

PHOTO OF THE DAY



President Katalin Novák addressing the UN General Assembly session in NY

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to the war in Ukraine

United Nations General Assembly session in NY

Presser on autumn festival of museums

TOP STORY

PRESIDENT NOVÁK IN UNGA: NO ALTERNATIVE TO PEACE

There is no alternative to peace, President Katalin Novák said in her address to the 78th session of the United Nations' General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.

"This war also directly affects us Hungarians. It is not just in our neighbourhood. Hungarian fathers and sons living in Ukraine are also giving their lives in the trenches," she said, adding that this is why "we want peace. In our country, in Ukraine, in Europe, in the world. Peace and the security that comes with it". Novák said at the general debate that "we know that peace is only realistically attainable when at least one side sees the time for negotiations as having come". "We cannot decide for Ukrainians about how much they are prepared to sacrifice, but we have a duty to represent our own nation's desire for peace," the Hungarian president said some 15 minutes after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's address to the General Assembly. Novák stressed that Hungary condemns "clearly and unequivocally the violation of international law, the attack on another state, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has caused immense suffering and destruction and has destroyed the peaceful life of Europe".

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NOVÁK: HUNGARY AGAINST FURTHER ESCALATION

Hungary is for the victims and against further escalation, which is why it punches above its weight in providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and those fleeing the war, President Katalin Novák said at the UN General Assembly in New York. Hungary stands for the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, and understands Ukraine’s desire to be part of the community of European countries, “thus we expect it to uphold the values that characterise our community”, the president said. The suffering caused by the war affects families first and foremost, Novák said, adding that having visited Kyiv at Zelensky’s invitation twice since the outbreak of the war, she had seen the suffering of the families and “what they experience when the peace is broken”.

The Hungarian president also touched on the demographic challenges facing the world, warning that if the international community did not address this issue, “it will have an immeasurable impact on our economies, societies, and security in the near future”. She noted that last week’s Budapest Demographic Summit, “the most important international forum on demographic issues”, brought together public leaders, thinkers, demographers, and the representatives of family organisations and professional workshops from sixty countries and

five continents. The message of the summit was that “pro-family forces stand up for their values and interests”, the president said. “If there is no child, there will be no future,” said Novák. “What is the point of looking after the Earth if we don’t have children and grandchildren to pass it on to?” Hungarians see the solution to the demographic crisis in strengthening and supporting families, Novák said. Hungary protects parental freedom, the president said. “We strongly believe that the right to raise children does not belong to the state, nor to NGOs, nor to the media or the knowledge industry, but to parents,” she added. Anyone who has a child is prepared to fight at any time to ensure that their child can live in peace and freedom, Novák said. “We recognise that family is the key to security. A strong, united and healthy family is a guarantee of security,” the president said, concluding her address.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GLOBAL HEALTH-CARE COOPERATION MUST BE TOTALLY DEPOLITICISED

Global health-care cooperation must be totally depoliticized in order for the world to be better prepared for a potential future pandemic, the Hungarian foreign minister said at a United Nations’ General Assembly meeting in New York on Wednesday. The ministry cited Péter Szijjártó telling a high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness

and response that the coronavirus pandemic had demonstrated “how defenseless we are regardless of all our super highly developed technologies and artificial intelligence at our disposal”.

“Unfortunately, we cannot give back the lives of those hundreds of thousands who have died ... but we do have to draw and understand the conclusions in order to be more protected in the future,” he added. “One of these lessons we have to learn is that all those strategic capacities might look like useless under normal circumstances, but under emergency circumstances they can save lives,” Szijjártó said. Hungary is building its own vaccine factory, and is now able to produce masks, gloves and ventilators as well, and has its own air cargo delivery capacity, he added. He expressed hope that as a consequence of COVID, everybody understands that “human health has nothing to do with geopolitics. Virus does not know any borders, any ideologies, any political affiliation”. To be better protected, the world must come to an era of real global cooperation, which is not being limited, restricted or influenced by global politics, he said. “Those who allow health care to be confused with global politics will be responsible for the fact that we cannot save the lives, we cannot protect as many people as many could have been protected with a real cooperation,” the foreign minister said.

