

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Vasvári Tamás

Drone shot of Church of Our Lady in Bodajki, on the day of farewell to Mary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related  
to the war in Ukraine

## TOP STORY

### HUNGARY 'NEEDS NEW SUPPLY ROUTES'

Supply routes have been blocked or destroyed owing to the war in Ukraine, so Hungary needs new ones, and the Turkic states can form a bridge between East and West, the foreign minister, has said.

Hungary has signed a new gas contract with Türkiye, buying 275 million cubic meters of gas from the start of next year Péter Szijjártó told newswire Bloomberg in Istanbul, adding that for the first time Hungary would be purchasing gas from Türkiye itself. Meanwhile, a Turkish construction giant is forming strategic cooperation with Hungary's biggest railway construction company, and they will bid in tenders jointly in third markets in Europe. Turkish Airlines is a key player in Hungary's civil aviation market, and the airline would focus even more on Hungary in the future, he said.

Asked about the European Union's view of Hungary's steps in relation to Turkic states and Türkiye in particular, Szijjártó branded the EU as "hypocritical". Governments that abjure the international liberal mainstream are attacked in an unjust and baseless way, he added. The minister said that just like in Hungary's case, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was often accused of being undemocratic, but in both countries the governments enjoyed a huge democratic mandate that "any European politician would be happy to win".

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## **AGMIN: EU DECISION- MAKERS 'STEERED BY BIG CAPITAL'**

The leaders of the European Union are not protecting the EU's interests, István Nagy, the agriculture minister, told public radio at the weekend. "We are witnessing multinational big capital's move to acquire new markets," he said. Commenting on the Hungarian government's decision to maintain and expand the ban on Ukrainian grain produce on its own authority, Nagy said in the interview that the European Union was protecting "so-called Ukrainian farmers" who were "in fact US, Saudi and Dutch companies and investors".

Hungary proposed that the EU set up a transit fee fund to support land transport of Ukrainian grain produce so that it may be transported to Africa and the Arab Peninsula from Croatian and Nordic free ports, he noted. The EU ban expired on Sept 15, and the EC decided against prolonging it, saying that the measures taken since May had eliminated market distortions in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, the beneficiaries of the ban.

Contrary to those statements, the European markets still suffer from a glut, he said. Meanwhile, the decision to lift the ban emerged after talks between EC President Ursula von der Leyen and

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, rather than consultations with the ministers of the countries in question, he said. Hungary's decision to expand the ban to rapeseed, sunflower seed, flour, cooking oil, honey, eggs and certain meats was a "very brave and tough decision" since such decisions are not normally within the power of member states, he said. Slovakia and Poland joined the decision and Romania is also expected to, while Bulgaria demurred, he added.

At the same time, Ukrainian produce will be delivered to traditional markets in Africa and the Arab Peninsula, to prevent a "famine triggering a wave of migration with unforeseeable consequences," he said on Facebook. The agriculture ministry has proposed establishing a fund to aid transit to ensure that Ukrainian products find their way out of Europe, he said. "Large Ukrainian agricultural companies owned by international corporations are not aiming to trade with third-world countries but to rule European markets, which is going to land the farmers of all member states in serious difficulties," Nagy said. European citizens have an interest in products produced under controlled circumstances, he said. "It is sad to see that Brussels can't see that and supports Ukrainian producers rather than European farmers," he said. "We will continue to protect the interests of Hungarian farmers," he added.

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## **FARMERS PROTEST AGAINST EC DECISION TO DROP BAN ON UKRAINIAN GRAIN IMPORTS**

Hundreds of farmers protested on Sunday near the Hungary-Ukraine border crossing at Záhony against the European Commission decision to drop the ban on the import of Ukrainian grain. Around 400 protesters marched and drove tractors along the road leading to the border station on one lane. Head of the Magosz Hungarian farmer union alliance István Jakab, which mounted the protest jointly with the national agricultural chamber, said Hungarian farmers found the commission's decision not to extend the import ban "unacceptable", and he praised the Hungarian government for prolonging the ban on grain and extending it to other agricultural produce on its own authority. Magosz has written an open letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, asking for an EC decision made on a professional basis and according to professional criteria, he noted.

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## **SZIJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY DEDICATED SUPPORTER OF EXPANDING ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

Hungary remains dedicated to the expansion of the Abraham Accords on Arab-Israeli normalisation

and it is ready to participate in promoting the process, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said at the Peace of Westphalia conference in Münster. "To put it simply, the government's position is that war is bad and peace is good," Szijjártó told a panel discussion on the Middle East peace process. It is at the negotiating table that one should seek to resolve all armed conflicts because in the battlefield there is only death and destruction, he added.

