

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Noémi Bruzák

Hungarian president attending Three Seas summit in Bucharest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases prelim July industrial output data

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY COULD GET LNG FROM NORTH

Hungary has reached a political agreement on potential gas deliveries from a new LNG terminal under construction in Gdansk, in northern Poland, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, has said.

The entry of Hungarian oil and gas company MOL onto the Polish market and Polish peer Orlen's presence in Hungary provides a good basis for energy cooperation between the two countries, Szijjártó said after talks with Anna Moskwa, Poland's energy affairs minister, in Karpacz. Hungary and Poland intend to expand their cooperation from fuel trade to gas purchases, he said, adding that the construction of a new liquefied natural gas terminal in Gdansk that will be used to export an annual 4-4.5 billion cubic metres of gas provided a new resource for diversification. This gives Hungary an opportunity to have a new gas delivery route, Szijjártó said, noting the existing interconnectors between Poland and Slovakia and between Slovakia and Hungary. Hungarian state-owned energy company MVM had signalled its intent to contract capacity from the terminal, he said, adding that the binding phase for booking capacity had started in September. Szijjártó said he and Moskwa had agreed that Poland would provide the needed political support to expanding energy cooperation to gas deliveries.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: ‘NO ONE CAN LECTURE HUNGARY ON FREEDOM, HISTORY’

It is unfair to accuse Hungary of being pro-Russian, the foreign minister said on Wednesday, adding that no one could lecture Hungary on history and freedom because Hungarians knew full well what it was like to live under oppression “unlike those who haven’t experienced this”. Addressing a panel discussion on the future of the Visegrad cooperation at the Economic Forum in Karpacz, in Poland, Péter Szijjártó expressed criticism of those who he said accused Hungary of being “pro-Russia” and “Putin-friendly”, saying: “I don’t have to explain it here in Poland to the Polish that perception does not always equal reality.” Hungary had to fight for its freedom and received no help in 1956 despite Radio Free Europe announcing at the time that the country would get support from the United States, he said, according to a ministry statement. The ones trying to lecture Hungary on history, freedom, the Soviet Union and communist oppression today are those who never experienced it, the minister said. He said it was unfair to accuse Hungary of being “pro-Russian”, arguing that it was the physical reality and the existing infrastructure that determined Hungary’s energy supply, and the European Union was not doing anything the develop alternative delivery routes. “Okay, I’ll cut the gas contract with Russia, fine, we don’t buy

the gas from Russia. And then what happens tomorrow?” Szijjártó said. “Who will explain it to the Hungarian people?” “The same with the nuclear... fine, we’ll cut the contract with Russia, no problem. Who is the one to stand here and say that I’ll replace these 2,400MW for you, same price, same schedule?” he said.

Hungary’s government is working to diversify its natural gas resources, but the capacity of the energy infrastructure in southeast Europe is very limited and the EU does not want to finance its development, Szijjártó said. Similarly, 85% of Hungary’s oil consumption is covered from Russian sources, but the Croatian authorities have increased the transit fee five-fold via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, the only alternative route, and no one in Europe is protesting this, he added. Meanwhile, Szijjártó said the United States had purchased twice as much uranium from Russia in the first half of this year as during the whole of last year.

On the subject of the Visegrad Group cooperation, Szijjártó said the grouping was still a strategic focus of Hungarian foreign policy, as the central European countries had a better chance of overcoming difficult circumstances if they were united. The Visegrad cooperation has made achievements in recent years that have served the interests of not just Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, but the whole of Europe, he said. Szijjártó argued that if the four countries had not presented a united front against

Europe’s planned mandatory migrant quotas, the continent would be full of illegal migrants waiting to be distributed. He also noted that the Czech, Polish and Hungarian militaries were cooperating in policing Slovakia’s airspace and that the other three countries had assisted Hungary with its border protection efforts when migration pressure peaked. The V4 have also contributed significantly to getting enlargement on the EU’s agenda, he said, arguing that they were united in their support for the EU integration of the Western Balkan countries, unlike several western European leaders, who he said only supported it in public. Given that the V4 comprises four sovereign countries, they will never be in 100% agreement on the various issues, and it is natural to have “ups and downs” in relations due to disagreements, Szijjártó said, adding, however, that the countries had always been capable of separating these disagreements from other aspects of their cooperation on which they were united.

