

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

Sun setting behind lookout and transmission towers atop Karancs, photographed from near Salgótarján

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NBH rate-setting meeting**

**Events related to Hungary's EU presidency**

**Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Middle East**

## TOP STORY

### SZIJJÁRTÓ: PAKS 'HITS NEW MILESTONE'

Construction works on the Paks 2 project are about to intensify as the investment moves into a higher gear.

A new milestone has been reached with the completion of soil works under Block 5 of the Paks nuclear power plant, and similar works under Block 6 are under way, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said on Monday. Countries that produce most of their energy requirements are generally regarded as "safe", the minister said on Facebook, adding that Hungary was intent on speeding up construction of the plant's two new blocks at Paks, Hungary's only commercial nuclear power plant. Szijjártó spoke by phone with Aleksey Likhacsov, chief executive of Rosatom, the general contractor for the construction of the additional two blocks at Paks, on Monday, and they reviewed key tasks for the next few weeks with a view to accelerating the project. He said 24,000 piles have been drilled into the ground, one-third of the total, and more than 1,000 people are working at the site and this number would soon increase significantly.

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## **AGMIN: HUNGARIAN FARMERS 'ALWAYS COME FIRST'**

Hungary is maintaining the import ban on Ukrainian agricultural produce as the interests of Hungarian farmers "always come first", István Nagy, the agriculture minister, said on Monday as he received Taras Kachka, Ukraine's deputy minister of economic development and trade. Nagy noted that Hungary nevertheless allows the transit of Ukrainian produce to other markets by land and by sea, according to a ministry statement, adding that the EU autonomous trade measures would be enforced until June 5 next year. Hungary's key interest was for the bloc "to put regulations on the table" that took the country's interests into account, it said. The minister also expressed hope that the war in Ukraine would end as soon as possible with a "reassuring" resolution.

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## **NÉZŐPONT: MOST HUNGARIANS 'OUTRAGED' BY UKRAINIAN OIL TRANSIT BAN**

Fully 69% "find it outrageous that Ukraine is seeking to restrict oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia," according to respondents of a recent Nézőpont survey, while 77% said Brussels should mediate between the parties. Fully 22% of respondents said that the Ukrainian restrictions were acceptable. Nézőpont said

47% of supporters of the opposition Democratic Coalition and Tisza Party criticised the Ukrainian move. Concerning proposals under which the Hungarian government could restrict power supplies to Ukraine in response to the oil delivery restrictions, 47% of respondents said they would support such a move, while 42% said the opposite. Nézőpont's phone survey was carried out between July 29 and 31 with a sample of 1,000 adults.

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## **CULTURE MIN: HUNGARY 'ISLAND OF VALUES'**

Hungary is "an island of commitment to values", the minister of culture and innovation told a conference of Hungary's cultural diplomats on Monday.

"It is our task to present our philosophy, values, our commitments, and the goal cannot be any other than making a group of islands out of a solitary one and then build a continent," Balázs Hankó said in his address. "Our goal and mission is to communicate values, to create values, and stand up for normalcy," the minister said. "In times of peril ... we must have faith in the important role of culture representing values," the minister said.

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## **NAVRACSICS: GOVT TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING LOCAL COUNCILS IN DISASTER RESPONSE**

The government will continue supporting local councils in

strengthening their defences against natural disasters, the minister of public administration and regional development said on Monday. The government currently provides half a billion forints (EUR 1.3m) to 34 local councils to bolster their defences against natural disasters and for post-disaster clean-ups, Tibor Navracsics said at an event where he handed over Force Majeure support certificates to local council leaders and mayors. The minister said the government trusted it could strengthen partnerships with councils with the aim of providing better protections to locals. Most recent natural disasters in Hungary have been caused by storms, downpours, hail and floods, the ministry said in a statement.

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## **INTERCITY DERAILS, TRAFFIC SUSPENDED AT KELETI STATION**

All train services were still suspended at Budapest's Keleti railway station after the derailment of an InterCity train arriving from Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár), MÁVinform said. On Sunday evening, five carriages derailed, blocking tracks leading into the station, MÁVinform said on its website. International trains have been diverted to Kelenföld railway station, and passengers are advised to count on delays. Railway services at the station are expected to resume on Tuesday morning, MÁV's chief executive, Zoltán Pafféri, told a

press conference, adding that the accident had not resulted in any injuries. Damage assessment and an investigation into the cause of the accident are being carried out prior to the restoration of services at the station, he noted.

