

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Péter Komlós

New lab at Eger's vocational training centre opens

UPCOMING EVENTS

Election campaign events

Events related to the wars in the Middle East, Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: MILITARY DRAFT PLAN 'UNACCEPTABLE'

"Crazy proposals" to introduce the draft in Europe "are unacceptable", the foreign minister said after a meeting of his EU counterparts in Brussels.

"The Hungarian government will in no way allow central European youths, including Hungarians, to be sent to the war in Ukraine," Peter Szijjártó told a press conference. "The countdown" to the European parliamentary elections "is unfortunately bringing about an increase in war sentiment", with many proposing more money and arms for Ukraine, "which can only result in further destruction and more deaths", he said. Referring to proposals aimed at allowing Ukraine to use Western arms against targets in Russia, Szijjártó said: "They talk positively about an initiative for NATO countries to shoot down Russian missiles above Ukraine and, unfortunately, my fellow foreign ministers have not distanced themselves from threats of nuclear war," he said, adding that such remarks and "crazy proposals" could have "dangerous and tragic consequences". "We don't want to see Hungarians at the frontline of the Ukraine-Russia war. This isn't our war and we have nothing to do with it," Szijjártó said, adding: "Hands off our central European and Hungarians young people."

SZIJJÁRTÓ: 14TH SANCTIONS PACKAGE AGAINST HUNGARY'S INTERESTS

Regarding the draft of the 14th sanctions package against Russia, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said that it was against Hungary's economic interests in its current form and would also endanger the security of Hungary's energy supply. After a meeting of his EU counterparts in Brussels, he said the government was unwilling to vote for it, adding that such measures would swipe a serious blow to Hungary's agriculture and food industry and could compromise "the way Hungary pays for" its electricity, slow down the Paks upgrade project and violate Hungary's sovereignty concerning the issuance of certain export permits. He insisted that the previous 13 sanctions packages had done "a lot more harm to Europe than to Russia". On another subject, Szijjártó said Hungary was sticking to its earlier position and would not agree to free up a further 6.5 billion euros from the European Peace Facility for arms deliveries to Ukraine. He said the foreign ministers of Germany, Lithuania, Ireland, Poland and other countries had "ganged up on him" at the meeting, but "this hasn't shaken our position". "No matter how loud Europe's pro-war politicians shout ... we won't give in to pro-war pressure," he said. "We insist that peace must be achieved and the senseless killing of people stopped; any escalation of the war must be prevented," he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: GREATER EFFORTS NEEDED TO FREE THE GAZA HOSTAGES

Intensified efforts are needed to free the remaining hostages held by Hamas, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said in Brussels, adding that it was also vitally important to guarantee the security of Red Sea shipping routes.

"I thanked the Arab states for their mediating activity [aimed at] freeing the hostages," Szijjártó told a press conference after a meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council attended by representatives of Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council. "Since another person with Hungarian citizenship is among the hostages, I asked them to continue their efforts." Meanwhile, he said the compromised Red Sea trading route was damaging European companies and population. "That's why -- if we're seeking points of agreement between Arab and EU countries -- the security of the Red Sea transport route should be such a common point." Regarding a possible two-state solution and recognition of the Palestinian state, he said no unified position existed within the EU. Further, there was no common standpoint on an assessment of the entire conflict or what the bloc's relationship with Israel should be in the future, he added.

Regarding Georgia's recent legislation on requiring organisations that receive funding from abroad to be registered, Szijjártó said several ministers at the meeting had "reprimanded" the country and were in favour of obstructing Georgia's path to EU integration, while he had been alone in "defending the Georgians". He added that Hungary would strongly support its EU accession during its EU presidency, "and hopefully the process will not be blocked by the other member states".

AZBEJ: HUNGARY TO MAKE DONATION TO HELP SYRIAN REGION

As a "pro-peace and anti-migration" country, Hungary is making a "significant donation" for humanitarian and development purposes in connection with the war in Syria, Tristan Azbej, the state secretary in charge of aid to Christian communities, told a conference on the future of Syria and its region in Brussels on Monday. Ahead of the conference, Azbej told MTI that the Hungarian donation was aimed at encouraging "the international community to contribute to building peace and stability in the region and to do everything to help Syrian refugees and migrants return to their homeland."

Through its donation, the Hungarian government seeks to present the Hungary Helps programme as an

example to Western donor countries, he added.

Azbej said the donation will include health equipment for Egypt to help with services delivered to Syrian refugees as well as a contribution to “religious support programmes” in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Hungary has donated some 25 million euros to help Syrian refugees through their church organisations and Christian humanitarian programmes since the scheme started seven years ago, he said, adding that Hungary has aided countries in accommodating refugees and migrants.

