

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Refurbished Hagymatikum spa designed by renowned architect Imre Makovecz inaugurated in Makó (S)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parl

National Election Cttee meets

Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Middle East

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: 'ENDING RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR IN HUNGARY'S FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST'

Ending the Russia-Ukraine war as soon as possible and starting peace talks is in Hungary's fundamental interest because continuing the war "brings the nightmare of a third world war closer" each day, the foreign minister told public radio.

Many of Europe's political leaders are under the influence of "a war psychosis", Péter Szijjártó said in an interview. "They speak and think as if they were personally at war..., and are unable to make reasonable decisions," he said, adding that this led to statements about the possible option of sending [European] ground forces to the war. NATO is the world's strongest defence alliance, he said, adding that it would be "illogical" from Russia to attack any of its members since under its charter, NATO would need to respond as an alliance. NATO was set up as an alliance tasked with defence and since it is not under attack, it does not need to respond, Szijjártó said. Speaking about Europe's defence industry, the foreign minister stated Hungary's support to its development in the interest of boosting Europe's industrial growth and to enable "Europe to defend itself without involving the United States". He said that a proposal by the European Council's president "to shift to a war economy" was "posing an exceptional risk in itself".

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ORBÁN EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES OVER MOSCOW ATTACK

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has expressed his condolences to Russian President Vladimir Putin and all of Russia's citizens "over the brutal terrorist attack at Moscow's Crocus City Hall", his press chief told MTI on Saturday. "We have all been shocked by the images of the dead, the wounded, and the destruction," Orbán said in a letter to Putin. The Hungarian government is committed to supporting the fight against terrorism, Orbán said, and pledged Hungary's continued support to stepping up international anti-terrorism operations.

SZIJJÁRTÓ CONTACTS LAVROV, EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES OVER MOSCOW ATTACK

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó phoned Sergei Lavrov, his Russian counterpart, on Saturday to express his "deepest condolences" over the terrorist attack on a concert hall that killed at least one hundred people on the outskirts of Moscow during the previous night. He told Lavrov that Hungary resolutely condemns the attack in which innocent people had been killed at random, according to a foreign ministry statement. Hungary stands with those mourning their loss, Szijjártó told Lavrov. "Those are in our prayers and we wish a speedy

and full recovery to those who have been injured in the terrorist attack," he said. Lavrov told Szijjártó that Russian authorities would do everything they can to round up those responsible for the terrorist attack. He said that in a new development the Islamic State terrorist organisation had claimed responsibility for the attack and 11 of the suspected perpetrators had been detained. Szijjártó told his Russian colleague that Hungary condemns "in the strongest possible terms" every form of terrorism and will continue to participate in international anti-terrorism cooperations. He said that the ministry had not received information about any Hungarian victims or casualties.

PRESIDENT SULYOK CALLS FOR DEEPENING DIALOGUE WITH POLAND

Hungarian President Tamás Sulyok underscored the importance of maintaining and deepening dialogue between Hungary and Poland, after meeting his Polish counterpart in Stary Sącz, in southern Poland, on Friday. Polish-Hungarian friendship goes back over a millennium and is deeply rooted in Hungarian society, Sulyok, who is on a working visit to Poland on the occasion of the Day of Hungarian-Polish Friendship, told a joint press conference with Andrzej Duda. "We in central and eastern Europe share a common cause and destiny, and this is what has united the two countries since the time of King of Poland,"

he said. Sulyok said his talks with Duda had touched on the Three Seas Initiative, the importance of military development, minorities and bilateral trade relations. He said Hungarians and Poles had always known when it was important to fight for freedom, and history had always shown that the two countries could only be free, equal and fast-growing countries in Europe when they were united.

Hungary and Poland, he said, also had several shared interests when it came to foreign policy. Hungary is proud that its defence spending reaches 2% of GDP, he said, adding that the upgrade of the military was a priority for Hungary as well as for Poland. The two nations are also bound together by their national minority communities in each other's countries, Sulyok said. There is a Polish minority in Kaposvár, in southern Hungary, he noted, and extended an invitation to Duda to mark the Day of Hungarian-Polish Friendship in Kaposvár next year. Sulyok said they were both open to dialogue and cooperation, which was important for finding common ground. He said Poland was Hungary's third biggest trading partner in 2023, and highlighted the close relations between the two countries' legislative assemblies.

