

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Baby armadillo and its mother at the Budapest Zoo

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office first estimate on foreign trade, prelim report on commercial lodgings in Nov

Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Israel

TOP STORY

AZBEJ: HUNGARY HELPS LAW TO ALLOW BROADER PARTICIPATION

The law on the Hungary Helps humanitarian aid programme has been amended to allow broader Hungarian contribution in economic development and peace-making as of January 1, the foreign ministry's state secretary overseeing the scheme told public broadcaster M1 on Wednesday.

"The amendment allows Hungary to strengthen its role and better enforce solidarity with Christian communities as well as to represent the concept that help must be provided where the problems are," Tristan Azbej said.

He said Christianity had become the most persecuted religion in the world, with some 5,000 followers murdered each year. Around 80% of the attacks occur in Nigeria, Azbej said, noting that "Jihadist, Islamist tribes" had mounted attacks on 20 Christian settlements and killed some 200 Christians around Christmas. The state secretary said that the few reports covering the event in the western press had presented it "as an attack by shepherd tribes against farming villages". "They failed to mention that behind the attacks were according to information Jihadist tribes trained and armed by the Al-Kaida Islamist terror organisation," he added. "It is important to break the silence, the disinterest and denial and to say out loud that this is Christian persecution," said Azbej, warning that "Islamist terrorism is now present in Europe".

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**EUFOR MISSION HEAD:
'HUNGARIAN TROOPS
PROVED SKILLS IN NATO
MISSION COMMAND'**

Hungarian soldiers have proved their skills in the command of NATO missions, the new commander of the EU's EUFOR ALTHEA mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina told public broadcaster M1 on Wednesday. Major General László Sticz, who took over the post on January 1, told M1 that NATO's KFOR mission had a Hungarian commander in 2021. "Now a Hungarian general has been appointed to serve for the first time as commander of the EU mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina for a whole year," he said.

Sticz said Hungarian troops would not only participate but also coordinate large-scale operations. "There will also be an opportunity to deploy new military vehicles such as the new helicopters which will illustrate the progress made under the Hungarian armed forces' modernisation since 2018," he said.

Speaking on public Kossuth Rádió, Sticz noted that based on the 2021 KFOR experience, the assignment of ALTHEA's Hungarian command had been supported by the EU on a political and military level and approved by the United Nations last year. "This is important also because peace in the Balkans is our peace, too," the general said. He noted Hungarian troops' capability in aerial transport and evacuation which could

be performed if need be to help local civilian residents. The general also noted the troops' explosive expertise that can be use in clearing landmines.

**MINISTER: GERMAN,
CHINESE CAPITAL
ATTRACT EACH OTHER
IN HUNGARY**

German and Chinese capital attract each other in Hungary which now has the most complex automotive industry ecosystem after Germany, National Economy Minister Márton Nagy said in an interview published in the latest issue of Demokrata. "The tendency is that German and Chinese capital want to work together, and this has become Hungary's turf," Nagy told Demokrata. "Chinese capital arrives in Hungary because of German capital. Battery plants don't come here for the pretty landscape, but because the BMW plant is 200 metres from the CATL factory," he added, referring to the Chinese battery maker's base under construction in Debrecen (E Hungary). "That Chinese capital then draws more German capital, and the additional German capital brings more Chinese capital. These are mutually reinforcing processes," he said. All elements of the vehicle manufacturing process can be found in Hungary, for which investors have a special appreciation, Nagy said. Investors also appreciate that Hungary is interested in "mutually beneficial cooperation", he added.

"We don't want to be more clever than those companies that create

jobs in Hungary and put their money on the line with local investments," he told Demokrata. Nagy noted that the government aimed to keep the investment rate over 25% of GDP. In addition to energy costs, which the government is working to reduce through regulated prices, tax policy measures play "a significant role" in creating a favourable investment environment for businesses, he added.

**LMP CALLS ON GOVT TO
RAISE TEACHERS' WAGES**

The opposition LMP has called on the government to raise the wages of teachers and other public education employees. The party's deputy group leader, Máté Kanász-Nagy, said that Gergely Gulyás, the head of the Prime Minister's Office, "spread uncertainty and pointed the finger at Brussels again" when he told commercial media outlet atv.hu at the end of last week that the government "will do everything it can" to ensure a 32% wage hike, but that it depended on "technical approval" by the European Commission.

The wage hike depends only on the government's will, Kanász-Nagy told a press conference on Wednesday. "It looks like the cabinet is looking for ways to back out of the wage hike", despite the interior ministry's statement that teachers would receive a 32% raise from January 1, he said. He called on the government to clarify whether teachers' wages will rise, and by how much.

UNIONS URGE UNIFORM PAY HIKE IN EDUCATION

Two trade unions have urged that the government's recent plans to raise teachers' salaries should be rolled out to staff in vocational training and in higher education. The Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions and the National Federation of Workers' Councils in a statement on Wednesday welcomed the government's announcement of pay hikes for teachers, but warned that introducing a hike "without applying uniform principles" would lead to a tension within the profession. "A well-deserved and substantial rise should cover all staff in education before the end of 2024," they said.

SZÁNTÓ: HUNGARY 'KNOWS HOW TO STOP THE WOKE MIND VIRUS' - WEBSITE

Miklós Szánthó, the director of the Center for Fundamental Rights (Alapjogokért), said Hungary's

"signature cocktail" was the antidote to the "woke movement". "No war, no migration, no gender – and a refusal to play by the liberals' rules," Szánthó said in an opinion piece published on The Daily Caller, a US website. In the piece, also quoted by Hungarian daily Magyar Nemzet, Szánthó said "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán does upset the delicate sensibilities of the progressive liberals". "An age of discovery in reverse has started, as intellectuals from Tucker Carlson through Jordan Peterson to Micheal Knowles explore for themselves the Hungarian conservative landscape in search of lessons to learn about politics and winning at the polls."

"We have always taken our borders seriously and controlled them effectively; respected our religious roots and guarded our state sovereignty and constitutional traditions. The family is the cornerstone of our society. We have also recognized that demographics is not just a matter of sovereignty, but a geopolitical challenge as well," Szánthó said. "Hungary is the last place – certainly in Europe – where people can speak their

minds. A country still led by elected politicians, not ruled by a bureaucratic deep state," Szánthó said.

GOVT SECTOR DEFICIT 3.7% OF GDP IN Q3 - KSH

Hungary's government sector had a 701 billion forint (EUR 1.8bn) deficit in the third quarter, equivalent to 3.7% of GDP, preliminary data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) on Wednesday show. Government sector revenue rose by 12.7% to 7,661 billion forints, while expenditures climbed 7.7% to 8,362 billion.

MORE THAN 14,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY

Fully 5,429 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Tuesday, while 8,696 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 59 people, ORFK said on Tuesday.