

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Folk art festival in Budapest's Castle District

UPCOMING EVENTS

Szijjártó visits Vojvodina

Palkovics has talks in Paris

Plenary session of parliament

War in Ukraine

TOP STORY

NOVÁK: B9 STATEMENT 'REFLECTS POSITION OF MY INAUGURAL SPEECH'

President Katalin Novák, assessing the Bucharest-9 summit she attended on Friday, said that the declaration adopted in the Romanian capital "clearly and unequivocally reflects the position I expressed in my inaugural speech a month ago".

"We have a successful B9 meeting behind us," Novák said in an English-language post on Facebook. Making reference to the statement she made at her inauguration, the president said: "We strongly condemn Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine which has ruined Europe's peace, causing enormous human suffering and destruction." "We mourn the tragic human sacrifices. We have reaffirmed our commitment to the sovereignty and the democratic processes of Ukraine. This also means that fully guaranteeing the rights of the Hungarian minority in Subcarpathia is the obligation of the Ukrainian state at all times," Novák said. She said because of the war in Ukraine the security of food supplies "may be endangered in those areas where living conditions are still difficult". "So we can expect a further increase in migration," she said.

Novák noted a swift progress made in the development of Hungary's armed forces. "By 2024, we will clear an old backlog and the defense budget will reach 2% of the GDP," the Hungarian president said.

NOVÁK IN BUCHAREST: SECURITY, PEACE COME FIRST

President Katalin Novák, arriving in the Romanian capital for the Bucharest-9 Summit on Friday, said on Facebook that striving for security and peace was a top priority. Novák noted her invitation by Romanian and Polish counterparts, Klaus Iohannis and Andrzej Duda, and recalled that the B-9 comprised the four Visegrad Group countries, the three Baltic states, plus Romania and Bulgaria, striving for the unified representation of NATO members in the region. The president said today's summit was about "finding common answers to the challenges of war in our neighbourhood". Novák will address the plenary session of the B-9 conference before bilateral talks with Iohannis in the evening.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: PAKS UPGRADE RECEIVES ANOTHER KEY PERMIT

The upgrade of Hungary's Paks nuclear plant has reached another milestone: it has received the soil stabilisation permit from the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Saturday.

One of the most serious crises in the world is the energy crisis,

Szjijártó said in a video on Facebook, adding that, in the coming years, it will be an advantage if a country is able to produce a substantial part of the energy it uses. "We, Hungarians, are building the Paks nuclear power plant so that from 2030 we can free ourselves from all uncertainties of the international energy market, and we can maintain our utility price cut scheme in the long run," Szijjártó said. The diaphragm wall construction permit (which has already been obtained) and the soil stabilisation permit are the most important prerequisites for the implementation permit of the project, Szijjártó said. After the latter has been obtained, "real construction work" can start, he said.

VARGA: NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET TO PRESERVE ACHIEVEMENTS, GUARANTEE SECURITY

The public utility price cut protection fund and the defence fund are necessary to ease the burden on families, preserve the government's achievements and, in response to the war situation, to guarantee the country's peace and security, Finance Minister Mihály Varga told public broadcaster Kossuth Rádió on Sunday. Varga noted that in 2019, before the outbreak of the pandemic, the budget projected a 1% deficit but the numbers had to be revised due to the crisis. High energy prices, rising inflation

and the increasing interest expenses of the debt service have significantly increased expenditures, he said, but the government is committed to restoring fiscal discipline. Next year's draft budget will ensure that both the deficit and the government debt will fall in 2023, to 3.5% (of GDP) and 73.8%, respectively, Varga said. The public utility price cut protection fund and the defence fund are planned for two years, 2022 and 2023, he said. The public utility price cut fund is projected to total 670 billion forints next year and the defence fund 842 billion forints. With the latter, Hungary will achieve its goal set earlier as a NATO commitment of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence by 2024 already next year as defence expenditures will well exceed 1,300 billion forints, Varga said.

Varga said Hungary's public utility price cut scheme, in place since 2013, is facing a great challenge now due to high energy prices and inflation. The government has decided to maintain this system; payments from the public utility price cut fund must serve the purpose of maintaining energy prices at their current low level for families, he said.

PALKOVICS: HUNGARY TO RELEASE STRATEGIC FUEL RESERVES FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION

Similarly to Austria, Hungary will make a part of its strategic fuel reserves available for domestic consumption, the minister of technology and

industry said late on Saturday. László Palkovics said the move would secure Hungary's fuel supply should the oil refinery at Schwechat stay shut down longer than expected, according to a statement from his ministry. The statement said the released amounts of petrol and diesel would be replaced by Austria's OMV as soon as possible, adding that despite problems with the Austrian refinery Hungary's supplies were secure.

GULYÁS ATTENDS UNVEILING OF RENEWED PETŐFI TOMB

The renewed tomb of 19th century Hungarian poet and revolutionary Sándor Petőfi's family was inaugurated in Budapest's Fiumei Street Cemetery on Saturday, in a ceremony attended by Gergely Gulyás, head of the Prime Minister's Office. "We must remember so that we can appreciate freedom," Gulyás said, and referred to the late poet as a figure "holding up a mirror to remind us that Hungarians all belong together in freedom". The shrine, built in 1911, contains the ashes of Petőfi's parents, István Petrovics and Mária Hruz, his widow Júlia Szendrey, his son Zoltán, and brother István. Petőfi himself died in battle on July 31, 1849, near Segesvár (now Sighisoara, Romania). His body was never recovered. The renovation project was financed by producer Philip Rákay and his wife.

LMP PROPOSES SEMIANNUAL PAY RISE TO PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The opposition LMP has proposed that the government should ensure a pay rise twice each year to employees of the public sector to compensate for inflation. A party spokesman told a press conference broadcast on Facebook on Sunday that the move could prevent those salaries from losing their value. The measure could cost between 250-300 billion forints in 2022, József Gál said, adding that the programme could be financed by introducing a new, 25% upper bracket for the corporate tax. Gál noted notoriously low pay in the sector, which has led to a labour shortage in health care, education, law enforcement and welfare services. He said, for example, that the salary of a young policeman was a mere 207,000 forints (EUR 520).

HUNGARIAN PROPERTY DEVELOPERS WIN FIVE GOLDS IN FIABCI COMPETITION

Hungarian property developers have won five gold and a silver medal at the FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence competition in Paris, FIABCI's Hungarian chapter told MTI on Friday. The Szervita Square Building in central Budapest, a complex of shops, offices and luxury apartments, won two golds in the

multifunctional building and sustainable property development categories. The renovated Star Fortress of Komárom, in northern Hungary, was awarded gold medal in the national heritage protection category, while BudaPart, a complex of 15 apartment blocks, 13 office buildings and a hotel won the fourth gold.

Millenáris Széllkapu Park, a recreational area in central Buda was given the fifth gold medal in the public infrastructure category. E and F buildings of the Váci Greens office complex earned the silver medal in the office development category. Paris-based FIABCI, an organisation active in 60 countries, offers prizes each year in recognition of the best property developments worldwide.

POLICE: NEARLY 13,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SATURDAY

Fully 5,812 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Saturday, while another 7,035 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 249 people, ORFK told MTI. Holders of such permits must contact a local immigration office near their place of residence within thirty days to apply for permanent documents, it added. Budapest police received 87 refugees, 36 children among them, arriving by train, ORFK said on Sunday.