

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tamás Kovács

Short track speed skaters Liu Shaoang, Sára Luca Bácskai and Petra Jászapáti at practice

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office draft report on commercial lodgings in Nov 2018

Schaeffler Group opens new plant in Debrecen

Results of 2018 supplier development programme presented

TOP STORY

FIDESZ: EUROPE MUST PROTECT BORDERS

The European Union “must protect its borders at sea and on land as expected by its voters,” an MEP of Hungary’s ruling Fidesz has said.

The EU should “prevent thousands of migrants from risking their lives at the Mediterranean Sea; it should make it clear that they cannot enter the continent illegally and it must eliminate the human smuggling rings,” Kinga Gál said. She responded to remarks by European Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos, who said that the number of illegal immigrants had plummeted in Europe and there was no migration crisis on the continent. He said the EU was a community based on solidarity and humanitarian values, and called for sustainable and predictable mechanisms towards refugees so that those values are preserved.

Péter Niedermüller, an MEP of the leftist Democratic Coalition, called for temporary measures to distribute migrants rescued at sea among volunteering member states before the new European Parliament is formed in July. Meanwhile, Lőrinc Nacsá, the parliamentary spokesman of Hungary’s co-ruling Christian Democrats, accused George Soros and leading EU politicians he said were being “paid” by the US billionaire of being behind Brussels’ migration policy and related proposals.

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HUNGARY TO HELP ISRAELIS SEARCH DANUBE FOR HOLOCAUST VICTIMS' REMAINS

Hungary will assist Israel in a search for the remains of Holocaust victims in the Danube river, the interior ministry said, responding to a query by MTI. Interior Minister Sándor Pintér held talks with his Israeli counterpart Arye Deri in Budapest on Monday, the ministry said in a statement. At the meeting, Deri expressed his appreciation and gratitude for Hungary's efforts in helping to recover the remains of Holocaust victims. A recovery team from the international voluntary search and rescue organization ZAKA also arrived in Hungary on Monday, the ministry said, adding that they, too, can count on the help of the ministry and its affiliated bodies in their efforts.

Reuters reported on Monday that an Israeli team of forensic experts had arrived in Hungary to search the Danube for remains of Holocaust victims, with Hungarian permission and assistance. A member of the delegation said the remains would be buried in accordance with Jewish rite. According to Israel's Yad Vashem Memorial Center, some 565,000 Hungarian Jews were killed in the Holocaust. The majority of them were deported to the Auschwitz death camp between May and July 1944. In October of that year, thousands of Jews were shot into the Danube by Arrow Cross militiamen. A memorial known as "Shoes on the Danube Bank" was erected in their honour in April 2005.

SZIJJÁRTÓ HOLDS TALKS WITH TURKIC COUNCIL HEAD

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó held talks with Baghdad Amreyev, Secretary General of the Turkic Council, the foreign ministry said. In its statement, the ministry said the Hungarian government's opening to the East policy plays a vital role in the country's foreign policy. Hungary's trade turnover with Turkey and the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus region has expanded dynamically in recent years, and more and more students from those regions are applying for Hungarian scholarships, the statement said.

The Turkic Council's chamber of commerce is ready to welcome Hungary to the organisation, just as the Turkic University Association is open to welcoming Hungarian universities, it added. At the talks, Szijjártó indicated that Hungary was ready for the Turkic Council to set up its European representative office in Budapest.

Hungary was granted observer status in the council on Sept. 3 last year.

DK TO FILE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT OVER USE OF 'STOP SOROS' CAMPAIGN TO INFLUENCE ELECTION

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) will file a criminal complaint for alleged disturbance of the order of elections based on a recent press

report which the party claims showed that the government's "Stop Soros" campaign used public monies to strengthen ruling Fidesz and mislead voters at last year's general election. At a press conference, DK deputy group leader Gergely Arató cited a recent interview with US political consultant George Birnbaum, who was a business partner of Fidesz's late campaign chief Arthur Finkelstein. According to Arató, Birnbaum's statements published in Switzerland revealed that the Hungarian government and Fidesz developed a "deceptive and brain-washing propaganda against [US billionaire George] Soros serving their campaign purposes". Fidesz "committed a series of crimes by using public monies to distribute accusations against Soros in order to influence the elections", Arató said. Birnbaum's "revealing statements" confirmed reports by election observers of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), who said there was serious abuse of power at the election, he added.

