

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Danube ship collision victims honoured with traditional Korean memorial service

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU interior ministers meet in Luxembourg

Finance ministry releases budget report for Jan-Sept

Stats office releases Sept CPI figures

Local election campaign events

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ URGES CLOSER HUNGARY-ROMANIA TIES

Closer ties between Hungary and Romania would benefit both countries and central Europe as a whole, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Arad, in western Romania.

At a press conference held jointly with Hunor Kelemen, the head of Romania's ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party, Szijjártó said that "positive gestures" towards the ethnic Hungarian community in Transylvania would strengthen inter-state ties, and consequently the countries' roles in the region. Hungary sees its own ethnic Romanian community as an important asset and continues to take steps to strengthen it, he said. Concerning the Valea Uzului (Úzvölgye) memorial cemetery in Romania, a resting place of Hungarian WW1 soldiers where Szekler demonstrators clashed with Romanians earlier this year, he called on Bucharest to delegate an "adequate negotiating partner" to the talks on settling the issue. "We especially expect the Romanian government to prevent further provocation," he said, referring to a commemoration announced by Romanian nationalist organisations at the same site for Oct. 25.

Kelemen said his talks with Szijjártó focussed on the situation of the Hungarian community in Romania. He said the challenges for the ethnic Hungarian community would not change in the years to come.

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TARLÓS MAINTAINS LEAD

Incumbent Budapest Mayor István Tarlós maintains his lead days ahead of Sunday's local elections, holding the support of 53% of decided voters, while joint opposition candidate Gergely Karácsony stands at 40% and independent Róbert Puzsér at 7%, the Nézőpont Institute said. Among all Budapest voters, Tarlós has a support of 49%, Karácsony 29% and Puzsér 7%, the pollster said.

Nézőpont conducted the poll by phone between Oct. 3 and 6, with a sample of 500 people. Fully 67% expect Tarlós to win the election, while 18% put Karácsony and 1% Puzsér in first place, Nézőpont said.

Regarding an audio recording in which Karácsony can be heard talking about threats made against his family and clashes he has had with other opposition politicians, which was leaked to the media in September, 44% of respondents said it was likely linked to the candidate's fellow party members. Thirty-three percent of those asked said that Karácsony should resign from his candidacy, while 57% said he should continue his bid for Budapest mayor, Nézőpont said.

FINANCE MINISTER: GOVT TO SUPPORT SME JOB CREATION WITH HUF 5 BN

As of Monday small and medium-sized enterprises can apply for 5 billion forints (EUR 15m) of government

funding to help create high-value added jobs, the finance minister told MTI. The government funded initiative aims to strengthen the competitiveness and productivity of SMEs by helping them to introduce new technologies and improve the skills of their employees, Mihály Varga said. The programme helps the creation of high-value added jobs through supporting capacity expansion and investing in technological improvements. SMEs can apply for 10 million forints to 150 million forints of funding but in less developed areas the eligible amount is 200 million forints. The support is non-repayable and can cover 50% of an investment project. Companies awarded funding must agree to keep their headcount at least stable, to raise wages by a minimum 10% for three years and offer training to their employees, Varga said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ INAUGURATES COMPRESSOR STATION NEAR ROMANIAN BORDER

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó inaugurated a compressor station operated by Hungary's FSZG Ltd. gas delivery company at Csanádpalota near the Romanian border. The creation of a two-way route for delivering natural gas between Hungary and Romania will further improve the security of gas supplies to Hungary, he said. Connecting the gas networks of Hungary and Romania and increasing capacity have been the most important energy security

development projects in Hungary in the past five years, Szijjártó said.

Once Romania completes its related development projects, the interconnector is expected to allow a two-way delivery of at least 1.75 billion cubic metres of natural gas a year from May 2020, he said. He added that the interconnector's capacity would in future be increased to an annual 4.4 cubic metres. The compressor will form part of a Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria energy corridor, Szijjártó said. Completing a south-north supply route is of strategic importance for the region and will facilitate importing gas from Azerbaijan, liquefied natural gas from Greece as well as gas planned to be extracted off shore in the Black Sea, he added. Szijjártó called for "progress in participating countries through taking action". Each country should make further developments and create links between the national networks, he said, adding that "all this will become meaningful when we take new resources into consideration, too," he added.

KARÁCSONY: OPPOSITION MULLING 'ALTERNATIVE' VOTE COUNTING

The opposition is planning to set up an "alternative" vote-counting system for the municipal elections set for Sunday, Gergely Karácsony, the opposition's candidate for Budapest mayor, told a press conference. Under the plan, opposition delegates in the committees at each polling station would copy the minutes taken after the votes are

counted, and the parties' campaign chiefs would upload the information to a non-public database. The database would be made public once the rules allow for such publication, he added. Karácsony insisted that there had been transparency issues around last year's parliamentary elections, and said that the proposed system would exclude the possibility of election fraud. He also announced that the opposition would send delegates to each polling station in Budapest.

