

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That's relativity. - Albert Einstein

INFOTAINMENT DVD 46

- Learn about the latest 'Save Our Seafarers' campaign launched to tackle the menace of piracy. Interviews of leading maritime personalities are also available in DVD 46 as they speak at great length about the subject.
- Take a sneak peek into the 2011-2012 NBA Season in the Sports section of DVD 46. Also read about ways to cure sports injuries and learn about world's best ice-skating destinations.
- Don't be the odd one out. Learn new languages now available on DVD 46. Also go through the Language Tips Section to brush up on your English grammar. Our sample papers give you the opportunity to test your English-language skills.
- Tickle your funny bone with some tongue-in-cheek jokes and humorous signs now available on DVD 46.

Europe: Ukraine's Tymoshenko 'Criminally' Exceeded Powers: Judge

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 on 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. But his initial summary was a clear blow for Tymoshenko who appeared distressed in the packed court, flanked by her husband Olexander and daughter Yevgenia.

Slovakia To Open Last-Gasp EFSF Talks Amid Cabinet Crisis: Slovakia's deadlocked centre-right coalition was on the verge of crumbling as it was set to meet for last-gasp talks ahead of a parliamentary vote on the EU's EFSF rescue fund on Tuesday.

Facing the worst crisis since her four-party Cabinet took power in July 2010, reports said Prime Minister Iveta Radicova had offered to resign if it would help push the fund through Parliament despite stiff opposition from a rebel

coalition party.

The SITA news agency said on Monday Radicova had offered to tie the EFSF vote to a confidence vote on the cabinet, resign if the fund does not make it, or resign before the vote.

Under-Pressure Europe Postpones Key Debt Summit: Europe's leaders postponed on Monday a key summit on the debt crisis, buying more time as they decide what to do about Greece now that their banks also need a financial leg-up.

Greece completed an audit which will be key to determining whether it gets further bailout funding, but its finance minister said Athens now expects a deeper writedown of its debt in a second rescue that Slovakia threatens to block on Tuesday.

Croatia Will Back Montenegro's EU, NATO Bid: President: Croatian President Ivo Josipovic on Monday said Zagreb would back Montenegro's bid to join the EU and NATO.

In a joint news conference held after the meeting of Josipovic and his Montenegrin counterpart Filip Vujanovic in Zagreb, the Croatian president said Croatia was ready to extend support to Montenegro in its EU and NATO integration processes, adding that "it is in our interest that Montenegro and all other countries in the region enter the EU." (AFP/Xinhua)

Asia, Asia Pacific: UN Exposes Torture In Afghan Custody

The UN says torture is practised systematically in some Afghan intelligence detention centres and that children under 18 are among those who suffered, according to a report published on Monday.

The UN mission in Afghanistan said it had "compelling evidence" that Afghan intelligence officials at five centres "systematically tortured detainees for the purpose of obtaining confessions and information."

Detainees described being hung by the wrists from the wall or ceiling; and being beaten especially with rubber hoses, electric cables or wires or wooden sticks and most frequently on the soles of the feet, the report said.

Sri Lanka Says Poll Killings A 'Tragedy': A gun battle between rival Sri Lankan ruling party factions that killed four people during local polls was a "tragedy," the government said on Monday, promising an impartial police investigation.

Police said they had detained a suspect and seized 12 pistols, two revolvers and two automatic assault rifles believed to have been used in Saturday's brief but intense shootout in the Colombo suburb of Kolonnawa.

Former legislator and presidential aide Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra was killed along with two of his bodyguards, while a fourth man died from his wounds on Monday. "It is a tragedy," said government spokesman Dullas Alahapperuma.

Myanmar To Free Thousands Of Prisoners: Myanmar announced a mass prisoner amnesty on 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.

China Halts Mekong Shipping After Deadly Attack: China on Monday suspended shipping on the Mekong after 11 sailors were killed on two cargo ships attacked last week in the Golden Triangle where the river runs through China, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos.

The halt in boat traffic was announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and reported by the official Xinhua news agency, citing maritime officials in southwest China's Yunnan province. (AFP)

Middle East: Abbas Willing 'At Any Moment' To Restart Israel Talks

Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas on Monday in Colombia said he was willing "at any moment" to restart peace negotiations with Israel aimed at a settlement that allows them to exist side by side as states.

"We are in favour of peaceful negotiations leading to the creation of a Palestinian state, alongside the state of Israel," Abbas said in Bogota, where he is on a Latin American tour to rally support for UN recognition.

"We are at any moment willing to return to the negotiating table if Israel is of the same mind," he said, during an event where he was declared an honorary citizen of Bogota by the city's mayor.

Customs Strike Hits Kuwait Trade, Oil Exports At Risk: Kuwaiti customs officers pressed a strike into a second day on Tuesday, severely disrupting air, sea and land trade and threatening to halt oil exports, a trade union official said.

"The strike is still on and we will continue until our demands are fully met," Fahhad al-Ajmi, the board member of the customs trade union, told AFP.

More than 3,000 customs employees went on strike Monday demanding a pay raise and improved working conditions.

Tamo Murder May Inflare Syria Uprising: Analysts: The assassination of Kurdish Opposition figure Meshaal Tamo is likely to push Kurds in Syria to take a more active role in the seven-month-old anti-regime uprising, analysts and activists believe.

More involvement by the Kurds in the pro-democracy revolt against President Bashar al-Assad's regime that erupted in March "will have a huge impact on the situation in Syria", said Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Twin Baghdad Blasts Kill 9: Two bomb attacks minutes apart in west Baghdad on Monday evening killed at least nine people and wounded more than 20 others, security officials said, amid nationwide violence that left 12 dead.

The first explosion occurred at around 8:30pm (1730 GMT) in the Iskan neighbourhood near a group of civilians, an AFP journalist at the scene and an Interior Ministry official said. The second blast came as emergency services arrived at the scene to treat the wounded. (AFP)

America: Underwear Bomber Trial To Open In Detroit

The trial of a young Nigerian accused of trying to blow up a packed US-bound airliner on Christmas Day 2009 in one of al-Qaeda's biggest failed plots is due to begin with opening statements on Tuesday.

MARINE NEWS SUMMARY

CONTAINER VESSELS: NEXT-GENERATION WILL BE LARGEST EVER

If the need is for greater efficiency for road and rail freight during an economic slowdown, standard operating procedures might be to downgrade to smaller and lighter means of overland transport. Shipping lines, however, have a different approach: they build bigger ships. The reason, they say, is better economies of scale, costing them less to send a string of three or four huge new ships across the oceans instead of a larger fleet of smaller vessels. These bigger and newer ships will also have more efficient engines and lower emissions, which also means lower fuel costs, as the company hopes an everlasting impression on its customers. One shipping giant is reportedly spending USD 1.9 billion on 10 new ships, each of which will carry 18,000 TEUs. The new Ultra Large Container Ships (ULCS) will be more than 1,312 feet long and more than 193 feet wide, and will outdo cargo capacity of the world's largest container vessel currently afloat, by 16%. The company's chief executive said that building ULCSs was not only a top priority for the firm but also for its customers, who are heavily dependent upon this in their supply chain. Five years ago, the world's largest container ship had a TEU capacity of 9,500. According to a Paris-based maritime research firm, the container carriers' answer to challenges of sustainable shipping and reduction of emissions is to build ever-larger ships, whose sizes have doubled over a decade.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, popularly known as the "underwear bomber," is contesting charges that he tried to kill nearly 300 people aboard a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

The trial will be closely watched as it comes two weeks after the killing of al-Qaeda preacher Anwar al-Awlaqi in a US air strike in Yemen.

