

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamas Kovacs

Hungarian athletics legends planting trees in the park of the National Athletics Centre

UPCOMING EVENTS

President on official visit to Israel

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

MOL ON DRUZHBA POWER CUT: RESERVES SUFFICIENT

Hungarian oil and gas company MOL has said it was prepared to ensure the country and the region's energy supply after power to the Druzhba pipeline which delivers Russian crude to Europe was cut following a missile strike.

The Druzhba pipeline was shut down after a transformer supplying power to it was hit by a missile, public current affairs channel M1 reported on Tuesday evening. M1 said Russian forces were carrying out massive air strikes on Ukraine, mainly targeting transmission stations.

MOL's operational and Hungary's strategic oil reserves are sufficient to keep the main refinery in Százhalombatta running until the damage is repaired, the company told MTI. MOL cited Ukraine's pipeline operator as saying that a transformer powering a Druzhba pump station had been hit by a Russian missile strike, temporarily interrupting crude deliveries to Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia. "We are monitoring developments and examining the conditions for restarting the Druzhba pipeline together with our Ukrainian partners," MOL said.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has convened a meeting of the Defence Council over the matter as well as a missile hitting Poland, Bertalan Havasi, the prime minister's press chief, said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ MEETS ROMANIAN COUNTERPART IN BUDAPEST

Hungary has a vested interest in maintaining the strategic partnership with Romania, which is key to avoiding recession, creating energy security and handling the “migrant wave”, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told a press conference after talks with Bogdan Aurescu, his Romanian counterpart, in Budapest on Tuesday. Noting that the two countries had signed a strategic partnership agreement 20 years ago, Szijjártó said: “There are always noisemakers who make a racket to seem to be in majority. But the aim of the two countries’ governments is to keep up the strategic partnership because that is in our nations’ interest,” he said. The ethnic minorities living in each other’s countries are an asset in bilateral relations, the ministry quoted Szijjártó as saying. Hungary has raised government support for the country’s Romanian minority six-fold and that of the Orthodox church sevenfold since 2010, Szijjártó said.

The strategic partnership is an asset in successfully tackling the current economic, energy and migration challenges, he said. “The European Union is currently barrelling towards recession”, the countering of which is helped by the “feat” of a record trade volume of around 10 billion euros reached between Hungary and Romania last year, Szijjártó said.

Bilateral trade this year has grown further, by 29%, he said. Romania is Hungary’s third most important exports market, with Hungarian oil and gas company Mol running 245 petrol stations and OTP Bank 97 branches in the neighbouring country. Pharmaceutical company Richter employs more than 600 people there, Szijjártó said. Romania also has a key role in the diversification of Hungary’s gas supplies, and the annual capacity of the interconnector between the two countries has been expanded to 2.5 billion cubic metres, the foreign minister said. Further, there is a four-party agreement in the pipeline that will allow Hungary to import green electricity from Azerbaijan via Georgia and Romania, he added.

The two countries cooperate in handling illegal migration on the borders, and the Romanian authorities’ effectiveness makes it possible for Hungary to concentrate on its southern border, where authorities have thwarted 250,000 illegal entry attempts this year alone, he said. Hungary’s strategic partnership with Romania helps to avoid economic recession, create energy security and “keep migrants out” of the country, “and so Hungary has a very clear interest in keeping up the partnership,” Szijjártó said.

Referring to EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, who on Monday said of the sanctions against Russia: “We never expected the sanctions were going to

finish the war, but certainly, they are weakening the capacity of the Russian army to renew its material,” Szijjártó called for a review of the EU’ sanctions. “A fundamental truth has been called into question, which until now has been an important pillar of the [EU] Foreign Affairs Council’s decision-making,” Szijjártó said. “So, what is the real aim with the sanctions, why have we done them?” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán also held talks with Aurescu on Tuesday.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY KEEPING KYIV EMBASSY OPEN

Hungary’s embassy in Kyiv will remain open, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Tuesday in connection with the most recent missile strikes on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure and major cities, including the capital. Szijjártó said he had spoken by phone with István Jgyártó, Hungary’s ambassador to Ukraine, who told him that three blasts could be heard in the city. The embassy and its staff are safe, though internet service and power cut out sometimes, Szijjártó said. The decision on keeping the embassy open is being reviewed on a daily basis, he said. Meanwhile, the minister said he had also spoken to József Bacskai, the consul-general in Uzhhorod (Ungvár), who is in contact with the governor of Transcarpathia. According to the governor, the western Ukrainian oblast has not been hit, Szijjártó said.

