

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Tamás Kovács

Kayaker Danuta Kozák shows her K-1, K-2 and K-4 gold medals won in the world championships in Portugal

UPCOMING EVENTS

Presser on digital welfare credit programme

Foreign minister announces capacity expansion of poultry processing plant

Democratic Coalition presser on home care

TOP STORY

ELECTRONIC PAYMENT GAINING IN POPULARITY

Hungarians use 9 million bank cards, 75% of which are contactless cards, and modern electronic payment solutions are now accepted by 110,000 shops and service providers using almost 140,000 POS terminals, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said in an interview with MTI.

Digitalising the payment system has a considerable impact on competitiveness since cashless payment options make it quicker, safer, cheaper and more convenient to execute payment transactions, he said.

The volume of cash in circulation in Hungary is currently over 5,000 billion forints (EUR 15.4bn) or more than 14% of GDP as against the EU average of 8%. Handling cash costs the country hundreds of billions of forints every year. Raising financial awareness and encouraging the use of modern electronic payment options instead of cash is common interest, Varga said. The finance ministry called a two-round tender two years ago to support the installation of 60,000 POS terminals at shops and service providers across the country, half of which are already operating. Once the programme is completed, almost 80% of shops in Hungary will accept bank cards, Varga said.

The value of bank card purchases exceeded 5,000 billion forints for the first time last year compared to 3,980 billion in 2016. As the ratio of electronic payments is still only 25%, there is still room for further expansion, he said.

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PAKS BLOCK NUMBER THREE RESUMES OPERATION

Block number three of the Paks nuclear power plant resumed operation early on Saturday after unscheduled maintenance work, MVM Paks Atomerőmű said on its website.

The block was shut down on August 14 after a pump malfunctioned.

Head of communications Antal Kovács said the equipment has been replaced and block number three is again operating at its nominal capacity.

STATE SECY HONOURS HUNGARIAN, RUSSIAN SOLDIERS FALLEN IN WW2

Hungarians will always honour the memory of soldiers fallen in their country, including those who fought against them, State Secretary of Defence Szilárd Németh said in Csólyospálos, in southern Hungary, at the consecration of the refurbished graves of Hungarian and Soviet soldiers fallen in World War Two.

It is a special duty of the Hungarian government to preserve the memory of war heroes and ensure that the fallen soldiers should not remain buried in unmarked graves, he said.

Németh noted that more than a hundred thousand Soviet soldiers, tens of thousands of Germans, and thousands of Bulgarians, Romanians and soldiers of other nationalities died in Hungary.

The government has signed agreements with nine countries on taking care of war graves and urges for further such agreements to be signed, wherever necessary and possible, he said.

BUDAPEST-VIENNA MOTORWAY TO BE UPGRADED, EXTENDED TO THREE LANES

Hungary's motorway M1, connecting Budapest with Vienna, will be upgraded on a 43-kilometre section and extended with a third lane, Innovation and Technology Minister László Palkovics told news portal Origo.

"M1 is Hungary's most overloaded motorway, practically the sole transit traffic artery between the two capital cities. With traffic approaching the tolerance limit, the motorway cannot be used by a lot more vehicles," he said.

The revamping project, to cost 25 billion forints (EUR 77m), will start in September and, if all goes according to plan, last until late 2019, Palkovics said.

The construction of the third lane is scheduled to start in 2021, he said.

44% OF HUNGARIANS WORKING IN JOBS NOT FITTING THEIR HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

About 44% of Hungarian workers are not employed in the field where they have their highest qualification and a further 44% are actively thinking about changing jobs, mainly because

of higher earning opportunities, according to a representative online survey by Profession.hu. The survey is based on interviews with 1,000 people.

Almost one-fifth of respondents said their highest qualification is vocational training but only 9% are currently employed as skilled workers. About 12% said their highest qualification is related to office administration while only 14% work in this field.

Around 8% of respondents said their highest qualification is for sales and commerce but just 4% of the participants of the survey are employed in such jobs.