**BUDAPEST TO HOST INTL GEOPOLITICAL CONFERENCE IN SEPT**

The Danube Institute and The Heritage Foundation will host their fourth international geopolitical conference in Budapest on Sept 17-18, the institute said. The conference, focusing on an emerging new world order, will feature lecturers including Indian politician and journalist Swapan Dasgupta, former Polish MEP Ryszard Legutko, James Carafano, chief advisor to the president of Washington’s The Heritage Foundation, former Australian PM Tony Abbott, and former British diplomat Lord David Frost. The lectures will focus on chances for the left and the right wing to dominate the near future, the role of states and corporations, and on “who will set the rules of the game in a multipolar world”, the institute said. The conference will also touch upon possible energy strategies as well as various “narratives for peace and justice” with regard to escalating global conflicts, as well as NATO’s role in the global power structure, it said in a statement.

**GROSS WAGES CLIMB 13.3% IN JUNE**

The average gross wage in Hungary increased by an annual 13.3% to 642,000 forints (EUR 1,630) in June, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Net wages climbed at the same pace to 427,000 forints. Real wages rose by 9.3%, calculating with June CPI of 3.7%. The gross median wage increased by 15.3% to 518,800 forints. Hungary’s statutory monthly minimum wage was raised by 15% to 266,800 forints for unskilled labourers and by 10% to 326,000 forints for skilled workers from December 1. The average gross wage in the business sector, which includes state-owned companies, rose by 11.4% to 644,000 forints, excluding fostered workers. The average gross wage in the public sector, without fostered workers, climbed 18.9% to 678,200 forints. For the period January-June, gross wages averaged 634,800 forints and net wages came to 422,100 forints, both up by 14.0% from the same period a year earlier.

Commenting on the data, the national economy ministry’s state secretary for labour policy said that real wages continued to increase at a significant rate thanks to low inflation and an “outstanding wage dynamic”. “With the 9.3% real wage increase in June, the purchasing power of family incomes has been rising

for the tenth consecutive month since September 2023,” Sándor Czomba said in a statement. He said that employment and wages were steadily increasing, noting that there were one million more people holding a job now compared with the period of the previous government. The average wages of jobholders have tripled, Czomba added. The state secretary said the government was committed to continuing wage increases with a special focus on minimum wages. He pledged gradual minimum wage increases by up to 140,000 forints by 2027.

**MINISTRY: HUNGARY SOLAR POWER OUTPUT HITS RECORD HIGH**

Output of Hungary’s industrial-scale solar parks with a capacity of over 50 kW reached a record 3,242 MW last Friday in the quarter hour between 1pm and 1.15pm, the energy ministry said on Facebook. Citing data from state-owned transmission system operator Mavir, the ministry said that, including household solar panels, Hungary’s solar power output exceeded the 2030 target output of 6,000 MW as early as February this year, and was now approaching 6,800 MW. By the end of August, there were 1,134 quarter hours in which solar power output exceeded last year’s high of 2,731 MW, the ministry said.

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## **ST ISTVÁN INSTITUTE: BUDAPEST MAYOR TO ORDER RESTORATION OF HOLY CROWN DECORATIONS ON BRIDGE**

Gergely Karácsony, the mayor of Budapest, promised to restore the damaged decorations of the Holy Crown vandalised on Margaret Bridge a year ago, the St István institute, which petitioned the mayor, said, noting that it had launched an online public petition in cooperation with CitizenGo Magyarország for the restoration earlier this month. It quoted the mayor as saying on public media that "I condemn every action that seek to desecrate public monuments by removing religious or cultural symbols. Therefore I have ordered the fastest possible restoration of the cross decorations on the Holy Crown

on Margaret Bridge." "We had to wait an entire year for this to happen but our cooperation has yielded result," the institute said and thanked some 16,000 signatories for their support.

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## **BUDAPEST CENTRAL EUROPEAN FASHION WEEK COMMENCES**

Budapest Central European Fashion Week (BCEFW), a showcase of fashion and workshops, has got under way, and Hungarian and regional brands will present their latest collections in the Millenáris G building at the weekend. Fully 24 designers from Serbia, Morocco, Slovenia, Poland, Slovakia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Ukraine will show off their latest collections and the designs of newcomers from the New Generation and Young Talents categories will also take to the

runway alongside internationally celebrated designers -- the chief aim of the event acting as a bridge between the domestic and international fashion scene. The idea is to foster enduring collaborations and exchanges in central Europe, and relevant agreements have been made with the Slovakian Fashion Council, Ljubljana Fashion Week and Belgrade Fashion Week. Zsófia Jakab, the ministerial commissioner for the developments in the creative industry and chief executive of the Magyar fashion and design agency (MDDU), said the agency encouraged its partners and brands to show greater environmental responsibility and involvement in sustainable practices, and new initiatives have been introduced with the involvement of recycling company MOL Hulladékgazdálkodási.