

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

Castle of Somoskő in northern Hungary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parl

Budapest municipal assembly meets

LMP's presser on party's „green consultation”

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: EC REFUSES TO FACE REALITY

The European Commission has “clearly not learnt from its recent mistakes” and refuses to face reality, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Luxembourg on Tuesday.

The ministry cited Szijjártó telling a press conference after the European Union energy affairs ministers’ meeting that the measures introduced by Brussels had only deepened the energy crisis. It is most important to stay alert in the weeks to come when the EC drafts and submits concrete proposals, he said. The EC plans to “make another concealed attempt” to reduce member states’ powers and “sneakily expand” its own powers, Szijjártó said. “Hungary insists that decisions in matters connected to energy supplies should require the unanimous approval of all member states,” he added. The security of energy supplies is a priority for the government, which will not approve any proposal that would even slightly reduce it, he said. “We believe the good and genuine long-term solution would be to flood the European market with natural gas,” Szijjártó said. “The EC should help to ensure that natural gas arrives from as many sources as possible and through as many routes as possible,” he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT MAINTAINS 'RED LINES' IN SIX MATTERS

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Tuesday that the government maintained "red lines" in six matters. The first one is that setting up a common gas acquisition platform should be done on a voluntary basis only, he said. Hungary refuses to participate in common acquisitions of any kind, he added. Measures related to a price cap must not influence long-term contracts in any way, he said. Commenting on the solidarity mechanism, Szijjártó rejected the possibility that natural gas purchased from Hungarian taxpayers' money and stored in Hungary should be offered to other countries. "European bureaucrats and quite a few other countries are juggling to banish Russian natural gas from European markets ... but in case of an emergency they would accept it from Hungarian reserves," he said. Szijjártó also said that Hungary's experiences were not necessarily the same as western European experiences in terms of which suppliers were reliable. Russia's Gazprom has been reliably supplying the contracted volumes while two western companies have let Hungary down in connection with extraction from the Black Sea gas fields in Romania, he added. Szijjártó said that unlike the successful Hungarian decisions connected to gas acquisition and storage, Brussels' measures have so far "only caused

problems and dangers for European energy supplies". It follows that the Hungarian government does not support handing over national powers. "We will stand on our guard in the weeks to come to make sure that no decision is made that could threaten Hungarian energy supplies, go against the European Council's decision, or take away powers from us to hand them over to Brussels," he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY, S KOREA AGREE ON INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND TRADE DEVELOPMENT PACT

Hungary and South Korea have agreed to sign an investment promotion and trade development agreement, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said on Monday. Szijjártó said on Facebook that the agreement he signed with South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun in Dunakeszi near Budapest would help bring more investments to Hungary. Given that South Korean companies are leaders in the global electric vehicle industry, their investments in Hungary are crucial, the minister said.

South Korean EV industry players like Samsung SDI, SK Innovation, W-Scope and others have created more than 10,000 jobs in Hungary in the recent period, he said. Meanwhile, bilateral trade turnover reached a record 5 billion US dollars last year, he said, adding that Hungary will soon resume meat exports to the country. The

minister emphasised the importance of investments carried out by reliable and strong Eastern businesses at a time when "Europe is rapidly moving towards a recession due to Brussels's failed sanctions". Thanks to its balanced economic policy, political stability and the fact that it has the lowest taxes in Europe, Hungary is an attractive investment destination for large Eastern companies, Szijjártó said. Eastern countries have been the biggest sources of foreign investment in Hungary since 2019, with South Korea being the top investor in 2019 and 2021 and China in 2020 and this year, he said. These Eastern investments are what will prevent Hungary from getting caught up in the European recession, he added.

ORBÁN CONGRATULATES SUNAK ON BECOMING BRITISH PM

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Monday congratulated Rishi Sunak on becoming the new British prime minister, Orbán's press chief said. In his message to Sunak, Orbán referred to "excellent" bilateral ties between Hungary and the United Kingdom, noting that cooperation was based on mutual respect, shared values and interests and deep-rooted historical relations. In these difficult times characterised by numerous crises when the various challenges directly affect the two countries' citizens, it is important that "as like-minded allies and partners, we continue to increase

the intensity of our already close cooperation”, Orbán said. The prime minister expressed his commitment to strengthening Hungarian-British relations and building strong and mutually beneficial cooperation between the UK and the European Union, the statement said.

JUSTICE MIN IN US: 'CONSERVATIVE POLITICS WORKS'

Justice Minister Judit Varga highlighted the achievements of the Hungarian government in a lecture delivered at the Washington, DC, headquarters of the Heritage Foundation late on Monday, and said those achievements had helped ruling Fidesz to its fourth two-thirds election victory in April. For example, Varga said the government had delivered on its 2010 pledge to create one million new jobs by 2021, adding it was proof that the Christian Democrat and national conservative formula were working. Varga insisted that the liberal mainstream was in opposition with the Hungarian government because it had demonstrated that national sovereignty, conservative values and democratic government based on the rule of law could be harmonised. The rule of law could be maintained on a foundation of conservative values, she added.

