

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Interior Minister Sándor Pintér gives a joint press conference with his Slovak counterpart Roman Mikulec at Hungary's southern border

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases first estimate on Q3 GDP

EU defence ministers meet in Brussels

NBH presser on Competitiveness Report

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

GOVT TO SET UP INDEPENDENT ENERGY MINISTRY

The government is setting up an independent energy ministry, and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has tapped economist Csaba Lantos as minister, the prime minister's chief of staff told a press conference on Monday.

At the same time, Orbán accepted the resignation of incumbent technology and industry minister László Palkovics, Gergely Gulyás said. The technology and industry ministry will be dissolved, and its tasks will be taken over by the ministries of economy, construction and investment, and culture and innovation, Gulyás said. Thanking Palkovics for his work, Gulyás said the outgoing minister will not take on another role in government but help its work in the areas of higher education, vehicle innovation and the defence industry.

Parliamentary committees will hear Lantos in the coming two weeks, and he is expected to enter office on Dec. 1, Gulyás said. The government is not planning further reshuffles, he added. The upgrade of the Paks nuclear plant will not be under the new minister's purview, due to a European Commission requirement that it should be supervised separately from energy provider MVM, Gulyás said. At the same time, responsibility for energy safety and energy security will rest on the minister's shoulders, he added.

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GULYÁS: INCOMING ENERGY MINISTER SUPPORTER OF WIND ENERGY

Csaba Lantos, who has been tapped to head the new independent energy ministry to be set up by the government, is a vocal supporter of increasing the role of wind energy in Hungary, so his appointment is in line with recently prepared legislation to change the regulation of wind turbines, the prime minister's chief of staff said. The government proceeded with that independently from the change of ministers, as part of its effort to access European Union recovery funding in the sector, Gergely Gulyás said. Lantos is an "economist with excellent management skills", and renowned for his work as the leader of the natural gas trader MET group, Gulyás said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT REJECTS ACCUSATION OF 'PUSHING RUSSIAN NARRATIVE' ON SANCTIONS

Hungary's government firmly rejects the accusation that it is "pushing the Russian narrative" in connection with European Union sanctions, the foreign minister said in Brussels on Monday. No economy is suffering as much from the sanctions as that of the EU, where inflation has skyrocketed, the foreign ministry cited Péter Szijjártó as saying during a break at a meeting with his EU

counterparts. "And we know very well who has profited from this," he added.

Szijjártó said it was "pointless" to compare the amount of support the EU has given Ukraine with what the United States has given. The sanctions imposed by the bloc have failed to live up to expectations and failed to bring a quicker end to the war, Szijjártó said, adding that there had been some at Monday's meeting "who denied the mere existence of this argument".

He said ministers at the meeting had engaged in an "emotionally charged, ideological debate which left little room for common sense and rationality". In the debate on a potential ninth sanctions package, "some even went as far as saying that those who say the sanctions aren't working are pushing the Russian narrative", Szijjártó said. "This is outrageous, this must be rejected in the strongest possible terms", he added. "It's possible that others don't understand this, but we don't care what the Russians think about what we say," Szijjártó said. "We don't even care what they think in Brussels about what we say and think. We only care about looking at every existing issue in relation to our own national interests". "It has to be acknowledged that the sanctions are causing immense harm to the functioning of the European economy," he said.

Szijjártó said there was no legitimacy to the argument that the warring sides should not hold direct or indirect talks. "Peace is needed; peace talks are needed, and this means that the

participants of the war must talk to each other as soon as possible," he said. Concerning a proposed EU aid package to Ukraine, the minister said Hungary was ready to keep supporting Ukraine, but strictly on a bilateral basis, and would not contribute to a joint EU loan.

"Our shared future doesn't lie in the direction of shared debt," he said. "We started supporting Ukraine a lot earlier than those in Europe who are now portraying themselves as Ukraine's best friends."

As regards cooperation between the EU and African countries, the minister underscored the importance of protecting Europe's borders, taking action against people smuggling rings and supporting African states in eliminating the root causes of migration. Asked about a German parliamentary resolution passed last week calling on the EU to cut 7.5 billion euros in funding for Hungary over concerns about corruption and the state of the rule of law, Szijjártó called the motion "political blackmail".

KÖVÉR DISCUSSES BILATERAL COOPERATION IN OMAN

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér held talks in Oman, focusing on developing political and economic cooperation with that country and the region, the Hungarian parliament's press office told MTI on Monday. In his talks with Khalid Al Mawali, head of Oman's Consultative Assembly, Kövér said his visit would

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also promote relations between the parliaments of the two countries. The talks also touched upon the impact of the recent coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Kövér regretted that “we are the only country in Europe that talks about peace” and warned that unless an early ceasefire was achieved “it will have very serious ramifications for us all”.

