

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tibor Illyés

The Cake of the Year 2022, the Cheeky Plum Prince by Orsolya Karikó of Nagykőrös

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases June retail figures

War in Ukraine

TOP STORY

FM: RUSSIA ONLY SOURCE OF GAS FOR HUNGARY

The infrastructure and geography of central Europe does not allow Hungary to buy large amounts of natural gas from other providers than Russia, the foreign minister told US TV channel Fox News on Tuesday.

Péter Szijjártó was asked about his negotiations in Moscow last month. In response, he said central Europe was currently relying exclusively on gas delivered through pipelines. "Unfortunately, if you want to buy big quantities of gas in central Europe, Russia is your only source," Szijjártó said. While northern and western European delivery routes are facing "technological and political challenges", Hungary's supplies are flowing uninterrupted via Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia, through a pipeline completed two years ago, he said. Asked about "the government's plan B" in view of "Russia ... blackmailing Europe, saying it won't send gas", Szijjártó said "we would have a plan B, but it's not a question of plans or dreams ... it's a question of physics and mathematics. You can have dreams, but when there are no alternative sources in the region, and there are no infrastructural possibilities, then you are definitely in a unilaterally defenceless position." The LNG terminals in the countries around Hungary do not have enough capacity to replace Russian gas, he said.

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FM CALLS FOR CURBING SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The international community should use every means to prevent the further spread and use of nuclear weapons, the foreign minister said in New York late on Monday. In his address to a review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Péter Szijjártó noted Hungary's security, economic and energy challenges due to the war in Ukraine, according to a foreign ministry statement. Hungary, he added, has so far received 870,000 refugees from Ukraine. He called on the international community to focus their efforts on achieving peace in Ukraine as "the only solution" to the problems arising from the conflict. The Ukraine war makes it even more important to prevent nuclear arms from being further deployed in the world, Szijjártó said, and warned that the conflict posed an increased threat of nuclear escalation.

Hungary's interests would be severely undermined if the world were again divided into blocs, he said, stressing the importance of maintaining a dialogue between East and West, especially on strategic issues. The breakdown of dialogue between the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council was, he said, "regrettable", and he called on the P5 to resume talks to avoid possible further tensions.

Szijjártó said the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were more crucial

than ever before. He said nuclear energy production was cost-effective, climate-friendly, secure and stable, and could reduce Hungary's vulnerability to fluctuations on the global energy markets. Possible sanctions concerning nuclear energy must be avoided, he said, adding that such measures would curb sovereign powers to define countries' energy mix. The minister called for full commitment to the NPT, and said Hungary would assume its share of related joint efforts.

Szijjártó met his Argentinian and Bangladeshi counterparts, as well as the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi, after the conference. The minister said several international organisations and countries shared Hungary's standpoint, adding that cooperation between Hungary and the IAEA was "excellent". He said the IAEA had an ever growing role in protecting the peaceful, civilian use of nuclear energy. He said a deal was reached with Argentina, Bangladesh and the IAEA to join forces "to ensure that nuclear energy does not at all fall prey to the political crisis ... taking place in the world."

CSÁK CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING HUNGARY-GERMANY INNOVATION COOPERATION

Hungary and Germany should continue strengthening their cooperation in innovation and work to spread a culture of innovation that quickly turns ideas into products,

János Csák, the minister of culture and innovation, said after meeting Bettina Stark-Watzinger, Germany's minister of education and research, in Berlin on Monday. Csák, whose visit to Berlin is his first foreign trip as minister, told public media after his talks that he and Stark-Watzinger agreed that research and development "can't just be about living out our curiosity". "We need to get closer to the Americans, who are very fast when it comes to turning an idea into a product," Csák said. "The future of Europe depends on whether we can spread this culture of innovation," he added. Meanwhile, the minister said he hoped to see the kind of cooperation and goodwill he said characterised Hungarian-German ties on innovation in all areas of bilateral relations.

GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARY-US TIES BASED ON CLOSE ALLIANCE

Relations between Hungary and the United States are based on "the close alliance that binds us together", foreign ministry state secretary Levente Magyar said in Washington, DC, on Monday. Magyar told MTI that his visit to Washington was a timely one, given that the last visit by a Hungarian state secretary to the US capital had been three and a half years ago, as well as recent developments like the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis. "We reaffirmed with our American partners that Hungarian-US relations are based

on the close alliance that binds us together, in spite of any potential disagreements, which can happen when it comes to policy, as we see the world or policy issues differently,” the state secretary said. Magyar said he had briefed his US partners on the assistance Hungary is providing to Ukraine, the changes Hungary’s energy and economic situation had undergone in recent months as well as the steps the country had taken to stabilise its economy and the energy situation. Concerning his talks at the US Department of Commerce, Magyar said he and Arun Venkataraman, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets, had reviewed the steps that could be taken to get bilateral economic cooperation back to where it had been before the war. He noted that the two governments disagreed on the issue of the global minimum tax. Now is not the time to increase the tax burdens of businesses, Magyar said, arguing that the energy crisis had already put them at a competitive disadvantage. He said Hungary would not back the introduction of a global minimum tax for the time being. “But, of course, since we’re allies and friends, we have to discuss everything, and I trust that sooner or later we’ll reach a consensus on this matter, too,” he added. Magyar said he had also discussed bilateral relations with Karen Donfried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. Though Hungary and the US agree on many issues, there are several other ones that require work, Magyar

said. “But naturally both sides will strive for an agreement” and to keep advancing bilateral ties in a way that is worthy of the alliance between the two countries, he added.