US intelligence officials have repeatedly linked the US-born cleric to the Christmas Day plot.

Mexico Cartel Crackdown: 11 Killed, 36 Captured: The Mexican military killed 11 suspected Gulf cartel members and captured 36 more in a major crackdown that began last week, officials said.

Among those arrested was Gabriela Gomez Robles, known as "La Gaby," who is believed to be the finance chief of the drug-trafficking group, said military spokesman Admiral Jose Luis Vergara.

Also detained was Ricardo Salazar Pequeno, an alleged Gulf cartel boss, Vergara added.

11 Rebels, 7 Colombian Troops Killed: Colombia's armed forces bombed a rebel base camp and killed at least 11 leftist insurgents in an area in the north near the Venezuelan border, military sources said.

"A camp was found with about 80 bandits. Support was brought in from the Air Force and the police came in. So far, 11 bodies have been found," Army 30th Brigade General Fernando Pineda told reporters.

Washington Protesters Given Permit To Continue: Protesters in Washington condemning corporate greed and corrupt politics leaped at the chance to extend their occupation of a square near the White House by another four months.

The Stop the Machine occupation of Freedom Plaza is one of two ongoing protests in the capital, alongside the like-minded but more youthful Occupy DC sit-in, now in its 10th day.

Its original four-day permit from the National Park Service - which polices the square - called for them to leave on Monday, but late in the day the federal agency proposed a permit that would run until February 2012. (AFP)

Africa: Egypt Probes Deadly Sectarian Clashes

Egypt's military rulers ordered a speedy probe into clashes which killed 25 people, mostly Coptic Christians, as the Cabinet held crisis talks and thousands attended the funerals of 17 victims.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) "tasked the government with quickly forming a fact finding committee to determine what happened," in a statement read on state television on Monday as world leaders urged restraint.

It called for "all measures against all those proven to have been involved, either directly or by incitement".

Both the ruling military council and the cabinet held crisis talks, a day after the clashes in Cairo left 25 dead, most of them Copts, and more than 300 people injured, according to Health Ministry figures.

Mali Prepares For Return Of Warriors From Libya: Authorities and non-governmental organisations in Mali have been making preparations for the return of fighters of Malian origin who took Libyan nationality and fought for Muammar Gaddafi.

"This is normal, that we welcome our brothers," one businessman said.

Tents have been put up about 30kms north of Kidal in the north-east, the main town in a region of the same name bordering on Algeria.

A collection of funds has been launched by a committee set up to welcome home the former fighters, who are expected during the next few days, though no timetable has been issued nor any statement about how many are expected back.

17 NTC Fighters Killed In Libya's Bani Walid: Seventeen fighters of Libya's new regime were killed and 50 wounded in clashes with Muammar Gaddafi loyalists in the desert town of Bani Walid, a military official in Tripoli said on Monday.

"We lost 17 fighters in fierce clashes on Sunday and our forces have withdrawn from the airport where they had taken control," said Salem Gheith, the head of the National Transitional Council (NTC) military command centre. (AFP)

FINANCIAL NEWS

Emirates NBD Takes Over Troubled Dubai Bank

Emirates NBD Bank, the largest lender in the UAE, has taken over the troubled Islamic lender Dubai Bank on orders of the ruler of Dubai, a government statement said on Tuesday.

"Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed al-Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, in his capacity as the ruler of Dubai, has given orders that Emirates NBD take over Dubai Bank," the statement said.

It said the acquisition is in "line with Dubai government efforts to enhance the banking sector in the Emirate (of Dubai)," which was hit hard by the global financial crisis.

Dubai Bank was acquired in May by the debt-laden government of Dubai, which pledged to inject capital into the troubled lender.

At the time, the government said the takeover would ensure that Dubai Bank's business continues uninterrupted. Dubai Bank posted a net loss of AED 290.6 million (USD 79.2 million) in 2009, the last financial results to be made public. (AFP)

GM China Sales Up 15.3% In September

US auto giant General Motors said on Monday its sales in China jumped 15.3% in September from a year earlier to 240,244 units, despite government moves to phase out incentives for buyers.

