

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamás Kovács

Academic year opening at Budapest Technical University

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**School starts**

**Events related to Hungary's EU presidency**

**Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Middle East**

## TOP STORY

# FM: HUNGARY READY FOR HEATING PERIOD, GAS DELIVERIES GUARANTEED FOR LONG TERM

Hungary is ready for the heating season and natural gas supplies are continuous from the south, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in St Petersburg, adding that the country's energy security was "guaranteed in the long term".

Szijjártó held talks with Aleksei Miller, the CEO of Russia's state gas company Gazprom, and the foreign ministry quoted him as highlighting the importance of the Turk Stream gas pipeline in terms of Hungary's gas supplies, as well as Hungary's 15-year gas purchase agreement with Gazprom, signed in 2021. "The long-term agreement and the secure transit route in the south guarantee that natural gas delivery for Hungary is uninterrupted and stable despite an extremely difficult geopolitical environment," Szijjártó said, according to a ministry statement.

"Gazprom is meeting its commitments taken in the 2021 agreement; Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Serbia, as reliable transit countries, ensure a continuous supply of gas from Russia to Hungary," the minister said.

He noted that Hungary had received some 5.6 billion cubic metres of gas via Turk Stream last year, while since the beginning of 2024, the volume of gas received had amounted to 4.8 billion, highlighting the increasing importance of the southern route. "Our gas storage facilities are 89% full ... an amount which could cover 57% of Hungary's annual demand," Szijjártó said, adding that the European average of gas reserves was 27% of the total storage capacity.

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## **OFFICIAL: BRUSSELS HAS BEEN TRYING TO PRESSURISE HUNGARY INTO TAKING PRO-WAR STANCE FOR YEARS**

Brussels has been trying to pressurise Hungary into taking a pro-war position for years, a foreign ministry official said, insisting that peace appeared to be a “new dirty word” in the Brussels lexicon. Boglárka Illés, the state secretary for bilateral relations, told public radio that Budapest would have happily hosted the European Union’s informal foreign affairs council meeting, and there would be more opportunities to do so in the upcoming weeks. “It is obvious that they are not picky when choosing between their various means -- and they thought this could be a means to force Hungary change its position or at least they have tried to put pressure” on Hungary, she said, adding that the government was responsible for Hungarian voters and their security, and sticking to the pro-peace position was a priority. As long as Brussels plans to free up further billions from the European peace allocation in order to buy weapons, then “Hungary will stick to its position”, Illés said. While Hungarian companies are discriminated against in Ukraine and decisions are made that threaten Hungary’s energy security, Hungary will not support the plan, she added. Meanwhile, regarding the Middle East, she said Hungary’s position was that the Hamas terrorist

organisation had attacked Israel and Israel had the right to self-defence and to protect its territorial sovereignty. The state must be supported, not the terrorist organisation, which is why the Hungarian government does not support putting elected officials and democratically elected government members on a list of sanctions, she said. “We aim to avoid escalation and all such decisions result in escalation,” she added. She said decisions made in Brussels aimed at the approval of sending soldiers to Ukraine from western countries, including EU member states. “We believe that if the soldiers of NATO member countries appear in the territory of Ukraine, and what’s more, a decision is made on this at an official foreign ministers council meeting .... that is clearly a step towards escalation and the prolongation of war,” she said.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: US AMBASSADOR TO BUDAPEST ‘A LEADING FIGURE’ OF HUNGARIAN OPPOSITION**

David Pressman, the US ambassador to Budapest, is “a leading figure of the Hungarian opposition”, and his statements must be handled as such, the foreign minister said on Thursday. At a press conference after an informal European Union foreign ministers’ meeting in Brussels, Péter Szijjártó said in response to a question concerning Pressman’s criticism of Hungary’s “peace mission” that the US ambassador was “an opposition activist and one of

the leading figures of the Hungarian opposition”. “His statements must be assessed accordingly,” Szijjártó said, according to a ministry statement. “And if I want to talk about the contents of his opposition activist statements, then I could say that interestingly, when the Italian prime minister went to China, and said that China was an essential partner for dialogue in the current fragile international situation, then the opposition activist did not activate himself.” “Or when President Zelensky called Donald Trump, he did not express any condemnation, or when the Ukrainian foreign minister recently visited China, we could not hear any criticism from him,” he added. “So it is obvious that his statements came from and were inspired by his opposition position,” he said. Commenting on criticism voiced by his Lithuanian counterpart, Szijjártó said Gabrielius Landsbergis was “one of the most pro-war politicians” in Europe. “He is competing for the title of most pro-war politician; he regularly criticises Hungary’s pro-peace position. I believe his assessment of the situation cannot be considered realistic in any aspect,” he added.