The minister criticised the fact that in the case of wars outside the continent, the Foreign Affairs Council had always called for immediate dialogue and ceasefire, but the approach to Ukraine was completely different. He said that the conclusion of the Abraham Accords had demonstrated that in the case of most conflicts there was a chance to find a solution and to pre-empt the re-formation of blocs in the world.

Szijjártó said the Abraham Accords should serve as an example for resolving other similar conflicts around the world, adding that "even though the Middle East seems to be far away in a geographical sense, we all know that whatever happens in the Middle East, it has direct influence on Europe". He said Hungary maintained strategic ties with Arab countries in the region and at the same time was an ally of Israel. Commenting on talks to revive the

Iran nuclear deal, he said it would improve global security, and added that sealing off Tehran would be a much worse option.

### **FINMIN: FISCAL POLICY PROPOSAL BY BRUSSELS UNACCEPTABLE TO HUNGARY**

A European Commission proposal to determine fiscal policy for European Union member states is unacceptable to the Hungarian government, the finance minister said on the sidelines of an informal meeting of his EU counterparts in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. "We believe that member states' budgets need to be determined on the basis of national interests, by the governments elected by the people instead of the European Commission making individual deals or applying other preferences," Mihály Varga told MTI.

At the two-day meeting, the finance ministers also discuss how monetary and fiscal policy can interact, he said. "In Hungary's economic policy, it is important that the central bank works together with the government to rein in and push down inflation as fast as possible," he said. Since April, there have been monthly personal consultations to ensure effective joint action, he added. He welcomed the European Central Bank rate decision on Thursday, stating that it was a good message that the rate increase cycle is expected to come to an end.

### **GULYÁS HOPES FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN TEACHERS' WAGES**

The head of the Prime Minister's Office has expressed hope that teachers' wages will undergo radical changes in the next 18 months or two years. Gergely Gulyás told a year-opening event of Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in Szekszárd, in southern Hungary, that teachers should receive wages that reflect the importance of their work. "I think we are closer to this than anybody would think and a breakthrough may occur within months, resulting in significant wage increases," he said. Over the past decade, a record number of schools have been renovated, the number of places in crèches increased to 62,000, and many kindergartens have been revamped, he said.

### **MINISTER: FAMILIES KEY TO PENSION SYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY**

Families raising children today will be key to "ensuring pensions for future generations" János Csák, the culture and innovation minister, said in an interview to public radio. "Certain countries are seeing the birth rate fall, while in others, especially in Africa, the population is growing rapidly, presenting a challenge to every country," he said.

Hungary's government has been working to turn demographic trends to prevent a "population exchange", a possible development of those trends, he said. The government has introduced several measures in support of housing families from home purchase subsidies to interest subsidies. It intends to continue this support while taking market trends into account, he said. It is also working to ensure mothers "are given a real opportunity to decide between work or staying at home" thanks to a programme to build creches and financial support, he said. As a result of the measures, Hungary's fertility rate was up at 1.59. After the pandemic, it suffered a setback and is now at 1.52. Hungary's population would reproduce naturally with a rate of 2.1, he said.

**CSÁK: CHILDBEARING SHOULD NOT LEAD TO FINANCIAL LOSSES**

Hungarian family policymaking is about creating a balance between work and family and ensuring that childbearing does not involve a financial penalty, János Csák, the culture and innovation minister, said on Friday at a panel discussion of the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit. The government provides housing support as a foundation for family life for young couples while promoting work-family balance and financial support for families,

he said. Whereas the fertility rate was 1.2 ten years ago, today it is 1.52, even though the number of women of childbearing age is falling, he said.

The government focuses not only on families with small children but the entire life cycle, including grandparents, he said. Csák said culture is passed on to the next generations mainly within families, adding that culture and family policy were tightly intertwined in a way that higher education, science and innovation could lay the foundation for the middle classes while boosting competitiveness.

Aida Balayeva, the Kazakh culture and information minister, said family was the key to security. She said her government was focused on turning Kazakh's youthful demographics into opportunities. The country's population, which is around 20 million, has grown by around three million in the last ten years, she added. Mahinur Ozdemir, Türkiye's family and social affairs minister, said the fertility rate in Türkiye, with a population of 85 million, was waning while there were more and more elderly in the country. Various government family support measures were aimed at increasing the number of births, he said.