Conservative opposition Jobbik MP György Szilágyi told a separate press conference that Birnbaum's remarks translated to a "guilty plea". He added that ever since 2008, Fidesz has in all of its campaigns intentionally placed emphasis on creating a fake enemy and turning people against each other. No government could stay in power in a civilised country after it is revealed that it had built several campaigns on lies, using public monies, he said.

CEVA-PHYLAXIA TO BUILD HUF 10 BN ANIMAL VACCINE BASE IN HUNGARY

French-owned veterinary company Ceva-Phylaxia Oltóanyagtermelő will spend almost 10 billion forints (EUR 31.0m) to build a vaccine plant and a research and development base in Monor, on the outskirts of Budapest, Foreign Minister Péter Sziijártó said. The government is supporting the investment with a 1.63 billion forint grant, he said. The plant will create jobs for highly trained professionals in a field of strategic national importance, Sziijártó said, noting the loss of revenue animal diseases have caused Hungary. Hungarian pharmaceuticals is a traditionally strong sector, he said, noting that 95% of Ceva-Phylaxia's production is exported.

HUNGARY CPI FALLS TO 2.7% IN DEC, UNDER NBH MID-TERM TARGET

Consumer prices in Hungary rose by 2.7% year-on-year in December, continuing to slow after an acceleration that lasted for much of the year. Headline CPI slowed from 3.1% in November, 3.8% in October and 3.6% in September, all over the National Bank of Hungary's 3.0% mid-term target for "price stability".

Average annual inflation reached 2.8% for 2018. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and fuel prices, was also 2.8%.

ING Bank chief analyst Peter Virovác noted that core inflation had risen by 0.2 of a percentage point in December, reaching its highest level since 2014. This clearly shows inflationary pressure building in the economy, he added. Takarékbank analyst Gergely Suppan said core inflation could reach the 3% threshold and remain there this year. Low imported inflation as well as a reduction in the tax burden for businesses could slow the rise in inflation, he added.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OUTPUT JUMPS 27.3% IN NOVEMBER

Output of Hungary's construction sector climbed an annual 27.3% in November, data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) show. Output of the buildings segment was up by 17.8%, lifted by construction of factories, stores and homes. Civil engineering output jumped by 40.2%, supported by road, railway and utilities projects. In a month-on-month comparison, construction output rose by 4.4%, adjusted for seasonal and workday effects. For the period January-November, output was up 22.9% year on year.

EIGHT FLIGHTS FROM BUDAPEST CANCELLED DUE TO GERMAN STRIKES

Eight flights from Budapest's Liszt Ferenc Airport to Germany have been cancelled due to strikes at German airports, the airport's communications director said. Lufthansa cancelled all flights to Frankfurt and one to Munich, Mihály Hardy said. A Eurowings flight to Hamburg and a Wizz Air flight to Frankfurt also fell out. The German service providers' trade union, Verdi, said on Monday that security staff were staging strikes in eight German cities, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Hannover, Dresden, Leipzig and Erfurt. The union is fighting to raise airport control personnel's wages to 20 euros per hour.

KOSOVAR SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS FOR DRUG SMUGGLING

The Szeged Appeals Court sentenced a Kosovan man to six years in prison and banned him from Hungary for five years for attempting to smuggle 11 kg of marijuana to Italy via Hungary. The ruling is binding. The 58-year-old man bought the marijuana in Kosovo and tried to smuggle it into Hungary at the Hungarian-Serbian border crossing at Tompa in January 2017. Customs officers found the drug hidden in his car.