People who earlier fled Syria are able to return now that the safety level has improved, Azbej said. Referring to Lebanon, which has accommodated nearly 2 million Syrians, he said the improvement in security was especially important since the country had faced a crisis “that could lead to the country falling apart and an armed conflict, while also threatening the exodus of the Lebanese Christian community,” he added. Meanwhile, Azbej said the international community allow Israel every room for manoeuvre to curb terrorism and, at the same time, “the international community must also do everything to prevent the conflict in Gaza from escalating into a regional conflict between states, which would re-ignite the Syrian war,” he said. Azbej said Hungarian aid would help countries involved to retain their population. “Local residents prefer staying to migration,” he said, adding

that the upcoming Hungarian EU presidency would also promote “the principle of delivering aid to where there’s a need rather than importing the problem.”

LAWYERS’ CHAMBER ‘SHOCKED’ BY ACCUSATIONS LEVELLED AT PRESIDENT

The Hungarian Lawyers’ Chamber has said it was “shocked” that a political party had called President Tamás Sulyok a “common criminal” and “servant of the land mafia” over his previous work as a lawyer. In a statement on Monday, the chamber said it was “deeply concerning” that “in the heat of the political battles” political players were making accusations that “seriously harm public trust in not just the office of the president but also the legal profession”. The chamber said it was convinced that Sulyok’s work as a lawyer had been held in “high public esteem”. It added that the president had always stood up for lawyers’ and the chamber’s independence in his academic work and during his time as a Constitutional Court judge, which he considered fundamental pillars of the rule of law and public trust. It was this public trust, they said, that had been “attacked with the aforementioned harsh statements”. They added that the Lawyers’ Chamber always took the necessary action against lawyers who violated the laws or ethics rules pertaining to them, and would also

take action against the “unworthy attacks” made against lawyers in the interest of protecting public trust in the profession.

FINMIN: FURTHER ROOM FOR NOURISHING HUNGARIAN-SWISS ECONOMIC TIES

Swiss businesses are benefitting from Hungary’s competitive taxes and escalating growth, while Hungarian companies have a growing presence in Switzerland, Mihály Varga, the finance minister, said after meeting counterpart Karin Keller-Sutter. Switzerland is the 9th largest investor in Hungary, the finance ministry said in a statement on Monday, further noting that Swiss companies employ 30,000 people. Bilateral trade turnover overtook the two-billion-euro mark in 2023, and the more than 800 Swiss companies have remained committed to Hungary during the war, it said, adding that like Hungary, Switzerland also stood for peace. An agreement on double tax avoidance is expected to be passed by the Swiss parliament in June and would further boost economic ties, Varga said. Regarding Hungary’s EU presidency, Varga said much emphasis will be placed on the EU’s competitiveness and demographic challenges, the green transition and sustainable debt, in preparation for the bloc’s 2025 budget. Varga said Switzerland’s Hungarian diaspora was a notable link between the two countries.

NAGY: EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE MUST BE FOCUSED ON FARMERS

Competitiveness, crisis management, sustainability and a knowledge-based economy will be on the agenda of the six-month Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union starting in July in order to make European agriculture focused on farmers, the minister of agriculture said on Monday. István Nagy told the press after a council meeting of EU agriculture ministers that there was “a huge amount at stake” in the European Parliament elections on June 9 because Brussels must be forced to make a major change in its direction and to allow a focus on farmers to find its way and role also in the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). “We expect the election to make Europe return to a ground of normality,” he said. “The interests of farmers must be protected because we protect the interests of European citizens through them, by guaranteeing everyday food security,” he added.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: FINAL DECISION MADE ON HUNGARIAN ASTRONAUT, BACKUP FOR ISS MISSION

In line with the final decision of an expert committee, Tibor Kapu has been selected as the Hungarian astronaut to be sent to space and his backup will be Gyula Cserényi, the foreign minister said on Monday. The ministry cited Péter Szijjártó as saying before setting off for a European Union foreign ministers’ meeting in Brussels that Kapu and Cserényi will undergo the last phase of training. Kapu is a 32-year-old mechanical engineer with a background in battery development in the automotive industry, and Cserényi is a 35-year-old electrical engineer, he added. The two men were among four candidates in the Hungarian to Orbit (HUNOR) programme. Hungary will send an astronaut to the International Space Station, with the cooperation of US-based Axiom Space, for a 30-day research mission at the end of 2024 or early in 2025.

NBH GOVERNOR ADDRESSES TSINGHUA PBCSF GLOBAL FINANCE FORUM

György Matolcsy, the governor of the National Bank of Hungary (NBH), took part in the 2024 Tsinghua PBCSF Global Finance Forum, the central bank said on Monday. Matolcsy joined a panel discussion on mitigating economic fragmentation at the forum which marked the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Bretton Woods system. He underlined the importance of learning from the patterns of economic and financial cycles and using those lessons to redesign the global monetary system with a view to ensuring global financial stability. He stressed that overlapping structural changes related to the green and digital transitions required new approaches. Matolcsy was named an honorary professor by the rector of Fudan University during his visit to China.