In the first nine months of the year, GM and its joint ventures sold a record 1.89 million vehicles in the world's biggest auto market, up 6.6% year on year, the company said in a statement.

"GM has maintained our momentum in China, with all of our major brands setting new September sales marks," said GM China Group President Kevin Wale.

GM said its September sales - the second-highest for a single month - puts the auto maker on track to surpass two million units for the 10 months ending October and set a record for the entire year.

China has been phasing out incentives such as tax breaks for small engine vehicles, originally implemented to ward off the impact of the global financial crisis.

Total sales in China are expected to grow five percent in 2011, lower than an earlier forecast of 10-15% and less than the 32% increase last year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. (AFP)

POT POURRI

US Soldier-Songwriters Beat Afghan Blues

Armed with acoustic guitars, US troops in Afghanistan are writing songs about everything from fear of the Taliban to dreams of going home, all in a bid to beat combat stress.

At Bagram airfield, the giant US base north of Kabul, and scores of smaller outposts, soldiers keep a guitar by their bed or at their desk and pick it up at quiet times to play to themselves or perform for a group.

Soldiers sit on the steps of their wooden barracks strumming chords at night, or on the concrete security barriers which dot the base.

Chinese-made acoustic guitars are on sale at many of Bagram's shops.

While their musical genius may not compare to stars like Elvis Presley or Jimi Hendrix, both of whom served in the US army, troops say it is an important way to wind down and taste normal life, albeit briefly.

"I play as often as I can, at least a couple of times a week," says Private First Class Zachary Short, 23, a combat medic based at an outpost in Paktya, eastern Afghanistan. (AFP)

Japanese Scientist Unveils 'Thinking' Robot

Robots that learn from experience and can solve novel problems - just like humans - sound like science fiction. But a Japanese researcher is working on making them science fact, with machines that can teach themselves to perform tasks they have not been programmed to do, using objects they have never seen before.

In a world first, Osamu Hasegawa, Associate Professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, has developed a system that allows robots to look around their environment and do research on the Internet, enabling them to "think" how best to solve a problem.

"Most existing robots are good at processing and performing the tasks they are pre-programmed to do, but they know little about the 'real world' where we humans live," he told AFP.

"So our project is an attempt to build a bridge between robots and that real world," he said. The Self-Organising Incremental Neural Network, or "SOINN", is an algorithm that allows robots to use their knowledge - what they already know - to infer how to complete tasks they have been told to do. (AFP)

SPORTS NEWS

Football: Reborn Argentina Set For Venezuela Test

Argentina are gradually emerging from their Copa America nightmare and are gunning for Venezuela on Tuesday, as they seek three World Cup qualifying points to add to Friday's impressive start against Chile.

After the albiceleste sent the Chileans packing 4-1, with Gonzalo Higuain netting a hat-trick and Lionel Messi also hitting the target, new Coach Alex Sabella said it was as if a dead weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

Barcelona's Messi produced one of his best displays in the national shirt and after he capped the performance with a goal, Sabella, who succeeded Sergio Batista two months ago, said it was time to put to bed claims the superstar cannot replicate his scintillating club form at international level.

FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

EUR 1 = USD 1.3434
 EUR 1 = GBP 0.86480
 AUD 1 = USD 0.9930
 USD 1 = JPY 76.680
 USD 1 = INR 48.9762
 USD 1 = PHP 43.3690
 USD 1 = SGD 1.2799
 USD 1 = THB 30.855.

"This goal will be important for Lionel to lay to rest this apparent collective psychosis that he can't do the business with Argentina," Sabella insisted.

Sabella, who led Estudiantes to the Copa Libertadores two years ago, is tasked with leading Argentina through to the 2014 finals in neighbouring Brazil, but, beyond that, with making the two-time world champions a team to be feared once more.