Hungary was subjected to “tremendous” attacks because it



had purchased vaccines which were manufactured in Eastern countries, and these criticisms and attacks were without any kind of professional aspects, he said. Szijjártó said that Hungary completed the most successful vaccination campaign in the European Union because the government bought vaccines from the East and West at the same time. The government considered vaccines as tools to save lives and not as a political statement, he added.

“The decade of dangers is coming up and we cannot exclude that new viruses will put challenges ahead of us,” said Szijjártó, calling it a global responsibility to be better prepared. “If we approach this issue in a political manner, we will fail,” he added. Global health-care cooperation must be totally depoliticized and all UN member states have to do their best in order “to make WHO the most professional and the most depoliticized organisation of power in a national political region”, the foreign minister said, concluding his address.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: ‘TERRORISM, ILLEGAL MIGRATION FORM VICIOUS CIRCLE’

Intensifying migratory waves towards Europe pose a great threat to the continent and reflect that terrorism and illegal migration form a “vicious circle”, the Hungarian foreign minister said in New York on Wednesday. The foreign ministry cited Péter Szijjártó as stating that despite all efforts,

the threat terrorism poses globally is currently more serious than ever before, with various terrorist attacks claiming 6,700 lives last year. He noted that the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) received only 3% of its budget from the global organisation with the rest to be provided by the member states. Hungary has made a great contribution by Budapest hosting the second largest UNOCT centre, Szijjártó said. Some 25 international experts work at the centre and its role is planned to be further strengthened, he added. “Hungary’s role in the global fight against terrorism will further increase in the upcoming period which will contribute to increasing security in Hungary,” he said.

Szijjártó said that he would meet eight of his counterparts on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting, including the foreign ministers of Bahrein, Chad, Moldova and the Vatican. The talks will focus on challenges posed by the war, he added. Hungary’s pro-peace position is met with great respect all over the world, Szijjártó said. Commenting on business negotiations held on Wednesday, he said that US companies were the second largest group of investors in Hungary, with 1,700 companies employing 105,000 people. “They have very positive feedback on the economic environment and do not allow being misled by various political attacks,” he added.

“Instead of getting information from the US or German press, they make

decisions based on their everyday experiences and they clearly see that the investment environment in Hungary with the lowest taxes in Europe, highly-skilled workforce and excellent infrastructure represents the best investment opportunity in Europe,” he said. Commenting on a meeting on Sudan, he expressed regret over disruptions in food supplies and added that grain exports from Ukraine should be started as soon as possible. He said that last year, the Hungarian government had donated 3.5 million euros from taxpayers’ money to help the delivery of 10,000 tonnes of Ukrainian grain to Sudan but “not even a single gram reached its destination”. “Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the approval of the Ukrainian authorities,” Szijjártó added.

MAGYAR NEMZET: OTP BANK FILES REPORT LINKED TO TAX AUTHORITY PROBE OF KARÁCSONY’S CAMPAIGN FINANCING

OTP Bank has filed a report in connection with an ongoing tax authority (NAV) investigation into the financing of Gergely Karácsony’s opposition 99 Movement, the daily Magyar Nemzet said on Wednesday. According to an official report on foreign influence in last year’s elections prepared for parliament’s national security committee, an associate of Karácsony, who is the mayor of Budapest, Gábor Perjés, was identified

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as the sole contributor to the bank account of the 99 Movement, and more than four-fifths of the money -- 526 million forints (EUR 1.7m) deposited into the account -- was in euro and pound banknotes. The paper said that in connection with press reports concerning donation boxes and how that information squared with the records submitted by Perjés, OTP Bank had launched an internal audit and found that most donations were from Hungarians living abroad, and the bank had been presented with 2,000-3,000 banknotes at a time, the majority in new euro notes -- mostly 50 and 100 euro denominations -- in many cases consecutively numbered and stuck together as if fresh off the printing press. Also, payments corresponded to the amount of transfers made immediately after the payment to one of the movement's key partners, the paper said, referring to the DatAdat group. According to the paper, OTP's report concluded that contents of the records sent to the bank by the 99 Movement for the purpose of source verification were at odds with the facts on the ground, and the bank had been deceived as to the true source of the money.