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## **NAVRACSICS HAS TALKS IN FINLAND**

Tibor Navracsics, the minister of public administration and regional development, praised Finland’s regional development on Thursday after discussing the EU’s competitiveness and the future of its cohesion policy during a three-

day visit to the northern European country. Speaking to MTI, Navracsics said northern Finland's Oulu will be the European Capital of Culture in 2026, adding that with Veszprém and the Lake Balaton region having held the title last year, his visit to Finland had also included consultations on the programme with Oulu's leadership. He said that during his visit to Oulu and the southern town of Riihimäki, he had the chance to inspect how Finland's regional development policy based on "regional unity" works. Navracsics said Hungary could learn from Finland's example, given that the regions along the Arctic Circle and beyond faced similar problems to Hungary's developing regions such as an aging population and emigration. He said he and his Finnish partners had discussed devising joint strategies for assisting their regions facing depopulation.

Meanwhile, the minister said he had also discussed priorities of the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union such as the need to restore the EU's competitiveness and debates around the bloc's cohesion policy.

Navracsics said that in Helsinki, he had discussed the future of the EU's cohesion policy and the development of bilateral political and economic ties with Finland's Economic Affairs Minister Wille Rydman. He said he had also met Peter Ostman, the parliamentary group leader of Finland's Christian Democrats, to talk about relations between the party and Hungary's co-ruling Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP).

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## **RÉTVÁRI: GOVT INSISTS BRUSSELS TAKES BORDER PROTECTION DEMANDS SERIOUSLY**

The government insists that Brussels takes into consideration Hungary's demands regarding border protection, Bence Rétvári, the interior ministry parliamentary state secretary said. Brussels has levied fines to an "unprecedented" extent because Hungary is barring the entry of illegal migrants while spending massive amounts to protect the border, Rétvári said in a statement, adding that the government is taking legal action "to assert its demands against the European Commission" when it comes to covering the costs of border protection. Hungary has contributed towards ensuring free internal flows in the Schengen area thanks to its controls against mass migration, he said, adding that Brussels "owes Hungary about 2 billion euros", which is how much the country has spent on protecting the border since 2015. The executive decree on taking legal action against the EC has been published in the official Hungarian Gazette, the statement noted.

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## **POTÁPI: OVER 227,000 ETHNIC HUNGARIAN YOUTH BEYOND BORDERS GET SUPPORT THROUGH GOVT SCHEME**

Some 227,159 ethnic Hungarian children and youth beyond the

borders are receiving support this year through the government scheme dubbed Szülőföldön magyarul, an official of the Prime Minister's Office said. Árpád János Potápi, the state secretary of policies for Hungarian communities abroad, said in a statement that the scheme played an important role in enabling Hungarian children and youth beyond the borders to study in their mother tongue in their place of birth. The government has been offering this type of support since the 2002/2003 academic year. All ethnic Hungarians studying in their mother tongue in their place of birth are eligible to apply for gross 100,000 forints (EUR 250) education-upbringing support and 100,000 forints student support, he added. This year 237,296 applications were submitted and 227,159 were approved, he said. The transfer of support will start next week and continue in the upcoming weeks, he added.

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## **HUNGARY, UKRAINE AGRICULTURE MINISTERS MEET IN KYIV**

Hungary continues to consider the interests of Hungarian farmers a priority and the government will maintain the import ban on agricultural products from Ukraine, István Nagy, the agriculture minister, said in Kyiv on Thursday after talks with Taras Vysotsky, interim Ukrainian Minister for Agrarian Policy and Food. The ministry cited Nagy as saying that

Hungary recognised Ukraine's efforts in agriculture but these must not work to the detriment of Hungary's agriculture. He also said that Hungary would continue to allow shipments of agricultural products from Ukraine to transit through Hungary. Nagy said at the meeting that a dialogue that had developed between the Hungarian and Ukrainian ministries of agriculture in the recent period has stabilised and there cannot be any problem that the sides could not discuss because good responses to the challenges could only be given together. He also said that the autonomous trade measures (ATMs) introduced by Brussels would expire on June 5, 2025, so by that time the European Union must find a long-term solution to the challenges caused by Ukrainian agricultural products. Nagy invited Vysotsky for an official meeting to Hungary and asked him to attend the EU agricultural council meeting to be presided by Hungary.

