

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Czeglédi

Debrecen's Csokonai National Theatre during renovation

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU summit in Brussels

EP plenary session

Parlt legislative cttee meets

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: LONG-TERM OPERATION OF TURKSTREAM ENSURED

The operation of the TurkStream pipeline is guaranteed in the long run after Dutch authorities re-issued the export licence of a company partly responsible for its maintenance, the Hungarian minister of foreign affairs and trade said on Wednesday.

Péter Szijjártó said withdrawing the export licence of the company, which is registered in the Netherlands, could have "brought a worrying situation" for the long-term operation of the pipeline linking Hungary with Russia. He said he had addressed the issue with the Dutch energy minister several times, and was informed on Wednesday that the licence has been again green-lighted. "The operation of the TurkStream pipeline is again fully reliable in the long run," he said. Szijjártó called the European Commission's new proposal to curb the fallout of the energy crisis in Europe "inadequate, even dangerous", and said that Russia would stop delivering natural gas to the continent if the measure were adopted. "Europe needs as much natural gas as possible, arriving to the continent from as many resources and routes as possible", and the proposal would result in the opposite, he said. Meanwhile, Hungary's gas supplies through the southern pipeline are uninterrupted, he said. The country's gas reserves are at 50% of its annual demand, comfortably higher than the EU's 27% average, he said.

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FIDESZ MEP: W BALKAN'S EU INTEGRATION IN INTEREST OF WHOLE OF EUROPE

The stability of the Western Balkans is in the interest of the whole of Europe which is why it is important to offer a perspective of EU integration to the region's countries, an MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz told MTI in Strasbourg on Wednesday. Pressure posed by migration is increasing along the Western Balkan route with groups of young armed men attacking border guards, Kinga Gál said, calling on Brussels to declare the protection of the EU's external border a priority. She said it was "a mistaken migration policy" by the European Union "not to concentrate on the right questions" and called for steps to stop illegal migrants at the Schengen borders. Hungary is facing double pressure, said Gál. She noted that Hungary had taken in 1.5 million war refugees from Ukraine ensuring them access to education and health care. "We support real refugees, while aggressive illegal migrants must be stopped in which efforts the Western Balkan region is playing a key role." The Fidesz MEP welcomed the EC's decision last week to propose granting Bosnia and Herzegovina the status of candidate to join the European Union. She said the EU's new package of enlargement proposals offered the Western Balkans "a more positive and promising outlook", reiterating Hungary's commitment towards the region's EU integration.

JUSTICE MINISTER CALLS PROTECTING SAFE ENERGY SUPPLY OF HOUSEHOLDS PRIORITY

The government gives priority to protecting the safe energy supply of Hungarian households and will represent its position clearly at the two-day European Union summit on energy issues starting on Thursday, the justice minister said. Judit Varga told the press on Tuesday after a meeting of ministers in charge of EU affairs that the only solution to Europe's current energy dependence problem is to diversify energy acquisition.

Energy dependence on the east must not be replaced by energy dependence on any other direction, the minister said. Dependence should be replaced by independence and the only way forward is diversification, she said, adding that energy should not come from any single source, continent or country. Commenting on the issues covered at the meeting, she stressed the need of a constitutional dialogue in connection with the rule-of-law procedure launched against Poland five years ago, insisting that double standards should be avoided. "In the current situation, we should rather focus on how to make the member states successful so that we should be strong together, instead of causing disadvantage in competition to one of Europe's largest country by holding back EU resources," she said. Commenting on the Russia-Ukraine

war, Varga said Hungary was urging a ceasefire and the start of peace talks, adding that Europe and all member states also had a vested interest in reducing tension.

GOVT MEETS AHEAD OF EU SUMMIT

The Hungarian government met for an all-day session ahead of an upcoming two-day EU summit in Brussels, which will have on its agenda "topics of paramount importance for Hungary's energy security", the prime minister's press chief said on Wednesday. Bertalan Havasi said the most recent EU proposal aimed at introducing a cap on gas prices "would equal an embargo on gas imports for Hungary in its current form". "Brussels's ill-advised sanctions are already putting a nearly unbearable burden on the Hungarian economy and families," he said, therefore Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will urge the EU to reconsider its sanctions policy and "putting it on a reasonable basis" at the summit on Thursday and Friday.

JOUROVÁ: EU TO PROTECT MEDIA FREEDOMS, FIGHT DISINFORMATION

The European Union has launched its European Action Plan to protect the European elections, fight the spread of false information and to protect media freedoms, Vera Jourová, EU commissioner for values and transparency, told a debate in the

European Parliament in Strasbourg on Wednesday. Europe's democracy must be protected from powers aiming to destroy it, the commissioner said, adding that the European Commission would propose a package next year aimed against those outside the bloc who finance mechanisms seen as dangerously manipulating the public. Referring to the Ukraine war, Jourova said the conflict had benefitted not only the extreme right but the far left, too, and warned that political extremism could lead to violence. The European Commission will cooperate with member states to tackle risks posed by the far right, she said.