The Budapest chapter of ruling Fidesz reacted by saying that it wanted answers in connection with the 99 Movement. In a Facebook post, the party noted that it had asked Karácsony months ago to reveal the source of the 500 million forints' worth of foreign currency that had been deposited into the movement's bank

account. It insisted that the mayor's explanation regarding the donation collection boxes was "a lie", noting the findings of OTP's internal audit. "All we're asking Gergely Karácsony is who they got the money from," Fidesz said. "If the mayor doesn't know, he should ask his fellow party member, Gábor Perjés ... who he got the fresh, crisp banknotes from. Budapest's residents deserve to know the truth!"

SOCIALISTS URGE BROAD RAIL UPGRADES OVER STATE'S AIRPORT PURCHASE

The money the government plans to spend on the takeover of Liszt Ferenc International Airport could instead be invested in comprehensive upgrades to Hungary's rail network, the opposition Socialist Party said on Wednesday. The 1,536 billion forints (EUR 4bn) the government reportedly wants to spend on Liszt Ferenc International operator Budapest Airport could be spent on the public procurement of 115 electric locomotives, motor trains and doubling the train fleet, László Varga, the party's deputy leader, told an online press conference. Neither do budget and air transport experts think the government's purchase would be justified, he said. The government "has recently spent 700 billion forints on the takeover of a mobile service provider, so the funds are there, but the cabinet isn't spending them in the right places", Varga said, referring to

Antenna Hungaria and state-owned Corvinus's acquisition of Vodafone Hungary. Hungary's rail network "is in crisis, lacks funding, and there are not enough trains or staff", he said. Half of the money to be allocated towards the takeover of the airport would be enough to replace the entire rolling stock fleet, while the other half could be enough for comprehensive network maintenance, he said. Varga called on the government to reconsider its plans and embark on a broad upgrade of the country's rail network.

MINISTER: HUNGARY TAKING OVER ROTATING PRESIDENCY OF CEEPUS EDUCATION SCHEME

Hungary has formally taken over the rotating presidency of the Central European exchange programme for university studies (CEEPUS) from Poland, János Csák, the minister for culture and innovation, said in Warsaw on Wednesday, following a meeting of representatives of the scheme's member states. Speaking at a press conference, Csák noted that the CEEPUS programme had been launched in Budapest in 1993 with the aim to promote mutual knowledge sharing among university students, teachers and other fellows in central and eastern European and Western Balkan countries.

The scheme has been highly successful with the number of participants increasing steadily over the past years and spending several

months in host countries, he said. The scheme will be expanded to have new members such as Ukraine offering participation of Ukrainian students in its programmes, the minister added. Representatives of the member states signed at the meeting an international agreement on the new CEEPUS programme for 2025.

ONE POLICE OFFICER DIES IN BLAST AT FAMILY HOME IN ESZTERGOM, N HUNGARY

According to information by public news channel M1, a police officer died and 6-7 people were injured in a blast which occurred during a police operation at a family home on the outskirts of Esztergom, in northern Hungary, on Wednesday. The police officer died when according to the channel's information a person threatened "to explode" an unidentified object during the operation, the channel's evening news broadcast reported. The public prosecutor's office has launched an investigation on alleged violence against an official representing an authority, the programme said.

MORE THAN 11,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY

Fully 6,414 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Tuesday, while 5,263 came

to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 80 people, ORFK said on Wednesday.

OFFICIAL: 15 HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITIES AMONG EUROPE'S TOP

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) international ranking higher education institutions of 46 European countries includes 15 Hungarian universities among the top 690, a government official noted on Wednesday. Among the top 300 in the QS-Times Higher Education rankings are Eötvös Loránd University of Science (ELTE), in 208th place, the Budapest University of Technology (BME), in 238th, the University of Szeged in 242nd place, while the University of Debrecen is ranked 258th, Balázs Hankó, the state secretary for higher education at the of culture and innovation ministry, said in a video uploaded to Facebook. The University of Pécs, the István Széchenyi University in Győr and Budapest's Corvinus University were included in the top 400. Hanko said the mounting competitiveness of Hungarian universities internationally was key to delivering on Hungary's potential, and he attributed this to the government's new higher education model. "The new funding model not only bolsters universities' autonomy but also ensures ... funding incentives, enhancing financial the predictability

and flexibility that are so important for competitiveness," he added. Hungarian universities, he said, were proving more and more successful internationally: four years ago there were 7, two years ago 9, and last year 11 Hungarian universities in the top five percent in the world rankings.

