

Labor on verge of victory

CANBERRA (AAP) - The federal government notched up a number of significant wins on the carbon tax front on Tuesday, ahead of landing the grand prize of seeing the entire package pass the lower house.

The Greens finally threw their support behind Labor's \$300 million steel transformation plan (STP), meaning it will become law on alongside the 18 carbon tax bills.

The minority Labor government won the initial vote on Tuesday and the amendments will be debated until close to midnight, ahead of a final vote on Wednesday morning.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard now believes the worst is behind her.

"This parliament will deliver this major reform which will enable us to seize a clean

energy future," she told parliament.

She is so confident of the bills' passage she turned her sights on Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's pledge to scrap the tax if elected.

Mr Abbott was "running around like a headless chook in hyperactive mode" pretending he would repeal the pollution price, but he wouldn't, Ms Gillard said.

"Ultimately, wiser heads will prevail in the opposition. They will say, 'Don't take (compensation) money out of the hands of pensioners and families.'"

Earlier on Tuesday, Greens deputy leader Christine Milne said ongoing difficulties in the steel sector, including a high Australian dollar and the loss of 1000 jobs at BlueScope Steel this year, meant the Greens would back the STP it previously labelled as too generous.

Iran lashing sentence: Australia protests

ADELAIDE (AAP) - The federal government has urged Iran to protect the rights of all people after an actress was sentenced to 90 lashes and a year in jail for her role in an Australian film.

Marzieh Vafamehr was sentenced for appearing in My Tehran For Sale, a South Australian-produced movie critical of the Islamic republic's hard-line policies.

Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd's office said the Australian government condemned the use of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and was "deeply concerned" by the reports.

"The Australian government urges Iran to protect the rights of all Iranians and foreign citizens," Mr Rudd's office said.

My Tehran For Sale was shot in the Iranian capital and tells the story of a young actress whose stage work is banned by authorities.

The filmmakers and investors behind the film, which was produced in South Australia, say they are "deeply shocked and appalled" by

her sentence.

Cyan Films producers Julie Ryan and Kate Croser said in a statement they were not aware of the specifics of the charges but believed they related to scenes in which Ms Vafamehr appears without wearing a hijab.

"The producers would like to emphasise that Marzieh's involvement in the film was limited to her role as an actress and she was not in any other way involved in the behind-the-scenes filmmaking," they said.

The film was never intended to be distributed within Iran and its dissemination on the black market in Tehran had been totally outside their control, the producers said.

"We continue to offer our support to Marzieh and her family by respecting their wishes to let the case and the appeal follow the proper legal channels," they said.

The Iranian website Kalameh.com says Ms Vafamehr's lawyer has appealed the sentence.

WORLD NEWS

FRESH OIL SPILLS IN NZ'S WORST SEA POLLUTION DISASTER

TAURANGA, New Zealand - New Zealand on Tuesday declared its worst maritime pollution disaster, as oil gushed into a pristine bay from a stranded container ship which was being pounded in heavy seas.

The crippled container vessel Rena, which hit a reef off the North Island coast last Wednesday, leaked up to 350 tonnes of heavy fuel after being further damaged in the storm, dwarfing an initial spill, maritime authorities said.

"I'd like to acknowledge this event has come to a stage where it is New Zealand's most significant maritime environmental disaster," Environment Minister Nick Smith told reporters at Tauranga.

UKRAINE'S TYMOSHENKO 'CRIMINALLY' EXCEEDED POWERS: JUDGE

KIEV - Ukraine's former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko clearly exceeded her authority in signing a gas deal with Russia in 2009 and used her powers to "criminal ends", the judge in her trial said in the verdict Tuesday.

"Y.V. Tymoshenko... used her official powers to criminal ends and, acting consciously, committed actions which clearly exceeded her rights and powers which had heavy consequences," said judge Rodion Kireyev.

Kireyev has yet to announce his final judgement in the case or give any details what sentence the former Orange Revolution leader could face if found guilty.

MYANMAR TO FREE THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS

YANGON - Myanmar announced a mass prisoner amnesty Tuesday, raising hope for the imminent release of hundreds of political detainees in what would be a major sign of change in the authoritarian state.

