

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Hungary's winning team in the women's K-4 500 event at the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships in Szeged (S)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Local election campaign events**

**Foreign minister holds talks with Indian counterpart**

**Budapest mayor addresses conference on innovation, sustainable surface transport**

**Railway company MÁV's presser on renovation of train stations**

## TOP STORY

# LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS UNDER WAY

The campaign for Hungary's October local elections officially got under way over the weekend.

Under the election law, the campaign period officially begins 50 days before the election and lasts until the day of the vote. President János Áder has set October 13 as the date of the local elections. On this day Hungary's national and ethnic minorities will also elect local representatives.

During the campaign period, political parties do not need to seek permission to put out advertisements. They are free to put out as many billboards as they want. Candidates can now start collecting recommendations by voters on recommendation sheets. Voters can recommend more than one candidate but may only sign the recommendation sheet of a given candidate once. The number of signatures a mayoral or councillor candidate must gather in order to run was set by notaries earlier this month based on the number of names in the local voter registry in question. Candidates have until 4pm on Sept. 9 to collect the required number of signatures. Parties or other organisations fielding county election lists can collect signatures until Sept. 10.

Hungary Matters is an English-language newsletter produced and distributed by the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) with content provided by Duna Media Service Provider exercises copyright over all content. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, redistributed or transmitted without prior written permission from the publisher, with the exception of copies made by individuals for private use, educational purposes or scholarly research, provided that such transmissions do not exceed the extent justified by the purpose and are not aimed at financial gain, even indirectly, and the source name are indicated at all times.

All rights reserved. Enquiries should be made to the English Help Desk at +361 441 9340  
For MTI's real time coverage please visit <http://english.mti.hu>, <http://econews.hu>



**TARLÓS SLAMS  
OPPOSITION’S LOCAL  
ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

Budapest Mayor István Tarlós, in a public radio interview over the weekend, slammed the opposition’s mayoral election campaign in the capital, calling it a “destabilisation attempt” that was “not even about the city itself”. Asked what kind of a campaign he was expecting in Budapest, Tarlós told Kossuth Rádió that the opposition’s campaign “is more like a thrown-together destabilisation attempt with no variety focused on revenge that makes no sense whatsoever in terms of the management of the capital”. The incumbent mayor said the opposition’s messaging was not even focused on Budapest, adding that the proposals they have put forward were “rather unbelievable”. Tarlós argued that many of their proposals were legally unfeasible and that the opposition candidates who were competent in managing a municipality had already had their chance and failed before 2010.

He criticised the city leadership under former liberal Budapest mayor Gábor Demszky, saying “it was they who left behind the unmanageable operational deficits and it was under their tenure that Budapest’s international perception was damaged.” He said the opposition politicians who had been in power before 2010 “promised Budapest an

actual green rainforest” at a recent press conference. “How come this never crossed their minds before 2010?” Tarlós asked. “How is it that they only planted a few hundred trees a year while we plant an average of 2,000 a year?” He said the pre-2010 Budapest leadership had not cared about historical parks like the one on Margaret Island and had barely spent anything on upgrading public parks, which the current leadership spent 5.5 billion forints (EUR 16.6m) on between 2015 and 2019. He noted that back in 2010, Budapest transport company BKV had operated 24-year-old buses and 30-40-year-old trams. Tarlós said it was under his tenure that Budapest transport authority BKK completed the interconnected tram network project in Buda. He also noted the renovation of Széll Kálmán Square and the introduction of selective waste management as part of his record.

Since 2010, the local council has stabilised the management of the city, including BKV, he said. Budapest no longer needs an operating loan and only has a “well-managed development credit line”, he added. Trains on the third metro line were recently renovated and air conditioning will soon be installed on them, the mayor said. Some 700 billion forints’ worth of development projects have been approved by the local council, Tarlós said. These will include the revamp of the iconic Chain Bridge, the replacement of more BKV vehicles, the renovation of Blaha Lujza Square and Széna Square, the

development of the European cycling route network Eurovelo as well as the upgrade of the road leading to Liszt Ferenc International Airport. He said Budapest’s e-ticket system, which will be coupled with the national system, is currently in its introduction phase. With the various developments on schedule, Tarlós said, “in the future we’ll be able to concentrate on environmental protection and the problem of homelessness”.

Over the last nine years, Budapest’s prestige has risen in the eyes of the international community, Tarlós said, adding that just this year, Budapest was awarded the title of ‘European Best Destination’.

**KARÁCSONY VOWS  
TO GIVE BUDAPEST  
RESIDENTS GREATER SAY  
IN CITY’S AFFAIRS**

At stake in the October 13 local elections will be the chance for Budapest voters to regain the right to have a say in their city’s affairs, the joint mayoral candidate of three leftist opposition parties said on Saturday, the official start of the election campaign. “The ballot will also decide whether incumbent mayor Istvan Tarlós, the ‘puppet’ of [ruling] Fidesz, can be unseated,” Gergely Karácsony, fielded by the Socialists, the Democratic Coalition and Párbeszéd, told a press conference at a Budapest market. Karácsony, who is mayor of Budapest’s 14th district, said Tarlós “does not represent the



interests of Budapest residents against the government, but rather the government's will against those residents". "But I have good news for those Budapest residents who want change: opposition parties and civil organisations will run in the October ballot in each individual constituency and in all 23 districts of Budapest on a joint ticket," he said. Karácsony said change was about "Budapest taking back the money and institutions that have been taken away from the city; and its residents having the chance to build a community with a trait of solidarity, a community that can again be an integral part of Europe".

