

PHOTO OF THE DAY



President Novák visits school in Lipót

UPCOMING EVENTS

President Novák visits Austria

Plenary session of parliament

Live chain for teachers

War in Ukraine developments

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: NUCLEAR ENERGY 'EXEMPT FROM IDEOLOGICAL DEBATES'

The nuclear energy sector may remain relatively exempt from “overly ideological, emotional debates, and the sector is an intact sliver of East-West cooperation,” Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Washington, DC, on Wednesday.

Speaking ahead of a ministerial meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Szijjártó said the countries able to generate the energy they consume will be positioned best to weather the energy crisis caused by the Russia-Ukraine war and “botched sanctions”. Hungary’s best chance to do so is using nuclear energy, by a much-needed upgrade of the Paks nuclear plant, which will boost its performance to 4,400 MW from the current 2,000 MW, he said. Szijjártó insisted that Hungary had fought to eliminate “discrimination” against nuclear energy in the EU in recent years. As a result, the Paks investment will not be restricted “in any way”, he said. The upgrade is a “truly international” project, with Russian Rosatom at the helm, and suppliers such as the US’s General Electric, French Framatome and German Siemens, he added. Nuclear energy is cheap, safe and environment-friendly, and the two new blocks in Paks are expected to prevent the emission of 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year, he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: NUCLEAR ENERGY MADE 'SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE'

"Nuclear energy has become an issue of sovereignty and national security," Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in a roundtable on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Washington, DC, on Wednesday. The foreign ministry quoted Szijjártó as saying that the current energy crises had not only been caused by the war in Ukraine and the EU's sanctions, adding that the community had become "much too lazy", neglecting crucial investments and infrastructure developments, focusing on spot markets rather than on long-term purchase agreements. Szijjártó insisted that green energy had also been shrouded in ideology, and noted a strong anti-nuclear position, whose supporters referred to such nuclear disasters as Chernobyl and Fukushima. "But this is like giving up cars because of a road accident," he said.

JUSTICE MIN: TREAT COMMUNISM CRIMES IN SAME WAY AS NAZI CRIMES

The crimes of Communism should be treated in the same way as Nazi crimes, Justice Minister Judit Varga said at the Victims of Communism Museum in Washington, DC. The

Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in the United States has a vital role in keeping the events of many decades ago in the minds of younger generations, Varga said on Wednesday local time. History also provides lessons for the present, she said, adding that gaining an understanding of the events of 1956 should be available to everyone around the world. "This is a highly important exhibition," she said. "I'm very glad that Americans and Hungarians set the exhibition up, depicting the horrors of Communism in an interactive way."

The museum is located in the government district in downtown Washington, DC, a few hundred metres from the White House. At a panel discussion held with Hungarians who escaped the country in 1956 and made the United States their home, Varga said Hungary's critics often failed to understand Hungarian and central European history, adding that debates on the rule of law "should start with a history lesson" so that critics of the government gain an understanding of "our historical experience [and why] we reject certain political solutions".

In her speech to the Conservative Partnership Institute, Varga said conservatism was not about being old-fashioned but about preserving values from the past and adapting them to the challenges of today. The minister said she sensed an optimistic mood ahead of the November mid-term elections in the US.

PRESIDENT NOVÁK TO MEET AUSTRIAN COUNTERPART

President Katalin Novák is scheduled to meet her Austrian counterpart, Alexander Van der Bellen, on Thursday as part of an official visit to Vienna, according to commercial broadcaster TV2. Novák is Van der Bellen's first official foreign guest following his recent re-election. The two presidents will hold a joint press conference. The last time presidents of the two countries met was in 2019, when János Áder paid an official visit to Vienna.

ORBÁN SENDS LETTER OF CONGRATULATION TO GIORGIA MELONI

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has sent a formal letter of congratulation to Giorgia Meloni, the newly elected prime minister of Italy. Orbán said in his letter that in the current period full of challenges, cooperation with his Italian counterpart will contribute to making European politics return to the path of common sense and real European values. The prime minister expressed hope that he will get an opportunity to personally consult with Meloni about joint tasks in the near future, he added.

PRESIDENT VISITS GYŐR-MOSON-SOPRON

President Katalin Novák announced that she would pay an official visit

to each county in the next years, in a Facebook entry on Wednesday.

The president started her visits with Győr-Moson-Sopron County on Wednesday, with a commemoration of the 1956 anti-Soviet revolt on her agenda. In Győr, Novák met Péter Horváth, head of the National Teachers' Corps. Novák said she was in agreement with Horváth that "an early solution is needed to ensure financial security for teachers". She added it was her conviction that "motivated, appreciated and well-performing teachers are needed" to ensure the future of the next generations. During her visit to Győr-Moson-Sopron County, the president met residents and local leaders, visited a primary school in Lipót and a faculty of Széchenyi István University in Mosonmagyaróvár.

