

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tamás Vasvári

The helmet of McLaren Formula 1 racing driver Lando Norris, decorated with motifs of the Herend porcelain manufacturer, which he will wear at this weekend's Hungarian race

UPCOMING EVENTS

European Political Community summit in UK

EP holds plenary session

Events related to Hungary's EU presidency

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ HOLDS TALKS WITH RUSSIA'S LAVROV IN NEW YORK

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó discussed the war in Ukraine and bilateral relations with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in New York on Tuesday.

Szijjártó told reporters after the meeting that Hungary wanted peace because it had been living in the shadow of the war for two and a half years now and was directly impacted by the conflict's negative effects. Szijjártó said the West's strategy had "failed", arguing that "regardless of the weapons deliveries, regardless of the sanctions", the situation on the battlefield had not gone the way the Europeans and the Americans had hoped. "So if this strategy has failed then we need a new strategy," he said. "With no solution on the battlefield, the solution must come from the negotiating table." This, he said, required diplomatic channels, without which "it will be very, very complicated to reach any kind of solution." Szijjártó said he and Lavrov had also touched on bilateral issues, including the upgrade of Hungary's Paks nuclear power plant. Turning to the issue of oil and gas supply, Szijjártó said gas deliveries were running smoothly, but Lukoil was currently not delivering oil to Hungary via Ukraine, and a legal solution was being sought in an effort to restart deliveries.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: PAKS NUCLEAR PLANT UPGRADE EN ROUTE TO COMPLETE NEW BLOCKS BY EARLY 2030S

The upgrade of the Paks nuclear plant is progressing apace, with the number of workers there at 900 and growing, the manufacturing of equipment with long production times under way, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said in Istanbul on Wednesday, adding that the construction was en route to conclude the two new blocks by the start of the next decade.

Péter Szijjártó said ahead of a meeting with Alexey Likhachev, the head of general contractor Rosatom, that they would discuss the state of the works and the most important tasks of the period ahead, according to a statement from the foreign ministry. Szijjártó said that the group of Russian, western European, American and Hungarian companies working on the project raised hope that "at some point, everyone will return to common sense, once we're over the political and ideological issues and the war psychosis."

Currently, soil stabilisation is under way, a crucial step ahead of pouring concrete, which is expected to start "in a few months", he said. Regarding the equipment with extremely long manufacturing times, the melt trap has been completed and is currently making its way up the Danube from Romania, he said. The 750-tonne equipment is expected

to arrive within 2 weeks, he said. The government has secured the investment by achieving its exemption from European Union sanctions, he said: "the smooth flow of construction, engineering and financial completion" will flow without obstruction. Once operational, the Paks plant will supply some 70% of the country's electricity demand, increasing its progressiveness, he said. It is also key to preserve the utility price caps, he said. Also, it will cut annual gas consumption by 3 billion cubic meters, and carbon dioxide emissions by 17 million tonnes, the minister added.

ORBÁN TO ATTEND EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY MEETING IN UK

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will attend the fourth European Political Community (EPC) summit at Blenheim Palace near Oxford on Thursday, the prime minister's press chief has said. At the summit, the leaders of 47 European countries are set to discuss support for Ukraine, along with shared challenges such as energy, connectivity, security, democracy and migration, Bertalan Havasi told MTI on Wednesday. Established in 2022 at the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, the EPC is an intergovernmental forum for political and strategic debates on Europe's future.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: 'CIVILISED EAST-WEST COOPERATION' ESSENTIAL TO MEETING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Civilised East-West cooperation is essential to achieving the UN's sustainable development and environmental protection goals, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in New York. UN climate protection goals set a few years ago will affect the future of the entire planet, the ministry cited Szijjártó telling a high-level political forum on sustainable development at the United Nations in New York on Tuesday. "Last year was the warmest year ever, and the past decade was the warmest ever decade... so it clearly shows that environmental protection must be an important issue in the long term," he said. "If the major countries in world politics do not talk to each other, if they cut the diplomatic channels, if they are unable to maintain civilised cooperation, then we cannot achieve results in matters that are important for the future of the entire planet," he added. Szijjártó said that achieving the UN sustainable development goals and protecting the environment would be impossible globally if the major states continued to refuse to talk to each other. "Without a civilised East-West cooperation, it is impossible to achieve results in important matters affecting the future of the planet. In a cold war atmosphere it will be impossible to fulfil the environmental protection and sustainable development goals," he said.

He added that Hungary showed an encouraging example, citing the expansion project of the Paks nuclear power station, which, he said, proved that despite all ideological attacks, nuclear energy could be used to produce a large volume of electricity in a reliable and sustainable way. He noted that the general contractor for the project is Russian, but American, German and French subcontractors are also involved. Such cooperation "shows common sense prevailing over political prejudice and ideological motivations", he added.

"There is still a chance for international cooperation based on common sense, even among those that for the time being refuse to even talk to each other in politics," he said.

