TO START ON OCT 22

The Budapest events marking the anniversary of the 1956 uprising against communist rule will start on

October 22 and include a torch-lit march, concerts and other events, the government’s website said. Commemorations will start with a wreath-laying ceremony at the memorial near Budapest’s Technical University on October 22, with former prime minister Péter Boross and Innovation and Technology Minister László Palkovics giving speeches ahead of the traditional torch-lit march to Bem square, where concerts will conclude the event. On October 23, the national flag will be hoisted in a ceremony in front of Parliament at 9am, ahead of day-long programmes on Kossuth Square and other venues. The traditional “Freedom concert” at the Millenáris events venue will conclude the commemorations in the evening. The Hungarian crown in Parliament and the House of Terror museum will be open to the public free of charge on October 23rd.

SERBIAN ARMS SMUGGLER ARRESTED IN S HUNGARY

A Serbian national attempting to smuggle 30 guns as well as silencers and ammunition into Hungary, was arrested at Röszke border station, national tax authority NAV reported. The Serbian man arrived at the border driving a car in which the officers found 28 pistols, two Scorpio 765 automatic rifles, 9 silencers and 500 rounds of ammunition, a NAV spokesperson said. Legal proceedings against the suspected smuggler are under way.

GLOBAL GREEN GROWTH INSTITUTE TO MOVE EUROPEAN OFFICE TO BUDAPEST

Global Green Growth Institute, an international organisation that advises governments on green growth opportunities, will move its European office from London to Budapest under a cooperation agreement signed at the Budapest Water Summit. The agreement was signed by Frank Rijsberman, who heads GGGI’s European office, and Péter Kaderják, state secretary at the Innovation and Technology Ministry. The agreement lays the foundations for cooperation between Hungary and GGGI until the end of 2022, Kaderják told a press conference. Since Hungary joined GGGI in 2016, the two have partnered on three projects, in Uganda, in the western Balkans and in the Vojvodina region of Serbia. So far 33 countries have joined GGGI, Rijsberman said.

HUNGARIAN DAYS CLOSES CULTURAL SEASON IN ISRAEL

A festival dubbed Hungarian Days started in Tel-Aviv late on Tuesday as the closing event of a Hungarian cultural season in Israel, which marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries. Levente Benkő, Hungary’s ambassador to Israel, said in his opening address that the cultural season, which started

in March, "has been the Hungarian diplomacy's most comprehensive project in Israel". He noted that the rich programme offered ballet, opera, and operetta performances by Hungarian companies, as well as exhibitions of traditional and contemporary art. The ambassador said that building personal and community ties between the two nations was even more important than good political relations, for which such cultural events provided an excellent opportunity. Tel-Aviv's mayor, Ron Huldai, attended the event that concludes on Thursday.

OECD WATER TEAM LEADER URGES MORE FUNDING FOR WATER PROTECTION

Xavier Leflaive, the OECD's water team leader, has called for tripling funding for water protection. Speaking to public news channel M1, Leflaive said that whereas back in 2003, the OECD believed it would have been sufficient to double funding for the protection of waters, today it was clear that it needs

to be increased threefold in order to meet hygienic requirements.

Further, the right political institutional system and decisions are needed, he said, adding, at the same time, that economic players such as investors could also do a lot for water protection. Leflaive also said it appeared that certain countries were not fully aware of the extent of the world's water crisis. While some areas have too much water, others do not have enough, he said. There are places affected by devastating storms and other areas are plagued by water pollution, he added.

DRONES CAUSE DISRUPTIONS AT BUDAPEST AIRPORT

Liszt Ferenc International's airspace was shut down for brief periods on Monday night and Tuesday night because of drones, operator Budapest Airport said. Take-offs and landings were suspended for 23 minutes on Monday because of drones, and a pair of drones

flew around the airport for more than an hour on Tuesday, causing interruptions and a 30-minute shutdown, Budapest Airport said. Twenty-one flights were delayed as a result, it added.

LIGET BUDAPEST PROJECT SHOWCASED IN CHINA

The Liget development project was presented as Europe's largest culturally oriented urban development project at Guangdong University of Technology in southern China. Attila Ságghi, deputy CEO of the firm implementing the project, talked to some 150 students and academicians at the university. The project, he said, will create a complex cultural and recreational space complete with revamped and newly built museums, sporting venues, playgrounds and much more. "Such a complex combination of green areas and institutions is unique on the continent," he said. According to an impact study, the government will see a return on the one billion euro investment within fifteen years, Ságghi said.