

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



The Hungarian sabre team at the Paris Olympics

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to Hungary's EU presidency

Events related to the war in Ukraine

KSH releases foreign trade turnover for May

## TOP STORY

### SZIJJÁRTÓ: BALTIC STATES LAUNCH 'CAMPAIGN OF LIES' AGAINST HUNGARY

"Rather than learning the facts the Baltic states have launched a campaign of lies against Hungary ... over Hungary including Russian and Belorussian citizens in its National Card programme," the foreign minister said.

Péter Szijjártó said the Hungarian government's move "does not ease strict security controls over incoming Russian and Belorussian citizens in any way."

Szjijártó also said Péter Sztáray, state secretary at the foreign ministry, had earlier in the day informed the embassies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

"We hope that learning the facts will end the campaign of lies," the minister said. The "Baltic propaganda campaign" against Hungary has been "restarted", as Baltic states accused the country of putting the security of the Schengen Area at risk, Szijjártó said on Tuesday. Contrary to that "childish lie", Russian and Belorussian nationals continue to need visas to enter the Schengen Area and can obtain residence permits only through lawful procedures, Szijjártó said. Meanwhile, issuing residence permits and similar procedures are national competencies, so "Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian authorities have similar rights," he added. "It would be much better if my colleagues in Baltic countries informed their citizens correctly rather than launching new smear campaigns," he said on Facebook.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY WELCOMES ITALIAN PM BEIJING VISIT**

Hungary welcomes Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's recent visit to Beijing and her talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, the foreign minister said on Wednesday. Meloni's statement suggesting that China is an indispensable partner in the dialogue amid "growing insecurity at an international level" is particularly welcome, Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook.

"We do hope that neither the European Union nor any of its members will attack Italy's prime minister over her visit to Beijing," Szijjártó said, adding that the way to find a solution in the current international situation was through diplomacy and dialogue.

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## **KOVÁCS: WEBER LAUNCHES 'HYPOCRITICAL ATTACK' ON HUNGARY**

A recent move by Manfred Weber, leader of the European People's Party, was "nothing but another hypocritical attack on Hungary by the pro-war liberal European elite," Zoltán Kovács, the government's international spokesman said on platform X on Tuesday. "Yet again, it is Manfred Weber who is attacking the Hungarian government, all the while his government and its political allies have poured millions of illegal migrants

into Europe, exposing the continent's states and the people of Europe to a grave threat to national and public security," Kovács said.

"This latest attack from Brussels is absurd and hypocritical because it is precisely the Brussels institutions and the EPP, in alliance with the liberal forces, that are doing everything in their power to ensure that Hungary is forced to dismantle its strict border protection and asylum system, allowing hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants into the country and thus into the European Union," he said. "The Hungarian immigration regime is the strictest in the European Union. Guest workers are only allowed entry under a regulated framework, which includes a national security check, and they can stay for a limited period solely for employment purposes," he said. Hungary will continue to protect its southern borders and maintain the strictest immigration regime in Europe, Kovács added.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY TO AID FIGHT AGAINST WILDFIRES IN NORTH MACEDONIA**

Hungary will send 3 all-terrain firetrucks to North Macedonia on Thursday, to aid efforts to extinguish wildfires there, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said on Facebook on Wednesday, after talking with Timčo Mucunski, his North Macedonian counterpart, on the phone. "Unfortunately, we have become

used to news of enormous wildfires during the summer heat, and it is not rare that they erupt in Europe, even in our extended neighbourhood," Péter Szijjártó said.

"Our North Macedonian friends are unfortunately facing those extraordinary challenges now. And if friends of ours are in trouble, we help ... Hungary will send three all-terrain firetrucks to North Macedonia tomorrow, which are able to target directly the point of origin from close up," Szijjártó said, adding that he hoped the Hungarian aid would contribute to curbing the fires as soon as possible. He also thanked the interior ministry and Interior Minister Sándor Pintér for the swift response to the crisis. Szijjártó said later on Wednesday that the Armed Forces are providing two helicopters to ramp up the aid.

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## **GOVT OFFICIAL: MEMBER STATES PRAISE EXPERT LEVEL PROGRAMMES OF HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY**

Member states -- on an expert level -- have given "very positive feedback" on the Hungarian presidency, a state secretary of the ministry of European Union affairs told news channel M1 on Wednesday. Hungary's presidency of the European Council has been subjected to "double standards" in Brussels, and continuous attacks even though professional programmes had been very successful, Barna Pál Zsigmond said. "We have had significant results, everyone is

praising the Hungarian organisers and Budapest, and the events have had an outstanding professional value." The government will take on leftist attacks, stand by its stance and implement its professional agenda, he said.

