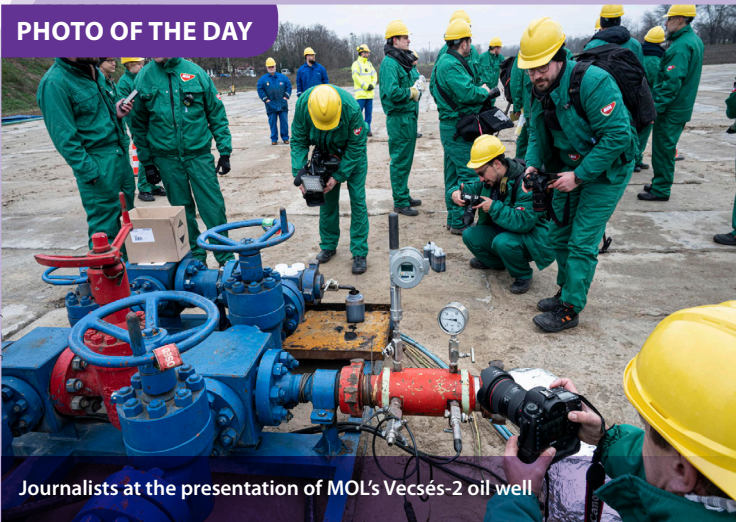


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Szűcs

Journalists at the presentation of MOL's Vecsés-2 oil well

UPCOMING EVENTS

NATO foreign ministers to meet in Bucharest

Parliamentary committee sessions

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SURVEY ON SANCTIONS ELICITS BIG RESPONSE

So far, nearly 700,000 voters have returned their National Consultation survey questionnaires in which the government is canvassing the public on their opinions regarding the economic problems caused by war-related sanctions.

The Hungarian public has been asked about the impact of the war in Ukraine and sanctions the European Union introduced against Russia, Zoltan Kovács, the state secretary for international communications, noted in an interview to the Magyar Nemzet newspaper. Concerning the consultations, Kovács said western Europe “does not understand the system” because “they no longer have the routine of asking voters for feedback between elections,” adding that “voters’ opinion is not as important” in those countries. The Hungarian government, however, “clearly sees that policymaking based on national interests requires continuous feedback from the people rather than just once in four years, at the general elections”. The government’s surveys “allow everyone an opportunity to put their position forward.” “They have a say on whether they agree with what is going on around the energy sanctions and they can also express their approval of the government’s position”, Kovács said.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: 'BRUSSELS DECISIONS' HINDERING EU-UK COOPERATION

Decision-makers in Brussels "often react to British proposals reflexively", and some of their decisions may make cooperation between the European Union and the UK more difficult, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in London on Monday, adding that "in the current difficult situation, good ties are important". After talks with James Cleverly, the recently appointed British foreign minister, Szijjártó said Brexit had been "a huge loss" and the damage arising from Brexit should be minimised, but this required "reasonable cooperation based on mutual respect". Szijjártó criticised the EU for excluding the UK from the Horizon programme and from digital cooperation. "Now, when the EU's economy has suffered a lot of damage in terms of competitiveness ... close cooperation with the British could help the EU become stronger and more competitive," he said. The Hungarian government will continue to seek resolution of open issues in Brussels, Szijjártó said, adding that "having unresolved conflicts with the EU is in sharp opposition to the interests of the EU and Hungary." The officials also discussed the war in Ukraine. Szijjártó said Hungary had an interest in "securing peace as soon as possible".

Earlier in the day, Szijjártó met leaders of the largest British companies investing in Hungary,

adding that the government was working to promote investments to create new jobs and retain the country's economic growth. UK companies make up Hungary's sixth largest investor group, with some 800 companies employing 50,000 people in the country, he added.

Meanwhile, he said the Hungarian and British governments maintained similar positions on nuclear energy and efforts to "eliminate negative discrimination" against it, as well as on combatting illegal migration, which "impacts the two countries equally".

Szijjártó said Hungary had so far spent 1.6 billion euros on protecting its borders, while the EU had reimbursed a mere 1.2% of the grand total. "This clearly shows that Brussels, regrettably, maintains its stance supporting migration," he added.

PRESIDENT NOVÁK OPENS SCHOOL FOR FOLK TRADITIONS IN TRANSCARPATIA

President Katalin Novák opened a special school for ethnic Hungarians in Chepa (Csepe) in western Ukraine on Sunday where children can learn about folk traditions, including music and dancing. "There must be peaceful Hungarian future in Transcarpathia," Novák said at the event, adding that the school was needed so that "even the youngest can learn about our common cultural treasures so that they can also transfer them to their children." Despite the ongoing war

in Ukraine, with many institutions being forced to close down, the opposite happens in Transcarpathia, she added. Ethnic Hungarians in Transcarpathia know the meaning of survival and struggle, she said. "This institution is proof that there is and there will be a Hungarian future here, in Transcarpathia," she added. Novák assured the ethnic Hungarians that they can always rely on Hungary's support. People have joined forces in Hungary and beyond the borders, and a scheme dubbed Bridge for Transcarpathia has therefore received support of over 1 billion forints (EUR 2.5m), she said. Hungarian state support will also be maintained, she added. Novák said she was representing all fifteen million Hungarians "thinking of their brothers in Transcarpathia".

Chepa has been the fourth location in Transcarpathia where a special institution dubbed Tulip School opened, with training courses being run in additional small villages with ethnic Hungarian communities.