Al Mawali said ties between Hungary and Oman were very good, with the two countries in agreement on a number of international issues. He added that strengthening economic ties should serve as a basis for more intensive cooperation. Kövér was received by Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, deputy prime minister of the Council of Ministers. At the talks, Kövér pointed to water management, agriculture, the defence industry and education as areas with further cooperation opportunities, while his negotiating partner said his country appreciated the moderate and balanced policies of the Hungarian government. Kövér is scheduled to meet Abdulmalik Abdullah Ali al Khalili, head of the State Council, and Foreign Minister Badr Bin Hamad Bin Hamood Al Busaidi. Following his talks in Oman, Kövér will leave for an official visit to Egypt.

PRESIDENT, HOUSE SPEAKER EXPRESS SYMPATHY AFTER BLAST IN ISTANBUL

President Katalin Novák has expressed sympathy and condolences to the

family and friends of the victims of an explosion in Istanbul, and to the Turkish nation, the Sándor Palace told MTI on Sunday. The blast, in a popular pedestrian street in Istanbul on Sunday afternoon, left six dead and 81 injured.

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér has sent a telegram to Mustafa Sentop, Speaker of Turkey’s Grand National Assembly, expressing his condolences over the explosion. Kövér said in the telegram he was “shaken” to hear of the “outrageous terrorist attack which claimed the lives of many civilians”. Hungary condemns all forms of terrorism, the telegram said. “In the name of the Hungarian parliament, I would like to express my sincere condolences to the families of the victims,” Kövér said. He wished those injured a speedy recovery.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the explosion a “nefarious attack”, speaking at a press conference. According to Turkish media reports, the bomb was planted by a young Syrian woman on behalf of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which is designated as a terrorist organisation.

INTERIOR MINISTER: COOPERATION KEY TO OPTIMAL BORDER PROTECTION

Hungary’s southern border is being protected by Hungarian, Slovak, Czech, Austrian and Turkish policemen, in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the effort, the interior minister said in

Hercegszántó, in southern Hungary, on Monday. Greeting Slovak and Hungarian policemen deployed to protect Hungary’s southern border, Sándor Pintér said their sacrifice would improve public safety in Slovakia by pushing back illegal migration. He reiterated Hungary’s stance that illegal migration should be addressed outside the European Union’s borders and the bloc’s “lines of defence” should be pushed as far out as possible. The Hungarian government is aware that Hungary is not capable of protecting all of Europe’s external borders, but it wants to set an example to other countries so that illegal migrants on their way to the EU could be stopped as far from the borders as possible, Pintér said. Hungary is no longer alone with this way of thinking, he said, arguing that Lithuania and Poland have also set up fences on their borders. Meanwhile, Slovakia is sending 40 police officers to help patrol Hungary’s borders and continually contributes to Hungary’s border protection efforts, he added. Pintér said migration pressure on Hungary’ southern border was at its highest since 2015. Some 224,000 migrants have tried to cross the country’s border illegally in the recent period, often endangering the lives of the police officers protecting the border, he said.

Slovak Interior Minister Roman Mikulec expressed thanks to all policemen serving at the borders, saying that “protecting the external Schengen borders is the adequate recipe for preventing secondary,

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internal migration". He thanked Pintér for the cooperation aimed at boosting the protection of the Schengen borders and for his support for persuading the European Commission and EU border agency Frontex to put greater emphasis on border protection.

OPPOSITION: ENERGY MINISTER WON'T SOLVE CRISIS

Commenting on the government's decision to set up an independent energy ministry to be led by economist Csaba Lantos, opposition LMP said the appointment of Lantos, who they said had profited from fossil fuels, was "no solution to the energy crisis". Party co-leader Péter Ungár told a press conference that there may be a need for an independent energy ministry but "rushed decisions are a bad sign". The government has yet to find the cause of the energy crisis, he said, adding that LMP saw the crisis as a sign of "the death throes of fossil fuel-based world order."

Bence Tordai of Párbeszéd said the reshuffle failed to mark a shift towards "the green revolution and sustainability". He called for the government to set up an independent ministry for environmental and climate protection, "with energy issues ideally falling under its purview." Tordai put the blame on the Fidesz government for "basically doing nothing to secure Hungary's energy self-sufficiency, or for a transition to sustainable energy". Fidesz's energy policy has so far been

plagued by chaos, incompetency and rushed decisions, he said adding that the approval of Palkovics's resignation was a confession of that.