He said there was "no democracy" in the European Parliament because the left "has shaped procedures in its own image" and pushed the patriotic community and sovereigntist forces out from all positions. "Europe has lost its independence ... and fully subjected itself to the intentions of the US's Democratic government." Europe must "find itself again", and strengthen its economy, especially the defence industry, and find its way back to "a culture of dialogue" to replace "political and ideological attacks", he said.

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### **VARGA: ECONOMY COULD GROW BY 1.8-2.2% THIS YEAR, 3.5% NEXT YEAR**

Hungary's economy could grow by 1.8-2.2% this year and 3.5% could be achieved "by all means" next year, the finance minister said. Mihály Varga told commercial channel M2 that it was "good news" that in a European comparison, Hungary's second quarter growth figures were the third highest behind Portugal and Spain. The Russian-Ukraine war continues to weigh on European economies, with competitiveness problems and high energy prices also having an effect, he said. Germany's struggle with its own challenges and a crisis has also dragged Hungary down, Varga said.

He expressed hope that the next half year would see Germany returning to economic growth, which in turn could boost Europe. He said he was optimistic about the future, with all international forecasts showing significant growth in the Hungarian economy. The economy will expand in the second half, but developments in the US will be decisive, he added.

Varga said that 3.5% economic growth was feasible by all means for 2025, with 1.8-2.2% being a realistic projection for this year. An uninterrupted increase in real wages for the past 9 months and expanding consumption also support growth, he said. Hungary received investment grade rating from rate setters in May-June, and the government measures of June will help maintain the positive ratings in the autumn, he said.

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### **OFFICIAL: GOVT TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES WITH HUF 300 M**

The ministry of the interior will provide over 300 million forints (EUR 770,000) to supporting persons living with disabilities through tenders, the state secretary for social affairs said. Péter Csizi told a press conference that under a scheme dubbed Employment 2024, rehabilitation service providers helping people with disabilities find employment on the primary labour market can apply for funding over one year. Prospective employers and employees will both need education

to enable as many people find work as possible, he said. A tender for parents aims to provide financial support to civilian and church organisations that support parents raising children with severe disabilities, he said. At a similar tender last year, some 1,500 parents received support, he said. The third tender which has been regularly announced for over fifteen years supports organisations that train service dogs, he said. These include visual assistance dogs, as well as mobility supporter dogs and therapy dogs, he added.

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### **DK TO REQUEST INFORMATION ON GOVT'S LOAN FROM CHINA**

The Democratic Coalition will file a request to the State Debt Management Centre for information concerning the terms of a one-million-euro loan the government has recently taken out from China, László Varju, the opposition party's deputy leader, told an online press conference. The government "seeks to conceal" what they want to use the huge amount of money for, and suggested that Hungary's taxpayers would be repaying the loan for decades. "We don't know what interest we'll have to pay on the Chinese loan," he said, adding that the term of the loan was also unclear. "We do not know either which Fidesz-billionaire's company the money will benefit," Varju added. Through providing the loan, China will make Hungary "dependent, not only in

an economic but in a political sense”, Varju said. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán “has put on the Chinese leash in return for further billions they could loot,” he said. Taking a loan from China is “a shining proof” that “the government’s austerity measures have yielded even less in state revenues ... and because of the empty coffers it will take out further and further loans and introduce more and more austerity,” Varju said.

### **MTI WEBSITE GETS REVAMP IN SEPTEMBER**

The website of the Hungarian News Agency, mti.hu, will offer its readers and professional partners a renewed look, more content and a number of new services from September 2, Anita Altorjai, the head of Hungarian

public media company Duna Médiaszolgáltató, said. The number of news items available for free will be expanded to 80-100 pieces per day for registered users. Published content will be available for one year instead of 30 days and the audio news service will be available to everyone, Altorjai said. The website mti.hu currently has 8,000 registered users and almost 6,000 contractual partners, she added.

### **PPI UP BY 2.7% Y/Y IN JUNE**

Factory gate prices in Hungary were up by 2.7% year-on-year in June, climbing for the first time in close to a year, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Wednesday. Prices for domestic sale inched 0.2% lower but export prices climbed by 4.2%. Month

on month, factory gate prices rose by 1.5% as prices for domestic sale increased by 1.2% and export prices climbed 1.7%.

### **HOME CONSTRUCTIONS DOWN BY 18% IN H1**

The number of completed homes was down by 18% year on year in the first half of 2024, at 6,027, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Wednesday. Building permits issued in the period were also down by 18%, at 8,972, KSH said. Budapest saw the completion of 2,124 new homes, down by an annual 8.3%. Home constructions were down year on year by 20% in county seats, 27% in other cities and 19% in other localities, KSH said.