

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/PM's press office Zoltán Fischer

PM Viktor Orbán, French President Emmanuel Macron at Jacques Delors's funeral service in Paris

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Israel

Events marking Epiphany

## TOP STORY

# KOVÁCS: OVER 1.1 M NATL CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED SO FAR

A total of 1,172,000 people have filled out the government's latest National Consultation public survey, the state secretary for international communication and relations said on Friday.

"This goes to show that there's an extremely powerful message being formulated that can't even be ignored in Brussels," Zoltán Kovács said in a video message on Facebook. He said representatives of the European left had continually indicated before the holidays that "they're working to bypass the will of the Hungarian people" on issues like migration, "the financing of war" and the scrapping of the caps on household utility prices. The state secretary thanked those who have filled out the survey as well as those who are going to do so. Kovács said earlier that the survey was aimed at addressing the issue of migration. The European Union's approach to illegal migration has not changed since 2015 while the issue has become particularly topical now "when a new migration package has been pushed through and adopted in Brussels" despite the fact that arranging the movement of migrants is now in the hands of radical groups...", Kovács said.

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## **LMP SUBMITS NEW REFERENDUM QUESTION TO SCRAP STRATEGIC CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Opposition LMP has submitted another referendum question in an effort to prevent the government from assigning certain construction project a status of strategic importance, LMP deputy group leader Antal Csárdi told a press conference on Friday. Last year, the National Election Committee thwarted a referendum proposal submitted by LMP, which was aimed at scrapping a law under which key government projects could be expedited. The party appealed against the committee decision to the Kúria, the supreme court, which decided in LMP's favour and scrapped the committee ruling. Ruling Fidesz then scrapped the contested law, but "packed practically all its stipulations" into another bill aimed to change the construction law, Csárdi said, adding that his party's aim was to remove all proposed stipulations aimed to expedite such government projects.

## **NOV PPI DOWN BY 6.6% Y/Y**

Factory gate prices fell by an annual 6.6% in November, falling for the fourth month in a row after rising for years, the Central Statistical Office said on Friday. Domestic prices declined by 1.9%, and export prices by 8.9%. KSH noted the impact of the strengthening

of the forint against the euro on the producer price index. Month on month, factory gate prices dropped by 0.8% as prices for domestic sale fell by 0.7% and export prices slipped by 0.9%.

## **HUNGARY JOBLESS RATE 4.2% IN NOVEMBER**

Hungary's jobless rate stood at 4.2% in November, up from 4.1% in October and 3.8% twelve months earlier, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Friday. The rate covers unemployment among people between the ages of 15 and 74. In absolute terms, there were 207,000 unemployed in November.

The rolling three-month average jobless rate stood at 4.3% in November, up 0.5 percentage points from twelve months earlier. In November 2023, the average number of employed persons aged 15-74 increased by 18,000 to 4,736,000 compared with the same period of the previous year.

In the September-November period, the number of employed persons was 4,755,000. While the number of workers in the domestic primary labour market increased by 34,000 and the number of workers abroad by 13,000, the number of public employees decreased by 6,000. Commenting on the figures, Sándor Czomba, the state secretary for employment policy, said the foundations of Hungary's work-based society were strong, allowing for rising employment even despite the difficulties caused by war and sanctions.

Whereas 2023 had been the year of reducing inflation, he said, 2024 would

be the year of restoring economic growth. Czomba said the government aimed to maintain dynamic wage growth so that the purchasing power of wages could rise by 4-5% this year. The government also aims to restore consumption, keep the investment rate above 25% and raise the ratio of active workers to 85% from 78% in the 20-64 age group, he said. To this end, the government will launch a 2.6 billion forint (EUR 6.8m) targeted programme to boost the labour market, he added.

## **BIRD FLU DETECTED IN E HUNGARY**

The H5N1 avian influenza subtype has been identified at a pheasant farm in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County, in eastern Hungary, food safety authority Nébih said on Thursday. Protection and surveillance zones have been established around the farm in Abádszalók and around 7,000 pheasants are being destroyed.

## **MORE THAN 17,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON THURSDAY**

Fully 6,424 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Thursday, while 10,617 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 118 people, ORFK said on Friday.

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### **RECORD HIGH MEASURED FOR LOWEST TEMPERATURE IN SW HUNGARY ON THURSDAY**

The HungaroMet weather service measured record high for the lowest temperature in southwest Hungary on Thursday. The temperature did not drop below 8.4 degrees Celsius in Boda, in Baranya County, which marked a record high for lowest temperature for the day. The previous record was 7.8 degrees measured in Vámosmikola, near Budapest, in 1998.

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### **HUNGARIAN DOG OWNERS SPEND HUF 190,000 A YEAR ON PETS**

The average Hungarian dog owner spends at least 190,000 forints (EUR 500) on their pet a year, a representative survey conducted

by Cofidis shows. In addition to a monthly 12,000 forints spent on dog food, owners spend an additional 47,000 forints on other pet products, grooming and veterinary costs. Dog owners' spending on their pets has risen one-third since the last survey was conducted five years earlier. Four in ten Hungarian households keep a dog at home.

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### **RENOIR EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS EXTENDED UNTIL JAN 21**

The Painter and His Models, an exhibition of Renoir's works in Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts, has been extended by two weeks until January 21, the museum has said. In response to great demand, the exhibition will also be open on Mondays, and the museum will open an hour earlier, at 9am,

on weekends, the statement said. Originally, the exhibition was going to close on January 7 but the museum has managed to agree about extending it with the international institutions that had lent some works. The nearly 70 paintings on display including such masterpieces as The Swing, Dance at Bougival and Claude Renoir in Clown Costume, have been arranged in chronological order and by theme to illustrate the artist's development, the museum said, adding that the exhibition is the first such show in Hungary dedicated to the impressionist artist alone. This is also the first time all three versions of Gabrielle are on display together, the first of which has been owned by the Budapest museum since 2019. The exhibition has been mounted in cooperation with Musée d'Orsay and Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris.