

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Noémi Bruzák

Bolivian dancers at an international folk festival in Százhalombatta near Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fitch, S&P to review Hungary's sovereign rating

State awards granted for Aug 20 national holiday

Govt official addresses event at Premonstratensian monastery in Csorna

TOP STORY

FARM MINISTER OPENS FARMER EXPO IN E HUNGARY

Farm minister István Nagy opened Farmer Expo, an exhibition of farming and food products in eastern Hungary's Debrecen which drew some 300 exhibitors.

In his opening address, the minister highlighted the importance of developing irrigation technology, and said that the government was planning to provide subsidised loans to finance such projects. Innovation and development are "unavoidable" and require results from "all fields of scientific research", Nagy said. Currently, 85,000 hectares of land in Hungary can be irrigated, he added. The government plans to develop irrigation for a further 100,000 hectares by the end of the cycle, which would raise production by 20 to 25 billion forints (EUR 61.6-76.9m), he said.

In a video message to the fair's participants, Hungarian President János Áder said "agriculture is one of the most important factors in the challenge endangering human civilisation". It is the sector most exposed to extreme weather changes, he said. Agriculture is in need of changes in approach and technology, Áder said. It will have to lay down the basics of modern irrigation systems, and develop plants capable of adapting to changing weather conditions, he said.

NAIH DEMANDS FACEBOOK GUARANTEES TO PROTECT USERS' PRIVACY

Facebook must provide written guarantees that it would not disclose the transcripts of users' voice calls to third parties, or else Hungary's data protection authority (NAIH) will ban the service provider from doing so, NAIH chief Attila Péterfalvi told MTI. Péterfalvi voiced his authority's appreciation that Facebook has recently suspended the evaluation of such transcripts, but added that the guarantees Facebook has so far undertaken did not provide sufficient protection. He also added that the NAIH would participate in an investigation conducted by its counterpart in Ireland, where Facebook has its European headquarters. Facebook on Tuesday admitted that it had contracted third parties to listen in on recorded voice calls. According to Péterfalvi, the NAIH has not received complaints from Facebook users as yet.

LMP PROTESTS OIL, GAS EXPLORATION PLANS

The opposition LMP party has called on the government to drop plans of opening new oil and gas fields and to scrap bids for oil and gas exploration projects. Erzsébet Schmuck, deputy group leader of the party, said that the innovation and technology ministry's recent concession bids were aimed at

oil and gas fields across the country with "negligible" potential, but would pose serious environmental threats. In the face of climate change, the government should take measures to eliminate fossil fuels, she added. LMP will propose setting up a special parliamentary committee to look into details of the contested bids, Schmuck said.

GOVT OFFICIAL: FOSTER PARENTS TO RECEIVE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY FROM 2020

The government will introduce child care subsidy (GYED) for foster parents from January 1, 2020, in an effort to strengthen the child protection system in Hungary, a government official said on Thursday. Speaking at an event at a small group home for children in state care in the northern Hungarian village of Tar, state secretary Attila Fülöp of the human resources ministry said that 15,000 children in Hungary live with foster parents and some 8,000 in state homes. Therefore, strengthening the network of foster parents and boosting appreciation for child protection professionals is extremely important, he said.

TWO ARRESTED FOR SMUGGLING CHILDREN THROUGH HUNGARY

An Iraqi and a Syrian national have been arrested at Budapest's Liszt Ferenc International Airport after they were caught attempting to smuggle four children through

Hungary, the national police headquarters said. The two adults and four children had arrived from Athens late on Tuesday evening. The Iraqi man and Syrian woman were apprehended when it was discovered that the woman, the two boys and two girls had fake names in their Greek passports. Police established that the suspects had been planning to take the 10-year-old Afghan and 9-year-old Iraqi boys to their relatives in Austria. They were also trying to smuggle the woman's 6 and 4-year-old daughters to an Austrian city. The suspects have been taken into custody and police have initiated expedited criminal proceedings. The four children have been placed in a state-run orphanage in Fót, near Budapest, and are awaiting immigration proceedings.

MINISTRY PUTS WHEAT CROP AT 5M TONNES

Hungary's Agriculture Ministry estimated this year's wheat crop will reach 5 million tonnes in a statement issued on Thursday, at the end of the summer harvest. Wheat grown on 952,000 hectares yielded 5.27 tonnes per hectare, on average, the ministry said. The barley crop is set to reach 1.2 million tonnes as barley planted on 218,000 hectares yielded 5.49 tonnes per hectare. The ministry put the rapeseed crop at 874,000 tonnes. The crop yielded an average 2.95 tonnes per hectare on 296,000 hectares.

FITCH, S&P TO REVIEW HUNGARY'S SOVEREIGN RATING ON FRIDAY

Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's Global Ratings are both scheduled to review Hungary's sovereign credit rating on Friday. This will be the second

and last scheduled sovereign credit rating review of Hungary by both rating agencies this year. In its previous review on February 22, Fitch Ratings raised Hungary's sovereign rating to 'BBB' from 'BBB-', two notches over the investment grade threshold. S&P also upgraded the rating to 'BBB', two notches over the investment grade

threshold, with a 'stable' outlook, on February 15. Moody's Investors Service did not update Hungary's Baa3 rating with a stable outlook in its May review. Moody's is next scheduled to review Hungary's sovereign rating on October 25. The three rating agencies put Hungary's sovereign rating back in investment grade in 2016.