

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

UPCOMING EVENTS

War in Ukraine

Commissioner Varhelyi has talks in Ukraine

Central bank presser on inflation report

President, House Speaker mark 800th anniversary of Golden Charter

27th International Book Festival

TOP STORY

NOVÁK: HUNGARY 'FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY'

On the final day of her visit to the United States, President Katalin Novák outlined Hungarian family policy and supporting measures, and emphasised the importance of being able to make decisions freely.

Addressing students at Franciscan University in Ohio on Tuesday, Novák told them "not to be afraid when you have to make a decision". On the subject of Hungary's relationship with Russia, the president said Hungary's position was "crystal clear": it condemns Russian aggression in Ukraine and supports Ukraine's territorial integrity. At the same time, Hungary pursues a "pragmatic relationship" with Russia to ensure its citizens can heat their homes, for which Russian oil and gas is essential. When it comes to sanctions, a similarly "rational and pragmatic approach" is needed, she added. At the wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Lajos Kossuth in Cleveland, Novák quoted Kossuth's speech on democracy made in the Ohio state legislature in 1852: "All for the people, and all by the people. Nothing about the people without the people..." Novák said Hungary was still fighting for these ideas and values so that people can decide for themselves how they want to live. Mayor of Cleveland Justin Bibb at the event called for closer ties between the city and Hungary.

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ORBÁN: GOVT APPROVES FIDESZ PROPOSAL FOR 'NATIONAL CONSULTATION' ON EU RUSSIA SANCTIONS

The government has approved the Fidesz parliamentary group's proposal to launch a "National Consultation" public survey on European Union sanctions against Russia, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said on Wednesday. "I ask everyone to give their opinion, because only through joint action can we put an end to the rise in energy prices," Orbán said on Facebook after a cabinet meeting. The prime minister said Wednesday's meeting had focused mainly on the issue of energy prices. "Brussels forced the energy sanctions onto member states and energy prices have been sky-high ever since," Orbán said. "When this happened, Brussels promised that the sanctions would end the war and would hurt the aggressor more than European Union member states." But instead, European citizens today are paying a "sanctions surcharge" on energy, he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: TURKSTREAM'S SECURITY CRUCIAL FOR HUNGARY

The security of the TurkStream gas pipeline is of paramount importance for Hungary, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, told a conference in Kazakhstan on Wednesday. Szijjártó addressed a

meeting of energy ministers of the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) in Almaty. The minister highlighted the increasing importance of the TurkStream pipeline, which is delivering natural gas from Russia via Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia to Hungary. Especially now when gas deliveries via the Nord Stream pipeline under the Baltic Sea are suffering disruptions, he said. Szijjártó called on the leaders of countries being a partner to TurkStream to keep monitoring the pipeline's operation. He said on Facebook the Hungarian government had repeatedly been attacked in connection with the implementation of the TurkStream project, adding that "without this pipeline, Hungary would be in a big trouble". Referring to the European Union's sanctions against Russia, Szijjártó said they had led to a serious energy crisis in Europe with global implications. "The sanctions could be more painful for Europe than for the Russian Federation," he added. The security of energy supplies is a physical, rather than an ideological or political issue for the Hungarian government, "therefore it is not a political question either, where energy is bought from," he said. The Hungarian government will never support any sanctions that could compromise the country's energy supplies, "whether it is nuclear energy, oil or gas", he said, adding that the government would represent the same position during talks on the EU's 8th package of sanctions. The Hungarian government has worked to diversify

energy supplies, and the TurkStream pipeline has "proved to be the best investment", as this is the only one coming from Russia that "is working with a 100-percent security", the minister said. TurkStream supplies 50-60% of Hungary's gas supply, Szijjártó said, adding that it had facilitated building reserves to cover 42% of the country's annual consumption. He warned, however, that new sources had to be identified, and pointed to Central Asia, which has 10.5% of the world's gas deposits. He urged that the EU should take steps to build infrastructure to provide access to gas in Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and to negotiate relevant deals. An upgrade of the Trans-Anatolian and Trans-Adriatic pipelines is necessary, while the Southern gas corridor should be linked to central Europe through the Western Balkans, Szijjártó said. The government also supports projects to import Azerbaijan's green power, produced by wind farms, through a cable under the sea, he added. Concerning the upgrade of Hungary's Paks nuclear plant, Szijjártó said the plant supplied half of the country's demand, adding that the government would not support "any EU sanctions that would hinder implementation of the project" by an international consortium led by Russia's Rosatom. Szijjártó noted that the OTS member states and observer countries had outlined their priorities in green transition at the session. He said the Hungarian government was committed to the

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cause of environment protection, but warned that "the green cause must be prevented from being disappropriated by political movements".

SZIJJÁRTÓ: PAKS PLANT'S OPERATIONS GUARANTEEING HUNGARY'S ENERGY SUPPLY

The "predictable and reliable" operations of the Paks nuclear power station guarantees Hungary's energy supply, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said on Wednesday. Both September deliveries of heating rods have arrived in Hungary, with the Russian manufacturer completing the second delivery by air, making a detour this time through Baltic and northern European airspace, Szijjártó said in a video on Facebook at Ferenc Liszt International Airport, from where he is traveling to a meeting in Kazakhstan of energy ministers of the Organisation of Turkic States. The current energy supply situation necessitates finding new partners, he said, which is why he is taking part in the meeting of energy ministers of Turkic states, whose countries enjoy major energy resources and transport routes, he added. Separate talks will be held with his Kazakh and Azeri counterparts to discuss possible new sources of energy for central Europe, and Europe more broadly, from the Caucasus and Central Asian region in the medium to long term. From Kazakhstan, Szijjártó will travel on to Thailand for a UN event and bilateral talks.