HUNGARY GAS CONSUMPTION DECLINES IN SEPT

Gas consumption in Hungary reached 4.4 TWh in September, falling by 9% from the same period a year earlier, a monthly report by the Hungarian Energy and Public Utilities Regulatory Office (MEKH) said on Monday. A fresh breakdown of consumption by consumer group – from the month of August – shows gas consumption of households paying regulated prices declined by an annual 18%, while consumption of business consumers fell by 25% and that of power plants edged 3% lower.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OUTPUT EDGES UP 1.6% IN SEPT

Output of Hungary's construction sector rose by an annual 1.6% in September, after edging down 0.4% in the previous month, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Monday. Output of the buildings segment rose by 3.3% but civil engineering output was down 0.5%. In absolute terms, construction sector output reached 688.5 billion forints (EUR 1.8bn) in September. The buildings segment accounted for 62% of the total. In a month-on-

month comparison, construction sector output climbed 2.2%, adjusted for seasonal and workday effects. For the period January-September, construction sector output increased by an annual 4.8%.

HUNGARY INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT UP 11.3% YR/YR IN SEPT

Output of Hungary's industrial sector rose by an annual unadjusted 11.3% in September, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a second reading of data on Monday. Adjusted for the number of working days of which there were two fewer in the base period, output increased by 11.6%, accelerating from 9.1% in the previous month, KSH said. Output of the automotive industry, Hungary's biggest manufacturing sector, rose by an annual 31.6%, albeit from a low base hit by the semiconductor shortage, KSH said. The automotive segment accounted for 25% of manufacturing sector output in September.

The detailed data show output of the computer, electronics and optical equipment segment, accounting for 11% of manufacturing, rose by an annual 21.5%. Output of the food, drinks and tobacco segment, which made up 12% of manufacturing sector output, edged up by 1.4% as domestic sales moderated. Output in the January-September period rose by an annual 6.7%. Month on month, output went up a seasonally and working day-adjusted 1.6%.

HUNGARY ISSUES EUR 1 BN OF GREEN EURO BONDS

Hungary has issued 1 billion euros of green bonds, the Government Debt Management Agency (ÁKK) said on Monday. The 4.25-year bonds carry fixed interest of 5% with a yield of 5.319%. Oversubscription for the bond issue was 4.5-fold despite the volatile market environment, ÁKK said.

Finance Minister Mihály Varga said in a post on Facebook the oversubscription showed that investor confidence in the Hungarian economy was unbroken despite the "sanctions crisis". Green bonds have been made more important by the energy crisis, the minister said, adding that proceeds from the bond issue are to be used to finance various renewable energy-related and environmentally-friendly investments.

NEARLY 9,500 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,967 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Sunday, while another 4,491 crossed

from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 209 people, ORFK told MTI on Monday. Budapest received 116 people, 61 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

POLICE ARREST PEOPLE SMUGGLERS ASSAULTING OFFICERS

The police have detained people smugglers that had fired shots at them in an attempt to avoid being apprehended near Inárcs, in central Hungary, early on Monday, the police said on its website, adding that nobody had been injured in the incident. The incident happened when the police tried to stop a van with Hungarian plates on the M5 motorway for a road check. The driver of the van did not stop, while several shots were fired in the direction of the officers, police.hu said. The driver and another man got out of the van, ran into the woods by the motorway, and continued firing at the police, the website said. The two men, allegedly Iraqis, were later detained in Budapest's south-eastern 19th district. The van was carrying 21 illegal migrants, who declared themselves to be Syrian nationals.

ITALIAN CUISINE FESTIVAL BEGINS IN BUDAPEST

Cooking shows, master classes, workshops, film screenings and several other programmes will be offered at the Italian gastronomy festival in Budapest between November 14 and 20, the Italian ambassador said on Monday. Organised every year since 2016, the festival this year will focus on communities, sustainability and innovation, highlighting that Italian specialties are healthy as well as delicious, Manuel Jacoangeli told a press conference.

Gabriele La Posta, director of the Italian Cultural Institute, said that the festival will give special attention to Roman kitchen, noting Rome's candidacy to host the 2030 World Expo. The cultural institute will host a screening of the documentary Florence, Central Market, accompanied by a gastronomy show on Tuesday evening. Giovanna Chiappini Carpena, the director of the Italian Foreign Trade Institute's Budapest office, said Master Confectioner Angelo Gala will give a workshop on Thursday and Friday. The full programme of the festival is available at <http://www.italianfestival.eu>