Concerning the European Union, the minister said the community's success was based on the achievements of each nation state, but added that

the EU was apparently seeking to build a Europe without nations. She said the EU outsourced democracy to an international network of NGOs, which had no authorisation by their respective states and were financed internationally. They have a huge power to influence the public, she said, and insisted that the political decision-making in the EU was no longer based on input from the national governments but from the institutions trapped by those NGOs. Europe should again be working as a democracy of democracies, in which the national governments set directions because those are the bodies that bear responsibility for their own citizens and economies, Varga said.

DEFMIN: HUNGARY, TURKEY TO COOPERATE IN DEVELOPING COMBAT VEHICLE

Hungary and Turkey are developing the Gidran combat vehicle, “a symbol of Hungarian Turkish defence cooperation”, the defence minister said on Facebook on Tuesday. Turkey will deliver 40 vehicles to Hungary by the end of 2023, and they will be equipped in Kaposvár, S Hungary, Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky said in the post. Szalay-Bobrovniczky is on a two-day visit in Turkey, where he met his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar, and visited the Nurol Makina plant where he tested the vehicles. Later on Tuesday, Szalay-Bobrovniczky and

Akar unveiled a memorial in Canakkale, western Turkey, dedicated to Austro-Hungarian artillerymen who fought in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign in the first world war, aiding the Ottoman Empire against Allied forces. In his speech, Szalay-Bobrovniczky said the courage and self-sacrifice of Turkish soldiers had elevated the memorial to Gallipoli among Turkish national memorial sites, the defence ministry said. Szalay-Bobrovniczky said the memorial, built at the initiative of the Hungarian defence ministry, was also a “memento to the historic coexistence and the joint history of the Hungarian and Turkish people, and to the respect of heroes and the courage that connects them”. Akar said the memorial was a symbol of the cooperation necessary to overcome obstacles. Hungary and Turkey have an “active” cooperation, he said, and called for cooperation in economy and culture as well as defence.

PÁRBESZÉD SLAMS GOVT ASSET MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT FOR 'SELLING OUT PROTECTED NATURE SITES'

The government's proposed amendments to legislation on the management of government-owned assets is tantamount to “selling out” protected nature sites, the co-leader of the opposition Párbeszéd party told an online press conference on Tuesday. Rebecka Szabó insisted that the cash-strapped cabinet was trying to shore

up its finances by privatising protected nature sites.

Although the law stipulates that the new owner should maintain the protected status of those areas, “the government has dismantled nature protection authorities” to the point where they will not be able to enforce the law, Szabó said. Further, the authorities are under the supervision of government offices, making them easy target for “some government-linked, Fidesz oligarch who wants to put pressure on them,” she added. Párbeszéd is looking into turning to the Constitutional Court over the matter, she said.

The minister of economic development said earlier this month that the government was submitting a bill to ensure that the state continues to own assets that are critical to its core functions and to sell cost-generating assets that are peripheral to its essential activities. The current bill is aimed at strengthening the position of the state asset manager Magyar Nemzeti Vagyonkezelő and creating a unified, centralised system for the legal exercise of real estate ownership, Márton Nagy said.

DK PROPOSES TAX-EXEMPT UTILITY SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) has proposed allowing employers to provide employees with a utility bill benefit that would be exempt from taxes and contributions. The benefit

that would be made available to full-time employees would be maximised at a monthly 50,000 forints (EUR 121), DK lawmaker Ferenc Dávid told an online press conference. Under the proposal, companies that require their employees to work from home would be mandated to provide the benefit in proportion to the duration of work shifts, Dávid, DK’s shadow economy minister, said. The scheme would have to remain in place until March 31 next year, he said.

Ruling Fidesz said in response that DK leader Ferenc Gyurcsány and his team are “amazing when they do brainstorming in the shadow” but they have never voted in favour of utility support or utility cut and they have been demanding the cancellation of the utility cut scheme for nine years. “The left wing has been fully supporting Brussels’ sanctions which caused the explosion of energy prices and they would be willing to switch off Russian gas for Hungarian families, pensioners and businesses in exchange for foreign campaign funding,” the party said in a statement.

JOBBIK PROPOSES AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION, LAW ON CENTRAL BANK

Opposition Jobbik proposes amending the constitution and the law on the central bank so as to protect the forint, deputy party leader Dániel Z Kárpát said on Tuesday. Jobbik wants preserving

the value of the national currency to be enshrined in the basic law as a government task, he told a press conference. Further, the party wants the central bank to be obliged by law to set an exchange rate target for the forint, he said. The exchange rate of the euro against the forint was around 266 at the time of the change of government in 2010, he said. This year, the exchange rate shifted permanently above 400, which is reflected in prices and inflates Hungarians’ salaries and savings, he added. Z Kárpát accused ruling Fidesz of purposely weakening the forint in the interest of export-oriented multinational companies. He said Jobbik would submit the two amendments to parliament this week.

