

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



500kg WW2 bomb found in C Budapest disassembled

MTI/Péter Lakatos/

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to the war in Ukraine

Events related to Christmas

## TOP STORY

### GOVT SUBMITS AMENDED BUDGET TO FISCAL COUNCIL

The government has submitted a draft budget amendment to the Fiscal Council, the finance ministry said on Friday.

“The most important task for next year is to protect Hungarian families and jobs, preserve the value of pensions, maintain the utility reduction scheme and guarantee the security of the country,” the ministry said. Hungary’s energy bill will increase from 7 billion forints (EUR 17.5m) to 17 billion forints next year but by increasing the allocation for the utility fee protection scheme, the necessary resources will be guaranteed up to the level of average consumption, the ministry said. Despite the difficulties, the budget will maintain family support measures and even expand them by offering tax exemption until age 30 to mothers. Additionally, the budget will guarantee a 15% pension increase from next January. The government maintains the goal to improve balance indicators and next year’s budget consequently includes a reduced deficit and public debt. The aim is to prevent an economic decline and maintain growth. Hungary’s economy could grow by over 4% this year and it is projected to grow by 1.5% in 2023, the ministry said.

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## **DEFMIN: ARMED FORCES TO GET CZECH-LICENCED SMALL ARMS**

The Hungarian Armed Forces will have its stock of small arms replaced with arms manufactured under a Czech licence, the defence minister said in Kiskunfélegyháza, in southern Hungary, on Thursday. Czech firearms manufacturer Colt CZ Group on Thursday said it signed a joint venture agreement with Hungary's state-owned N7 National Defence Industry Innovation Holding to establish a small arms production facility in Hungary. The firearms will be produced both for the Hungarian Armed Forces and the international market, Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky said in a video posted on Facebook. The minister called the partnership a "very important step in the development of the Hungarian military and the Hungarian defence industry". Szalay-Bobrovniczky said he firmly believed that Hungary should not just purchase equipment, but also "create an innovation platform, opportunities for innovation, jobs and generate tax revenue" in the interest of reducing its dependence on arms suppliers.

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## **DEFMIN MEETS ITALIAN COUNTERPART**

Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky met his Italian counterpart, Guido Crosetto, in Pápa, in western Hungary, on Friday, the defence ministry said.

The two ministers discussed military cooperation, their countries' participation in NATO's battle group based in Hungary as well as their experiences in commanding the KFOR peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, the ministry said. Speaking about Crosetto's visit, Szalay-Bobrovniczky said the strengthening of NATO's eastern flank and the establishment of four more battle groups had been one of the alliance's most important decisions following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The battle group set up in Hungary with a Hungarian leadership had achieved operational readiness by late September, he said. Szalay-Bobrovniczky said Crosetto had visited the Italian forces that make up the second largest contingent within the battle group.

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## **GOVT APPROVES NATIONAL DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME**

Hungary's government has approved the National Digital Citizenship Programme aimed at creating the conditions for simple, convenient and efficient administration, the Digital Hungary Agency said on Friday. The uniform digital environment ensured by the programme streamlines communication between government bodies and citizens, the agency told MTI. The programme is aimed at creating public administration spaces that are accessible online at any given time and suitable for managing any administrative needs that can be handled in person. The programme's

founding document puts the main focus on digital citizenship, the agency said, adding that it also covers the utilisation of national data assets and the application of cloud technology. By the end of the first strategic phase set for 2026, people will be able to handle almost all matters relating to public administration online, the agency said. The development of the most important services will begin as early as 2023, they added.

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## **500KG WW2 BOMB FOUND IN S BUDAPEST NEUTRALISED**

A US-made second world war aerial bomb weighing 500kg discovered by a dredger in the Petroleum bay of the Danube river at south Budapest's Csepel district on Tuesday has been neutralised, the Hungarian army bomb squad said. The bomb had ignition devices at both ends and these had to be deactivated before it was neutralised and then transported by boat to a depository. An exclusion zone was set up for the operation which has since been opened.

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## **HUNGARIAN MEDIA CONSUMPTION 'VARIED' ACROSS URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE, STUDY SHOWS**

Research by the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) shows Hungarians' media consumption is varied both in big cities and smaller settlements, the authority's chairman told MTI. Summarising a Media Market

Report recently published by the NMHH, András Koltay said the data refute the assumption held by many that Hungarians' access to news is limited outside of big cities. The internet has a strong presence everywhere, and people get their information from a number of different sources, he added. "People who want to be informed can do so from a vast range of sources, and they do. The trope, repeated by many around the time of the general election, that people living in small towns and villages want just one kind of news and read only the daily newspaper for their county is untrue. There, too, media consumption is varied. It's another matter that people who want to form a diverse picture of the world need to follow various media, but everybody has the chance to do that, and the data show there is demand for that in Hungarian society," Koltay said. The NMHH data show the time Hungarians spend watching television - over 4.5 hours a day, on average - is among the most in Europe, he said, while noting that they also use the internet 3.5 hours a day on average. Print media is on the decline, in line with the global trend, but cross-consumption is strong, he said. Only around one-fourth of Hungarians say they consume just one type of media, and for most of them that is the internet, not television, he added.

Koltay noted that the NMHH has been mandated by parliament to play a coordinating role in the local transposition of the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) for online platforms. The directive marks

"a new chapter" in media regulation and raises "an awful lot of issues that need to be cleared up", he added. A negative development Koltay pointed out is the bigger share of advertising spending channeled to internet service providers. Two-thirds of that money goes to foreign-owned tech giants that take it out of the country, leaving less for local content production, he said.

### **FIRST INDUSTRIAL-SCALE GREEN HYDROGEN UNIT ARRIVES IN HUNGARY**

Hungary's first industrial-scale polymer electrolyte membrane (PEM) electrolysis unit for producing green hydrogen has arrived at the Bükkábrány solar park, in the northeast of the country, the Mészáros Group's PR department told MTI on Friday. The PEM electrolysis unit will turn out 130-150 tonnes of green hydrogen a year, using solar power, when it starts operation in the first half of 2023. The European Union has set a target to produce 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen a year by 2030.

The Bükkábrány Energy Park belongs to the Mészáros Group's energy portfolio.

### **ALMOST 13,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON THURSDAY**

Fully 7,997 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Thursday, while 4,806 came to the country via Romania, according to the

national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 220 people. Altogether 141 refugees, 70 children among them, arrived in Budapest by train, ORFK said on Friday.

### **AIR POLLUTION HIGH IN EIGHT CITIES, TOWNS IN HUNGARY**

Air quality is dangerous in Miskolc, Putnok, Kazincbarcika, Oszlár, Sajószentpéter, Nyíregyháza and Debrecen in north-east Hungary and in Pécs in southern Hungary, due to a high concentration of airborne particles, the National Public Health Centre (NNK) said on Thursday. NNK declared air quality to be "objectionable" in Veszprém, Székesfehérvár, Budapest, Tököl, Dorog, Vác, Kecskemét, Szolnok and Salgótarján. NNK declared air quality to be "unhealthy" in Ajka, Várpalota, Győr, Tatabánya, Százhalombatta, Eger and Hernádszurdok.

### **WATCHDOG FINES EXIMBANK FOR COMPLIANCE SHORTFALLS**

The National Bank of Hungary (NBH) on Friday said it fined state-owned Magyar Eximbank a little more than 16 million forints (EUR 40,000) for failing to comply fully with regulations on enterprise management, data provision, risk management and write-downs. The NBH said the shortcomings do not affect the lender's reliable operation.