

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Zsolt Czeglédi

Preparations under way for Debrecen Flower Carnival

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

**State awards granted on occasion of Aug 20 national holiday**

**Govt official addresses event at Premonstratensian monastery in Csorna**

**Opposition mayoral candidate primary in Budapest's 9th district ends**

## TOP STORY

# NEW RESEARCH BODY HEAD MEETS UNIVERSITY REPS

Miklós Maróth, head of the Eötvös Loránd Research Network, has met with university representatives to begin talks on cooperation concerning the new research, development and innovation system, the Szent István University said.

Lawmakers approved amendments to legislation early in July that relocated the research institutions of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to the Eötvös Loránd Research Network, a body with its own, independent budget chapter. At the meeting, the university representatives said the higher education institutions set to play key roles in the development of the new R&D&I system were now better prepared to use the extra funds they receive thanks to the chancellery system, the university said in a statement. Stable management and infrastructural developments have made the universities capable of carrying out innovation-related tasks, they said.

The university cited Maróth as saying that the government funds spent on research would have to yield "tangible" results for the Hungarian economy and society in general. The economy will need more Hungarian patents and inventions if it is to get stronger, he said. Next year's budget earmarks an extra 32 billion forints (EUR 98.2m) towards R&D&I, "thereby establishing the conditions for uniform, performance-based financing", the statement added.

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## **AUGUST 20 - HR MINISTER HANDS OUT STATE AWARDS**

Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler and state secretary Bence Rétvári handed over state awards to artists, actors, doctors, scientists and academics on the occasion of Hungary's August 20 national holiday.

In his speech to the ceremony, Kásler said that in their studies of "nature, man, ideas and the arts", the recipients had "discovered new paths and approaches in the empire of ideas", science and culture. The minister thanked the 75 recipients on behalf of the nation and the government for their service to their country and contribution to its progress.

Turning to the upcoming national holiday, Kásler said Hungary's founder, King St. Stephen, had set out Hungary's place in Europe and the world. He said it was that foundation which had lifted Hungary "to the height of secular power for centuries" and was the foundation "on which we could always build during our centuries of affliction, distress and martyrdom".

The award recipients were presented with the Knight's Cross, Officer's Cross and Medium Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary as well as the Master of Folk Art and Young Master of Folk Art awards.

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## **HOUSE SPEAKER OPENS CSÁNGÓ FESTIVAL IN BUDAPEST**

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér opened Budapest's Csángó festival,

dedicated to the culture of the 250,000-strong ethnic group living in Romania's Moldavia region. Running between August 15 and 25, the festival showcases Csángó culture through a series of exhibitions, concerts and other events. Kövér told the opening ceremony that the Csángó community had "preserved the treasures of our past ... the way of thinking that belongs to the language, songs, ballads and myths representing the most ancient branches of our nation". Next year, the government will spend 130 billion forints (EUR 400.3m) on supporting the three million Hungarians living abroad, Kövér noted. The funding will go towards preserving their mother tongue and culture and strengthening the network of communities, he said. The government should continue uniting the nation across borders and its policies aiming regional cooperation with neighbouring countries, he said.

Csángós are believed to have fled from neighbouring Transylvania in at least two waves, one in the 18th century. An estimated 60,000 members of the community still speak an archaic form of Hungarian.

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## **LMP CALLS ON GOVT NOT TO EXTEND MÁTRAI COAL PLANT OPERATING LICENCE**

Green opposition LMP has called on the government not to extend the operating licence of the Mátrai Erőmű coal-based electricity plant

near Gyöngyös, in northern Hungary, which will expire at the end of 2025. Party lawmaker Péter Ungár said that the government had repeatedly stated that it wants to transform the system of energy supplies to be based on a combination of renewable resources and nuclear energy. If this is true, then there is no reason to extend the operating licence of a "real climate-killer power plant", he added. Ungár called on the government to declare that Hungary's energy supplies would be carbon-free by 2030.