HUNGARY, MOLDOVA ARCHIVES SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security Services (ABTL) and the National Archives Agency of the Republic of Moldova (ANA) signed a cooperation agreement on document exchange in Budapest on Wednesday. ABTL director Gergő Bendegúz Cseh said after the signing event that the Hungarian agency would make available documents with content on Russia to ANA under the agreement. In exchange, ABTL will receive copies of documents concerning Hungarian citizens and victims with Hungarian nationality, he added. Hungarian State Security document files are incomplete but archives in many neighbouring countries and Russia store many documents on Hungarian citizens or Hungarians beyond the borders, he said. Previously, agreements were signed with archives in Romania, Ukraine, and Russia. Preliminary research showed that many documents are available in the Moldovan archives about thousands

of Hungarians who were deported or taken prisoners of war in 1944-45.

FIRST HUNGARIAN-MOROCCAN CO-PRODUCTION WRAPPED UP

The film shoot of *Scirocco* directed by Yassine Marco Marroccu and produced by Andrea Taschler, made with the support of the Hungarian Film Institute (NFI), has wrapped up in the Marrakesh area, and the film crew recently returned home from the earthquake-stricken location, NFI said in a statement on Wednesday. Taschler noted that filming of the scene in which the main characters arrive in the ruined city after the great earthquake in Agadir in 1960 coincided with the recent earthquake and the subsequent rescue operations. She said the earthquake provided a real historical backdrop. "We shot the scene on location in Casablanca, in a destroyed part of the city ... and then that night we experienced the real earthquake, the biggest ever in Morocco," she said, noting that rescue operations were ongoing. Taschler described the situation as "tragic". "Our crew sympathises with the families of the victims," she added. Marroccu features a variety of cultures

in his films, and his latest is a mixture of European and African history and their social landscape. *Scirocco* is the odyssey of a man seeking the treasure of a stranded ship and crosses the Sahara in the early 1960s and shows the complex relationship between Europe and Africa through a personal story spanning the twentieth century. Filming began last May in locations in Morocco -- the Sahara, Casablanca and the city of Tarfaya -- and Hungary. Post production is to begin shortly and the film goes on general release next year.

THE NETHERLANDS, US SCI-FI WRITER SCALZI GUESTS OF HONOUR AT BUDAPEST INTL' BOOK FESTIVAL

The Netherlands and US sci-fi writer John Scalzi will be the guests of honour at this year's International Book Festival which will also feature a roundtable of EU Literature Prize laureates between Sept 28 and Oct 1, the organisers said on Wednesday. The Netherlands will offer at its national stand presentations by top contemporary authors such as writer-journalist Arnon Grunberg, essayist-sociologist Abram de Swaan, writer, theatre and opera director Martin Michael Driessen and Annamarie Bon, the widely popular author of children

and youth books, the Dutch embassy's press and cultural attaché told a press conference. The programme has been organised for two years in cooperation with the Budapest ELTE University of humanities and the department of Netherlandic studies at the Károli Gáspár Reformed University, and includes presentations on Dutch-Hungarian ties and panel discussions with Hungarian translators and experts of Dutch works, he said.

Multi-award winning author John Scalzi, the former president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, will be hosted at a podium discussion on September 30 in the afternoon, said Krisztián Kovács, communications director of the Hungarian publishing house of Scalzi's works. "The American star author's invitation as a guest of honour to this year's festival is an excellent opportunity for building bridges between classic fiction and high-standard popular literature," he said. Scalzi will receive the Grand Award of Budapest from the city's mayor on the opening day, Katalin Gál, the president of the association of Hungarian publishers and book sellers (MKKE), said. The festival will feature 40 international authors and 180 programmes with some 200 book-signing events, she said.

