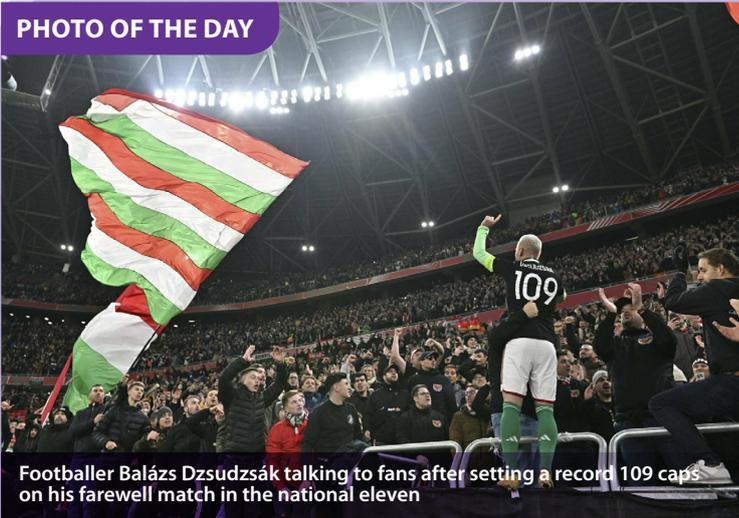


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTVA/Marton Mönus

Footballer Balázs Dzsudzsák talking to fans after setting a record 109 caps on his farewell match in the national eleven

UPCOMING EVENTS

European parliament holds plenary

Plenary session of parliament

Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting

TOP STORY

ENERGY SUPPLY 'NATIONAL COMPETENCE'

Sanctions must not be allowed to curb the security of Hungary's energy supply, Péter Szijjártó told the Atomexpo forum in Sochi.

Determining the country's energy mix is a national competence and a fundamental principle of Hungary's energy strategy, the minister of foreign affairs and trade told the forum. Another principle is enabling investments needed to ensure energy security, he said, adding this meant that in the absence of resources of its own, Hungary had opted to expand nuclear capacities. Any measure that would hamper this would be an attack on Hungary's national sovereignty, he said. Szijjártó mentioned energy diversification as another important goal. He added, however, that there was a disagreement as to the definition of diversification, which Hungary believed meant having as many energy sources available as possible rather than the exclusion of certain sources.

Also, the government considers carbon neutrality a practical issue rather than an ideological one, the minister said, insisting that certain European political movements had "expropriated" the matter which he said should primarily be about environmental protection.

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NUCLEAR ‘CHEAPEST, MOST ECO-FRIENDLY’ WAY TO PRODUCE ENERGY

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said nuclear plants were the most reliable, cheapest and most eco-friendly means of producing energy, arguing that the upgrade of Hungary’s nuclear plant in Paks will prevent the emission of 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

Meanwhile, the minister said that the government’s scheme to keep household utility bills low put Hungary in a “unique position” in Europe. Since 2013, the government has been allocating a significant amount of resources towards cutting utility prices, so the current price increases weigh heavily on the state budget, he said. Europe’s energy market had been experiencing a “golden age” up until the first half of 2021, thanks in large part to a combination of advanced Western technologies and cheap Russian energy sources, Szijjártó said. But the necessary infrastructure upgrades had not been carried out, he added. Hungary, on the other hand, “did its homework” and signed long-term energy supply agreements, linked its energy grid with those of six of its seven neighbouring countries and approved the upgrade of its nuclear plant, Szijjártó said. The unpredictability of the international energy market means countries must be as self-sufficient as possible, which in Hungary’s case can only

be guaranteed by nuclear energy, he said. Hungary is also investing in solar energy, which, together with the expansion of nuclear capacities, will allow for 90% of the electricity consumed to be generated domestically by 2030, the minister said.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó noted that Germany’s export agency has not yet given its approval for the export of control technology for the new blocks of the Paks nuclear power station. “Some countries and authorities” in Europe were “outdoing Brussels” in putting up obstacles in the way of Hungarian endeavours, he added. “The plan and the goal remains to finish the two new blocks by 2030. In effect, the only factors are external,” he added. “We’ve managed to avoid sanctions [on nuclear energy] so far, and made it clear during debates concerning each of the eight packages that nuclear energy must not be included.” While the Germans are foot-dragging, the relevant French consortium has already issued the relevant approvals, he added.

“I honestly hope that not a single European country will hinder this investment project. We must see that the security of energy supplies is now a matter of national security and national strategy, and even a matter of sovereignty,” he said. “We’re asking everyone -- all European Union institutions, European banks and European governments -- to respect the fact that there are no sanctions on nuclear energy, and not to hinder Hungary’s nuclear investment

project, which is critically important from the point of the security and affordability of long-term energy supplies,” he added.

