

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tamás Vasvári

Greenergy Group's solar plant near Paks inaugurated

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: POLICY OF SANCTIONS MUST BE CHANGED

The European Union's policy of sanctions must be changed, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said late on Thursday.

Orbán said in a video on Facebook ahead of the Prague summit of EU heads of state and government that some "weighty subjects" must be discussed at the meeting. "Are European countries going to have gas and electricity in the upcoming months," he asked. Orbán said Hungary had previously fought successfully to receive an exemption from the embargo and sanctions on oil. In recent days, the country has also achieved exemption from new sanctions affecting nuclear energy and gas supplies, he added. The sanctions have resulted in "sky-rocketing" energy prices which have also affected Hungary, he said. "Prices that are nearly impossible to pay," he added. "Russia has not at all fallen to its knees and European economies are bleeding to death. It is obvious that the policy of sanctions must be changed," he said, adding that it was the main issue at stake at the meeting.

Orbán held a number of bilateral talks in Prague, including meetings with Polish counterpart Mateusz Morawiecki, Czech President Milos Zeman and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković.

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ORBÁN TO MEET GERMAN CHANCELLOR FOR TALKS ON MONDAY

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is scheduled to hold talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin on Monday, Orbán's press chief said.

The meeting was also announced by the German chancellor's office in Berlin on Friday. Deputy spokesman Wolfgang Buechner said that the two heads of government will discuss European policies, bilateral, economic policy and international issues with a focus on the reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the most recent developments.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HINDERING WESTERN BALKANS' EU INTEGRATION SECURITY RISK

While delaying the enlargement of the European Union in the Western Balkans was no more than "missed opportunities" earlier, in view of the Ukraine war it now "poses a security risk", Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Montenegro on Friday. Integrating the Western Balkans is crucial for reinforcing an ailing Europe, the foreign ministry cited Szijjártó as saying at the annual 2BS (To Be Secure) forum in Budva. "Now the European Union is more in need of the Western Balkans than vice versa," the minister said.

Answering a question on another subject, Szijjártó said the Hungarian

government did not consider funds suspended by the EU as "humanitarian aid" and insisted that "those funds are made up of European contributions, including those of Hungarians, therefore they are partly owed to us". He said the funds had been suspended "purely for political reasons" rooted in "Hungary's being successful despite opposing the mainstream on some important issues". He also insisted that the country could not have made its achievements "if corruption were systemic".

TEACHERS' UNIONS INITIATE STRIKE COMMITTEE, CALL FOR APPOINTING COMMISSIONER FOR EDUCATION

Teachers' trade unions PSZ and PDSZ have called for a meeting of their joint strike committee next week, and called on the prime minister to appoint a commissioner for education, in an open letter on Friday. In their letter, the unions said "the government declines talks with unions referring to a pending European Commission decision concerning funds to cover a pay hike (for teachers)" but added that the government could start giving teachers a substantial raise immediately, from the central budget. They also said they refused the argument that "the Left and Brussels are hindering a pay hike in education". The unions called on Viktor Orbán to "appoint a commissioner without delay who has expertise in all areas of education and who is not

associated with recent fiascos" to be a partner in talks on structural changes in education, managing a shortage of teachers, reducing the burden on teachers, a review of the national curriculum, and modernisation of the education system in general. Addressing those issues must not be further delayed, the unions added.

TRADE UNIONS ASK ORBÁN FOR HELP IN COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Trade union alliances MASZSZ and SZEF have asked Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in an open letter for help to combat the cost-of-living crisis, they said in a statement. "European employees are facing an unprecedentedly serious cost-of-living crisis. Inflation is not caused by wages, employees are the primary victims and those with low wages and in a vulnerable position are especially affected," they said. Employers and governments bear responsibility to make the necessary steps to combat the crisis, the statement added.

Workers and trade unions throughout Europe demand the approval of a six-point plan to overcome the crisis and develop an economy that works for employees, it said. "Energy affairs ministers from the European Union made steps in the right direction last Friday but their measures are timid and insufficient to overcome the cost-of-living crisis," the statement said.

In view of an informal meeting of EU heads of state and government on

Friday, MASZSZ and SZEF called on the government to put pressure on the EU to implement six measures. The trade union alliances said wage increase and price caps are needed, especially on energy bills, and people must get help to pay their utilities and rents. The EU energy market must be transformed and trade unions given a role in crisis management, they added. Also, the various measures must be planned and implemented through social dialogue, they said.

