

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Decorative shade structure at the venue of the Sziget festival

MTI/Zsolt Szigetvári

UPCOMING EVENTS

DK organises protest against disposal of sewage sludge in Székesfehérvár

French supermarket chain Auchan, Natl Assoc of Large Families organise school supply drive

TOP STORY

NÉZŐPONT: RULING PARTIES RETAIN BIG LEAD

The ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance has retained its big lead ahead of the opposition parties, a poll conducted by the Nézőpont research institute shows.

The ruling parties would win a general election, if held on Sunday, with a 52% support among decided voters, according to the poll commissioned by daily Magyar Nemzet. The leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) and Momentum would garner 11% of the votes, respectively, in this group, the poll showed. Nationalist Jobbik was backed by 9% and Socialist-Párbeszéd by 7% of the respondents. The satirical Two-tailed Dog party was supported by 4%, LMP by 3% and radical nationalist Mi Hazánk by 2%.

Among all voters, support for the ruling parties remained practically unchanged, at 41%. DK and Jobbik were supported by 7% each, while Momentum was backed by 6% and Socialist-Párbeszéd by 5%. Nézőpont conducted the poll by asking 5,000 voting-age adults in person between July 2 and 9.

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EUROBAROMETER: MAJORITY OF HUNGARIANS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT STATE OF EU

The majority of Hungarians tend to have an overall positive view of the European Union, according to a fresh Eurobarometer survey. Fully 55% of Hungarians tend to trust the bloc as against 44% who lent in the opposite direction, according to the Standard Eurobarometer 91 report's section on Hungary, which ranks 9th out of 28 member states in this respect. Since the last Eurobarometer survey, the share of Hungarians who trust the EU has risen by 7 percentage points. On average in the bloc, 44% said they trusted the EU, up 2 percentage points since the last survey. Altogether 52% of Hungarians said they had a positive view of the EU, 9 percentage points more than in the previous survey. Fully 68% of Hungarians expressed optimism and 28 pessimism concerning the future of the bloc.

Asked what they saw as the most important challenges facing the bloc, 49% of Hungarians claimed immigration as the top issue, followed by 23% who identified terrorism, while 22% insisted it was climate change.

The personal interviews of over 27,000 people from the 28 EU member states were conducted in June.

LMP DEMANDS IMMEDIATE HALT TO BUDAPEST- BELGRADE RAILWAY PROJECT

The opposition LMP party has called on the government to halt the China-backed project to upgrade the Budapest-Belgrade rail line. The party's group leader accused the government of "treason" costing the nation around 1,000 billion forints (EUR 3.1bn). László Lóránt Keresztes said the project was a failure and had become "completely unnecessary and senseless". The party has submitted a resolution to parliament to halt the project with immediate effect, he added.

He said the government in 2017 justified the investment on the ground that it would ease access to the port of Piraeus. But, he added, this reasoning was now obviated, given the government's recent purchase of an area in Trieste with a view to building a port and logistics base there. Keresztes cited Foreign Minister Péter Sijjártó recently stating that the port of Trieste would completely open up opportunities to Hungarian businesses. "This means the government has admitted that the development of the Budapest-Belgrade rail link is completely unnecessary in terms of the national interest. "According to professional estimates, the project's cost, including servicing "a gigantic Chinese loan", could come close to 1,000 billion forints, Keresztes said. He added that the development of the rail link primarily served Chinese interests as well as companies belonging to Lőrinc Mészáros, a businessman linked to the

Hungarian prime minister, who owns a share worth at least 300 billion forints. "The project would take 1,000 billion forints out of the pockets of Hungarian taxpayers, when rural infrastructure around the country is in a parlous state," he said. "This is proof that the government is committing treason against Hungarian interests."

