

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Justice Minister Judit Varga addresses an event marking the Memorial Day of Hungarians Deported to the Soviet Union

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hungarian Olympic Committee general assembly meets

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY FIRMS HOBBLLED IN UKRAINE

Hungary's foreign minister has called it "unacceptable" that while Hungary was making every attempt to support Ukraine, the operation of several Hungarian companies was rendered impossible in Ukraine simply because they are also present in Russia.

Péter Szijjártó told a press conference after a meeting of EU foreign trade ministers that several products of Richter had been banned on the Ukrainian market, and procedures had been initiated against Egis products, too, while some people had already called for a boycott against oil company MOL. "These companies operate fully in line with the law, and have not violated any regulations ... their only 'sin' is that since they are international companies, they are also present in Russia," he said. He insisted that the latter had not violated any international legal regulations because participation in the pharmaceuticals and energy sectors was not subject to any sanctions. "We expect the European Union to take action with the Ukrainian authorities to ensure that the operation of companies from EU member states is not rendered impossible," he said. Szijjártó said that the EU had lifted all customs fees on Ukrainian products and services in May this year until mid-2023 in order to help the war-ridden country, and Hungary had no objections against extending this.

SZIJJÁRTÓ SLAMS EU 'ATTEMPT TO HAMPER INVESTMENT IN MEMBER STATES'

The European Union is "making pathetic attempts" to hamper investments in EU member states, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Friday, adding that investments were the only way to avoid recession amid the war and sanctions. Szijjártó told a press conference after a meeting of EU foreign trade ministers that Hungary had used investments as a key economic booster after the coronavirus pandemic, and that it would need them to maintain growth. Member states are currently allowed to issue government subsidies of up to 37.5 million euros to support investments without EU approval, he said. "We hit records in the past years, but we could have drawn even more investments had the European Commission not blocked them," he said, calling for a suspension of the regulation. Approval procedures can take more than a year, he said. Certain Hungarian approval applications have been before the body for 4 years, he said. "That is unacceptable even in normal circumstances, and undercuts European competitiveness," he said. The measure is putting investments worth hundreds of thousands of euros and the creation of "hundreds, maybe thousands" of jobs at risk, he said. "The EC is blocking Hungary from accessing the monies it's entitled to, and even

hinder us from using our own money to create jobs," he said.

Szijjártó also touched on trade disputes between the EU and the US, saying that US competitiveness and trading positions had improved greatly recently. "The European economy's decline into recession is good news for the US, and they can obviously profit from it," he said. Measures like the US Inflation Reduction Act, "discrimination against European electric cars" and tariffs on aluminium raise the suspicion that the US "have breached regulations of world economy", he said. The EU should support its own economy and companies in the face of such measures, he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR PREVENTING MIGRATION WAVES TO EUROPE

Europe must work closely with north African and Middle Eastern countries to prevent the emergence of more illegal migration waves on its borders, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Thursday, arguing that the combined burden of the war in Ukraine and migration would be "too much" for the continent. Though the armed conflict in Ukraine is a regional one, its effects are felt on a global scale, and the top priority right now is preventing the war from becoming a global one, the foreign ministry cited Szijjártó as saying at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the European Union and the Southern Neighbourhood countries in

Barcelona. "This requires that everyone finally start working to achieve peace," the minister said.

Europe, north Africa and the Middle East all have an interest in peace being achieved as soon as possible, the minister said. The food crisis caused by the war is hurting countries that are already in a difficult situation the most, where the risk of instability is greater, Szijjártó said. "So the most important thing right now is to prevent the global food crisis from triggering new migration waves, because they would be headed for Europe and Europe is not strong enough to confront two security-type challenges at the same time," he said.

Because Europe has to prevent the emergence of illegal migration waves, it has an interest in establishing the closest possible forms of cooperation with the north African and Middle Eastern countries, he said.

This, Szijjártó said, required supporting the countries of those two regions, which he said could act as a "European line of defence" when it came to stopping migration waves. It also requires Brussels to change its "pro-migration policy", he added. Szijjártó said it should be made clear as soon as possible that those who come to Europe could only do so legally, and that the breach of borders was a crime. He said this made the NGOs operating the migrant rescue vessels on the Mediterranean people smugglers against whom proper action should be taken.