KÖVÉR: 'HUNGARY EXPOSED TO BRUTAL POWER POLITICS'

Hungary is a target of brutal power politics, while European Union funds are being handled "in an openly arbitrary way that can only be called highway robbery", Speaker of Parliament László Kövér has said in an interview.

Although EU membership has still more benefits than drawbacks, the ratios have deteriorated significantly, the speaker said in an interview published in the weekly Hetek on Friday. Among the advantages, Kövér noted that over the past five years Hungary had continued to catch up with the average performance of the EU member countries. In the meantime, however, the political situation has considerably worsened, he added. Hungary is exposed to a brutal power politics, coupled with efforts "to impose obsessions and ideological dogmas on us", the speaker said. "If we didn't resist, very serious social consequences would

ensue." Kövér said he saw a chance of at least 50 percent of EU funding for Hungary being withheld until the Polish elections.

The ordinary European voter sees little more than the impression of constant trouble with the Polish and Hungarian governments, Kövér said. "There are concrete efforts to incite hatred in the European public against the right-wing European governments." Asked if it had been a mistake for the Hungarian government to help broker the deal that brought European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to power in 2019, the speaker said that, unfortunately, the other candidates had been "even worse".

Asked whether it was "absurd" that the pay rise for Hungarian teachers was made conditional on the deal between Brussels and the Hungarian government, Kövér said that the pay rise would not depend on whether or not the deal could be struck.

"The salaries of teachers are being increased and will continue to be increased in the future. If we get our money from Brussels, the process will be faster, if not, it will be slower, he said. Asked whether a politician who gives priority to national sovereignty should rather support the Ukrainians against the empire-building Russians, Kövér put another question: "What if the empire-building policy is being conducted by the West against the East, and Ukraine is seen as another hopeful province of the Euro-Atlantic Empire? It is up to anyone to decide which interpretation they prefer."

Kövér noted that the war had been unleashed by Russia. But Russia, too, had legitimate security interests, he added. As Russia is the strongest nuclear power next to the United States, "ignoring these interests is a huge mistake," the speaker said.

KÖRÖSI: WAR HAS UPENDED EVERYTHING

The world has not been in such a complex crisis since the second world war, and the United Nations will not be able to change the course of events based on how it has traditionally operated, so a serious rethink of how it does things is needed, Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th UN General Assembly, said in an interview to Hungarian public media on Thursday. Kőrösi said the world had arrived at a watershed owing to the severity, complexity and consequences of current crises, as well as national responses to them, including resorting to war and nuclear threats. So common answers must be found for the most serious questions, he added. The UN, like other large organisations, tends to carry on as it always has once the big speeches have been made, he said, adding that his biggest task was to consult the UN's six main committees and encourage them to change how they operate. To emerge from the current crisis, a serious reassessment is needed, he said. Kőrösi said it was heartening to have received everyone's support for the implementation of the General

Assembly presidential programme. He said the Russia-Ukraine war was the most serious among 30 armed conflicts currently taking place around the world in terms of food security as it had an influence on the food supply of 1.2 billion people. The war, he added, contravenes international law and the UN Charter, and it must be brought to an end urgently. Work must be done to manage current crises and transition to a state of affairs which ensures future generations can create and sustain life. Movement must be made towards a sustainable and peaceful world, he said, adding that if everyday life is filled with war, then the aim of societies is bare survival. The issue of sustainability, the diplomat said, had been pushed to the background. Because energy is now being wielded as a weapon, climate protections are deteriorating, he added. "The logic of war has upended everything," Kőrösi said.

AGREEMENT REACHED TO RESUME WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES IN BUDAPEST

An agreement has been reached between representatives of the Budapest Public Utilities (BKM) company and workers on strike enabling waste collection services in the city to resume, BKM, its waste management division FKF and the HVDSZ 2000 trade union said. Under the agreement, workers involved in waste management will receive a one-time extraordinary payment of 200,000

forints (EUR 474) gross for utility costs and employees in non-management positions will also get a Christmas bonus of 120,000 forints gross, a joint statement issued late on Thursday showed. Waste collection services will resume on October 7, it added. Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony said on Facebook late on Thursday that consultations had been started with trade unions about ways to help workers during the cost-of-living crisis.

KARÁCSONY: 'EVERY MEMBER OF BUDAPEST FAMILY' TO RECEIVE ONE-OFF HUF 200,000 UTILITY BILL SUBSIDY

"Every member of the Budapest family" will receive a one-off remuneration of gross 200,000 forints (EUR 743) to help them pay their utility bills, Gergely Karácsony, the city's mayor, said on Friday.