Workers of Mátrai Erőmű need to be retrained without delay so that they can find jobs in other energy sectors, he said. Ungár said in July that the plant emits about 14% of Hungary's greenhouse gases. Keeping the plant operational will compromise the country's ability to hit its climate protection targets, he added. Ungár said that whereas the plant produced a big portion of Hungarian heat and electricity, it used outdated technology.

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## **KARACSONY CALLS FOR BARRING LOCAL POLITICIANS FROM RENTING MUNICIPALITY- OWNED HOUSING**

Opposition lawmakers will submit a bill to parliament barring elected local politicians from renting real estate owned by the local authority, Budapest mayoral candidate Gergely Karácsony said.

Karácsony, the joint candidate of the Socialist, Párbeszéd and Democratic

Coalition parties and mayor of Budapest's 14th district, cited the city's 1st district, comprising the Buda Castle and its surroundings, as an example. The district has become a symbol of local politicians "wanting to rule and not to serve", he said. District-owned properties are inhabited by local politicians while other citizens are destitute, he said.

Márta Naszályi V., the opposition candidate for district mayor at the October 13 local election, insisted "it has turned out" that the district's incumbent mayor (of the Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance), his family and some of his business partners are living in properties owned by the local government "for rents well below the market price".

### **MORE THAN 30,000 STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN STATE-SPONSORED SUMMER JOBS SCHEME**

More than 30,000 students have participated in a state-sponsored summer jobs programme this year, daily Magyar Nemzet said. State secretary for employment policy and corporate ties Sándor Bodó noted that annual funding earmarked for the programme had earlier been topped up by 400 million forints to 4 billion forints (EUR 12.3m). He said the programme offers students work experience. The subsidies available under the programme, which runs until August 31, cover 75% of wages and payroll taxes for student hires

between the ages of 16 and 25 at private businesses in July and August. Local council-owned companies enjoy a 100% subsidy for student hires during the period.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPENDING STEADY IN HUNGARY**

Hungarian families' spending on back-to-school supplies is little changed from two years ago, according to a survey by online marketplace Vatera. One-third of families spend 15,000-25,000 forints (EUR 46-76) on back-to-school supplies per child, according to the survey. Around 27% spend 10,000-15,000 forints, and 21% spend 25,000-40,000 forints. One-tenth of families spend less than 10,000 forints per child, and the same percentage spends over 40,000 forints per child. Around 56% of families start their back-to-school shopping well ahead of the end of the summer break, but 44% leave those purchases to the last minute.

### **SZOMBATHELY TO HOST SAVARIA HISTORICAL CARNIVAL**

Szombathely will host its Savaria Historical Festival evoking the historical past and ancient traditions of the city founded in the Roma times between August 22 and 25, the organisers have said. Szombathely is one of the oldest settlements in Hungary founded by Emperor Claudius around 50 AD. Then known as Savaria, it is the only

settlement in the Carpathian Basin which has been continually inhabited ever since its Roman foundation.

Organised for the 20th time, the festival will offer some 400 events at 30 venues. In a highlight event, about 1,200 people dressed in costumes will be evoking the glorious and memorable historical events of Szombathely and the province Pannonia at a Grand Procession taking place on Saturday and Sunday. The march will be followed by music performances, and acrobat, fire juggler and banner waving shows. The four-day festival will offer a wide range of other programmes including exhibitions, national costume shows and art workshops. Delegations from Szombathely's sister cities in Austria, Germany, Portugal and Romania will also attend the event.

### **TURNOVER OF HUNGARIAN FISHING COMPANIES CLIMBS TO HUF 18 BN IN 2018**

Net revenue of Hungary's fishing and fish processing companies rose close to HUF 18bn last year from HUF 16.8bn (EUR 51.9m) in 2017, Opten, which compiles company information, said. Turnover was boosted by the reduction in the VAT rate on fish from 27% to 5% from the start of 2018, Opten noted. Hungarians consume 5-7kg of fish, per capita, a year, well under the 20-22kg European Union average.