

PHOTO OF THE DAY



The 27th SPAR Budapest Marathon

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases Aug foreign trade figures

Plenary session of parliament

War in Ukraine

TOP STORY

ORBÁN URGES UKRAINE CEASEFIRE

Working towards a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine is of paramount importance, Viktor Orbán said at a two-day summit of European leaders in Prague.

The prime minister said on Facebook that he had represented Hungary's position that an escalation of the conflict should be prevented and peace secured as quickly as possible. Despite current events, a ceasefire and talks should be launched, Orbán said, adding that he asked the leaders of the more powerful EU member states to engage in talks with a view to preventing a spread of the conflict.

On the subject of energy sanctions, the prime minister said Hungary had attained all its goals, noting that it had been granted exemptions from the parts of the eighth EU sanctions package that would have been harmful to the country. The latest sanctions package applies neither to Hungary's gas supply nor to nuclear energy, and Hungary can continue upgrading its Paks nuclear power plant. Orbán said the member states had called on the European Commission to take immediate steps to bring down energy prices which had skyrocketed across the continent due to the sanctions imposed by the bloc.

PALKOVICS HAILS 'SUCCESS STORY' OF HUNGARY-GERMANY TIES

The relationship between Hungary and Germany is a "success story" and is useful for the entire world, Technology and Industry Minister László Palkovics said after talks in Berlin with German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Robert Habeck. Speaking to public media, Palkovics said that because a close relationship "always has issues that need to be cleared up", he and Habeck had "clarified" some "misunderstandings" ahead of Monday's meeting between Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The two countries have no disagreements when it comes to the economy, Palkovics said. The minister said a survey by the German-Hungarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DUIHK) that found that 88% of German companies doing business in Hungary would repeat their past investments in the country was also a sign of the success of bilateral economic cooperation.

Palkovics said he and Habeck had discussed energy as another area for cooperation, noting that Hungary needed to have a stable energy supply in order for German companies to be successful there. "Recent developments have also led us to rethink Hungary's energy situation, including the aim to become independent and environmentally friendly solutions that will characterise

the coming period," he said. Palkovics said the talks also covered plans to build a hydrogen economy and the issue of new vehicle propulsion technologies, on which he said Hungary and Germany were in agreement that political decisions needed to adhere to the principle of "technological neutrality".

OFFICIAL AT TRANSYLVANIA ECON FORUM: COOPERATION ONLY SOLUTION TO CRISIS

The only solution to the crisis in Europe is maintaining cooperation, the state secretary for policy for Hungarians across the borders told the Transylvania Economic Forum held in Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely). In his welcoming address, Árpád János Potápi said the Russia-Ukraine war and the European response to it "made economic development impossible" in Europe at a time when Hungary, Romania and the region had become the engine of that development. The region saw a high rate of development, falling unemployment and growing wages before the war, he said.

Hungary has used economic development as a policy to boost national cohesion, by supporting training and organised mentor programmes in Hungarian communities across the borders, he said. Besides the development schemes, the government continues to support entrepreneurs in an attempt to create a community and network strengthening ethnic Hungarian communities across the borders, he said.

Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Hunor Kelemen of the ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party said the war, "which seemed regional at first", shook the foundations of European economy, prompting states to interfere with market trends to protect their citizens and companies. The disruption of global supply chains makes it likely that world economy will be reconstructed on a regional level in the case of a ceasefire, he said. "A crisis is always an opportunity for those able to think flexibly, innovatively and creatively," he said. Sharing knowledge and experience among entrepreneurs of the Carpathian Basin is a good way to find those opportunities, he said.

PALKOVICS: HUNGARY AT CUTTING EDGE OF HIGH- TECH MANUFACTURING

Hungary is at the cutting edge of high-tech manufacturing, the technology and industry minister has said, citing fresh global innovation rankings. The 2022 Global Innovation Index puts Hungary in fifth place when it comes to high-tech manufacture in proportion to total output, while the country advanced three places overall compared with the previous year, László Palkovics said in a statement. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) publishes the Global Innovation Index annually, comparing the innovation performance of 132 economies this year.

Overall, Hungary is ranked 34th, while it is in 23rd place in terms

of scientific and technological performance in seven subject areas examined. Hungary is in the top 10 in terms of the complexity of production and export, as well as the high-tech export ratio.