### **MOL: COMPANY NOT INFORMED OF PLAN TO SHUT DOWN FRIENDSHIP CRUDE OIL PIPELINE**

Hungarian state oil and gas company MOL said on Friday that it has not been informed in any form about alleged plans to stop the operation of the Druzhba (Friendship) crude oil pipeline. In response to press reports about Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak stating that the pipeline supplying Russian crude to Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia would

shut down in January, MOL said: "We would be the first one to receive information about any changes." "We continue to have good business relations with the Ukrainian side and supplies are uninterrupted," the company said. Podolyak said in an interview cited by online news website hvg.hu that by stopping flows through the pipelines and excluding Russian energy, Moscow would lose its best market. Czech energy security envoy Vaclav Bartuska told Reuters on Friday that any potential halt in oil supplies via the Druzhba pipeline through Ukraine from Russia from next year would not be a problem for Czechia. He said Ukraine had also in the past warned of a potential halt, adding that "this is not the first time; this time maybe they mean it seriously -- we shall see".

### **ENERGY MINISTRY: BATTERY PLANTS MUST PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN FUTURE**

Battery plants will be obliged to prepare an environmental impact assessment in the future, the Energy Ministry said late on Thursday. The government's aim is to make the economy greener and strengthen its circular operation, with a special emphasis on protecting people's health and environmental values, the statement said. All industrial establishments are expected to meet strict environmental and safety standards, including companies and

plants involved in the production and storage of green energy, it added. In line with new regulations coming into force, the preparation of an environmental impact assessment will be obligatory for plants manufacturing any type of battery or battery parts, or involved in the handling of battery waste, the ministry said. The amendment of the government decree published today applies to the production of all types of batteries and battery parts, and the preliminary treatment and utilisation of battery waste, it added. When the original regulations for the environmental licensing of battery plants were introduced, only "traditional" lead-acid batteries existed, the ministry said. With the introduction and increasing popularity of lithium-ion batteries, it has become necessary to standardise the environmental licensing that applies to the manufacturing and other activities connected to such batteries, too, it added.

### **HUNGARY JULY INDUSTRIAL PRICES UP 2.5%**

Industrial producer prices in Hungary increased by an annual 2.5% in July, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Domestic sales prices went up 1.4% while export prices were 3% higher. Month on month, prices edged up 0.7%, with domestic prices up 2% and export prices unchanged. In January-July, factory gate prices fell by an annual 1.6%, with domestic prices falling by 3.8% and export prices by 0.5%.

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## **KSH: DECLINE IN BIRTHS OUTPACES DECLINE IN DEATHS IN JULY**

The number of births fell by 13% in July compared with the same month in the previous year, while deaths went up by 2.8%, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Meanwhile, the number of marriages went down by 14%, with 4,859 couples tying the knot. Fully 6,793 children were born in July, while there were 10,044 deaths. The natural population loss was 27,986 people in Jan-July 2024, compared

with 24,923 in the same period of 2023. Fully 80,194 children were born between Aug 2023 and July 2024, 8.8% less than in the same period twelve months earlier. Altogether 126,208 people died between Aug 2023 and July 2024, 3.4% less than in the year before. There were 8.0 live births and 13 deaths per thousand inhabitants in the first seven months.

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## **DAWN HEAT RECORDS BROKEN ON THURSDAY**

Thermometers at dawn registered heat records both in the capital

and nationwide on Thursday, weather service HungaroMet said. Budapest's Lágymányos meteorological station saw the mercury dropping to 23.9 C at dawn, breaking the capital's morning heat record of 23.4 C measured back in 1992 on Széchenyi Hill. The Budapest reading also pipped the national record to the post, with the previous dawn high recorded at Árpádtető meteorological station in Pecs, in southern Hungary, where 23.8 C. was measured in 2003.