Szijjártó said some “purportedly green” NGOs which were well organised and seriously financed considered it their mission “to thwart nuclear projects”. Their stance, he said, clashed with common sense and hindered the security and affordability of long-term energy supplies while undermining green targets. The operation of the Paks plant means 14.5 million fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide being emitted each year, he said. The plant’s expansion will result in savings of another 17 million tonnes of emissions, plus around 4 billion cubic metres less natural gas will need to be consumed, he added.

Szijjártó noted he held talks with Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev and they reviewed the upgrade of the Paks plant, which, he added, was “progressing well”. Excavation work is proceeding as planned, and production of two “especially important” pieces of equipment are under way in Russia, he added.

GOVT OFFICIAL CALLS FOR SCRAPPING SANCTIONS ON RUSSIAN ENERGY RESOURCES

Energy-related sanctions against Russia should be scrapped “and new sanctions shouldn’t even be mentioned”, a state secretary



of the foreign ministry said on Monday. "It is outrageous, but Josep Borrell lied," Tamás Menczer said in a video on Facebook. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said recently that the EU sanctions against Russia were not aimed at ending the war in Ukraine, Menczer said. At the same time, the European External Action Service which he heads "has clearly written that the sanctions policy's goal was to stop the war," he said. "This would be absurd were the situation not so grave," Menczer said.

Gas and oil revenues made up 35% of Russia's GDP in January-September last year, Menczer said. That ratio jumped to 43% in the same period in 2022, he said. "Russia is raking in record revenues, while we in Europe are paying a sanctions surcharge on energy and suffering from sanctions-related inflation," he said.

**AGRICULTURE MIN:
SKYROCKETING
FERTILISER PRICES DUE
TO 'BOTCHED' SANCTIONS**

At a meeting of European Union agriculture ministers on Monday, Agriculture Minister István Nagy called for speedy action to support farmers amid skyrocketing fertiliser prices. The sector, he said, was badly hit by sanctions-related energy price rises and the proposals presented at the meeting were effective only in longer term. "Farmers need help now," he said.

At the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), Nagy said the European Commission's proposal was merely "a summary of steps already taken and means already at our disposal". Prioritising organic manure and sustainable materials are "doubtless good and useful initiatives" but do not offer solutions to the situation caused by rising energy prices, the ministry cited Nagy as telling the meeting. At times when food security is threatened by skyrocketing fertiliser prices and input costs, farmers need EU support as soon as possible, he said.

As "botched Brussels sanctions" are at the root of the price rises, which are "completely independent from agriculture", the funding should not burden the Common Agricultural Policy alone, he said. Meanwhile, the most effective handling of the situation would be to reach for a ceasefire and peace talks, as that would stabilise energy markets and thereby the challenges of the farming sector, he said.

**NAVRACSICS:
CONSULTATION TO BE
RESTORED TO CULTURE
OF HUNGARIAN
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

The government is striving to restore consultation to the Hungarians legislative process, Tibor Navracsics, the regional development minister, said on Monday, after signing a strategic cooperation agreement

with 13 higher education institutions on strengthening scientific cooperation on regional development. "Institutionalised consultation" provides the government with information and "sophisticated opinions" while giving universities insight into government planning, guidelines and approach, he said. Hopefully, the cooperation will blossom into a long-term dialogue in which "we can shape Hungary's strategic paths together", he said.

In the first round, the ministry invited institutions which have undergone government-mandated reforms in recent years "or have a special status", Navracsics said. The universities' location and educational profile were also key criteria, he said. "We have to grasp every source of information and consider all opinions that enable us to form a better-informed vision of the future of Hungary, its regions, localities and communities," Navracsics said, adding that he hoped the agreement would shape a "stronger, more flexible and more competitive regional development policy". The signatory universities are the Budapest Corvinus University, Debrecen University, Etudus University, the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the University of Miskolc, the National University of Public Service, Neumann János University, the University of Nyíregyháza, Óbuda University, Pannon University, the University of Pécs, the University of Szeged and the University of Tokaj.

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BALÁZS ORBÁN: USING EU FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES 'WRONG'

It is wrong to use European Union financial instruments for political purposes, Balázs Orbán, the prime minister's political director, told Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications and relations, in The Bold Truth about Hungary podcast on Monday. Kovács said Hungary had concluded talks with the European Commission about the recovery fund in a positive manner, but recent reports suggest that decisions were being postponed. Orbán said the "leftist transnational political ideology has kidnapped European integration" and "European institutions are not using their legal neutral power to keep together the European integration but they want to push forward a political agenda." He said it was the same situation in the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Union, each of which should be neutral, in line with the treaties.