TECHMIN: GOVT AIDING LAID-OFF TUNGSRAM EMPLOYEES WITH SUBSIDISED TRAINING

Workers of Tungfram Operations who are being made redundant due to downsizing have the chance to participate in training subsidised by the government, a ministry of technology and industry (TIM) official said on Tuesday. Tungfram announced in April it was terminating the production of traditional lighting products and would lay off 1,600 employees in the counties of Zala, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar, as well as in the capital, by the end of the year. TIM is helping all such employees to get back to work as soon as possible, Zsolt Kutnyánszky, the state secretary for industry and the labour market, said in a statement.

INFECTOLOGIST: COVID SPREADING, BUT SYMPTOMS MILD

The number of Hungarians infected with Covid-19 is increasing but few of them require hospitalisation, János Szlávik, chief infectologist at the South Pest Centrum Hospital, told public broadcaster M1 on Tuesday, adding that “a few days’ rest” was

usually enough to recover. Szlávik said the mild nature of the disease was due to the fact that a relatively high number of Hungarians had been vaccinated against coronavirus, and the shots were instrumental in avoiding hospitalisation. The new BA.4 and BA.5 variants of coronavirus will probably replace the original Omicron variant, but “they seem to be less dangerous for the vaccinated than for the unvaccinated,” he said. He warned, however, that those earlier infected with Omicron could still contract the new variants. Each new variant produces slightly different symptoms from earlier versions, BA.4 and BA.5 generally causing coughs and sneezes, rhinitis, fatigue and headaches, Szlávik said. He warned that those experiencing symptoms of a common cold should suspect Covid-19. Such patients who get tested or stay at home for a week “will protect not only themselves but others too”, he added.

KARÁCSONY MARKS ROMA HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Budapest’s leadership is working to ensure that nobody in the city should live in fear because of the colour of their skin, their identity or religion, Mayor Gergely Karácsony said on Tuesday, marking Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. “On this day, we remember our Roma compatriots who were dragged from their homes and deported to death camps just because of their ethnicity,” Karácsony said on Facebook. “Diversity and standing

together makes Budapest strong," he said. "We stand up for those who suffer discrimination even today, because this is the only way to prevent hatred from re-emerging," the mayor said. The Council of Europe declared August 2 the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day in 1972. Some 3,000 Roma prisoners killed that night in Auschwitz in 1944 are commemorated on that day. About 500,000 Roma are estimated to have been killed in Nazi camps, 23,000 of them in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

DK: SHORTAGE OF GPs 'ALARMING'

Opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) lawmaker Zoltán Komáromi said there was an "alarming" shortage of GPs in Hungary, on Tuesday. Recent figures by the national hospital directorate showed that there were 1,093 unoccupied medical positions in the country, of which 687 were GPs. A significant part of practicing doctors are above retirement age and the number of unoccupied GP practices has grown by 60% in the past three years, and the number of people left without a GP practice

by 80%, he said. Komáromi said the policies of the Orbán regime over the past 12 years resulted in a "huge health-care disaster". He criticised the fact that the area was not overseen by a dedicated ministry. He said interior minister Sandor Pinter would be unable to resolve the problem of missing doctors and entire regions were left without regular health service. Fully 909,720 Hungarians live in areas without a GP and 725,430 people get no local dental care, he added.

POLICE: 12,378 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON MONDAY

Fully 6,342 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Monday, while another 6,036 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 257 people, ORFK told MTI on Tuesday. 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 27 people, 10 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

FREIGHT TRAFFIC RESUMES ON RENOVATED SZEGED-RÖSZKE RAIL LINE

After a thirty-year hiatus, freight transport along the Szeged-Röszke railway line has resumed, with the first cargo train passing through Serbia on Monday evening before proceeding to the port of Piraeus and on to China, Dávid Vitézy, the Ministry of Technology and Industry state secretary for transport, told a press conference at the site. The project received 40 billion forints (EUR 100m) of government support. The completion of the renovation has paved the way for the full reconstruction of the Hungarian section of the Budapest-Belgrade railway line which, he said, catered to growing demand for a competitive and environmentally friendly mode of transport connecting Europe to China and, more broadly, to Asia via Turkey via Balkan routes.