

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Fischer, PM's press office

PM Viktor Orbán (front, right) holds a meeting with newly appointed govt commissioners

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU affairs ministers meet in Brussels

UNGA under way

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: UNGA FORUM FOR PEACEMAKING

The world should take the 78th United Nations General Assembly as an opportunity to broker peace in Ukraine, but that would require dialogue between the parties, Péter Szijjártó said in New York.

Regarding a meeting of European Union foreign ministers scheduled on occasion of the General Assembly, the foreign minister said that in all likelihood his colleagues would “warn everyone against meeting and talking to representatives of the Russian government”. “I think that’s going in the wrong direction,” he said. “The UN was founded so that even warring parties could at least talk to each other, because that raises the hope of a solution taking shape, or at least things not getting worse,” he said. The UNGA, to be attended by Ukraine, Russia and “everyone else”, “would be an opportunity for everyone to talk to each other on neutral territory,” he said.

Szijjártó said he was scheduled to meet his Russian counterpart in the second half of the week, “and I think that the best course of action would be if as many of my Western colleagues as possible would do the same.”

Meanwhile, the minister welcomed a meeting of the Visegrád Group on closer cooperation. “Our views on and approach to peace are clearly different, but there is a multitude of other matters we agree on, on which cooperation is in the nation’s interest.”

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SZIJJÁRTÓ DECRIES 'WAR PSYCHOSIS'

Regarding a meeting of the World Economic Forum the foreign minister was scheduled to participate in, Péter Sziijártó said "war psychosis" resulting from the war in Ukraine had created a political climate that could lead to blocs forming anew in world politics. "We want the coming years to be about connectivity," he said. He said that after the ties between Russia and Europe had been severed "one by one", there were western European attempts to do the same with China. "That would have tragic consequences," he warned.

Meanwhile, western car manufacturers are dependent on Eastern suppliers in the transition to electromobility, he said. Hungary has successfully become an important meeting point for the sector's investments, he added. "We have an interest in developing civilised cooperation between East and West," he said.

At the same time, the security situation had deteriorated worldwide, he said. Humanity "may be closer to the third world war than ever," he said, adding there were 50 armed conflicts happening simultaneously worldwide. Sziijártó said instability in the Middle East had a direct impact on Europe, contributing to rising migration pressure. The Abraham Accords, he said, were the first successful attempt in the past few decades to broker peace between Israel and several

Arab countries, and he called for a push to expand the accords, saying that Hungary was ready to contribute as it saw Israel as a strategic partner and had friendly relations with many Arab countries.

KÖVÉR IN TBILISI: EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION A MUST FOR GEORGIA

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér, on an official visit to Tbilisi, said Georgia should be allowed to join the European Union and NATO. Kövér said it was beyond question that Georgia had made great strides towards the EU, Parliament's press chief Zoltán Szilágyi said on Monday after the speaker's talks with Georgian counterpart Shalva Papuashvili. European institutions, Kövér said, must repair the omission of Georgia as an EU candidate when Ukraine and Moldova had been promised that status. Georgia, he said, was the second oldest European Christian state and deserved candidate status, also considering it has made the most progress in terms of legal harmonisation among countries hoping to join the bloc.

Hungary will continue to support Georgia's EU aspirations and offer help in the process of bidding to become a member state, he said. Hopefully, by the second half of 2024, when Hungary holds the rotating EU presidency, Georgia will have made even greater advances in this area, he said.

The West must guarantee Georgia's security, the speaker said, adding

that Hungary stood for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty and backed the country's NATO aspirations. Hungary, he said, trusted that it would be possible to restore the country's territorial integrity through reconciliation with Russia and with the support of the international community.

Referring to an upcoming joint government meeting of the two countries, he said both the Hungarian government and opposition parties understood the need to strengthen bilateral relations. Papuashvili praised Hungarian support for Georgia's EU integration efforts, and he noted that the possibilities of deepening bilateral cooperation and the progress Georgia has made in implementing the 12 recommendations of the European Commission were also matters of discussion between the two speakers.

Kövér also met Levan Davitasvili, the deputy prime minister who heads the economy ministry, and David Songulashvili, chairman of the Georgian parliament's economic policy committee. He also laid a wreath at the memorial to the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the territorial integrity of Georgia.

ORBÁN MEETS NEWLY APPOINTED COUNTY GOVT COMMISSIONERS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán held consultations with two newly appointed county government commissioners in his office on

Monday morning, Orbán's press chief told MTI. The meeting with László Salgó of Csongrád-Csanád County and Gábor Tanárki of Fejér County was attended by Gergely Gulyás, the head of the Prime Minister's Office, and István György, state secretary for regional public administration, Bertalan Havasi said. Orbán said at the meeting that although county government commissioners are tasked to lead an office, they need an attitude of "turning to the people and their affairs in a spirit of partnership" rather than acting as an authority, the press chief said. The prime minister also said that his government "had on several occasions proved that it is capable of tackling challenges in difficult times and will do everything in its power to protect Hungarian families, jobs and the economy".