Since a 1993 Copa success, seven coaches have come and gone without achieving senior level silverware. (AFP)

Football: Belgium Up For Mission Impossible Against Germans

Belgium have not qualified for a major finals since the 2002 World Cup and to keep alive their hopes of reaching Euro 2012 they will need to do something no-one else has managed in the qualifiers and beat Germany on Tuesday.

The Belgians are presently in second place, which would give them a play-off spot, but only a point ahead of Turkey, who should take three points against Azerbaijan.

Both Belgian Coach Georges Leekens and his players acknowledge that beating Germany in Dusseldorf let alone denying them a record 10th successive win in the qualifiers is a tough ask - the last Belgian win on German soil dates back to 1983 against East Germany.

"It is almost mission impossible but even so I believe deep down we can do it," said midfielder Timmy Simons, who plays for Bundesliga side Nuremberg.

Leekens - who is in his second spell as national coach having guided them to the 1998 World Cup finals but was sacked after they exited in the first round - said that but for a couple of moments of slapdash defending they would already be in the play-offs.

"My players deserve to be involved in this 'final' in Germany," said the 62-year-old, who has had his contract extended to June 2014. (AFP)

 WEATHER

New York: 16 to 29c Partly cloudy
 Washington: 12 to 24c Sunny
 London: 16 to 20c Partly cloudy
 Moscow: 8 to 11c Showers
 New Delhi: 21 to 33c Clear
 Beijing: 11 to 21c Partly cloudy
 Tokyo: 17 to 24c Partly cloudy
 Bangkok: 25 to 31c Scattered
 thunderstorms Canberra: 3 to 17c
 Partly cloudy Brasilia: 13 to 22c
 Showers Buenos Aires: 15 to 21c
 Mostly cloudy.

Football: Ireland Will Not Take Armenia Lightly In Euro Decider

Republic of Ireland Manager Giovanni Trapattoni has warned his players not to underestimate Armenia in Tuesday's shoot-out for a place in the Euro 2012 play-offs. Trapattoni's second placed side go into their final Group B qualifier in Dublin with a one-point lead over third placed Armenia and a draw will guarantee their spot in the play-offs.

A defeat, however, would eliminate Ireland and allow Armenia to move into the play-offs instead.

Ireland could also snatch automatic qualification, if they win and group leaders Russia slump to a shock defeat at home to minnow Andorra, but that is an extremely unlikely prospect.

A dramatic finale to the qualifying campaign is in store for Ireland's fans, who will expect their side to nail down that second spot against an Armenia team beaten 1-0 in the sides' last meeting. But Trapattoni is determined not to let his players get swept away on a tidal wave of Irish optimism. (AFP)

Tennis: Roddick Survives Shanghai Scare

A frustrated Andy Roddick dug deep to beat Taiwan's Lu Yen-hsun 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 at the Shanghai Masters on Monday and avoid a second ignominious first-round exit in a week in China.

The American 10th seed, who lost to Lu at Wimbledon last year in their most recent meeting, started the match in blistering form, breaking twice and racing into a 4-0 lead, taking the first set 6-2. But the Taiwanese world number 74 hit back strongly in the second set, striking a stunning two-handed backhand down the line to force a break for a 3-1 lead, which proved enough to level the match against an erratic Roddick.

Clearly unsettled, the American voiced his frustration at noise and movement in the sparse crowd and at a ball-boy, but he refocused and crucially broke in the fourth game of the decider.

Roddick, ousted from the first round of the Beijing Open by South Africa's Kevin Anderson last week, kept his grip as the Lu challenge faded, breaking again to seal the match in a little under two hours.

"He plays so high risk. You know, a lot of it's two sets with two breaks, one set where I had more break opportunities and didn't get it," said Roddick. (AFP)

Golf: Westwood Hopes To Regain Number One Spot

Lee Westwood, the world's number two golfer, said on Monday that wins in Asia have boosted his confidence and raised his hopes of regaining the top spot.