JUSTICE MINISTER: DEMOGRAPHICS TURNAROUND CRUCIAL TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A turnaround in demographic trends is crucial for the long-term social development and economic sustainability of Hungary and Europe, and this requires a predictable, targeted and flexible family policy, Justice Minister Judit Varga said on Friday. The basic principle of family policy in Hungary is that families should not suffer any financial disadvantages as a result of having children. Rather, they should benefit from it, Varga told a conference held on the subject in Budapest.

Families are eligible for special support in Hungary, with over 5% of GDP given to families raising children last year, which puts the country in the leading group among the OECD member countries on this score, she added.

State secretary in charge of families Ágnes Hornung told the event that the government planned to “fine-tune” family policy measures to encourage more births and improve families’ financial circumstances. The aim is to ensure that all families who want children should be able to fulfil their desire and parents should be able to maintain a good balance of family and work. Ever since 2010, the government has been making efforts to offer predictability to families, she said. “A complex and well-prepared system has

been developed by the family-friendly government to support families, but this does not mean that no changes would be needed or it would be impossible to make changes,” she added.

ORBÁN DISCUSSES SPORTS AFFAIRS WITH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE HEAD

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán held talks in his office on Friday with head of the Hungarian Olympic Committee (MOB) Zsolt Gyulay, Orbán’s press chief said. The MOB will hold its general assembly on Saturday, when decisions will be made on next year’s plans and several senior committee positions, Bertalan Havasi said. Orbán and Gyulay reviewed the most important sporting events of 2023, the government’s New National Sports Development Programme, and plans to set up a national sports museum, he added.

FINANCE MINISTER HOLDS TALKS WITH 250 INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS

Finance Minister Mihály Varga held talks with 250 international investors from all over the world, the minister said in a video message posted on Facebook on Friday. There is strong interest towards the Hungarian economy and Hungarian crisis management measures. Hungary is in fifth place in the European Union economic growth ranking

and it is among the top countries for tax reduction measures while holding seventh place in the tax competitiveness ranking, the minister said. Varga said Hungary would stick to its budget deficit target, and he noted that investor confidence is strong as Hungarian government bonds have been heavily oversubscribed at recent auctions.

HUNGARIAN ‘PRO- DEMOCRACY GROUP’ ACCUSES GOVT OF USING SECRET SERVICES FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

A new organisation in Hungary calling itself a “pro-democracy group” has accused the government of using the country’s secret services for the purposes of carrying out its political aims. In a statement on Thursday, Action for Democracy’s press agency accused the government of using secret services to monitor its activities in Hungary. It slammed the government for wasting taxpayers’ money, insisting that one of its own agencies, the National Information Centre, had stated that the group’s background was “completely legal”.

In its endeavours to defend democracy and the rule of law in Hungary, the group has done so maximally within the law, the group’s press agency, Eurolex Consulting, wrote. Referring to an official report, Action for Democracy dismissed the suggestion that the US government had been involved in its work, adding

that support for the group was independent of any government or other outside influence. The group also blamed the government for openly using the secret services, the police and the tax office in a smear campaign against itself, the opposition political movement MMM and political consulting firm Datadat. Action for Democracy said it was taking “the necessary diplomatic and legal steps” to combat the “ongoing attacks”.

DK ACCUSES FIDESZ OF WANTING ‘TO STRIP HUNGARIANS OF FUNDING’

The Hungarian government wants to make sure that Hungarian citizens and entrepreneurs do not receive funding if the European Union blocks Hungary’s funds, an MEP of the Democratic Coalition (DK) said on Friday, referring to an amendment proposal submitted by Fidesz MEP Balázs Hidvéghi to a European parliamentary resolution which sought to prevent local authorities from disbursing EU resources. “Three-quarters of MEPs voted down the proposal which was a betrayal of Hungarians,” Sándor Rónai told an online press conference after Thursday’s EP voted against adopting Hungary’s recovery fund plan. He noted the resolution declared that “the government has not eliminated stealing and corruption in Hungary.”

Fidesz said in response in a statement that Hungary’s left-wing parties had been “bought by foreign

powers, and they are constantly working against national interests.” The left-wing parties in the European Parliament “approved a text that they had previously drafted” to prevent Hungary from getting the EU resources that the country is entitled to, it added.

