

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid's new rescue team leaving for Türkiye

## UPCOMING EVENTS

EU summit wraps up

Events related to the war in Ukraine

## TOP STORY

# GULYÁS: NO ALTERNATIVE TO EU

There is no alternative to Hungary's membership of the European Union at present, the head of the Prime Minister's Office said at a forum in Szekszárd, in southern Hungary.

The reason why is not the EU's 1.4% contribution to Hungarian GDP but because the country is part of the Schengen zone and the single market, and these are a must for the Hungarian economy, Gergely Gulyás said at a roundtable organised by Mathias Corvinus Collegium on Thursday. European countries individually would compete less well in the global economic environment, he added. Hungary could get by well without EU funds for a long time, and it is not the case that the country's prosperity depends on the bloc, he said, "but our aim is to get hold of all our EU funds". Regarding Visegrad Group cooperation, he said Hungary diverged from Poland on whether Russia was a danger to NATO member states. "Were it up to the Poles, we'd have to get mired in the war," he said, adding that cooperation with Poland within the EU was good but "less than spectacular". Regarding Slovakia and Poland, he said the situation was "not as good as it was a few years ago", but following elections in both countries and once the war is over, V4 cooperation would improve, he said.

## **GULYÁS: UPGRADED PAKS NUCLEAR PLANT COULD START OPERATING AROUND 2032**

If construction on the expansion of Hungary's Paks nuclear power station starts next year, it is realistic that the plant can start operating around 2032, Gergely Gulyás, the head of the Prime Minister's Office, said at a forum in Szekszárd, in southern Hungary. In response to a question at a roundtable organised by Mathias Corvinus Collegium on Thursday, Gulyás said one difficulty was that the American and German companies were among suppliers that still wanted to be part of the project, but this required the permission of the respective state. "Let's see if Siemens gets this," he said. Siemens, he added, was "not essential" and 3-4 western European companies could step in if it came to it.

Meanwhile, he said that if Ukraine did not amend its language and education law that makes use of the Hungarian language difficult its route to joining NATO and the EU would be blocked. But he welcomed Ukraine's recent offer to agree on changing the laws bilaterally as "good news".

## **ORBÁN: LIVES ONLY SAVED THROUGH PEACE, CEASEFIRE**

Lives can only be saved through a ceasefire and by securing peace, Viktor Orbán, Hungary's

prime minister, said in a video uploaded to Facebook on Thursday. "We Hungarians are still on the side of peace," he declared. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, addressed the extraordinary European Union summit in Brussels, Orbán noted. The prime minister said that Hungary mounted its largest ever humanitarian operation when it delivered aid for Ukraine and took in refugees from the country in the past year. "We let more than one million refugees cross our borders from Ukraine," he added. "From what the Ukrainian president said, it's clear this war will drag on. We can't count on it ending soon," Orbán said, adding that Hungary would continue to aid Ukrainians by humanitarian means but "we won't deliver weapons". He said a settlement resulting in lasting peace was in the Hungarian interest.

## **NOVÁK EXPRESSES SYMPATHY TO SYRIAN VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE**

President Katalin Novák expressed her sympathy on Friday to the Syrian families of the victims of this week's earthquake. In a bilingual Facebook post, she said the death toll from the tragic earthquake already exceeded 20,000. "I have assured the Turkish President as well as the leaders of the Syrian churches of the sympathies of Hungarians," she said. "The Hungarian

rescue teams have already saved many lives, I thank them for their sacrificial work!", she added. Novák also said that she prayed for the injured and the families of the victims.

## **OFFICIAL: DUNAFERR WAGE PAYMENTS UNDER WAY**

The transfer of January wages for Dunafer steelworks employees is starting within a few days in line with a government decision to help several thousand families whose livelihoods have come under threat, an official of the economic development ministry said on Friday. The situation arose after the company was ruined by its former owners and management, the war, misguided EU sanctions and the energy crisis, Sándor Czomba said in a statement. The government has set up a jobs protection committee and commissioned a liquidator that has already started settling the company's situation. December wages were already paid from a wage guarantee fund, he added. At the proposal of Lajos Mészáros, a lawmaker from Dunaújváros where the steelworks are located, the government decided to pay Dunafer workers' wages for six months, at total cost of over 16 billion forints (EUR 41m), Czomba said. A new owner guaranteeing reliable and permanent operation will be sought in the upcoming months in order to protect jobs and the families of the workers, he added.

## **HUNGARY MILITARY TO LAUNCH NATIONWIDE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN**

Hungary's military is launching a nationwide recruitment campaign with a view to informing as many people as possible about the forms of service and career opportunities offered by the Hungarian Armed Forces, the defence ministry said. The campaign will target young people who are prepared and willing to act in the interest of defending their homeland, family and loved ones, the ministry said in a statement. The Armed Forces offers an attractive career to those who, in addition to their individual progress, value community, camaraderie and a youthful outlook and are interested in high-tech military equipment, it added. In addition to recruitment offices, the campaign will also have an online component and will run on various media platforms, the statement said. It will also involve recruitment events across the country. The campaign's opening event will be held at Budapest's Bálua cultural centre on Monday and will welcome anyone looking to join the military either as a contract soldier or a reservist, the ministry said.

## **BUDAPEST POLICE WARN AGAINST UNLAWFUL PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AHEAD OF BUDAPEST SIEGE ANNIVERSARY**

Budapest police are allowing 3 rallies commemorating the siege of Budapest towards the end of the second world war to go ahead on Feb. 11, but they have prohibited another 3 gatherings in and around the city's Castle District, warning that anyone participating in unlawful assembly will be penalised. The Budapest police headquarters issued the warning on its website on Thursday, noting that three gatherings which are prohibited under the law on assembly were announced to take place in the area of Buda Castle. The Budapest chief of police noted that the location of one intended gathering is a historical monument of national importance, while "the date is a day commemorating the victims of the inhuman crimes committed under the rule of the National Socialist dictatorship".

The three prohibited gatherings planned at the Vienna Gate were intended to commemorate the victims of the 1945 siege of Budapest, another the "heroes who took part in the breakout" and the third a protest against a "neo-Nazi tour". The police said on its website that they guaranteed the right of assembly carried out peacefully but would take action against participants of prohibited or unannounced assemblies.

## **MORE THAN 9,300 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON THURSDAY**

Fully 4,677 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Thursday, while 4,719 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 93 people, ORFK said on Friday. Fully 51 people, 30 children among them, arrived by train in Budapest.

## **HUNGARY JAN HEADLINE INFLATION 25.7%**

Consumer prices in Hungary grew by an annual 25.7% in January, up from 24.5% the previous month, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The increase was driven by higher household energy and food prices, KSH said. Food prices were up an annual 44% in January, while household energy prices increased by 52.4%. Month on month, inflation was 2.3%. Gas prices rose by 88.6% and electricity prices climbed 27.7%. The data show consumer durable prices increased by 13.5%. Prices in the category of goods that includes vehicle fuel rose by 26.3%, climbing at a faster pace after a cap on motor fuel prices was lifted early in December. Harmonised CPI, adjusted for better comparison with other European Union member states, was 26.2%. Core inflation, which excludes volatile fuel and food prices, was 25.4%. CPI calculated with a basket of goods and services used by pensioners was 27.4%.