Balázs Hidvéghi, MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, said the debate reflected "the European Left's ideological terror against all those that dare to disagree". The debate shows "the hysterical and intolerant nature of the Socialist and Liberal Left trampling on democratic decisions ... they openly disrespect the democratic decisions of the people and will launch attacks against the Italian and Swedish governments just as they are trying to hunt down Hungary," he said.

Klára Dobrev, MEP of the opposition Democratic Coalition, said the Hungarian government was "illiberal and far right", which could not protect voters or come up with achievements because "they only have one skill: how to incite to hatred". "The far right must be defeated so that people could be ensured decent and free lives," Dobrev added.

Opposition Momentum MEP Katalin Cseh mentioned, for

example, recent protests in Hungary concerning education, and quoted the government as blaming "Brussels for all the problems". "Similar lies are echoed in Hungary concerning the war in Ukraine and concerning all policies of the EU," she said, adding that "these lies are working" because the EU "fails to give an adequate response". "Such disinformation will have the EU rotting from within," she said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ INAUGURATES EUROPE'S LARGEST RAILWAY INTERMODAL COMBI TERMINAL NEAR UKRAINE BORDER

Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, inaugurated a 30 billion forint (EUR 73m) railway intermodal combi terminal in Fényeslitke, near Hungary's border with Ukraine, on Tuesday. Addressing the ceremony, Szijjártó said the terminal will play an "enormous role" in facilitating exports of Ukrainian grain to trade routes on the Adriatic. The terminal's transshipment capacity will reach about 800 tonnes of grain per hour, while annual capacity is set to reach 1 million containers, he said.

He noted that the largest and most modern railway intermodal combi terminal in Europe had been completed in record time and using digital solutions. It will allow fast and safe loading of four 740 metre long trains at the same time, he added. About 500 people will work at the East-West Gate terminal, Szijjártó

said. According to the press material distributed at the event, the East-West Gate terminal (EWG) will be Europe's first intermodal combi terminal based on green technology using its own 5G network for internal communication and operation of its technological devices. The facility will be powered by green technology, in line with the EU's rail and climate strategy. A high-performance solar park as well as a heat pump system will provide power and only electric terminal tractors and e-cars will be used in the terminal area.

W HUNGARY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AMONG BEST IN EU

The unemployment rate of two western Hungarian regions was among the lowest in the European Union in 2021, with youth unemployment among the lowest in three regions, the technology and industry ministry said on Wednesday, citing Eurostat data.

The unemployment of 15-29-year-olds has fallen by 12.8 percentage points in Hungary since 2010, ten times the EU average of 1.3 percentage points, the ministry said. The decline is second only to Lithuania's, the statement said. Youth unemployment was below 5% in 2021 in Hungary's central and two western regions, down from around 30% nationwide in 2010, the ministry said. Unemployment in the total population in the western Hungarian regions was at 2.1-2.2%, it said. Zsolt Kutnyánszky, the state secretary for industry and labour market, said Hungary's employment



rate was at a record high in the summer of 2022. "This was the first time when the number of jobholders in Hungary was over 4.7 million over three consecutive months," he said. The subsidy scheme for regional workforce support for companies has supported the employment of 8,700 people, with over 3,000 of them under 25, he said. "That age group will find working even more worthwhile, as they will be exempt from paying a personal income tax from the beginning of next year," he added.

NEW LAW TO AID WINE PRODUCERS, PROMOTE HUNGARIAN WINES

Hungarian winemakers are launching a 2.6 billion forint (EUR 6.3m) campaign to popularise Hungarian wines among younger consumers and on foreign markets with government support, while the government is revamping official administrative procedures

with a view to simplifying red tape for Hungary's 30,000 winegrowers and winemakers, according to a government official. One fix in the pipeline is a new electronic administration system to be introduced in the first half of 2023, on a voluntary basis at first, for larger market players, Zsolt Nyitrai, chief adviser to the Prime Minister, told MTI, after meeting winemakers.

ALMOST 9,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON TUESDAY

Fully 5,071 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Tuesday, while another 3,811 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 233 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. Budapest received 64 people, 22 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

HUNGARY REGISTERS 11,947 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES LAST WEEK, 118 FATALITIES

Fully 11,947 new Covid-19 cases were registered last week, while 118 people died in connection with the virus, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday in a round-up of last week's data. Currently there are 35,043 active infections and 1,597 Covid patients are hospitalised, 18 intubated on a ventilator. Altogether 6,418,810 have been vaccinated, with 6,205,327 having received a second shot, 3,898,566 a third, and 357,678 a fourth. Fully 2,132,490 Covid cases have been registered in Hungary since the start of the outbreak and 47,798 have died. So far 2,049,649 people have made a recovery.