Concerning the V4’s economic weight, he said the combined GDP of the four countries would put them in 14th place in the global ranking, adding that trade between Germany and the V4 was double the trade volume between Germany and France. Szijjártó welcomed that the current Czech V4 presidency sought to focus on practical accomplishments, pointing out that central Europe would be willing to purchase natural gas from Qatar, Azerbaijan, Türkiye,



though the southeast European energy infrastructure did not have the capacity for this and needed to be developed.

OUTGOING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT URGES UN REFORM

Geopolitical rivalry hinders cooperation and solutions in the UN, and diverts focus from the transition to sustainable development, Csaba Kőrösi, the outgoing Hungarian president of the United Nations General Assembly, told the closing event of the GA's 77th session in New York, urging a reform of the organisation in view of the challenges of modern times. Kőrösi said the world was running a race for time on issues such as climate change, preserving biodiversity, education and gender equality, and regretted that the UN's 2015 sustainable development targets could not be met by 2030. The UN adopted a "historic" resolution last year, declaring a clean, healthy and sustainable environment a human right, Kőrösi said. The organisation should now ensure transparency and accountability by determining those responsible for implementing the document, he said. Kőrösi urged that the UN should be restructured in line with current challenges. He said changes were not easy in view of the UN Charter, but said that the document should be applied in its entirety rather than selectively, with special regard to conflict management,

massive unrest, genocide and other war crimes. The next General Assembly session of the UN will be presided over by Dennis Francis of Trinidad and Tobago. The 78th session, starting on September 18, will be addressed by Hungarian President Katalin Novák.

PRESIDENT: BUDAPEST TO HOST THREE SEAS SUMMIT IN 2025

Hungary will be the host country of the summit and business forum of the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) in 2025, President Katalin Novák said in Bucharest on Wednesday. Addressing this year's 3SI summit, Novák called the region's economic cooperation important despite the fact that a focus was currently on the war in Ukraine. She welcomed the adoption of a joint declaration and its provisions concerning Ukraine. Novák noted the two visits she paid to Kyiv in the past twelve months and reiterated Hungary's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity. Hungary condemns the Russian aggression against that country and considers peace the most important goal to be achieved, she said. Speaking about the 3SI initiative, she noted that it had been launched with the aim to enhance economic relations and promote effective connections within the region it covers. She welcomed Greece's joining the 3SI while highlighting the importance of promoting the Western Balkan countries through the initiative. She said she would welcome for the

initiative to gradually open towards the region's six countries. The Hungarian president called attention to the importance of population growth which she said was essential to boosting competitiveness. Under the declaration adopted at the summit, Greece has been included in the 3SI.

On the summit's sidelines, Novák held bilateral talks with Gitanas Nausėda, the president of Lithuania which will host the 3SI summit in 2024. Novák also held talks with Hunor Kelemen, the head of Romania's ethnic Hungarian party RMDSZ.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY BENEFITTING FROM CHINA-GERMANY COOPERATION

Hungary greatly benefits from the strong cooperation between Chinese and German carmakers, "which guarantees economic growth despite all uncertainties and crises," Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Munich on Tuesday. In his address at international mobility exhibition IAA (Internationale Automobil-Ausstellung), Szijjártó said "if there is one country in the world whose economy is determined by car making, that is clearly Hungary," according to a statement from the foreign ministry.

Car manufacturing accounts for one third of Hungary's industrial output, worth 30 billion euros last year and with exports totalling 20 billion euros, the minister said. He added that the sector employed 170,000 people in

Hungary. Meanwhile, though western European carmakers developed the best electric cars, the necessary batteries were produced by eastern companies, he said. "This is the first time that western European companies of a leading sector have become totally dependent on eastern suppliers," he said, adding: "Hungary has become an important meeting point for eastern and western investors". "For us a civilised cooperation between East and West is always better; we have usually been on the losing side without such cooperation," he said.