HUNGARY JOBLESS RATE AT 3.6% IN OCT

Hungary’s jobless rate was 3.6% in October, edging down from 3.8% in the previous month and from 3.9% twelve months earlier, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Friday. The rate covers unemployment among people between the ages of 15 and 74. In absolute terms, there were 176,400 unemployed, 8,500 fewer than a month earlier and 12,100 fewer than in October 2021. The rolling three-month average jobless rate stood at 3.6% in July-October, unchanged from the previous 3-month period and down from 3.8% twelve months earlier. The average number of people employed in the 15-74 age group was 4,705,000 in October, 17,000 more than a year earlier. In the three-month period between August and October, the average number of people employed was 4,714,000, up 35,000 from the same period of last year. The number of people employed in the primary labour market increased by 35,000, the number of those working abroad grew by 16,000, and the number of public workers dropped by 14,000. Some 4,601,000 people aged 15-64 held jobs in October, their employment

rate stood at 74.7%, up 0.8 percentage point from the same period of last year.

MORE THAN 9,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON THURSDAY

Fully 4,589 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Thursday, while another 4,533 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 127 people, ORFK told MTI on Friday. Budapest received 68 people, 31 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

JUSTICE MINISTER MARKS MEMORIAL DAY OF HUNGARIANS DEPORTED TO THE SOVIET UNION

During the Communism era, anyone who was branded an enemy was brutally punished or eliminated, Justice Minister Judit Varga said at the memorial of Soviet occupation on Friday, the Memorial Day of Hungarians Deported to the Soviet Union. The Communist era was a tragic period of the 20th century, and the Soviet empire violated all civilised laws when it persecuted suspected enemies, including politicians, church officials and civilians, she said. Hundreds of thousands of Hungarians were deported to forced labour camps, and it was forbidden to talk about the

sins of the Gulag and the Communist regime for a long time, she added.

The Christian, national, conservative government gives due weight not only to the country's future but also to its past, she said. A memorial day for the victims of communism was introduced in Hungary in 2002 and in 2012, and another memorial day was introduced to pay honour to political prisoners and forced labourers deported to the Soviet Union during and after the second world war, she added. "It is impossible to change the past but it is possible to learn from it," she said. Parliament named November 25 as the Memorial Day of Hungarians Deported to the Soviet Union on May 21, 2012 because the first group of Hungarians deported to the Gulag returned to Hungary on this day in 1953.

FUJIMOTO'S HOUSE OF MUSIC WINS US ARCHITECTURE GONG

Budapest's House of Music, designed by Japanese architect Suo Fujimoto, has been awarded the Architectural Design of the Year award in America's prestigious Architecture MasterPrize competition. The idea behind the prize founded in 2015 is to promote

innovative and creative architecture around the world, and 65 countries submitted nominations this year. The jury praised the House of Music's harmony with its environment, the bold colour palette and the acoustic qualities of the concert hall. The structure houses installations that showcase the country's musical traditions, history and instruments, as well as a library, a concert hall and other music-related facilities.

László Baán, the government commissioner for the Liget Project -- a museum and culture quarter of which the building is a flagship structure -- took over the prize in Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum and thanked the architect. He said the project is the largest urban development project in Europe which "rethinks the district to fit the 21st century while respecting its traditions". The Liget project will continue with a new 50,000sqm National Gallery, he noted.

OTTO VON HABSBURG REMEMBERED AT HUNGARIAN EMBASSY IN VIENNA

A panel discussion marking the 110th birth anniversary of Otto von

Habsburg, the last crown prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was held at the Hungarian embassy in Vienna on Thursday. Addressing the discussion on the future of Europe, Gergely Gulyás, the prime minister's chief of staff, said that in the 27-member European Union it was natural that member states had different ways of thinking given their different histories. At the same time, the EU is important as an alliance, he added. The balance between federalism and nationalism should be found in the bloc's founding treaties, Gulyás said. Concerning the war between Russia and Ukraine, Gulyás said Hungary was undertaking the "largest humanitarian aid operation" in its history in an effort to help the Ukrainian people.

Former Austrian chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel said Otto von Habsburg would today have a clear view regarding the issues in the EU that should be addressed through subsidiarity. These, he said, included environmental protection, security policy and global economic challenges. The event was organised by the Otto von Habsburg Foundation and the Pannonhalma Benedictine Archabbey.