GOVT ALLOCATES HUF 100 BN FOR RURAL ROAD UPGRADES

The Hungarian government has decided to allocate a total 100 billion forints (EUR 31m) for road renovation projects as part of the Hungarian Villages Programme, the government's commissioner for modern communities said. Half of the grand total would be spent on renovating 250 kilometres of roadways at 89 road sections this year. The programme will continue in 2020 with projects using the second 50 billion forints. Road works will be undertaken throughout the country in all 19 counties.

CHIEF VET: HUNGARY SWINE STOCK UNAFFECTED BY AFRICAN FLU

The African swine flu virus has not been detected in Hungary's farm stocks, the chief veterinary officer told public broadcaster M1, but warned that wild boars are spreading the disease. Further infected wild boars have been found in north-eastern Hungary, Lajos Bognár said, while there is a high risk of the epidemic spreading in central-

eastern Hungary, too. Hunters are obliged to remove the carcasses of dead boars and kill ones exhibiting symptoms of the African fever, the officer said. Farmers are advised to pay increased attention to the cleaning and disinfection of the stiles and not to feed their swine with green fodder straight from the fields or use fresh straw for litter. Livestock cannot be transported from one location to the other without prior inspection by a vet, Bognár said.

WIZZ AIR TO ADD EDINBURGH TO BUDAPEST TIMETABLE

Hungarian low-cost airline Wizz Air said it will launch a Budapest-Edinburgh flight in December. The flight will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Passenger numbers on Wizz Air's Hungarian flights rose by 7% to more than 3.2 million in January-July this year from a year earlier.

Meanwhile, Wizz Air has said is considering cancelling its contract for services from Malév Ground Handling at Liszt Ferenc International.

Wizz Air VP Diederik Pen acknowledged an investigation of Malév Ground Handling over suspected violations of consumer protection rules and said the company was indeed breaking rules by charging higher prices than advertised and by selling services which Wizz Air does not offer. "In the interest of resolving the situation, we

are weighing all possibilities, including the cancellation of the contract," Pen said in the statement.

Days earlier, Hungary's state secretary for consumer protection ordered a probe of Malév Ground Handling, because of reports in the press that the company was overcharging for services such as check-in. Malév Ground Handling, which also runs business lounges and offers VIP services at Liszt Ferenc is owned by the Hungarian National Asset Management Company (MNV).

VODAFONE LAUNCHES NARROWBAND IOT IN HUNGARY

Mobile company Vodafone told MTI it had launched its Narrowband Internet of Things (NB-IoT) nationwide in Hungary. The launch is part of an international network development project run by the Vodafone Group in ten European countries. Narrowband IoT is a Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) radio technology standard enabling access to and communication of a wide range of smart devices and services based on the existing mobile networks.

NEW ROUNDABOUT AT BUDAPEST AIRPORT TO COST HUF 1 BN

A new roundabout is being built before Terminal 2 of

Budapest's Liszt Ferenc airport to accommodate both personal and cargo traffic, the airport operator Budapest Airport told MTI. The two-lane roundabout will cost 1 billion forints (EUR 3m). Eighty-five percent of the expenses will be retroactively paid for by the European Union.

INDOTEK ACQUIRES SHOPPING MALLS FROM KLEPIERRE GROUP

Hungary's Competition Office (GVH) has cleared the acquisition of a number of shopping centres owned by France's Klepierre group by Hungary's Indotek group, a resolution posted on the office's website shows. Forbes Magazine Hungary said GVH approved the acquisition of Klepierre units that own the Corvin Plaza and Duna Plaza in Budapest, as well as the Győr Plaza (NW Hungary) and the Miskolc Plaza (NE Hungary). Forbes noted that Indotek acquired the Alba Plaza in Székesfehérvár (NW Hungary) and the Nyír Plaza in Nyíregyháza (NE Hungary) from Klepierre early in the year. Indotek has made a number of high profile purchases recently, including the non-performing commercial real estate loans of MKB Bank and the landmark Gellért Hotel in Budapest. Indotek is majority owned by its CEO, Dániel Jellinek.