SPOX: GOVT WORKING TO CREATE SOCIETY INCLUSIVE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Hungary's government is working to create a society in which both non-disabled and people with disabilities can find their place, government spokeswoman Alexandra Szentkirályi said on Monday on the occasion of the coming International Day

of Persons with Disabilities. The government's duty to create an inclusive society is enshrined in the Fundamental Law, Szentkirályi said at Budapest's School for the Blind. The government has a responsibility to ensure that people with disabilities can live as full a life as possible and that their special needs are met in all areas, be it education, health care or the labour market, she said. And this has borne results, Szentkirályi said, noting the achievements of people with disabilities in the fields of sports, culture and science.

Over the last decade, the government has increased support for organisations representing disabled people by 800 million forints (EUR 2m), she said, also noting the live sign interpretation of weekly government press briefings as an example. Some 1 million people in Hungary live with some kind of disability, Szentkirályi said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT SUPPORTS PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó pledged the Hungarian government's support to persecuted Christians worldwide, despite current economic difficulties, at a conference held in London on Monday. At the International Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Conference, Szijjártó said the government's Hungary Helps programme has spent some 80 million dollars on reconstructing schools

and hospitals and on economic support enabling locals to stay in their homeland. The programme has provided aid in 54 countries so far, he said. The scheme has funded the Nigerian Catholic Church and the Iraqi Chaldean Church which work to help women who survived sexual violence at the hands of Islamist terrorists, he said. Despite economic difficulties, European recession and other challenges, Hungary is committed to carrying on with the programme, he added. The conference was organised by the United Kingdom's government between November 28 and 29.

KARÁCSONY: EVIDENCE SUGGESTS CITY HALL SALE ALLEGATION WAS 'CRIMINAL SMEAR CAMPAIGN'

Evidence suggests that the "false" allegation that people close to the metropolitan administration were planning to sell the City Hall building was part of a "criminal smear campaign" aided and abetted by people connected with the government and ruling Fidesz party, Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony said, noting that former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai had posted an official police document on its decision to close down the investigation which, he insisted, indicated that the people responsible for the "smear campaign against him" had "committed a criminal act". "The Fidesz-serving media, government

members and Fidesz representatives in Budapest entertained themselves and the public with obvious lies for months," Karácsony said on Facebook. "Even the police was used for the Fidesz-backed manipulation campaign when they searched City Hall offices and the homes of several colleagues," he added. "Nobody sold the building and nobody wanted to sell it," Karácsony said, adding that the allegations were "false".

Bajnai, who was "dragged into the affair with the help of underhand manipulation", published the police report showing that manipulated sound recordings had been circulated, which he said qualified as a criminal act. "What we always suspected has now been stated in an official document: during the smear campaign, government members and Fidesz politicians had been assisting in criminal acts," he added. The police decision states that the perpetrators were unidentified but "I have some ideas about where to look for the man who planned and controlled the entire operation," Karácsony said.

LMP RE-SUBMITS PROPOSAL ON WIND ENERGY

The opposition LMP has again submitted its proposal on permitting the use of wind energy to parliament, the party's co-leader told an online press briefing. The move "is giving the government a chance to take action," Máté Kanász-Nagy said. If sustainable



energy is as important to the cabinet as they profess, they will support the initiative, he added. Kanász-Nagy called government communication on the matter “muddled”, with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán saying “he would personally ban the use of renewable energy even as outgoing [technology and industry] minister László Palkovics talked about utilising it.” Csaba Lantos, who is slated to lead the energy ministry from Dec. 1, has said wind turbines could be set up if local communities allowed them, he added.

SOCIALISTS CALL FOR LINKING STARTER TEACHERS’ SALARIES TO CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR’S PAY

The opposition Socialists have called for teachers’ salaries to be linked to the central bank governor’s pay. Socialist parliamentary group leader Bertalan Tóth told an online press briefing that a current government proposal to raise György Matolcsy’s salary from 5 million forints (EUR 12,275) a month to over 6 million forints was unacceptable. The Orbán government is raising Matolcsy’s salary at a time when inflation is record high, food prices are growing by 40-50%, and the central bank has introduced a base rate of 18%

to prevent the collapse of the forint, he said, proposing setting starter teachers’ wages at 10% of the central bank governor’s pay packet.

UKRAINE CRISIS - MORE THAN 9,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SUNDAY

Fully 4,948 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Sunday, while another 4,177 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 263 people, 86 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

DEATHS OUTPACE BIRTHS IN OCT

Preliminary data show that 7,361 children were born and 10,808 people died in October 2022, with the number of live births decreasing by 3.9% and deaths by 8.3% in November 2021-October 2022 compared with the same period a year earlier, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The natural population loss was 3,447 in October this year as against 3,501 in October

2021, KSH said. In October 2022, 4,712 couples tied the knot, down 11% from October 2021. The natural population loss came to 55,335 compared with 64,720 in the same period of last year, a drop of 12%. Between November 2021 and October 2022, 66,260 couples were married, 6.4% fewer than in the previous year.

INVESTMENT VOLUME UP 7.7 % IN Q3

Investment volume in Hungary grew by an annual 7.7% in the third quarter, edging down from a 7.8% annual increase in Q2, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said, adding that the increase in investments could be explained by the dynamic activity of households and businesses combined with shrinking government investments. Developments in the manufacturing industry, the energy sector as well as housing construction increased, while investments related to transport, storage and agriculture held back economic performance. Corporate investments grew by 10.3%, picking up from a 3.0% increase in the previous quarter, helped by developments of foreign-owned companies. Public sector investment fell by 10.5% after growing by 3% year on year in the second quarter.