More than 6,300 prisoners will be pardoned from Wednesday "on humanitarian grounds", state television announced, without saying whether political prisoners would be among them.

The fate of the country's estimated 2,000 political detainees, who include pro-democracy campaigners, journalists, monks and lawyers, has long been a top demand of Western nations that have imposed sanctions on Myanmar.

Crook keeps govt guessing on boat vote

CANBERRA (AAP) - Key crossbench MP Tony Crook is keeping Prime Minister Julia Gillard guessing over whether he will help her avoid a historic and embarrassing parliamentary defeat.

Just two days out from an expected lower house vote on the federal government's legislation to resurrect its Malaysian people swap deal, the West Australian Nationals MP says he still hasn't decided which way he will vote.

Mr Crook was expected to meet Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and government frontbencher Anthony Albanese later on Tuesday, as he inches towards a decision on the vote that is likely to come up on Thursday.

Aussie cop maybe involved in Bali brawl

KUTA, Indonesia (AAP) - An Australian police officer may have been involved in a brawl at a Bali nightclub in which AFL coach Dean Laidley and some of his family were injured.

Three bouncers from the Bounty nightclub in the Kuta Beach area were still in custody on Tuesday after they were arrested following the fight last Friday.

Laidley required stitches after being hit in the head with a bottle during the brawl, while his son's jaw was broken and other family members including women were also injured.

NSW 'most wanted' arrested in Sydney

SYDNEY (AAP) - A Sydney man who left Australia days after being wounded in a gunfight has returned two years later to be charged with the murder of his alleged attacker.

Anthony Tan, also known as Alexander Nguyen, had been listed on the NSW Most Wanted website prior to his arrest.

The 27-year-old Australian national was arrested at Sydney Airport about 9.45am (AEDT) on Tuesday after he disembarked from a flight from Vietnam.

He was charged with the 2009 shooting death of 23-year-old Bosnian refugee and Rebels bikie Edin Smajovic.

Detective Sergeant Keith Bristow led Strike Force Tirage's investigation into Tan's whereabouts. He said Australia had been in contact with Vietnamese authorities but it was Tan who had contacted police.

PM TO MOVE OUT FOR LODGE MAKEOVER

CANBERRA (AAP) - Prime Minister Julia Gillard will have to move out of The Lodge while millions of dollars in repairs are done.

The 84-year-old official residence in Canberra has a leaky roof, rusty plumbing, wiring that is a fire hazard, and asbestos that needs to be removed.

The repair project - which is yet to be costed - will take about 18 months to complete, Special Minister of State Gary Gray said.

"If The Lodge were a patient it would be in hospital," Mr Gray told ABC Television on Tuesday. "There is a lot of work to be done."

The makeover includes replacing the slate roof and "massive work" on the wiring, "much of which is old copper wrapped in cloth, and so therefore a substantial fire risk". "We don't expect it to be cheap. It will certainly cost in the millions of dollars," Mr Gray said. "It can't just be fixed up with a trip down to Bunnings."

Xenophon writes to MPs about pokies

CANBERRA (AAP) - South Australian senator Nick Xenophon has written a letter to all federal coalition and independent MPs, urging them to consider the facts rather than the claims of Clubs Australia in the debate over poker-machine gambling reforms.

The government's plan to adopt a mandatory pre-commitment system for high-intensity poker machines has attracted strong opposition from registered clubs and the AFL.

The independent senator said the reforms were designed to help prevent recreational gamblers from becoming problem gamblers.

"The reforms are about putting a fence at the top of the cliff rather than an ambulance at the bottom," Senator Xenophon wrote in the letter.

Uni politics match debate on uni fees

CANBERRA (AAP) - Student politicians have taken sides on the debate in federal parliament on fees to pay for student services at university campuses.

Federal government legislation, which will see students pay up to \$263 annually for campus services and amenities from next year passed the Senate on Tuesday.

Liberal senator Brett Mason said Australian universities had changed, with increasing numbers of mature-age and part-time students who did not have the time or opportunity to make use of campus services.

There also were "potential horrors" that the fees would be directed towards "fashionable left-wing" causes that students did not support.