OVER 10,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON MONDAY

Fully 5,463 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Monday, while another 4,788 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 173 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 25 people, 14 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

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HUNGARY CBANK LEAVES BASE RATE ON HOLD

Rate-setters of the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) on Tuesday kept the base rate on hold at 13.00%. The Monetary Council also decided at its policy meeting to keep the central bank's O/N deposit rate at 12.50% and the O/N collateralised loan rate at 25.00%. The O/N deposit rate and the collateralised loan rate mark the bottom and the top, respectively, of the central bank's "interest rate corridor". The base rate is paid on mandatory reserves. The decision was in line with expectations.

In a statement released after the meeting, the Council said the NBH will continue to use the instruments introduced in mid-October "as long as it is warranted by the maintenance of market stability and developments in risk perceptions". It said tight monetary conditions would be maintained over a prolonged period, ensuring that "inflation expectations are anchored and the inflation target is achieved in a sustainable manner". The Council added that the instruments applied over the past month with the aim of draining interbank liquidity were effective in strengthening monetary policy transmission. At a press conference after the meeting, NBH deputy governor Barnabás Virág said Hungary's current account had "bottomed out" in September and would improve "more quickly than expected". Concerning inflation, Virág

said a turnaround in fundamental consumer price trends was "taking shape", adding that an increase in headline CPI in October could be driven by volatile food prices.

1956 FUSILLADE VICTIMS COMMEMORATED IN BUDAPEST

A commemoration was held in Budapest to pay tribute to the victims of a fusillade that took place near Parliament on October 25, 1956, on Tuesday. László Géza Sömjéni, head of the organiser Freedom Fighters Foundation, said October 23, the outbreak of the anti-Soviet revolt, was an "iconic day" in Hungarian history. Sömjéni also said that "Hungary is under appalling attacks even now, therefore we must fight for our survival in every hour and every minute". The commemoration was attended by House Speaker László Kövér and former Prime Minister Péter Boross.

PEACE MAIN THEME OF BUDAPEST MEETING OF LEADERS OF CEE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES

Peace was the main theme of the two-day meeting of the leaders of the Bishops' Conferences from Central and Eastern Europe that ended in Budapest on Tuesday, the press service of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference (MKPK) told MTI. Addressing the meeting, András Veres, the head of MKPK's

council, cited the Second Vatican Council's message which says: "Peace is not the mere absence of war or the simple maintenance of a balance of power between forces, nor can it be imposed at the dictate of absolute power. It is called, rightly and properly, a work of justice." In his address, Michael Wallace Banach, the apostolic nuncio, said the church is an institution that loves peace. He then asked the question: "what does the church do for peace?", adding that "this is a question that must resonate in people's hearts". Gintaras Grusas, archbishop of Vilnius, asked everyone to pray for peace in Ukraine and in Europe. Cardinal Mario Grech also highlighted the importance of peace in his address. Participants on Monday evening attended a holy mass celebrated in the Saint Stephen's Basilica by Cardinal Péter Erdő, the leader of the Hungarian Catholic Church. The meeting concluded with a reception hosted by Hungarian President Katalin Novák.

BUDAPEST SPAS PLAN NO CLOSURES DESPITE HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Budapest spa company BGYH plans no closures in spite of high energy prices, tourism portal Turizmus.com said on Tuesday. BGYH's CEO, Ildikó Szűts, told the portal there could be "reductions in service portfolios" as baths coordinate energy use with demand, but no

closures are planned. BGYH expects energy-saving measures to cut gas consumption by at least 30% and district heating and electricity by 20-25%. The company had budgeted 1.6 billion forints (EUR 3.9m) for energy costs this year, but that is likely to reach 4.8 billion forints now, Szűts said. Without steps to manage the crisis, energy costs would reach 6 billion forints, she added. BGYH's visitor numbers are at 80-85% of pre-pandemic levels, but revenue is up 10% thanks to a pair of price rises targeting foreign visitors.

NEW YORK FILM WEEK VOTES HUNGARY'S STORK BEST ACTRESS

Hungary's Natasa Stork has been voted Best Actress for the film *Ice Cream Can Be Dangerous* at this year's New York Film Week, the National Film Institute (NFI) said on Tuesday. The film tells the story of Adél and Éva, who are identical twins. Despite their identical appearance they are very different: Adél, who works as a radiologist, finds escape from loneliness in work,

while Éva's life is full with bringing up her son in a wealthy environment. Then the appearance of Ákos brings an unexpected turn to their conflict-ridden relationship, NFI said. Stork in the film plays the characters of Adél and Eva both, it said. In its statement, NFI quoted Stork as saying about the award that "I am very happy and grateful to director Fanni Szilágyi and the entire crew who worked on this film. This award is a common recognition." The film will enter Hungarian cinemas on November 17, NFI said.