GOVT OFFICIAL OPENS WEEK OF SAFETY CAMPAIGN

The safety of children comes first, Bence Rétvári, parliamentary state secretary of the interior ministry, said, opening the Week of Safety campaign in Budapest on Monday. The campaign focusing on accident prevention and the protection of health and the environment is being organised in coordination with the police force, firefighters, the ambulance service, the Red Cross and the Hungarian Insurers Association (MABISZ), among others, Rétvári told a press conference. Some 75,000 students have participated in

the Week of Safety events in the last seven years, and the campaign's online videos have received 3.6 million views, he said.

József Óberling, head of the traffic department at the national police headquarters (ORFK), said that around 14,000-15,000 people are injured in road accidents each year. Some 1,000-1,500 of those are children, often because the parents don't put them in proper child safety seats or exceed the speed limit without having their own seatbelts fastened, he said.

DK SUSPECTS FIDESZ OF ATTEMPTED ELECTION BRIBERY

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) demands an answer from ruling Fidesz to the question "how many opposition politicians has the party bribed or attempted to bribe to mislead and split opposition voters" in next year's municipal elections, DK's spokesman said. Balázs Barkóczy said DK had knowledge of a secret audio recording of a Fidesz politician offering 5 million forints (EUR 13,000) to a Budapest politician of the Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP). "If the opposition MKKP politician was fielded to run for mayor in the 18th district, that would weaken the re-election chances of Sándor Szaniszló, the incumbent mayor representing DK, by splitting the opposition vote [in the district]," said Barkóczy. DK also wants to know "from what source had Fidesz received the bribery money and how much

the ruling party plans to spend on election bribery in the 2024 municipal elections", the spokesman said, insisting that DK suspected election fraud because, he said, "a tight race" was expected in several Budapest districts and in many localities. "If Fidesz's bribe attempt in the 18th district gets proven, it will go to show clearly that the party is preparing to do the same across the country in next year's municipal elections," Barkóczy said.

LMP: EU INSTITUTION LEADERS 'IN THRALL TO MULTINATIONALS'

Ursula von der Leyen's recent "state of the union" speech is evidence of how the leaders of European Union institutions are in thrall to multinationals, German and French carmakers in particular, opposition LMP has said, commenting on the speech given by the President of the European Commission. The green party's spokesman, József Gál, told a press conference on Monday that LMP did not support Von der Leyen as EC president and would continue to withhold its backing after the European Parliament elections. Von der Leyen has said the EC will investigate the flood of cheap Chinese electric cars on the European market, he noted, adding that the competition procedure was set up to protect the German and French car industry, while these companies repatriated handsome

profits thanks to exploiting cheap labour and natural resources in central and eastern Europe. European institutions, he said, were encouraging eastern parts of the EU to be places of landfill and assembly plants of EU core countries.

UNION: HUNGARY TEACHER SHORTAGE EXCEEDED 20,000 IN 2020- 21 SCHOOL YEAR

Hungary's public education sector had a shortage of more than 20,000 teachers in the 2020-2021 school year, the head of teachers' union PSZ said, citing a study carried out by the organisation. Counting all school staff directly assisting teachers, the labour shortage in the sector exceeded 34,000, Tamás Totyik told a press conference, adding that the study was based on data obtained from local reports of national competence tests, the Central Statistical Office and social security information. Altogether, the public education sector is missing 34,618 workers, Totyik said, adding that this was a "conservative estimate". According to the study, the sector had a shortage of 20,587 teachers in the 2020-2021 school year.

HUNGARY HOSTING NATO INNOVATION BODY MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Budapest is hosting the meetings of two NATO innovation bodies from Sept 18 to 22 as part of a NATO Innovation Week, the defence ministry said on Monday. Hungary, as a testament to its commitment to NATO, is a founding member of both the NATO Innovation Fund (NIF) and the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), which have chosen Budapest as the location of their meetings, the ministry cited Imre Porkoláb, ministerial commissioner for defence innovation, as saying.

Porkoláb, who is also deputy chair of DIANA, said the defence ministry is organising the NATO Innovation Week "on the sidelines" of the DIANA and NIF meetings together with the Defence Innovation Research Institute (VIKI), with Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky as the event's chief patron. NIF and DIANA are both aimed at adapting advanced technologies developed in the civilian sector by partnering with small and medium-sized businesses, the commissioner said. As part of the Innovation Week,

Hungary will present its innovation ecosystem to the other member states, the ministry said.

HUNGARY TAKING IN POLISH WW2 REFUGEES COMMEMORATED IN WARSAW

A commemoration was held in Warsaw on Monday, marking the 84th anniversary of Hungary opening its borders to Polish refugees at the beginning of the second world war. The event was held at the memorial of József Antall Sr and Henryk Sławik, who organised the rescue effort, and attended by Orsolya Zsuzsanna Kovács, Hungary's Ambassador to Poland, and Jan Józef Kasprzyk, the head of the Polish office of war veterans and those persecuted in war. Polish Speaker of the House Elżbieta Witek sent a letter greeting the participants. In his speech, Kasprzyk noted that in September 1939, Hungary opened its borders to Polish refugees displaced by German and Soviet aggression. He called Antall and Sławik heroes of the Polish, Hungarian and Jewish people. "Those two men showed that we must preserve our humanity and love for our brethren even in the hardest of times," he said.