Relax in a deck chair, Sydney told

SYDNEY (AAP) - Sydneysiders and visitors are being invited to take some time out to relax in one of many deck chairs set to appear around the CBD over spring and summer.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore launched the Chairs in Squares program on Tuesday, saying more than 190 pieces of furniture will be placed in Sydney Square, next to Sydney town hall, and Barrack St Wynyard, for the next six months.

Cafe chairs and tables will also feature in the pop-up outdoor relaxation areas to be set up as part of the City of Sydney's 2030 vision for the future, Ms Moore told reporters.

There will also be free wi-fi at the relaxation areas. "Come and enjoy a bit of sun in our free deck chairs over this spring and summer," Ms Moore said.

Princess Mary to attend Melbourne events

MELBOURNE (AAP) - Denmark's Crown Princess Mary will attend two Alannah and Madeline Foundation events in Melbourne as part of her official visit to Australia in November.

Tasmanian-born Princess Mary and her husband Crown Prince Frederik will attend a lunch supporting the foundation's eSmart cybersafe program and its Starry Starry Night gala ball.

Princess Mary is the international patron of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, a charity aimed at protecting children from violence.

The November 26 events will fill the last day of the royal couple's week-long official Australian visit.

Red Dog leads the IF Awards nominations

SYDNEY (AAP) - Australian box-office smash Red Dog is leading the 2011 IF Award nominations pack, after scooping up a total of nine nods.

MARKET DATA

AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

Top ten by value at Tuesday's close	value at	Tuesday's	close
BHPBilton	433,280,175	37.39	+0.290
Rio Tinto	352,178,124	68.00	+0.600
WestpacBk	268,654,878	21.92	+0.220
Fosters	227,801,476	5.27	unch
CBA	226,772,046	47.25	+0.540
ANZ Bank	206,618,041	21.20	+0.200
NAB	176,633,044	24.21	+0.160
Newcrest	141,754,730	36.40	+0.530
TelstraCp	117,619,883	3.09	+0.010
Woolwrths	96,661,757	24.62	-0.230

CURRENCY RATES

Snapshot at 1700 AEDT	Oct 11	Oct 07
AUD/USD	0.9971-73	0.9831-34
AUD/JPY	76.46-48	75.46-48
AUD/EUR	0.7310-14	0.7297-01
AUD/NZD	1.2738-45	1.2699-08
AUD/GBP	0.6379-84	0.6298-03
EUR/USD	1.3638-39	1.3471-72
USD/JPY	76.67-71	76.75-76
EUR/JPY	104.57-61	103.39-42

TUESDAY'S RESULT

SOCCER: WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Australia 3 - 0 Oman

The majority of the awards are voted for by the Australian public, so Red Dog's success comes as no surprise seeing as it's raked in more than \$18.7 million at the local box office.

Red Dog, which was the highest-grossing Australian film for 2011, is in the running for IF Awards for Best Film, Direction, Script, Cinematography, Editing, Production Design and Music.

On top of that are nominations for Josh Lucas and Rachael Taylor in the Best Actor and Actress categories.

Red Dog director Kriv Stenders was at the announcement in Sydney on Tuesday and said it was a great feeling.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Australian shares higher on eurozone hopes

SYDNEY - The Australian share market ended higher but pulled back from earlier gains, as investors digested news that France and Germany have a plan to fix the eurozone debt crisis.

By the close, the benchmark S&P-ASX200 index gained 26.6 points, or 0.63 per cent, at 4,227.6 and the broader All Ordinaries index climbed 26.5 points, or 0.62 per cent, to 4,288.8.

SPORTS NEWS

Socceroos on a roll after downing Oman

SYDNEY (AAP) - The Socceroos maintained their flawless start to qualifying for the 2014 Brazil World Cup with a comfortable 3-0 win over Oman at ANZ Stadium on Tuesday night.

Goals to Brett Holman, Josh Kennedy and Mile Jedinak ensured Australia claimed maximum points from their first three qualifiers after wins over Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

The result means the Socceroos are virtually assured progression to the final stage of qualifying in June next year, likely only needing as little as a point from their remaining three games in the group to ensure it.