Karácsony told a press conference that the Budapest leadership's consultation with city council-run companies, institutions and unions had yielded an agreement that will see the one-off payment granted to rubbish collectors expanded to "every employee of the Budapest family". The utility bill subsidy will be paid out to the employees of all Budapest-run companies and institutions with the exception of their leaders, he added.

Karácsony said that the city had a duty to help its employees in difficult times if it wanted public services to run smoothly.

Deputy mayor Ambrus Kiss said the city-run companies and institutions employ around 25,000-26,000 people, adding that the one-off payment will cost the city 5.5 billion forints.

POTÁPI: 'THOSE WITH IMPERIAL ENDEAVOURS ALWAYS SEE DANGER IN HUNGARIANS' DESIRE FOR FREEDOM'

Those with imperial endeavours have seen danger in the Hungarian nation's desire for liberty ever since the crushing of the 1848-49 revolution, even when the nation took a stand for peace and order, Árpád János Potápi, the state secretary in charge of policies for Hungarian communities abroad, said in Dunajska Streda (Dunaszerdahely), in southern Slovakia, on Thursday. Addressing a commemoration of Arad martyrs, Potápi noted that the Habsburg empire that carried out the reprisals at that time branded the freedom fighters as enemies of order and peace.

Potápi called Hungary's policies for Hungarian communities abroad as its greatest achievement over the past 12 years, adding that the feeling of national cohesion had strengthened. "Now we're helping each another's prosperity as a true nation," he said. Speaking about the future, Potápi said that difficulties are to be expected in the period ahead, too, but "today no nation is as united within its borders and beyond as ours".

"In this unity there is strength and perseverance on which we can build our future", he said. Hungary's government

declared October 6 a national day of mourning in 2001, in commemoration of the 13 martyrs executed in Arad following the crushing of the revolution. Lajos Batthyány, Hungary's first prime minister, who is also commemorated today, was executed in Pest.

UKRAINE CRISIS - SOME 11,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON THURSDAY

Fully 5,450 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Thursday, while another 5,304 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 205 people, ORFK told MTI on Friday. 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 33 people, 13 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT TO JOB-CREATING PROJECTS BY INTL FIRMS

Hungary will stay on an economic growth path if it continues to provide support to job-creating projects by large international companies in the country, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook on Friday. Szijjártó noted that Europe was facing serious economic recession and insisted that Hungary could be a "local exception" if it maintains

the practice of promoting such projects. Szijjártó made a special mention of South Korean electric car producers with battery plants in Hungary, and said they were the third largest investment group in the country. At a meeting with South Korean business leaders, Szijjártó said the Hungarian government was firm in its commitment to "retain fundamental economic and social policy goals". Despite a serious economic situation, "retaining full employment and the lowest taxes in Europe, as well as the fastest business promotion system must not be compromised", he added.

GUEST NIGHTS EDGE UP 3% IN AUGUST

Guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary rose by 3.1% year on year to 3,938,000 in August, data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) on Friday show. The number of guest nights spent by domestic travellers fell by 16.5% to 2,366,000, after a surge in in-country travel by Hungarians in the base period. The number of guest nights spent by foreign visitors rose by 59.9% to 1,573,000, albeit from a low pandemic base. Revenue of commercial accommodations increased by 16.2% to 63 billion forints (EUR 149m) in August.

MONKEYPOX - NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES REACHES 78

Hungary has so far confirmed 78 cases of monkeypox, with one new infection

recorded in the past week, the national public health authority (NNK) said on Friday. The new patient is a male aged 30, NNK said, adding that he did not require hospitalisation. Local authorities are investigating each recorded case, including contact tracing, NNK said.

4iG ACQUIRES 9.5% STAKE IN SPACECOM

Listed Hungarian IT company 4iG on Friday said it acquired a 9.538% stake in Israeli satellite company Space-Communication in a public share issue.

4iG signed a contract in September to gradually acquire a 51% stake in Spacecom over a period of several years. Under the contract, which replaced one signed close to a year earlier, 4iG may acquire a 20% stake in Spacecom in public offerings or private placements as a "first step". Three years after the acquisition of the 20% stake, 4iG may boost its holding in Spacecom by an additional 31%, pending approval by shareholders and clearance from Israel's Ministry of Communications.

The Ministry of Communications earlier issued approval for 4iG's acquisition of a 20% stake in Spacecom.

Spacecom operates the AMOS fleet of four geosynchronous satellites, offering broadcast and broadband service. Spacecom's AMOS 3 satellite leases the geostationary orbit held by Hungary under an agreement that will expire in 2024. CarpathiaSat, a 4iG group member, holds the rights to the orbit for a 20-year period from 2024.