Szijjártó said an approach to separate the European and Chinese economies "to remove risk" was regrettable. "Trying to remove risk is the actual risk for us here in Europe," he insisted. Szijjártó noted that five out of the ten largest battery makers had "made a commitment" to Hungary, adding that the country was currently the fourth largest battery maker in the world, and "soon it will be the second". According to Szijjártó, Chinese producers prefer Hungary because of the presence of German makers, as demonstrated by the development projects of CATL and Eve Energy. "Close cooperation is needed between Chinese and German firms ... and we Hungarians profit from it a lot," he said.

AGMIN HIGHLIGHTS COOPERATION WITH UZBEKISTAN

Agricultural ties between Hungary and Uzbekistan are "continuously strengthening", Agriculture Minister István Nagy said after meeting Aziz

Voitov, his Uzbek counterpart, in Samarkand on Wednesday. Nagy said Hungarian and Uzbek companies were in an "active and dynamic" communication. The minister said both countries saw food security as a priority while also seeking joint answers to challenges posed by climate change and frequent droughts. Irrigation systems in the region could be modernised with the help of Hungarian experts, he said. Another focus was scientific cooperation, of which student and researcher exchange is a good tool, he said. He said the two countries should cooperate not only in higher education but at the high school level, too.

INCOMING COMMISSIONER URGES RESOLUTION OF EU, HUNGARY CONTROVERSY OVER HIGHER ED PROGRAMMES

"Students cannot feel victim to political disputes," Iliana Ivanova, the European Commission's appointee for education, said on Tuesday, and called for a resolution of controversies between the commission and Hungary over the Erasmus and Horizon higher education programmes. She said it was regrettable that young people were stripped of opportunities, but added that "rules will be rules and they need to be observed". If the Hungarian authorities agree to meet the European Commission's legal requirements, obstacles for Hungary's accessing community funding will be removed,

she said. She pledged to be "part of the solution" and contribute "information and goodwill" to the process. "The ball is in the Hungarian government's court ... it is up to them when they meet the requirements," Ivanova said.

Andrea Bocskor and András Gyürk, MEPs of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, called for an urgent resolution in a statement sent to MTI. Bocskor said the commission's "discriminative" decision to exclude Hungarian universities run by private foundations from the programmes could impact two thirds of Hungary's universities and a total 180,000 students from next year on. "Time is running out and an urgent solution is needed," she said. Gyürk said his group expected Ivanova to initiate an immediate supervision of the commission's decision, and to "restore the rights and opportunities of Hungarian students and researchers".

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MINISTER MEETS CATL EXECUTIVES

Economic Development Minister Márton Nagy on Wednesday met the executives of Chinese battery maker CATL to discuss the state of the global battery industry, Hungary's position on the global market and the company's planned plant in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, the ministry said. The meeting in Budapest was attended by CATL VP Chen Junwei, CATL strategic planning head Lórád Dióssi and Wang Yanyun, the general manager of China Construction Bank Hungary.

CATL is the world's largest EV battery maker with a 37% global market share, the ministry said in a statement. The construction of its plant in Debrecen, the country's biggest greenfield investment, is ongoing, with test production set to start in early 2025, it added. At the talks, Nagy emphasised that car and battery production were clearly the driving force of the Hungarian economy. Electric vehicles are the future of the auto industry, he said, arguing that there was not sustainable car production without battery production. CATL's investment will therefore contribute both to boosting high value-added economic output and job protection, the ministry said. Battery production is an integral part of the Hungarian economy, with the sector set to see more than 6,300 billion forints (EUR 16.3bn) worth of developments in the coming years, creating 20,000 jobs, Nagy said. Hungary is set to become the fourth-biggest battery maker in the world, after China, the US and Germany, with a capacity of 250 GWh, enough to meet 35% of demand in Europe, he said.

GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARIAN POLICE OFFICERS HELP STOP ILLEGAL MIGRANTS AT S SERBIA BORDER

Hungarian police officers have been dispatched to a mission to help stop illegal migrants and people smugglers at the Serbian side of the North Macedonian-Serbian border,

the interior ministry's state secretary told MTI by phone in Presevo on Wednesday. Bence Rétvári visited the town to meet the 35-member contingent of Hungarian police officers serving on a joint mission with their Serbian and Austrian colleagues. He also met the national police chief of Serbia and the leader of the border protection authority. Rétvári said the Serbian partners had expressed gratitude for the presence of the Hungarian police unit over the past two weeks and praised their expertise. He said the Serbian-Hungarian-Austrian joint police mission had made it possible to stop and turn back illegal migrants and people smugglers at the Serbian-North Macedonian border, "just one borderline away from the Hungarian border in the south". Rétvári said the triparty cooperation could serve as a model for the EU in an effective cooperation between member states and a non-member in protecting the bloc's external borders. The state secretary also visited a refugee centre with 1,000-2,000 people staying there. Since the outbreak of the migration crisis, the centre has handled between 1.5-2 million people, a number equalling the population of the Hungarian capital, Rétvári noted.

RETAIL SALES DOWN 7.7% IN JULY

Retail sales in Hungary fell by an annual 7.7% in July, dropping for the seventh month in a row, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Wednesday. Adjusted

for calendar year effects, retail sales declined by 7.6%. Adjusted food sales fell by 4.1%, non-food sales by 5.5% and vehicle fuel sales by 20.5%. Month on month, retail sales fell by an adjusted 0.2%. For the period January-July, retail sales dropped by an annual 9.9%, according to both unadjusted and adjusted figures.

OVER 13,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY

Fully 5,933 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Tuesday, while 7,496 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 169 people, ORFK said on Wednesday.

BUDAPEST PARK IN GREEN CITIES EUROPE CONTEST

Northern Budapest's Pünkösdfürdő Park, the winner of Hungary's National Green Cities Europe Award, will represent the country in the Green Cities Europe international contest in Brussels in October, Mayor Gergely Karácsony said on Facebook on Wednesday. Karácsony said the Pünkösdfürdő project, implemented by the city council and municipal park manager FÖKERT, was one of the projects launched and completed by Budapest's incumbent leadership. Pünkösdfürdő is the city's first "rain park" with 600 trees, shrubs and wild flowers, Karácsony said.

THIRD LISZT FEST TO BE HELD IN BUDAPEST ON OCT 11-22

The Liszt Fest International Cultural Festival held between October 11 and 22 in Budapest will feature events in contemporary music and artists of national and international renown, the organisers told a press conference on Wednesday. At the festival, organised for the 3rd time, Liszt's opera *Sardanapalo* will have its Hungarian premiere, the director of the Palace of Arts (Müpa) said. The piece, which has survived in fragments and was reconstructed by David Trippett, can now be heard in Budapest alongside Liszt's *Dante Symphony*, performed by the Staatskapelle Weimar, said

Csaba Káel. The festival will feature renowned Hungarian pianist Gergely Bogányi performing pieces by Liszt at a joint concert with the Angelica Girls' Choir, he said. Káel said the event will present how Liszt has inspired our times and its generations including György Kurtág and György Ligeti. In a highlight, the festival will premiere György Kurtág's only opera, *Fin de la partie* (*Endgame*), which is based on Samuel Beckett's epochal drama, in a staged concert. In another highlight, the festival will also offer a large-scale piano marathon celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of composer György Ligeti, a close friend of Kurtág over six decades. Káel said.

International star guests include the legendary Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, founded nearly four

decades ago. The band will play new compositions written for this year's Liszt Fest tour at a concert with Japanese organist Akiko Tsuruga and Hungarian pop and soul singer Gigi Radics as special guests, said Janina Szomolányi, the festival's operative director. Other guest stars include Polish pianist-composer Hania Rani, who likes to transcend genres and experiment with electronics and vocals, and the 50-year-old Kronos Quartet which will be on stage in a joint act with award-winning Iranian singer-composer Mahsa Vahdat. Iconic performers of Gypsy dance and music, the Boban Markovic Orkestar, Parno Graszt, Mónika Lakatos and the Roma Fest Gypsy Dance Theatre, will evoke the mood of a Roma wedding feast with a joint staged concert, she said.