PRESIDENT TO VISIT ISRAEL ON NOV. 16-17

President Katalin Novák will pay an official working visit to Israel on Wednesday and Thursday at the invitation of Isaac Herzog, her Israeli counterpart. According to information from the president's office, Novák is scheduled to meet incoming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yair Lapid, the acting prime minister. During the visit, aimed at further deepening bilateral diplomatic ties, the Hungarian president will visit Jerusalem's Holocaust Center, the Yad Vashem Institute, and meet Holocaust survivors there. She will also meet representatives of the Christian communities in Israel. The president and Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky, who will accompany her, will see the operation of the Israeli Iron Dome anti-missile system, the president's office said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY BACKS COOPERATION WITH NON-EU COUNTRIES, OPPOSES MIGRATION

Hungary supports close cooperation between the European Union and countries outside Europe but says a clear "no" to migration, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Tuesday after talks with Jutta Urpilainen, the European Commissioner for International Partnerships. The geopolitical crisis has weakened

the EU on the global stage, so it is important for the bloc to boost its external partnerships and relations, Szijjártó said in a post on Facebook. Hungary supports close cooperation between the EU and "the world outside Europe", but such partnerships must be beneficial for all member states, the minister said. He noted that the EU cooperates with 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries within the framework of the Post-Cotonou Agreement. Hungary, of course, backs cooperation when it comes to trade and developments, Szijjártó said, noting that the country had "one of the world's most open economies" and that its achievements in foreign trade were a fundamental factor in its economic performance.

He added, however, that Hungary disagreed with the EU "using the Post-Cotonou Agreement to legalise migration, undermine the fight against illegal migration and spread gender ideology". Hungary's parliament made a clear decision last December when it mandated the government to thwart the approval of the Post-Cotonou Agreement, Szijjártó said. "The direction is clear: yes to economic cooperation, no to migration," he added.

HUNGARY, AUSTRIA, SERBIA LEADERS TO MEET IN BELGRADE

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is scheduled to attend the second trilateral summit of the leaders of

Hungary, Austria and Serbia in Belgrade on Wednesday, the PM's press chief told MTI.

According to Serbian press reports, Orbán, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer will hold a press conference after the talks. The first such summit, focusing on efforts against illegal migration, was held in Budapest on October 3, Bertalan Havasi said.

DEFMIN: STRONG DEFENCE INDUSTRY IN HUNGARY'S SECURITY INTEREST

Building a strong defence industry is in Hungary's security interest, investments in the sectors ensure the country a strategic advance, the defence minister said on Tuesday in Brussels, on the sidelines of a meeting of EU defence ministers. The government will set up a national defence innovation system connected to the international network, Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky told MTI. As part of ongoing ministry reshuffles, N7 National Defence Industry Innovation Holding Ltd will be moved from the technology and industry ministry to the defence ministry, he said. The company will be headed by outgoing Technology and Innovation Minister László Palkovics, Szalay-Bobrovniczky added. The restructuring has also involved changes and streamlining at the defence ministry, Szalay-Bobrovniczky said. He said that Gáspár Maróth, the state secretary for defence developments, would leave his post

as of November 15, with his tasks to be taken over by Gábor Gion, state secretary for strategic analysis. Szalay-Bobrovniczky praised the “timeless merit” of Maróth’s work as government commissioner and state secretary in preparing Hungary’s defence and army development scheme.

DEFMIN: HUNGARY MILITARY REFORM ADDING TO EUROPE’S DEFENCE

The reform of the Hungarian military, under way since 2016, “actively contributes to efforts aimed at increasing Europe’s defence capabilities and its defence industry”, the defence minister said in Brussels on Tuesday. Speaking after a meeting of his European Union counterparts, Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky said without NATO ensuring security and “in the wake of the sanctions against Russia” the EU was vulnerable in terms of energy supplies and defence. The minister called for efforts to “build a more prepared EU”, adding that “Hungary continues to play an active role” in increasing the EU’s military capabilities. He added that the Hungarian government purchased its defence supplies mostly from European firms. Concerning the meeting, focusing on the war in Ukraine, the minister regretted that “talks aimed at achieving a ceasefire and settling the conflict are not in sight”. He said that unfortunately the situation was not suitable for

the parties to start talks, while “it would be in the interest of European people”. Referring to a new European mission to reinforce the capabilities of the Ukrainian military (EUMAM Ukraine), Szalay-Bobrovniczky said the Hungarian government had a “reserved position”, adding that any move involving international participation could threaten an escalation of the situation and impact the security of Hungarians. “Aid should be provided on a bilateral basis as Hungary has been doing since the start of the war through the greatest humanitarian effort in its history,” the minister insisted.