Dawes deal done, say AFL's Magpies

MELBOURNE (AAP) - Collingwood have confirmed key forward Chris Dawes will this week sign a deal to keep him with the Magpies, as AFL clubs made slow progress on prospective trades on Tuesday.

While rival clubs had been interested in the 23-year-old premiership forward, Magpies football manager Geoff Walsh said Dawes had already agreed to terms on a new contract.

"Chris and his management are signing the deal this week and it's been agreed for a week," Walsh told the AFL website.

Nightingale backs Vatuvei's replacement

SYDNEY (AAP) - New Zealand winger Jason Nightingale has backed debutant Kalifa Fafai Loa to step into the big boots of Manu Vatuvei, as the Dragons NRL star prepares to lead a youthful Kiwi backline against Australia.

Nightingale apart, the four other Kiwi outside backs named to take on the Kangaroos in Newcastle on Sunday have won just one cap between them.

Lewis Brown won that in the Anzac Test earlier this year, but centre partner Gerard Beale of Brisbane, Cowboys winger Fafai Loa and Warriors fullback Kevin Locke will each undergo a Test initiation this weekend.

The total of debutants will be five, with Warriors prop Russell Packer and Brisbane second rower Alex Glenn also earning their first Test caps.

AUSSIE CRICKET TAINTED BY BRIBE CLAIMS: CA

MELBOURNE (AAP) - Australian cricketers have been unfairly tainted by slurs that they're among the sport's biggest match fixers, Cricket Australia (CA) and the federal government say.

The claims, aired in a London court, were made by an agent of "dubious repute", CA chief executive James Sutherland said.

Sutherland described the allegations by agent Mazhar Majeed as "outlandish" and federal Sports Minister Mark Arbib said the claims were a "terrible slur".

Majeed, in a covert recording played on Monday to London's Southwark Crown Court, said Australian players were "the biggest" when it came to rigging games.

But Sutherland said he had no evidence to support the claims of Majeed, who is accused of match fixing. "These sweeping statements unfairly malign Australian cricketers," Sutherland told reporters in Melbourne on Tuesday.

"If there is one skerrick of evidence we will investigate Australian players... There is nothing that I have at hand to suggest these are anything but baseless and outlandish allegations."

Inglis' relief at Four Nations all clear

NEWCASTLE, NSW (AAP) - Greg Inglis is confident he'll be fit and firing for Australia's Four Nations rugby league opener against New Zealand in Warrington, England on October 28.

The superstar centre was passed fit to travel to the UK on Monday after meeting with his surgeon and has joined the Kangaroos squad in Newcastle even though he's not playing in Sunday's clash with the Kiwis at Ausgrid Stadium.

Inglis' inclusion is good news for the Kangaroos who will be without Petero Civoniceva, Jarryd Hayne, David Taylor, Justin Hodges and Brett and Glenn Stewart for the tour due to injury and personal reasons.

Thurston named Indigenous captain

NEWCASTLE, NSW (AAP) - Johnathan Thurston is the new captain of the Indigenous All Stars team for February's annual rugby league clash with the NRL All Stars on the Gold Coast.

 WEATHER

Observations at	1620	on Tuesday
	Max	Min
MELBOURNE	16	10
SYDNEY	22	12
ADELAIDE	17	11
BRI SBANE	26	14
TOWNSVILLE	31	23
CAI RNS	31	21
CANBERRA AP	16	4
HOBART	16	5
DARWIN	34	27
ALICE SPRINGS	32	12
PERTH AP	26	12
BROOME	29	23

Thurston replaces Preston Campbell, who came up with the idea of the hugely successful concept two years ago, following the diminutive utility's retirement. Test and Origin star Thurston said he was flattered to captain a side that represents his people.

Mitchell Johnson rolls ankle in Perth

PERTH (AAP) - Test spearhead Mitchell Johnson rolled his left ankle as the wickets tumbled on the opening day of the Sheffield Shield clash between Western Australia and Tasmania at the WACA Ground.

Johnson, playing just his third first-class match for the Warriors, crashed to the deck and grimaced in pain after his back foot slipped at the crease as he came in to bowl the fifth ball of his seventh over.

