

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tibor Illyés

St. Stephen's Day bread

UPCOMING EVENTS

War in Ukraine

TOP STORY

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT 'MUST CONTINUE'

Nuclear disarmament must continue and dialogue between superpowers must be resumed, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said, marking the start of a review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in New York.

Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook that dialogue between nuclear powers has come to a virtual standstill due to the war in Ukraine, "which could become a big problem in the current situation," he said. "For a long time we believed and hoped that the deployment of weapons of mass destruction would never again surface in international politics, but the war in Ukraine has put that hope in a very different light," Szijjártó said. For the talks on nuclear disarmament to continue, dialogue among superpowers must be resumed, at least on strategic security issues, he said. "We who live in the immediate vicinity of war expect large and strong countries -- often situated quite far away -- not to make geopolitical decisions to our detriment. We want peace as soon as possible, and an immediate ceasefire and peace talks." Until peace returns, the danger of ever more destructive weapons being deployed will grow, he said, calling for the reinforcement of the final declaration of the 3rd NPT review conference in Geneva which states that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought".

HUNGARIAN ARMY TO INCREASE DISASTER MANAGEMENT STAFF

In view of natural disasters near Hungary in the past weeks, the Hungarian Armed Forces has decided to bump up personnel numbers serving in disaster management, according to Army Commander Lieutenant General Romulusz Ruszin-Szendi. Last month, two Hungarian helicopters assisted in combatting a wide-spread wildfire in Slovenia, and other countries, including Hungary, can be facing similar challenges in the near future, he said. In case of a natural disaster in Hungary, 250 personnel will be able to perform simpler tasks, while working groups were assigned to operate machines and perform more complex duties, Ruszin-Szendi said. The army is also performing logistical and health-care tasks, he said.

Meanwhile, he said tensions are rising in Kosovo, where the NATO forces are under the command of a Hungarian general. "They are doing everything in our power to de-escalate the situation and ensure peace and security for locals," he said.

ORBÁN LEAVES FOR US TO ATTEND CPAC

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has left for the US to attend the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) and hold bilateral meetings, his press chief said on Monday. The delegation includes Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó,

the prime minister's political director Balázs Orbán, and head of parliament's foreign affairs committee Zsolt Németh. Orbán has been invited to hold one of the opening addresses at CPAC, the world's largest and most influential conservative event, Havasi added.

OPPOSITION CALLS FOR SPECIAL PARLT SESSION OVER 'COST-OF- LIVING CRISIS'

Six opposition parliamentary groups have called for a special session of parliament to be convened on Aug. 8 to discuss their proposals to mitigate "the cost-of-living crisis" they say has gripped the country. Representatives of Momentum, Democratic Coalition (DK), Párbeszéd, the Socialists, LMP and Jobbik told a joint press conference about their bill to withdraw changes to the tax on small businesses (kata) and keep the full cap on household energy bills and the price of basic foodstuffs in place. Further, they propose VAT cuts, a public transport "climate pass" -- a 5,000 forint monthly voucher to encourage car users to switch to public transport -- and a nationwide home insulation programme.

Momentum's Miklós Hajnal said the special session would present an opportunity to postpone any changes made to kata to next January to allow time for consultations with advocacy groups and to introduce any changes. Meanwhile, a looming "social crisis" in Hungary during "this age of austerity" would also require immediate action,

he said, accusing the government of getting Hungarians "to pay for its wasteful spending during the elections and for its failed economic policy". Olga Kálmán of DK said the party called on the government to withdraw its "utility price rise" and draft regulations for "family-friendly, economically sustainable utility price cuts". She accused Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of "lying as he talked of protecting the utility price caps while raising prices and implementing the largest austerity package of all time." Párbeszéd group leader Bence Tordai said Hungary had been "hit by a brutal food crisis", with skyrocketing prices and growing inflation. The party calls on the government to boost food self-sufficiency, reintroduce the strategic food reserves abolished in 2016, and to take steps to adapt to climate change, he said. LMP proposed a "climate pass" for public transport to help those hit hard by rising fuel prices and to encourage motorists to use public transport. Ágnes Kunhalmi of the Socialists said the party called for launching a home insulation programme as a means to ensure sustainable utility price cuts for families. Jobbik called for VAT cuts on basic foodstuffs and products used mostly by families raising children. The government should also waive VAT on gas, electricity and firewood, parliamentary group leader László Lukács said.

Ruling Fidesz said in reaction that the left had "fallen apart" after the spring general election and were

now “subserviently doing as they are told” by Democratic Coalition leader Ferenc Gyurcsány, “setting the stage for him”. “If it were up to the left, this crisis would have swept Hungary away by now because the left wants to drag the country into war and make the people pay the price of the war,” the party said. The measures protecting Hungarian families from drastic price increases are unparalleled across Europe, Fidesz added.

JOBBIK: GOVT ‘RUINING’ SOCIAL-CARE SECTOR

The government’s decision to dilute caps on household energy bills and restrict the circle of those who benefit from the cap on the price of fuel will “ruin” Hungary’s social-care system, opposition Jobbik said on Monday. The price increases resulting from the recent changes will make it impossible for the country’s social-care institutions to function, Jobbik MP Ferenc Varga told a press conference, arguing that the institutions could soon see their expenditures rise by up to tens of millions of forints. The government did not consult those affected by the changes, neither were there any impact studies carried out on how the social-care sector would be affected by them, Varga said. He said it was also unclear to the sector’s workers whether

they could expect the government to take steps to ensure the security of their operations, or what would happen to the existing clients of any service providers that are forced to or decide to close down. “[Prime Minister] Viktor Orbán and his team are unfit to govern...” he said.

POLICE: 15,451 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SUNDAY

Fully 7,069 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Sunday, while another 8,382 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 309 people, ORFK told MTI on Monday. 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 received 231 people, 92 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

KSH: HUNGARY POSTS EUR 95 M TRADE DEFICIT IN MAY

Hungary’s trade balance showed a 95 million euro deficit in May, the Central Statistical Office (KSH)

said in a second reading of data. A first reading of the data, released on July 7, had shown a 135 million forint trade surplus. Hungary, an export-driven economy where trade surpluses are the norm, had a trade deficit for the eleventh month in a row. The revised data show exports rose by an annual 29.5% to 12.289 billion euros, while imports climbed by 31.4% to 12.384 billion, KSH said.

GOVT SPOX: PROGRAMMES OF AUG 20 HOLIDAY CAN BE REGARDED AS A FESTIVAL

The four-day celebration of Hungary’s national holiday on August 20th “can be regarded as a festival”, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international relations and communications, said, adding that the event celebrating St. Stephen’s Day drew 2 million visitors last year. He derided “the politically motivated campaign” against the fireworks, explaining that all contracts were signed in the spring and the purchases have been made. “At this stage, it would be more expensive to cancel the fireworks than to hold them.” The fireworks cost the same as last year, he added.