KARÁCSONY: BUDAPEST SENDING GENERATOR, HEAT GUNS TO KYIV

Budapest is sending an electric generator and two heat guns to Kyiv, Mayor Gergely Karácsony said on Tuesday. “This is how we are helping to restore the critical infrastructure being hit by the Russian army -- a war crime -- and depriving the civilian population, including the elderly, women and children of heating and electricity...” Karácsony said on Facebook. The city council is working with the Oltalom Charity Association headed by pastor Gábor Iványi in sending a shipment of relief supplies to Kyiv that will include several tonnes of food as well as a “life-saving” generator courtesy of the public water works, the mayor said. Karácsony thanked former Budapest mayor Gábor Demszky for helping to deliver the supplies.

POTÁPI MARKS HUNGARIAN DIASPORA DAY

Hungarian communities in the diaspora are “fortresses of the nation” and key to its survival, Árpád János Potápi, state secretary at the Prime Minister’s Office, told MTI on Tuesday, on the occasion of Hungarian Diaspora Day.

“If the diaspora is weakened or disappears, the core of the nation will follow, that is why supporting ethnic communities is a top priority for the Hungarian government,” Potápi said. Ethnic Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin make up nearly half of the Hungarians living outside Hungary, he said. Those communities were drastically reduced in number in the 20th century, but the past decade has “proven that no process must be declared irreversible”, he said. November 15, the birth and death anniversary of Gábor Bethlen (1580-1629), prince of Transylvania, was declared Diaspora Day in 2015.

PARLT CTEE HEAD: HUNGARY, TURKEY STANCES ALIGN ON UKRAINE WAR

Hungary and Turkey both see it as imperative for diplomatic talks to start as soon as possible on the war in Ukraine, as they may lead to a ceasefire and a peace agreement, the head of parliament’s foreign affairs committee said on Tuesday, after meeting his Turkish counterpart, Akif Çağatay

Kılıç. Hungarian-Turkish relations go back 100 years, and are expected to become much stronger, Zsolt Németh said after the meeting. Hopes are high that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will also visit Hungary, he said. Németh and Kılıç discussed the Russia-Ukraine war. Turkey has acted as a mediator between the parties in many issues, Németh noted. Turkey is also a key player in the issue of migration, he added, and called for the agreement between the European Union and Turkey to be implemented, so the latter can access the funds necessary to stem waves of migration towards Europe. The country plays an important role in Hungary's energy supplies, especially due to the "sanctions-fuelled inflation", he said. Kılıç thanked Hungary's support after a recent explosion in Istanbul. Hungary and Turkey both work to broker peace between Ukraine and Russia, he added.

CBANK: HUNGARY COMPETITIVENESS IMPROVES

Hungary's competitiveness has risen to take place 17 among European Union countries, over the average of Visegrad Group members, Ákos Szalai of the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) told a press conference on Tuesday, presenting the NBH's Competitiveness Report 2022. The report uses 160 indicators to gain a comprehensive and objective image of Hungary's competitiveness, Szalai said. The report mostly leans on 2021 data, he noted. At

the same time, NBH said a switch to a growth model based on sustainable, quality factors from one founded on quantity will require a "competitiveness turnaround".

Hungary is ahead of the European Union average in a number of gauges of quantity, but he said the country has "much room for improvement" when it comes to indicators of quality. While the local labour market is close to full employment, gauges of labour productivity are low in EU comparison, and although the investment rate is high, the share of investments in software or communications is low. The high complexity of exports indicates a competitive export sector, but the value-added of those products is low, the NBH said. The NBH said switching to a growth model driven by knowledge and technology may only be sustainable if the change is accompanied by a broad expansion of digitalisation and a green revolution. It noted that while Hungary's digital infrastructure is competitive in international comparison, boosting its use from relatively low levels requires an improvement of user skills, more business digitalisation and state-supported data reform. It added that the rate of renewable energy used for Hungary's energy-intensive economy is just 14%, and rising at a rate under the EU average.