FIDESZ MEP: EP REJECTS PFE INITIATIVE TO CONDEMN POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The Patriots for Europe group initiated a debate in the European Parliament on Wednesday, aiming to condemn political violence in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump, but the EP voted down the proposal, Fidesz MEP Kinga Gál said in Strasbourg on Wednesday. Gál, who also serves as the vice-president of PFE, slammed the EP for "not doing anything against political violence which is also present in Europe", pointing to the assassination attempt on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and the case of Ilaria Salis, an Italian activist

who was detained in Hungary on assault charges until she was elected MEP, "who, despite almost killing an innocent man, is now sitting in the EP lecturing us how we should behave."

Regarding the EP vote on Vice-Presidents on Tuesday, Gál said in a speech ahead of the agenda that it was "disrespectful of the 18 million voters behind PFE, and of the fundamental rules of democracy and the rule of law" that the EP had voted against both PFE candidates. "It is unacceptable that the positions the Patriots are entitled to basically went to a communist extremist," she said, adding that legal action was "not off the table". "We must fight for what we're entitled to under EP regulations." According to parliamentary minutes, the initiative was rejected with 339 votes against, 119 in favour and 15 abstentions.

DEUTSCH: EP IGNORING WILL OF 'MILLIONS OF EU VOTERS'

The left-wing majority bloc in the European Parliament "has ignored the will of millions of EU voters" by overlooking the candidacy of the Patriots for Europe EP group for a post overseeing administrative and financial matters that directly affect MEPs, known as a Questor, the head of the Fidesz delegation in the EP said on Wednesday. Tamás Deutsch told a joint press conference held in Strasbourg with Fidesz-Christian Democrat MEP Pál Szekeres, the Patriots for Europe nominee, that the left-wing bloc "feels it has the power to overrule the

decision of European voters and abuse its mandates from voters, using its EP position to rewrite the will of European voters expressed at the EP election".

Today's vote on Questors and yesterday's vote on vice-presidents in which neither of the two candidates of the Patriots for Europe group received enough supporting votes "will only serve to boost the combative spirit of the group and the Fidesz-Christian Democrats delegation", he said. He said the Patriots for Europe is the third largest group in the EP, so its delegates should have been given the positions.

EU AMBASSADORS APPROVE OF 2025 BUDGET DRAFT

Ambassadors of members of the European Union on Wednesday agreed on the EU Council's position on the community's 2025 budget based on total commitments of 191.53 billion euros and payments of 146.21 billion euros, the EU's Hungarian presidency said. The statement quoted Péter Banai, state secretary at the Hungarian finance ministry, as highlighting the budget's crucial importance in the implementation of the community's long-term priorities and objectives. He said Wednesday's agreement was a good basis for negotiations with the European Parliament and would facilitate the draft's timely passage. The draft is aimed at ensuring prudent budgeting with sufficient room for manoeuvre in case of unexpected developments, he said.

The 2025 budget is designed to ensure financing for the EU's traditional policies such as cohesion and agriculture, as well as financing for long-term priorities in the 2021-2027 period, Banai said. Finance ministers of the EU will adopt an official position before September 13, he added. Wednesday's agreement provides the Hungarian presidency with guidelines for negotiations with the European Parliament, to be concluded before November 18, Banai said.

TUZSON: NEW LAW COMBATting CYBERCRIME SET TO ENTER INTO FORCE

A new law aimed at aiding the authorities in stepping up action against cybercriminals will enter into force on Aug 1, the justice minister said on Wednesday. The package of laws whose drafts were submitted to parliament by the justice ministry in cooperation with the national economy ministry, the central bank and the Hungarian Banking Association in the spring are the first pieces of legislation to come out of the government's "intensive efforts" to combat online fraud, Bence Tuzson

told a press conference. The package is aimed at speeding up criminal investigations and proceedings, he added.

NÉZŐPONT: MAJORITY OF HUNGARIANS DO NOT WANT VON DER LEYEN RE- ELECTED

Fully 51% of Hungarians are set against incumbent president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, being re-elected, according to a Nézőpont Institute survey published on Wednesday, while 26% approved of her nomination. In its commentary, the think-tank said the parties of Péter Magyar and Ferenc Gyurcsány were poised to combine their votes to reinstall von der Leyen "against the will of the majority of Hungarians". Von der Leyen needs the votes of at least 361 MEPs on Thursday to carry on in her post. The think-tank noted that Magyar's Tisza Party has joined the EPP, while the Democratic Coalition belongs to the Socialist family of parties. The phone survey of voting-age adults was conducted between July 1 and 3.

INTL ROMA SONG DAY TO BE HELD IN SIX COUNTRIES

The International Roma Song Day is being held for the third time this year in fifteen venues across six countries on Aug 8, and this year celebrates all kinds of styles from flamenco, Balkan brass bands, to gypsy jazz. Mihály "Mazsi" Rostás, the event's artistic director, told a press conference the day will celebrate the diversity of Gypsy music with legendary Roma and non-Roma artists, with 260 performers giving concerts in ten Hungarian cities and five foreign locations. The longer term aim is to bring the event to every EU member state, he added. Concerts will be held in the courtyard of the Benczúr House in Budapest, while other Hungarian venues include Százhalombatta, Szentendre, Veszprém and Pécs. Roma Song Day will also be celebrated in Jerez de la Frontera in Spain, Štúrovo (Párkány) in Slovakia, Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) in Romania, Burgas in Bulgaria and the German capital, Berlin.