Darija Kisić Tepavčević, Serbia's family affairs minister, said that Hungary had been an inspiration in tackling the problem of the declining population over the past five decades. Twelve years

ago the fertility rate was 1.4, she said, noting that today it has risen to around 1.5-1.6, thanks to family support measures such as direct financial support for families with children. Amna bint Ahmed al-Rumaihi, Bahrain's minister of housing and urban planning, Amel Moussa Belhaj, Tunisia's minister of family affairs, and Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Qatar's family affairs minister, also contributed to the panel discussion.

**MINISTRY: HUNGARIAN VOCATIONAL TRAINING 3RD IN OECD RANKINGS**

When it comes to employment opportunities of graduates of vocational training, Hungary ranks third, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD Education at a Glance 2023 report presents the performance of education systems in a global context, showing that the employment rate of people aged 25-34 with professional qualifications in Hungary "is exceptionally high", with the country coming third after Norway and Iceland, the culture and innovation ministry said on Saturday.

Fully 38% of 24-34-year-olds obtain a vocational diploma and are less exposed to the risk of unemployment than those with general secondary education, and can expect a 31% higher salary, the ministry said in a statement.

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## **PROTEST HELD AGAINST NEW LAW ON TEACHERS' CAREER PATHS**

Student organisation United Student Front and other organisations staged a demonstration against the new law on teachers' career paths on Friday evening. The protesters gathered at Margaret Bridge and moved to Kossuth Lajos Square near Parliament where a stage had been set up and they placed the flag of the teachers' trade union PDSZ there. Several opposition politicians and activists joined the protest, including Bence Tordai of Parbeszed, Ágnes Kunhalmi of the Socialists, independent MP Ákos Hadházy and student activist Lili Pankotai.

Activist of the Tanítanék (I want to teach) movement Katalin Törley said they had experienced "oppression" and "revenge by way of the law on teachers". Protests held in the past had produced barely any results, except the joining of forces between teachers, students and parents and international attention, she added.

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## **PRESIDENT: HUNGARY HAS MANY FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD**

Hungary has many friends around the world, President Katalin Novák said on Friday, reflecting on the demographic summit hosted by Budapest. Her message posted on Facebook with photos is captioned: "At the 5th Budapest Demographic Summit with

the Friends of Hungary". She noted that pro-family forces have gathered at the Budapest summit arriving from 60 countries in five continents. "Today, I met the Friends of Hungary, members of which are Hungarians who physically have gone far away from their country, but in spirit they have stayed close to it," said Novák.

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## **HUNGARY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT WINS EU SCIENCE PRIZE**

Szilveszter Laskai, a student of the Fazekas Mihály Secondary School in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, has won the CERN prize of the 34th European Union Contest for Young Scientists held in Brussels between Sept 12 and 17. Laskai's work, entitled Design of traction inverter with SiC semiconductors, was awarded the prize of the European Organization for Nuclear Research. The finalists were chosen from 65,000 contestants from 37 countries. Ákos Vida from the Veres Péter Secondary School in Budapest and Ákos Óvári and Balázs Szőnyi from Tatabánya's Bánki Donát Secondary School also competed, the Hungarian Association for Innovation said.

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## **TREASURE OF EUROPEAN FILM CULTURE PLAQUE UNVEILED AT BUDAPEST NYUGATI RAILWAY STATION**

A memorial plaque placed at Nyugati (Western) railway station as a Treasure of European Film Culture was unveiled

in the iconic building's hall in Budapest on Friday. The title was awarded to Nyugati by the Berlin-based European Film Academy (EFA) in 2022, said Csaba Káel, government commissioner for film and the director of the National Film Institute.

The architectural design is the work of Austrian architect August W. de Serres, while the structure of the hall was designed by Gustav Eiffel's engineering firm, Káel noted. One of Hungary's oldest railway stations, Nyugati has featured in many international and Hungarian films, he said. Among the foreign titles, it can be seen in Tony Scott's Spy Game starring Robert Redford, Brad Pitt and Catherine McCormack, as well as in Steven Spielberg's Munich and Tomas Alfredson's Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy with Gary Oldman, Colin Firth and Tom Hardy, said the commissioner. Last year, it served as a venue for a Gucci commercial, he added. The Hungarian films featuring the railway station include István Szabó's Sunshine with Ralph Fiennes as well as Hanussen, Káel said.

The Treasures of European Film Culture form a growing network of memorable places people can visit, reminding them of the great and remarkable history of European cinema, Matthijs Wouter Knol, CEO and director of EFA, said at the unveiling event. Claire Legras, the ambassador of France, said Nyugati railway station was a symbol of Hungarian-French cultural ties.