When asked about their possible reasons for changing jobs, 34% of interviewees gave financial reasons, 15% said they wanted more flexible working hours and 14% indicated the loss of their job.

NEW CARPATHIAN LAWYERS' NETWORK PRESENTS ITSELF IN CLUJ

The newly established Carpathian Lawyers' Network, an international group of lawyers working in Hungarian as well, formally introduced itself at a Hungarian festival in Cluj (Kolozsvár), in western Romania.

The network comprises lawyers and law students who also use Hungarian for their work around the world.

Greeting the new organisation, László Kövér, the Speaker of Hungary's Parliament, said in a letter that the Network can strengthen cooperation in alliance with the Association of

Hungarian Lawyers in the Carpathian Basin beyond the borders.

Erika Mayer, the founder, told MTI after the event that the Network has been established as a community with the aim to promote cooperation among professionals working in Hungarian.

“Our goal is to adopt a common legal position on issues such as migration or EU affairs that arise in more countries,” she said.

The event was attended by lawyers from Hungary, Transylvania, southern Slovakia and Serbia’s northernmost region of Vojvodina.

ZALAEGRSZEG TO SUPPORT LENDAVA’S EUROPEAN CULTURAL CAPITAL BID

The south-western Hungarian city of Zalaegerszeg has signed a letter of intent to support as a partner the north-eastern Slovenian Lendava’s (Lendva) bid to become a European Capital of Culture in 2025, the local government of Zalaegerszeg said.

As a European cultural capital, Lendava strives to present to the European public the cultural values and traditions of a region that is home to Hungarian, Slovenian, Croatian and German speaking people, it said.

Working in partnership with the European Cultural Capital’s program council, Zalaegerszeg will participate in designing joint cultural, touristic and environmentally sound transport programmes, it said.

EMPLOYERS MAIN BENEFICIARIES OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION

It is mainly capitalists employing workers who benefit from economic migration while lower-income groups see their situation deteriorate in countries receiving large numbers of immigrants, state secretary of the ministry of innovation and technology László György said at a conference on migration in Balatonszárszó, in western Hungary.

Speaking at the Gathering of Reformed People, the state secretary cited the results of a research conducted five years ago in the United States, showing that although employers’ profits increased by 450 billion dollars in connection with the employment of immigrants, the wages of the workers they employed fell by more than 400 billion dollars.

György noted that immigrants use the welfare benefit system to a much higher extent, adding that integrating immigrants has huge costs. OECD statistics show the labour market integration of one asylum seeker is estimated to cost 371,000 dollars in Norway and 71,000 dollars in Hungary, he said.

The state secretary noted that the government’s main job is to create and maintain the conditions of prosperity, freedom, order, justice and national security, and it is mainly the latter that is under threat from the mass migration arriving to Europe.

RENEWED MUSEUM OF BISHOP MÁRTON REOPENS IN CENTRAL ROMANIA

The museum of Áron Márton, the ethnic Hungarian bishop of Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár) from 1939 to 1980, was reopened in his native village Sândominic (Csíkszentdomokos), in central Romania’s Szeklerland region.

The museum has been extended with a section of Romanian secret service documents about the bishop as well as digital and mechanical interactive elements.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Árpád János Potápi, the state secretary for Hungarian communities abroad, noted that the communist power-holders had failed to break the bishop, who had repeatedly stood up for the oppressed.

Áron Márton (1896-1980) was a prominent representative of Hungarian public life in Transylvania. In 1944, he condemned the planned deportation of Hungarian and Romanian Jews. For his activities during this period, he was awarded the title “Righteous Among the Nations” by the Yad Vashem institute in Jerusalem in 1999.

A committed advocate of religious freedom and human rights, Márton became an outspoken opponent of Romania’s dictatorial communist regime. He was arrested in 1949 and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1951. Upon international pressure, he was ultimately released in 1955 but was not allowed to leave the bishopric building from 1956 to 1967.