EC REPORT: HUNGARY'S INNOVATION ON THE UP AND UP

On the score of research, development and innovation, Hungary is closing the gap with the rest of the European Union, and has risen to 21st place in the innovation ranking, according to a fresh European Commission report. In the category of "up-and-coming innovators", the country is ranked first on the 2022 European Innovation Scoreboard, the ministry of culture and innovation said on Wednesday. The EC report published on Sept. 22 shows that Slovakia, in 23rd place overall, and Poland (24th) ranked behind Hungary, while Czechia ranked 14th in the group of "moderate innovators". This year, compared with the EU average, Hungary's performance is 69.8%, 3 percentage points up on its performance in 2021 and just below the 70% threshold of so-called moderate innovators. Compared with the 2015-2022 period, its performance is 7.1 percentage points higher.

Hungary is strong on indicators such as the number of foreign doctoral students, government support for business R&D, high-tech exports and the number of joint publications of the scientific and corporate spheres. It is especially strong on collaborations between sectors and the financing and support system, the ministry said in a statement. Recently, the government has prioritised improving infrastructure for universities and research institutes,

linking these up to businesses with a view to creating marketable, innovative products and services, the statement said. The results of the policy are already clear, it added, noting that compared with the previous year, the indicator of innovating enterprises and attractive research systems measuring the proportion of innovative enterprises outperformed the rest.

GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARY VALUES FRIENDSHIP WITH FINLAND

Hungarians value their long friendship with the Finns, a government official said at the opening of the 15th Hungarian-Finnish Sister Cities Conference, adding that the two peoples were bound by their shared tasks like achieving sustainable development. Since 2000, Hungary has been able to keep its economy growing while reducing carbon emissions, Zsófia Koncz, the deputy minister in charge of technology and industry, told the conference, adding that Hungary ranked 9th in the European Union in terms of per capita emissions. She noted Hungary's aim to become one of the world's top 50 most liveable countries by 2030. Tibor Navracsics, the minister for regional development, said there had never been a time in history when Hungarians and Finns had turned against each other, "despite attempts to incite disagreement between us". As an industrial and cultural leader, Finland sets an example for the whole of Europe today, he said.

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DK CALLS ON PARLT TO RATIFY SWEDEN, FINLAND NATO ACCESSION

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) has called on parliament to ratify the NATO accession of Sweden and Finland. All 30 NATO member states, including Hungary, backed membership of the two countries at the start of July, yet the Turkish and Hungarian parliaments are the only ones not to have ratified their accession. Ágnes Vadai, DK's deputy group leader, told an online press briefing on Wednesday, adding that the government was serving Russian interests by not submitting Sweden and Finland's accession documents to parliament.

LMP CALLS FOR REFERENDUM ON PLANNED DEBRECEN CATL BATTERY PLANT

The opposition LMP in Hajdú-Bihar County, in eastern Hungary, is initiating a local referendum on China's CATL battery plant planned near Debrecen. The city has long-standing water shortages, Péter Ungár, the green party's co-leader, said on Wednesday. The area would become a desert if the water-intensive project went ahead, he insisted. He castigated the government for not canvassing the opinion of locals on an issue that he insisted could affect the city for the next 30-40 years. In times of drought, this scarce commodity must be conserved, he added.

SOCIALISTS: RISING ELECTRICITY PRICES COST BUDAPEST EXTRA HUF 200 BN

The rise in the price of electricity is costing the Budapest city council an additional 200 billion forints (EUR 490.7m), Socialist city councillor Csaba Horváth said on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters ahead of a meeting of the City Assembly, Horváth called on the government to compensate Budapest transport company BKV for its rising energy costs. Budapest is incapable of covering its rising energy costs on its own, he said, adding that like national railway company MÁV, BKV should also receive state support. Horváth noted that Budapest residents pay 20 billion-25 billion forints in taxes each day.

HUNGARY RECORDS 11,392 NEW COVID CASES, 46 FATALITIES LAST WEEK

Fully 11,392 new Covid-19 cases were registered last week, while 46 people died in connection with the virus, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday in a round-up of last week's data. Altogether 6,418,057 have been vaccinated, with 6,204,361 having received a second shot, 3,897,091 a third, and 344,798 a fourth. Fully 2,094,142 Covid cases have been registered in Hungary since the start of the outbreak and 47,503 have died. Currently there are 32,464 active infections and 1,166 Covid patients are hospitalised, 18 intubated on a ventilator. So far 2,014,175 people have made a recovery.

MORE THAN 10,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON MONDAY

Fully 6,098 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Tuesday, while another 4,177 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 170 people, ORFK told MTI on Wednesday. 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.

RESEARCHERS' NIGHT TO OFFER RECORD NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES

A record number of over 2,500 programmes will be on offer across more than 50 localities nationwide on Researchers' Night this coming weekend, organisers said on Wednesday. More than 170 institutions will take part in the event, offering programmes at some 260 locations, Béla Kardon, the chief scientific officer of the Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development (RCISD), told a press conference, adding that organisers anticipate around 100,000 participants. László György, state secretary for innovation and higher education, said this year's event will also be attended by children who are being mentored by university students.