---

### **KÓSA: FIDESZ OFFERS PROGRESS AGAINST OPPOSITION'S 'UNREST'**

Hungary's ruling alliance of Fidesz and the Christian Democrats offers progress, while the opposition offers "unrest" in the upcoming local elections, Lajos Kósa, Fidesz's campaign chief, said in an interview to Saturday's edition of the daily Magyar Nemzet. "These are the two choices voters will be faced with in the October 13 municipal election," Kósa told the paper. He said voters could expect "many attempts at disinformation" from the opposition parties during the campaign.

Kósa said it was impossible to predict the issues the opposition would campaign on "since their messaging is already all over the place". He said the common theme in their messages

was their desire to oust Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party. Kósa argued, however, that this was not the right message in a local election since the vote will not affect the status of the government.

Contrary to the opposition, Kósa said, Fidesz wants to improve Hungary's municipalities in line with the government scheme launched by the prime minister. Fidesz is calling on voters "not to put control of their municipality in the hands of the opposition led by Ferenc Gyurcsány and his party, the Democratic Coalition, because that side embraces hate, war and constant hatemongering", he said. There are close to 3,200 local councils in Hungary, Kósa said. He added that Fidesz would field or support mayoral candidates in some 1,200 localities. "The race could end up being close in a number of municipalities, but Fidesz could also secure sweeping victories in many cities and towns," he added. In response to a question, Kósa said the ruling alliance was prepared to counter the opposition's strategy of "supporting candidates who claim to be independent and try to come across as conservative". All Fidesz would have to do, he said, was go door-to-door and warn voters of this.

---

### **JOBBIK CAMPAIGNS FOR 'TRUE REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL CAUSE'**

Hungarian voters will have a chance on October 13 to choose between officials "delegated to serve the

interests of ruling Fidesz" in localities and local officials "faithful to the local cause", the group leader of opposition nationalist Jobbik said. Jobbik politicians have sat down for consultations with representatives of many parties, civil groups and local officials over the past several months to discuss ways of offering localities "a better future", Péter Jakab told a press conference launching the conservative party's campaign for the local ballot in Budapest.

Jobbik's aim is to help local officials "retake Hungarian cities, towns and villages from ruling Fidesz" so that they can give them back to those who can "rebuild them under the principle of decency", Jakab said. "Jobbik's politicians will make sure in every local assembly that this principle is observed. Fidesz has built its two-thirds majority in local governments and that is why the ruling party is destined to be defeated on that battleground," Jakab added. "The first chance to get an entry ticket to unseating the government in the 2022 general election will be on October 13," he said.

---

### **LMP EYES MORE 'GREEN LOCAL COUNCILS'**

At stake in October's municipal elections is whether there will be more "green local councils" after the ballot, opposition LMP said over the weekend. Hungary needs local councils that will approve within the shortest amount of time schemes promoting the

sustainable use of local resources, Erzsébet Schmuck, the party's deputy group leader, told a press conference in Budapest. Such schemes will aim to improve the living conditions of local residents, reduce pollution, thwart climate change and help people adapt to its effects, she said.

### **SUSPECTED INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED IN BUDAPEST**

Police have arrested suspected members of an international drug trafficking network in Budapest, the national police headquarters said on its website. A Croatian, a Hungarian and a Kosovar suspect were caught red handed by investigators of the operational police force on Thursday as they were getting ready to sell marijuana worth 115 million forints (EUR 350,000) in Budapest's 10th district. Police had received a tip that a major drug transaction was about to go down in the capital and planned their operation. They checked all three suspects and then inspected the van in which the drugs were hidden.

The investigators found two boxes containing 46 kilos of a substance later confirmed to be marijuana stashed in the cargo compartment of the van. The 32-year-old Croatian, 57-year-old Hungarian and 23-year-old Kosovar national were taken into custody and police have initiated legal proceedings.

### **PIERRE RICHARD, MICHAEL NYMAN, UDO KIER SPECIAL GUESTS AT BUDAPEST CLASSICS FILM MARATHON**

Pierre Richard, Michael Nyman, Udo Kier and Magda Vasaryova will be special guests at this year's Budapest Classics Film Marathon held between September 4 and 11, the organiser said over the weekend. The prominent open-air international film festival's focus will be on the connection between film and music, the Hungarian National Film Fund told MTI.

On its opening day, the festival will pay tribute to Hungarian-born Hollywood producer Andy Vajna, government commissioner for developing Hungary's film industry,

who died in January this year. On September 6, French actor Pierre Richard will meet the audience in the Urania cinema before the screening of *Je Suis Timide Mais Je Me Soigne* from 1978. He will later in the evening give a speech at the screening of *The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe* at St. Stephen Square. Michael Nyman, Britain's celebrated composer and regular collaborator on cult films by Peter Greenaway, will talk about his career at a public discussion in the Urania cinema on September 10. It will be followed by the screening of three-time Oscar winning title *The Piano*, for which Nyman composed the score. German-born American actor Udo Kier, starring in Gábor Bódy's 1980 Hungarian drama film *Narcissus and Psyche*, will give a talk at the Ódry Theatre on September 8. Slovak actress Magda Vasaryova, starring in Jiri Menzel's *Cutting It Short*, will be the guest at the 1980 Czechoslovak comedy's screening on September 5.

Programmes on the festival's sidelines include international film lectures, workshops, master classes, concerts and a poster exhibition.