DANUBE COLLISION VICTIMS HONOURED WITH TRADITIONAL KOREAN MEMORIAL SERVICE

A traditional Korean memorial service was held in Budapest on Monday to honour the victims of the Hableány pleasure boat disaster. Members of the South Korean traditional band Soo Jae Cheon Jeong-Eup marched from the Olympic Park to Margaret Bridge from where they released roses into the Danube in memory of the South Korean and Hungarian victims of the collision. The victims were also honoured with a Korean musical piece called Requiem, composed by Korean composer Lee Gum-seop specifically for this occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Choe Kyoo-Sik, South Korea's ambassador to Hungary, noted that the Hableány had 33 South Korean tourists on board and a crew of two Hungarians. Seven Korean tourists were rescued from the water after the collision and the authorities later found the bodies of 27 victims. The ambassador said the

Hungarian government had provided all the necessary resources for the search for those who had gone missing in the collision.

The Hableány collided with a cruise ship and sank in central Budapest on May 29.

FIDESZ DEMANDS JOBBIK'S MIRKÓCZKI STEP DOWN DUE TO AUSCHWITZ COMMENT

The ruling Fidesz party has called on nationalist Jobbik politician Ádám Mirkóczki, who is vying to become the mayor of Eger, in northern Hungary, to depart from public life for playing down the number of victims of the Auschwitz death camp. At a press conference in Eger on Sunday, Ildikó Martonné Adler said the leaked message of Mirkóczki, who is the joint opposition candidate, was disconcerting. She said it was unacceptable for anyone to joke about the Holocaust or to dispute its number of victims. Further, she accused Jobbik politicians of encouraging each other in emails to sympathise with the aims of the Holocaust. Adler said Eger had many outstanding Jewish craftsmen, scientists, artists and doctors and their memory should be treated with respect and affection.

HUNGARY INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT GROWS BY 0.3% IN AUGUST

Output of Hungary's industrial sector edged up 0.3% annually in August, the

Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a first reading of data. Adjusted for the number of workdays, industrial output was up 2.7%. In July, output of the sector rose by an annual 12%, a record rate since March 2017.

Output growth of the automotive segment, which has the biggest weight in the industrial sector, "slowed down significantly" while output growth of the computer, electronics and optical equipment segment "slightly accelerated", KSH said. Output of the food, drinks and tobacco products segment declined, it added. For the period January-August, industrial output rose by 5.6% year on year. In a month-on-month comparison, industrial output was down a seasonally- and workday-adjusted 1.2% in August.

Commenting on the data, a state secretary of the innovation and technology ministry told public television that the government's investment promotion measures helped increase Hungary's industrial output even in a period when it stagnated and declined in other countries. László György said Hungarian industry had gone through major structural changes over the past nine years. Citing a fresh IMF study, he said that the high-tech capacities account for 70% of the Hungarian industry, the second highest ratio globally.

Analysts interviewed by MTI attributed the weaker than expected industrial data to the different scheduling of car manufacturers' summer shutdowns to last year's and

the workday effect. Péter Virovác of ING Bank said he expected industrial performance to continue fluctuating in the coming months but still forecast full-year output growth of around 5% in 2019. Dávid Németh of K&H Bank said that a major slowdown could be expected after the outstanding, more than 12% increase of the previous month. He predicted full-year industrial output growth of 5.5% this year. Orsolya Nyeste of Erste Bank said it remains to be seen how much the August slowdown is due to the summer shutdowns and how much to weaker export demand. She also forecast annual industrial output growth of 5-5.5% this year.

114,000 FAMILIES AVAIL OF CSOK HOME PURCHASE SUBSIDIES

Some 114,000 Hungarian families have availed of 340 billion forints (EUR 1.02bn) in grants in the framework of

the Home Purchase Subsidy Scheme for Families with children, known by its Hungarian acronym "CSOK", since its launch in 2015, state secretary for family and youth affairs Katalin Novák said. About half of the subsidies awarded till the end of August went to families with two children and 37% went to families with three children, Novák said. CSOK subsidies are now applied to the purchase price of nine in ten new homes and six in ten resale homes, she said. Two-thirds of subsidy recipients use the monies to buy new homes, she added.

MAGNUS AIRCRAFT INAUGURATES 5,100 SQM PRODUCTION HALL

Hungary's Magnus Aircraft inaugurated a 5,100 sqm production hall at its base at an airport on the outskirts of Pécs, in south-western Hungary. Magnus Aircraft has invested some 6 billion

forints (EUR 18m) at the base over the past two years, supported by 2 billion forints in government grant money. In addition to the production hall, the company has built a 1,900 sqm assembly hall and a 300 sqm office building. The company started test production a year ago of a composite body aircraft. It plans to reach full capacity next year, turning out more than 200 of the aircraft. Magnus Aircraft also wants to produce composite material parts for business partners in other industries. Magnus Aircraft employs 70 people at the base, but headcount is expected to rise over 100 by year-end, and to 150 by the second half of next year.

László Palkovics, the minister of innovation and technology, told the event that the government considered the aircraft industry a sector of special importance. Over the past one year Airbus, Lufthansa Technik and Rolls Royce have all launched investment projects in Hungary, he added.