Meanwhile, Sulyok said both he and Duda considered the Three Seas Initiative and the Bucharest Nine (B9) group important. He stressed the importance of "every project that supports European cohesion and economic growth". Polish President Andrzej Duda said Poland and Hungary

were leaders in NATO in terms of defence spending. Duda noted that Poland was spending over 4% of its GDP on defence. "In this respect, we are leaders in terms of fulfilling the requirements of NATO," the Polish president said. Citing the "changing global and European security situation", Duda reiterated a proposal he made earlier that NATO members should raise their defence spending to 3% of GDP.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY GOVT, AUSTRIAN RIGHT FIGHTING TOGETHER FOR 'REAL EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY'

Hungary's government and the Austrian right are fighting together for "real democracy" in Europe, so that those who stand up for their national interests and have a different position to the mainstream are not stigmatised, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said in Budapest on Friday. The cooperation between Hungary's government and the Austrian right will "contribute to our ability to preserve our sovereignty and bring to a halt the European Union's federalisation efforts", he told a joint press conference with Petra Steger, a spokesperson of Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ), according to a ministry statement. "We both want to see a successful Europe, but we are certain that Europe can only be successful if it is made up of strong nations," Szijjártó said.

In addition, he called security an important basis for success, which,

he said, made it necessary to finally stop illegal migration, to protect the external borders, and to realise that the war raging in Ukraine had no solution on the battlefield. "Therefore, the Austrian right and the Hungarian government will take a joint stand to ensure that there is a ceasefire and negotiations in Ukraine as soon as possible," he said.

Szijjártó then noted that this year will be special for both countries as Hungary will take over the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU in July and elections will be held in Austria. "We are both interested in stopping this European decline, and we both believe that the only way to do that would be to achieve a massive right-wing shift in the European parliamentary elections," he said. The minister added that they also had the same view on the EU sanctions against Russia, through which, he said, Europe had "shot its economy in the foot, the knee, and then the lungs", adding that a review of the punitive measures would be necessary. "We are grateful that we can always count on Austria's Freedom Party in difficult moments," Szijjártó said. "And we continue to be ready to cooperate with the Austrian right in order to create a successful and democratic Europe."

SZIJJÁRTÓ WELCOMES HUNGARIAN PARTY'S RESULT IN SLOVAKIA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó has welcomed that Krisztián Forró,

nominated by Slovakia's Hungarian Alliance party, has secured the fourth place in the first round of Slovakia's presidential election this weekend. The Slovakian Hungarian community is "strong and has demonstrated political unity," he added, and congratulated Forró on his result. "Hungary always respects the decision of voters in other countries, while its foreign policy is based on mutual respect; the country never interferes with the internal affairs of other countries and expects others to do the same," he added. "We wish to see more and more politicians internationally that speak the language of peace ... we will always support such politicians," Szijjártó said.

ORBÁN ATTENDS INAUGURATION OF RENEWED MAKOVECZ SPA IN SE HUNGARY

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán attended the inauguration of the refurbished Hagymatikum spa, designed by renowned architect Imre Makovecz (1935-2011), in Makó, in south-eastern Hungary, on Sunday. In his address the prime minister said the renewed and enlarged spa "is the most beautiful thermal bath in Hungary and probably in the whole world", adding that by building a new wing to the complex "we have somewhat reduced the debt we owe to Makovecz". Referring to the works of the late architect, Orbán said "we have not been taught that he designed those buildings; we simply recognise them just by looking at them

... they are not examples for a style: they represent a distinct style themselves". Orbán likened the significance of Makovecz to that of Antoni Gaudí, and said "what Barcelona was for Gaudí, that was Makó for Makovecz". Concerning contested plans to implement projects left in the design phase by the architect when he died, Orbán said "Makovecz is still alive, as evidenced today by the completion of this building he had designed, his legacy".

DEFMIN: 'THIS YEAR IS ABOUT THE AIR FORCE'

Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky, the defence minister, said on Friday that 2024 would be all about the Hungarian air force. Addressing an international conference focusing on Europe's security and defence in Fehérvárcsurgó, south of Budapest, Szalay-Bobrovniczky said that with the expansion of the army's fleet of 14 Gripen fighter jets with another four, Hungarians would become "masters" of the craft, given their associated training and maintenance capabilities. In addition, Hungary will take delivery of two transport aircraft supplied by Brazil, as well as training and reconnaissance planes manufactured in Czechia. The purchase of loitering, kamikaze and reconnaissance drones is also on the agenda, he said. "Besides purchases that meet the needs of the Hungarian armed forces, we are also thinking in terms of placing emphasis on developing our defence industry with a view to preparing it for the

export markets," the minister said, noting the manufacturing of Lynx armoured infantry fighting vehicles in Zalaegerszeg and the construction of an ammunition plant in Várpalota. He highlighted "cultural change" in the Hungarian armed forces, the essence of which was to have professional units capable of operating cutting-edge equipment at bases round the country. Szalay-Bobrovniczky said the two main focus areas of Hungary's upcoming EU presidency in the second half of this year will be strengthening the bloc's own defence capabilities and enhancing its defence industry capacities.