The NBH called competitiveness of human capital the "aegis" of convergence with a sustainable balance, noting that productivity in Hungary has risen to the largest degree

in the EU since 2011, supported in large part by family subsidies. It highlighted the need to strengthen modern skills transfer for the future labour market in primary and secondary schools, while improving staff numbers and quality at universities and making continuous improvements to adult education.

HUNGARY GDP UP 4.0% IN Q3

Hungary's GDP grew by an annual 4.0% in the third quarter, slowing from 6.5% in Q2 on a "significant" decline in the agricultural sector, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a first reading of data on Tuesday. KSH said all branches of the national economy contributed to headline growth, with the exception of the agricultural sector. Growth was supported especially by industry, particularly the automotive, computer, electronics and optical equipment, and electrical equipment manufacturing segments. It was in addition supported by market services, notably logistics, professional and administrative services, KSH added.

Adjusted for seasonal and calendar year effects, Q2 GDP growth was 4.1%. Quarter on quarter, adjusted GDP dropped by 0.4%. GDP growth in Q1-Q3 climbed by an annual 6.1%.

Commenting on the data, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said that the Hungarian economy was resilient to the harmful effects of the war in Ukraine and sanctions, and grew beyond expectations. The recent GDP data is "among the most favourable among EU countries", he said. Growth

Hungary Matters is an English-language newsletter produced and distributed by the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) with content provided by Duna Media Service Provider exercises copyright over all content. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, redistributed or transmitted without prior written permission from the publisher, with the exception of copies made by individuals for private use, educational purposes or scholarly research, provided that such transmissions do not exceed the extent justified by the purpose and are not aimed at financial gain, even indirectly, and the source name are indicated at all times.



has been driven by the one million jobs created by the government since 2010, as well as by a growing industry, retail and services sectors, the minister said in a video message posted on Facebook. EU sanctions are expected to push European economies into recession next year, he warned. "We in Hungary are working to offset the harmful international effects and save the economy from recession," Varga said.

CONSTITUTIONAL COURT CALLS ON PARLT TO REGULATE FINANCIAL TIES BETWEEN MTA, RESEARCH NETWORK

Parliament has run afoul of the constitution by failing to regulate financial ties between the Eötvös Research Network and its former operator, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), the Constitutional Court said on Tuesday. The Constitutional Court called on parliament to fulfil its legislative duty in the matter by June 30, 2023. In 2019, parliament amended laws on operating and financing the institutional network for research, development and innovation. In

line with the proposal, MTA research institutions were transferred to the Eötvös Loránd Research Network from MTA. MTA head László Lovász and 61 lawmakers turned to the court in two separate queries, asking the body to annul the amendments which they said "breached MTA's right to property, the Academy's constitutional securities and scientific freedom." In Tuesday's decision, the court said MTA's assets are not state-owned property, dedicated for a specific purpose. Therefore, parliament must issue legislation to guarantee the circumstances for the Academy to perform its public duties, the decision said.

GOVT OFFICIAL: FAMILY SUPPORT MEASURES EXPANDED FOR MEN

The government's aim is to support families through expanding possibilities under its family support schemes for fathers, the deputy state secretary in charge of family affairs said on Tuesday. "The old cliché that it is the man's role to raise and support a family must be abandoned," Attila Beneda told a conference organised in Budapest by the Fathers' Academy

to mark International Men's Day. "The government will support that every family, woman, man, mother and father should have the freedom to decide how many children they want to raise, for how long they want to stay at home on a child-care leave and what form of family support they want to access," he said. The government has expanded its family support system since 2010 and introduced new elements each year, he said, noting as an example the measure ensuring fathers the option to take out the maternity allowance "gyed". In most recent measures, Beneda noted the possibility of part-time work ensured to fathers until the youngest child turns 8, as well as increasing the period of paternity leave to 10 days.

OVER 8,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON MONDAY

Fully 4,960 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Monday, while another 3,168 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 107 people, ORFK told MTI on Tuesday. Budapest received 91 people, 22 children among them, by train, ORFK said.