The 38-year-old Englishman earlier this year won the Indonesia Masters and the Ballantine's Championship in South Korea, adding to a long career which includes playing in seven Ryder Cups and winning 22 European Tour titles.

"I've always enjoyed playing in Asia, played well here. It makes a lot of sense to keep coming back," he told AFP in an interview in Shanghai, where he is playing in the Shui On Land China Golf Challenge.

"If you come somewhere and you play well, then obviously it builds confidence," he added. Westwood spent several weeks as world number one last year, but said his recent play, though consistent, had failed to push him a notch higher. "Obviously, I would like to get back to number one in the world," he said. (AFP)

RugbyU: France Can Be Consistent, Warns Edwards

France should not be written off as a one-trick pony unable to string together two good World Cup games on the trot, Wales Assistant Coach Shaun Edwards warned on Tuesday. The French, who play Wales in a World Cup semi-final on Saturday, have been labelled as a team incapable of capitalising on an impressive result the following week.

France suffered two pool losses, to New Zealand and Tonga, before surprising England 19-12 in the quarterfinal, turning the formbook on its head to be 16-0 up at half-time. But France have rarely produced two good knockout World Cup wins in succession.

A stunning semi-final victory over Australia was followed by defeat by New Zealand in the 1987 final, while two brilliant wins over the All Blacks, in 1999 and 2007, were the forerunners of losses to Australia and England in the final and semi-final respectively of those World Cups. But Edwards insisted France had it in them to produce another good performance. (AFP)

Cycling: Tour de France Organisers In Route Slip-Up

Tour de France organisers inadvertently published next year's route on their official website, according to several specialist cycling websites on Monday. Amaury Sport Organisation (ASO) refused to comment when contacted by AFP about the embarrassing slip-up over the race which gets underway in the Belgian town of Liege on June 30.

The page is no longer accessible but Dutch journalist Stephan van der Zwan has some images he took of it on www.Wielerland.nl, the website that revealed the error.

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The 2012 Tour will feature nine flat stages, five mountain stages including two finishing at altitude, two individual time-trials and a prologue.

There will also be two rest days. The race will comprise a total of 25 climbs of 2nd, 1st or Hors categorie: one in the Vosges, three in the Jura, four in the Swiss Jura, six in the Alps and 11 in the Pyrenees. The official unveiling of the route is due to take place in Paris on October 18. (AFP)

F1: Vettel Tipped To Emulate Schumacher

Sebastian Vettel is on course to become one of the greatest champions in Formula One history - and has the potential to secure more glory than Michael Schumacher, according to two of the greatest drivers of all time.

Jackie Stewart and Niki Lauda, both triple world champions, believe the 24-year-old German can go on and emulate his compatriot's achievements providing Red Bull can maintain their levels of car design.

And if he does, it will cement an era of German supremacy in Formula One.

Stewart, champion in 1969, 1971 and 1973, said: "He is unquestionably the most mature 24-year-old racing driver I have seen. He has made slight errors, such as losing in Canada to Jenson Button, who was supreme that day, but his second world title is an incredible achievement for one so young."

He added: "Vettel's greatest strength lies in his mind management. God gives you your natural talent, but it is what you do with that talent. So many people have let it slip away or abused it. Vettel hasn't." (AFP)

!?! THAT'S ODD

No Turkeys Fall On Arkansas Festival This Year

YELLVILLE - Turns out turkeys don't fly. The "Baxter Bulletin" reports that attendees at the Turkey Trot festival in Yellville were disappointed when no turkeys dropped from planes on Friday or Saturday. The turkey drop is a mainstay of the event in northern Arkansas, though organisers don't sanction it. Supporters say the turkeys can fly just enough to descend safely, but animal-rights advocates call it cruel.