Also, the European Commission's 2022 European Innovation Scoreboard ranks Hungary at the top of the "emerging innovators" category, citing the export of high-tech products, putting Hungary in third after Switzerland and Slovakia. When it comes to support for business research and development, Hungary ranks seventh among the EU member states, according to the scoreboard. The government, said Palkovics, has launched a "technological revolution" over the past few years aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and improved competitiveness, as well as boosting industrial performance in knowledge-based, future-oriented sectors. By 2030, Hungary aims to become the single European centre of battery manufacture and, alongside Germany, the top developer of autonomous vehicles, the statement said. Collaborations with top innovators centre around 5G, AI, drone technology and the hydrogen economy, it added.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES CALL ON ORBÁN TO CONVENE NATL ENERGY SUMMIT

The leaders of 18 localities have signed an open letter to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, calling on him to convene a

national energy summit and start talks with local authorities on providing aid to weather the energy crisis. Local authorities are in dire economic straits, the letter said, and the government should act swiftly to ensure that public services are maintained.

The energy crisis and soaring prices have driven a cost of living crisis that has resulted in an increasing number of people turning to local authorities for welfare support, even as the municipalities themselves are fighting to maintain basic services, the letter said. The national energy summit would be an opportunity to table solutions to the problem, it said. The signatories, none of whom belong to the ruling parties, said they were aware that "the state budget is also in a difficult situation, for both domestic and external reasons". At the same time, "the government is in talks on supporting church-run schools, but there has been no mention of maintaining state-run kindergartens and creches."

Government support could be funded by handing back local authorities' tax revenues taken away from them under a government decree, the letter said, referring to a government decision to strip municipalities of their corporate tax revenues in 2020. It could also be funded from the extra profit flowing into state coffers from higher energy prices, it said. The mayors are also initiating talks on the price of electricity produced in the Paks nuclear plant, saying the electricity produced there

for 12 forints/kWh is sold to cities at over 400 forints/kWh (EUR 0.94). While the nuclear power plant's electricity output could satisfy the demand of public services, "we think it is unacceptable for a state-owned company to profiteer from a plant built as a community investment to the detriment of Hungarian localities."

Avoiding a social crisis and keeping Hungarian operational are a national interest, the letter said. The letter was signed by the mayors of Budapest, Baja, Balmazújváros, Budakalász, Budaörs, Érd, Gödöllő, Hódmezővásárhely, Kazincbarcika, Nyírbátor, Pécs, Pomáz, Salgótarján, Tatabánya, Szeged, Szentendre, Szombathely and Vác.

DK TURNS TO STRASBOURG COURT OVER MP'S FINE

The Democratic Coalition (DK) has turned to the Strasbourg European Court of Human Rights over a fine meted out to a party lawmaker by the Speaker of Parliament. Speaker László Kövér recently fined László Sebián-Petrovszki 4 million forints (EUR 9,400) for declaring in parliament that the government was unlawful, the party said in a statement on Facebook. Kövér punishes opposition representatives arbitrarily for expressing their opinions, notwithstanding the guarantee of freedom of speech and opinion enshrined in the constitution and the Act on Parliament, which protects the freedom of opinion of lawmakers, the statement added.

LMP INITIATES REFERENDUM ON PLANNED CHINESE BATTERY PLANT IN DEBRECEN

Opposition LMP is initiating a local referendum in Debrecen to prevent the construction of a Chinese battery factory whose massive water consumption it says would aggravate water shortage in the eastern Hungarian city, a local party official said. As subsoil waters have been ebbing here since the 1960s, Debrecen is not the best choice for such a water-intensive plant, Mihály Murguly said. He criticised the government for its failure to canvass the opinion of locals on the issue, which would entail long-term consequences for the city.

Levente Magyar, the parliamentary state secretary of the foreign ministry, announced on August 12 that the largest ever investment project in Hungary will be carried out under an agreement signed with

Chinese battery maker CATL, which will set up its second European plant in Debrecen. Magyar said that after a series of talks spanning more than two years, the world's largest battery maker will invest 3,000 billion forints (EUR 7.6bn) in a plant occupying 221 hectares and employing 9,000 people.

NEARLY 12,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SAT

Fully 5,980 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Saturday, while another 5,832 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 251 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 received 70 people, 23 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

KOVÁCS LAUNCHES PODCAST AIMED AT AUDIENCES ABROAD

Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications and relations, has launched a podcast for audiences abroad who are interested in Hungary. The Bold Truth About Hungary podcast invites guests to discuss Hungarian policies in a way that transcends traditional government communications, Kovács said on Facebook and Twitter. Topics for discussion will include EU funding, domestic politics, and the war in Ukraine, among others. Kovács told MTI that attempts had been made over the past 12 years to convey how Hungarians feel and think about the world and politics. "Yet so many pretend they don't understand," he said. "So we're now telling foreigners, as foreigners, [all about this] on a new platform," he said, adding that from now on no one would be able to say that they do not understand "what we are talking about and how we think about the world".