The 29-year-old was clearly hampered as he rose to his feet but began to move more freely as he tested out the injury. However, Johnson was unable to resume his bowling duties and left the ground for treatment.

Western Australia's medical staff confirmed Johnson had rolled his ankle and said he would be further assessed on Wednesday morning to determine whether he could bowl again in the match.

Ponting happy to drop down batting order

PERTH (AFP) - Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting says he is happy to drop down the Test batting order to accommodate Shaun Marsh at No. 3.

The 36-year-old, who has scored 12,487 runs in 154 Tests, has long come in to bat at first drop but slotted in as No. 4 during the second Test against Sri Lanka last month in which Marsh scored 141 at No.3 on his debut.

Marsh followed it up with scores of 81 and 18 in the third Test when again batting at No.3. Test skipper Michael Clarke sees Marsh as a long-term fixture in the role and Ponting said he had no complaints.

RUGBY WORLD CUP FANS FACE AIRPORT DELAYS

SYDNEY (AAP) - Rugby World Cup fans travelling to New Zealand to cheer on Australia face major airport delays as aircraft engineers and cabin crew walk off the job.

The semi-final clash pitting the Wallabies against the All Blacks takes place in Auckland on Sunday, but getting there will be a headache for many Qantas passengers on Thursday and Friday.

The Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Association (ALAEA) has decided to hold a four-hour stopwork meeting at Sydney airport on Friday afternoon, from 4pm (AEDT).

It is a renewal of industrial action initially scheduled for Monday, which was withdrawn but nevertheless led to the cancellation of 40 Qantas flights. The stoppage by aircraft maintenance engineers will prevent flights taking off.

'Roo Adams signs three-year AFL deal

MELBOURNE (AAP) - North Melbourne utility Leigh Adams has capped a successful AFL season by signing a three-year deal with the club.

Adams finished fourth in the Kangaroos' best and fairest voting.

He played mainly across half-forward this year, but also went into the midfield and averaged just under 20 disposals a game.

"He is fast becoming one of our most consistent players," North football manager Donald McDonald told the club website.

"It is a credit to Leigh that he has overcome many injury setbacks to become the player he is today."

The 23-year-old also was third in last year's club best and fairest count and has played 44 senior games since his 2007 senior debut.

Tomic gets Kooyong spot

MELBOURNE (AAP) - Bernard Tomic's dramatic rise up the tennis world rankings has earned him an invitation to the eight-man Australian Open leadup exhibition event at Kooyong.

Tomic, who has rocketed to No.49 in the world - sparked by a Wimbledon quarter-final appearance - will join some of the world's best players in the Kooyong Classic in Melbourne from January 11-14.

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Czech Tomas Berdych is currently the highest-ranked confirmed player at No.7 but promoter Colin Stubs is hopeful of again snaring Scottish No.4 Andy Murray, who went on to reach the Open final after this year's event.

Wozniacki set for Hopman Cup in Perth

PERTH (AAP) - World No.1 Caroline Wozniacki has signed on for this summer's Hopman Cup mixed teams tournament in Perth.

Wozniacki, who has won 18 WTA titles but is yet to break through for a major, will join forces with Frederik Nielsen to represent Denmark for the December 31-January 7 event.

The teams for France, Spain and debutants Bulgaria were also announced on Tuesday, rounding out the eight-team field after Australia, China, the US and the Czech Republic were previously announced.

France will be represented by world No.11 Marion Bartoli and world No.17 Richard Gasquet, who possesses arguably the most spectacular one-handed backhand in the men's game.

White rules out Boks return for 4 years

SYDNEY (AAP) - Brumbies coach Jake White says he wants to return to South Africa to guide the Springboks again - but not for at least another four years.

With Springboks coach Peter de Villiers expecting to be sacked following his team's Rugby World Cup quarter-final exit at the hands of the Wallabies, speculation has risen that White could resume coaching the national team he led to the 2007 World Cup title.

But White was quick to squash it on Tuesday, saying he was committed to the Brumbies, having taken over at the Canberra-based Super Rugby franchise following their dismal 2011 season.