NAVRACSICS: HUNGARY, SLOVENIA COOPERATING IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hungary and Slovenia are cooperating in regional development and in supporting ethnic minorities, Tibor Navracsics, the minister of public administration and regional development, said after talks with Slovenia's minister for cohesion and regional development Aleksander Jevsek in Sümeg, in western Hungary, on Friday, adding that the goal was to preserve identities, enrich cultural life and strengthen businesses. Navracsics told a joint press conference that his talks with his Slovenian counterpart had focused on the results of bilateral programmes, cooperation in regional development and providing support for ethnic minorities. The sides

discussed programmes supporting investments affecting the Hungarian community in Slovenia and ethnic Slovenes in Hungary. The minister said they wanted to continue the programmes, financed partly from European Union funds and partly by the two governments. Navracsics expressed his appreciation of Slovenia's support for ethnic communities and offered his government's support for development opportunities for the Slovene community in Hungary. Jevsek said the most important goal was to keep the population and especially young people in the border region, and he called job creation and the development of tourism indispensable for this purpose. He said Slovenia and Hungary were each spending one million euros on implementing the projects. Jevsek pointed to the importance of bilateral cooperation in tourism, economy and culture.

SOCIALIST CONGRESS DESIGNATES TÜTTŐ EP LIST LEADER

A congress of the opposition Socialists on Saturday designated Budapest deputy mayor Kata Tüttö to head the party's list for the upcoming European parliamentary election. "Ruling Fidesz can be defeated but none of the opposition parties are able to achieve that goal alone," Tüttö told the campaign opening party congress in Budapest. Party co-chairs Ágnes Kunhalmi and Imre Komjáthi underlined the

importance for opposition parties to run together as a united left-wing bloc in the upcoming election. "In a 'smart' coalition, the opposition parties could have an influence on a European level and could prevent the Orbán camp's forging ahead," Kunhalmi said. In her closing address, Tüttö said her campaign programme focuses on promoting women's rights, strengthening Europe's social democrats, accessing all EU funds Hungary is entitled to and "making friends in the EU".

COMPOSER EÖTVÖS DIES AGED 80

Celebrated Hungarian composer and conductor Péter Eötvös has died, his family told MTI. Eötvös, an eminent personality of the Hungarian and international contemporary music scene, died on Sunday after a long illness, at the age of 80. Born in 1944 in Transylvania's Odorheiu Secuiesc (Székelyudvarhely),

Eötvös was admitted at the age of 14 to the Budapest Liszt Music Academy's class for outstanding talents by Zoltán Kodály. He later studied conducting on a scholarship in Cologne. After 1967 he worked abroad, on assignments in Cologne, Paris and London and was conductor over the past several decades of the Berlin, Munich, London and Vienna symphonic orchestras. He composed several operas, madrigals and works for orchestra and also wrote scores for theatre and cinema. His last opera, Valuska, written for Hungarian scores, had its premiere in Budapest on December 2 last year. Eötvös received the Hungarian state's highest award, the Kossuth Grand Prize, for his lifetime achievement of "epochal significance" in 2024.

FOUR DIE AT RACING EVENT IN NW HUNGARY

Four people died and another eight were injured when a car veered off

the road and drove among spectators during the Esztergom-Nyerges Rally on Sunday. The accident occurred between the villages of Lábatlan and Bajót in north-western Hungary. The rally was immediately called off and the police have launched an investigation.

SCHEDL TO INVEST HUF 40 BN IN WHEEL ASSEMBLY CAPACITY IN HUNGARY

German automotive industry supplier Schiedl will invest 40 billion forints (EUR 101m) in wheel assembly capacity in the Hungarian cities of Debrecen and Kecskemét, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, announced on Friday. Schiedl will supply the local manufacturing bases of BMW and Mercedes-Benz from 2025, Szijjártó said. The state is supporting the investment, which will create 160 jobs, with 2 billion forints, he added.