

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Ános Váida

Persian leopard cub born in Miskolc Zoo

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**EU interior ministers meet in Brussels**

**LMP presser on forest protection**

**Events related to the war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# DEFMIN MEETS EU COUNTERPARTS IN STOCKHOLM

Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky attended a meeting of EU defence ministers in Stockholm and held bilateral talks with his Swedish and Finnish counterparts on Wednesday.

In his address at the meeting focusing on the Ukraine war Szalay-Bobrovniczky reiterated the position that Hungary would not send weapons or ammunition because that could lead to the escalation of the conflict, according to a statement by the defence ministry. Another topic discussed at the meeting was the development of the defence industry. Szalay-Bobrovniczky noted the Hungarian government's measures aimed at reviving the sector and integrating it with Europe's defence industry. At his talks with Swedish Defence Minister Pal Jonson and Finland's Antti Kaikkonen, Szalay-Bobrovniczky reassured his partners of Hungary's standing support to the two countries' NATO accession. He added however that "over the past couple of years, politicians of the two countries made false accusations against my country which is regretful." "Hungary deserves more respect, therefore we would like to engage in a political dialogue as partners and allies cooperating on a basis of mutual trust in future once the ratification process is concluded," the minister was quoted as saying.

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## **MATOLCSY TO MPS: ECONOMIC POLICY TOOK 'WRONG TURN' IN 2021**

Economic policymaking already "took a wrong turn" in 2021, before the war in Ukraine and sanctions of 2022, György Matolcsy, the head of Hungary's central bank (NBH) told MPs on Wednesday. The NBH governor, presenting the bank's report on 2021 in parliament, said Hungary was at risk of letting down future generations, who may justifiably ask why policymaking "went astray". "[W]e lost our way in 2021, and regrettably this continued in 2022," he said. Matolcsy insisted that it was as yet unclear whether the "wrong turn" could be remedied this year.

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## **GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT UKRAINE**

While creating peace in Ukraine is a task for world powers, solidarity is everyone's responsibility, and one that Hungary will continue to shoulder, the state secretary for church and minority relations told a meeting organised by the UNHCR in Budapest on Tuesday. At the presentation of the Hungarian chapter of the UN Refugee Agency's regional Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Miklós Soltész said six Hungarian charity organisations have received 3 billion forints (EUR 7.9m) in government support for aid programmes

for refugees. Private donations amounted to more than a billion forints, he said, and the UNHCR has concluded a 2.5 billion forint contract with the same charities. More than 1 million refugees have arrived in Hungary from Ukraine, and more than 500,000 of them received aid, he said. Transcarpathia Hungarians had a key role in the humanitarian effort, Soltész added.

UNHCR said in a statement that Hungarian partner organisations have requested a further 63 million dollars to continue the work. "As the war in Ukraine has entered its second year, and with millions of Ukrainians displaced both within the country and across Europe, in Hungary 37 local and refugee led organizations and United Nations agencies are appealing for \$63 million to complement Government response to the needs of Ukrainian refugees in the country," the statement said.

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## **PARLT SPEAKER MEETS KENYA PRESIDENT**

Kenyan President William Ruto on Tuesday received Hungarian Speaker of Parliament László Kövér, who is on an official visit to the east African country, Parliament's press chief said. House of Representatives Speaker Moses Masika Wetangula and Foreign Minister Alfred Mutua also attended the meeting, Zoltán Szilágyi said in a statement.

President Ruto highly esteemed the Hungarian speaker's first visit to Kenya, saying it would contribute to

the deepening of relations between the two countries, the statement said. Kenya plans to open an embassy in Budapest in the near future, the president said, adding that this would further enhance the broadest possible bilateral cooperation.

Kövér told his partners that the Hungarian government is refreshing ties with sub-Saharan countries and seeking mutually beneficial relations with states in the region, including Kenya, "a highly important strategic partner" in east Africa. This ties in with Hungary's Africa policy developed as part of its Southern Opening strategy announced in 2015 and the Africa strategy adopted in 2019, he noted. Hungary is striving to enhance economic relations in agriculture, and the health and water industries, as well as sharing Hungarian innovations and technological know-how, he added.

The sides also discussed global challenges affecting both countries and joint endeavours towards finding solutions to climate change, terrorism and migration, the statement said. Kövér has visited a training centre for youth in a Kangemi slum implemented as part of the Hungary Helps aid scheme. Here, young people learn key trades in modern classrooms and workshops built and operated with Hungarian support. The speaker also inaugurated the Kenyan office of Óbuda University. Here, knowledge gained by Kenyan students in Hungary is set to be used on the labour market.

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## **PÁRBSZÉD TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO CURB VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The opposition Párbeszéd party is submitting a resolution proposal and law amendments to parliament aiming to curb violence against women, the party's co-leaders told a press conference on Wednesday. Co-leader Rebeka Szabó cited a survey on the situation of women which ranked Hungary 25th on the issue among European Union states. The gender wage gap is much larger in Hungary than the EU average, she said.

EU polls put the number of women aged 17-80 who have suffered some sort of violence at 1 million. Some 200,000 Hungarian women are subjected to domestic violence, she said. Párbeszéd is calling for stricter punishment in cases of serious domestic violence, she said.

Meanwhile, the party is also calling for promoting women's autonomy by raising the family allowance, making school attendance mandatory until the age of 18, and extending state support for contraceptives, she said. It also proposes that women with particularly heavy menstrual pain should get extra days off, she said. Co-leader Bence Tordai praised Párbeszéd as a "feminist" party where quotas played an important role. Párbeszéd

has a female and a male co-leader and is the only party to have more women than men on its board, he said.

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## **HUNGARY FEB HEADLINE INFLATION 25.4%**

Consumer prices were up by an annual 25.4% in February, driven mostly by household energy and food prices, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Wednesday. Month on month, prices edged up by 0.8%.

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## **ALMOST 8,000 REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY**

Fully 4,214 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Monday, while 3,553 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 43 people, ORFK said on Wednesday. Budapest received 38 people, 8 children among them, who arrived by train.

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## **HUNGARY RECORDS 878 NEW CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS, 11 DEATHS REGISTERED LAST WEEK**

Fully 878 new Covid-19 infections were confirmed last week, while 11 fatalities were registered in connection with the

virus, the Coronavirus Press Centre said on Wednesday. The number of active infections stands at 4,254. Currently, 395 coronavirus patients are being treated in hospital, 14 intubated on a ventilator. Altogether 6,421,986 people have been vaccinated against the coronavirus, with 6,209,406 having received a second jab, 3,905,026 a third, and 424,655 a fourth. The number of registered infections since the start of the pandemic has reached 2,196,804 in Hungary, while there have been 48,762 deaths. Fully 2,143,788 people have made a recovery.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: SEVEN HUNGARIAN CONSULS TO ATTEND BAYER LEVERKUSEN-FERENCVÁROS FOOTBALL MATCH**

Seven Hungarian consuls will attend the football match between Bayer Leverkusen and Ferencváros in Leverkusen, in western Germany, to aid Hungarian fans should they need assistance, the minister for foreign affairs and trade said on Wednesday. Some 2,300 Hungarian visitors are expected to attend the first match of the Europa League's round of 16 on Thursday, some 1,000 of them will arrive by a chartered train, Péter Szijjártó said. The foreign ministry has a duty to take steps when a large number of Hungarians travel to one destination, he said.