OFFICIAL: UTILITY PRICE CAPS TO BE EXPANDED TO STATE, LOCAL COUNCIL-OWNED RENTAL FLATS

The government has decided to expand its household utility price caps to state and local council-owned rental apartment buildings, the government

commissioner in charge of the scheme announced. The decision will help close to 2,000 families, 1,400 of whom live in rental flats in Budapest and 532 in state-owned flats maintained by the Armed Forces in Budapest and three other localities, Szilárd Németh told a press conference. Zsolt Láng, the government commissioner in charge of developments in central Hungary, said the measure will be implemented retroactively from Aug. 1. The government decree on the decision will be published on Monday evening, he said.

LMP URGES PROTEST AGAINST AMENDMENT PROPOSAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES LAW

Opposition LMP has called on the public to join a protest against a government-sponsored amendment proposal to the law on social services. The demonstration is scheduled to take place in front of Parliament on Monday evening. "Let's all say no to the policy that shifts responsibility for social care from the state to individuals and families," Máté Kanász-Nagy, LMP's deputy group leader, told a press conference. "At a time when people face the combined threats of a climate crisis as well as social and energy crises, the state [is showing] no responsibility for its citizens."

Inflation has caused prices to soar and the changes made to household utility price caps is undermining families, businesses and civil

organisations, Kanász-Nagy said. In a situation like this, the state should take on an even bigger role rather than cutting social services, he added. Kanász-Nagy said the government should raise public-sector wages, support housing, launch a home insulation scheme and invest in care services. "We must all say yes to social rights, the role of the state, and a welfare policy that helps everyone in trouble," he said. Lawmakers are scheduled to vote on the bill on Tuesday.

KINCS: MAJORITY OF HUNGARIANS SEE NO RISE IN UTILITY BILLS

Almost three quarters of Hungarians have experienced no rise in their utility bills compared with last year in spite of the energy crisis caused by the sanctions related to the war in Ukraine, according to a survey by the Hungarian Kopp Mária Institute for Population Growth and Families (KINCS). Fully 63% of respondents said they were paying the same amount for energy as last year, while 9% said they were paying less, KINCS said in a statement. The institute attributed the figures to the government's scheme to keep household utility bills low and growing energy-conscious attitudes among Hungarians. Altogether 90% of respondents said they were making sure to save electricity, while 84% were conscious about their water consumption. Fully 80% use energy-efficient light bulbs and appliances

and 72% conserve energy with the regular maintenance of their heating systems, KINCS said. Most of those surveyed by the institute said they used gas for heating. Firewood was the second most common heating method followed by district heating. Six out of ten respondents said they made a conscious effort to adjust the temperature of their homes. KINCS conducted its representative survey of 1,000 adults by phone from Oct. 19 to 26.

DIPLOMATIC CHARITY FAIR TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN DEEP POVERTY, HEIM PÁL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

A Diplomatic Charity Fair will be held at InterContinental Budapest on Sunday, with proceeds to go to children in deep poverty and the Heim Pál Children's Hospital, the organisers said. More than 30 countries will be represented at the event organised by the Diplomatic Spouses of Budapest, to be held in cooperation between various embassies in Budapest for the 11th time this year. Szilvia Szijjártó-

Nagy, spouse of Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, is the patron of the fair to be held between 10am and 4pm, the statement said. All proceeds of the Diplomatic Charity Fair 2022 will be donated to Tovább Élni Egyesület (Live On Association) which helps the housing and employment of children and young people with multiple and mild disabilities, the BIZSU Közösségi tér (BIZSU Community Space), which supports children from Roma families living in deep poverty, and the Heim Pál Children's Hospital in Budapest.

CLOSE TO 10,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,935 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Sunday, while another 4,777 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 198 people, ORFK told MTI on Monday. Budapest received 125 people, 39 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

ORFK: POLICE ACTION TAKEN AGAINST OVER QUARTER MILLION MIGRANTS THIS YEAR

Police have taken action against more than 250,000 illegal migrants and human smugglers so far this year, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said on police.hu on Monday. The figures have almost doubled since last year, from 109,117 cases registered between Jan. 1 and Nov. 20 last year, the website said. In addition to an increase in the number of cases, border violators have become more aggressive, damaging police and army vehicles and cameras using stones and bricks. Human smugglers have also been acting in more violently, and whenever they suspect possible police checks, they try to flee the scene, leaving the migrants behind, it added. Police apprehended 1,730 human smugglers between Jan. 1 and Nov. 20 this year, as against 1,109 in the same period of last year, the ORFK said.