ÁDER URGES FUNDING FOR RESOLVING CLIMATE CRISIS

It is vital to provide funding necessary for solving the problems caused by the climate and water crises, János Áder, the former Hungarian president, told a preparatory meeting for the 2023 United Nations Water Conference in New York. One dollar invested today will save six dollars in avoided recovery costs, Áder said on Tuesday local time, citing economists. "The climate and water crisis is already here," he said. "Though we tried, we were unable to prevent it."

The world must now adapt to the crisis, Áder said, adding that global,

regional and local climate data was needed to determine what needs to be done to overcome it and how much this would cost. The world has the knowledge and technology needed to overcome the problems caused by the crisis, he said, adding that the question was whether it can provide the resources "that transform the intention to act into actual political and economic action". Áder proposed that a "plan B" should be formulated in case the world is unable to provide the money needed to address the crisis. This would involve launching pilot projects to prove that such investments are worthwhile, he said.

The projects, he said, could be similar to the development of sewage treatment in Africa, where 80% of wastewater is discharged untreated, creating serious environmental, economic, social and health problems. Prior to the meeting, the participants met UN ambassadors to discuss the incorporation of the climate and water crises and data-based decision-making into the 2023 Water Conference.

OPPOSITION POLITICIANS FILE COMPLAINT OVER GOVT'S 'SANCTIONS-BOMB' BILLBOARDS

Opposition politicians on Wednesday said they are filing a criminal complaint over the government's billboard campaign depicting European Union sanctions as a bomb. Budapest district mayors of the Democratic Coalition (DK) are filing the complaint over

scaremongering and threats of public endangerment. The billboards "are the latest example of the government's money-wasting spree," Sándor Szaniszló, mayor of Budapest's 18th district, told a press conference ahead of a meeting of the city assembly. The EU's war-related sanctions do not apply to Hungary and neither does the war pose a threat to the country, he said, adding that all sanctions against Russia have been approved by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Szaniszló said the billboards depicting a bomb with the word "sanctions" on it were misleading and diverted attention away from "the social crisis caused by the deeds of the Orbán government". He said billboard company leaders would also be "complicit" if they did not take the billboards down.

Ruling Fidesz said in a statement that "Gyurcsány and company" wanted to remove the billboards because they "raise awareness of the destructive Brussels sanctions", and the "National Consultation" survey on the subject. The sanctions ruin European economy and quality of life, the statement said. "There is an energy crisis, soaring energy and food prices, growing inflation and the burdens of families and companies are becoming brutal because of the sanctions," it said.

BUDAPEST SOCIALISTS CALL FOR EXPANSION OF METRO LINE 4

The Socialists called on the government to expand metro line

4 into the 14th district rather than pursuing an “overpriced project on the southern belt railway line”, the Socialist mayor of Budapest’s 14th district said ahead of a meeting of the Budapest Assembly on Wednesday. The planned 6km expansion of the belt railway in the outer 14th district originally had a 340 billion forint (EUR 821.4m) price tag, and has recently been bumped up by a further 5 billion, Csaba Horváth said. The project is “overpriced tenfold”, he said. The same resources could be used to lengthen metro line 4 beyond Keleti railway station to Bosnyák Square or further into the 14th district, Horváth said. A recent survey in the district showed that 44% of motorists there would use the line daily if it were extended to Bosnyák Square, he said. Motivating tens of thousands of people to use the metro rather than cars would solve many problems of the suburb, he added.

BUDAPEST MUNICIPALITY CLEARS PROPERTY TAX FOR BUILDINGS ON MARGARET ISLAND

The municipal council of Budapest voted to introduce a property tax on buildings on Margaret Island. The proposal was tabled by Mayor Gergely Karácsony and approved with 18 votes in favour, 12 against and 2 abstentions.

From January 1, owners of real estate on the island worth more than 1 billion forints (EUR 2.4m) will pay a 1% tax on the value of their property.

OVER 9,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON TUESDAY

Fully 4,791 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Tuesday, while another 4,471 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 149 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 10 people, 5 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

HUNGARY REGISTERS 9,023 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES LAST WEEK, 140 FATALITIES

Fully 9,023 new Covid-19 cases were registered last week, while 140 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 31,576 active infections and 1,371 Covid patients are hospitalised, 25

intubated on a ventilator. Altogether 6,419,183 have been vaccinated, with 6,205,608 having received a second shot, 3,899,385 a third, and 364,943 a fourth. Fully 2,141,513 Covid cases have been registered in Hungary since the start of the outbreak and 47,938 have died. So far 2,061,999 people have made a recovery.

TISZA-TÚR RESERVOIR INAUGURATED IN NE HUNGARY

The Tisza-Túr reservoir, a 35.8 billion forint (EUR 86.5m) investment designed to handle the effects of floods and droughts, was inaugurated in Milota, in north-eastern Hungary, on Wednesday. István Láng, the head of Hungary’s General Directorate of Water Management, said at the ceremony that the reservoir is a “complex water management system which can reduce the level of the River Tisza by 50cm during flooding, and will have an important role in recharging water bodies and maintaining the water balance of the region.” The 16sq km facility located near the Hungarian-Ukrainian border is able to store 42 million cubic meters of water. The reservoir, a pilot project in Hungary, was built using government and European Union funding.