

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

I read part of it all the way through. - Samuel Goldwyn

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ZRP, Unity Urge President To Nominate Dombrovskis As PM Candidate

The Zatlers Reform Party (ZRP) and Unity urged President Andris Berzins to nominate current Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis (Unity) as the next PM candidate, the parties' representatives informed LETA. After three weeks of long-drawn and difficult talks, ZRP and Unity have agreed to form a three-party coalition.

However, the parties still did not reveal their third potential partner - All For Latvia!-For Fatherland And Freedom/LNNK (VL-TB/LNNK) or Harmony Centre.

According to information obtained by LETA, ZRP and Unity could choose VL-TB/LNNK, leaving Harmony Centre and Union of Greens and Farmers in the opposition.

Such coalition would have 56 seats in the Parliament. At 4.30pm on Tuesday, ZRP and Unity will hold a bilateral meeting.

After the meeting, the parties could announce the third coalition partner.

As reported, Berzins hopes to hear specific results in coalition talks by this evening, so that he can make a decision on how to act further on.

The 11th Saeima will convene for its first meeting on October 17. LETA further reported that Harmony Centre had won the 11th Saeima elections, and would have 31 seats in the next Parliament. ZRP will have 22 seats, Unity - 20, VL-TB/LNNK - 14, whereas Union of Greens and Farmers - 13. (LETA)

GUAM, Baltic Assembly Organise Joint Conference

The initiative of GUAM member states to resolve conflicts in the regions is significant, the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of GUAM, MP Elton Mammadov said in Baku at the opening of the international conference "Establishing relationships across borders".

The conference was jointly organised by the GUAM PA and the Baltic Assembly - a consultative body for co-operation between the Parliaments of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, the *Trand.az* reported on Monday.

Mammadov used the opportunity to lash out at the international community, saying that after Azerbaijan gained independence and faced Armenia's aggression, "the international community, rather than solve this problem, used double standards".

He said the conference would serve to strengthen relations between GUAM PA and the Baltic Assembly.

Mammadov further said that the relationship between the two bodies in recent years had successfully developed, and this co-operation covered the regions of the Caspian, Black and Baltic Seas.

According to GUAM PA Chairman Anatoli Dimitriou, who addressed the conference, the Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Baku was important for the organisation's member countries on the path of approximation to the EU and the expansion of mutual co-operation. (LETA)

Court Lifts Judge Muizniece's Immunity

The Constitutional Court on Monday decided to lift Judge Vineta Muizniece's immunity so that the Prosecutor General's Office could bring charges against her. The Court's decision will be submitted to the prosecutor's office in three days, Laila Jurcena, aide to the Court's chairman, informed LETA.

According to the law, Muizniece's authority as a Constitutional Court judge will now be suspended until the court ruling in the given criminal case comes into force, or the case is dismissed.

The law also provides that a Constitutional Court judge loses his/her job if convicted.

As reported, Prosecutor General Eriks Kalnmeiers on June 1 started a criminal process for falsification of a Saeima committee meeting protocol against Judge Muizniece.

Muizniece was chairwoman of the Saeima's Legal Affairs Committee at the time.

The criminal process has been started in accordance with the Criminal Law's Section 327, Part 1 - forging official documents.

Saeima Legal Affairs Committee Chairwoman Ilma Cepane (Unity) and Saeima Corruption Prevention Subcommittee Chairman Aleksejs Loskutovs (Unity) informed a press conference on February 23 that Muizniece, who was a member of the People's Party at that time, may have falsified a Legal Affairs Committee protocol in 2009 in order to stymie amendments to the Criminal Law, that would have set criminal liability for illegal party financing. (LETA)

Experts Commend Latvia's Achievements In Export

Latvia's export volume has so far exceeded estimates several times in reaching a one-month record in August, yet developments in the global economy clearly show that the increase in exports will slow down, bank analysts predicted on Monday.

"DnB Nord banka" analyst Peteris Strautins noted that the value of Latvia's export goods reached LVL 534.6 million in August, which is the highest-ever increase in exports in one month.

He said that even the most optimistic observers did not expect such an outcome.

"Nordea banka" analyst Andris Strazds predicted that exports in September should also be high.

However, there is a risk that the trends in the fourth quarter will not be as positive, as uncertainty in the global economy will influence the demand for Latvian export goods.

Asked whether the same situation might occur as in 2008, Strautins indicated that there were some similarities between the situation in the global economy three years ago and today, but this time it will most likely not be "as severe". (LETA)

Annual Inflation In September 4.6%

The average consumer price level in Latvia increased 4.6% in September, as compared to September last, the Central Statistical Bureau's data showed. Compared to August, the average consumer price level grew 0.4% in September. The average price level for goods increased 0.6%, whereas for services - shrunk 0.2%.

In September 2010, the average consumer price level grew 0.4% as well.

This past September, compared to the corresponding month last year, the average price level for goods increased 6.1%, for services - 0.8%.

Over the past 12 months, the price level, compared to the previous 12 months, grew 3.8%.

In the first nine months of 2011, the prices have grown 3.8% (September 2011 compared to December 2010).

Electricity, which became more expensive - by 26.7%, had the largest impact on the price changes in January-September 2011, followed by fuel - 11.9%, milk, cheese and eggs - 10.2%, and meat - 5.9%. Vegetable prices dropped 22.1% and also affected the prices changes. (LETA)

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.

REGIONAL NEWS

Dzintris Kolats To Apply For LTV News Service Director's Job

Latvian State Radio (LR) Director General Dzintris Kolats is all set to apply and be part of the competition for the position of Latvian State Television's (LTV) News Service director, LR press representative Ilze Zvaigzne informed "Nozare.lv". Higher remuneration and "new challenges" have been mentioned as the main reasons for Kolats' candidacy.

The National Electronic Mass Media Council of Latvia, which has been informed about Kolats' application, has asked for two-weeks time to consider whether to increase Kolats' remuneration.

Kolats received the invitation to apply from LTV Director General Edgars Kots.

Kolats has also informed his superior, the National Electronic Mass Media Council's chairman of the board, as well as LR staff.

As reported, LTV's former News Service Director Mareks Gailitis resigned at the end of September and will now work in the public relations sector. His last work day will be October 24. It was also reported that Kots planned to make the content of the broadcast news programme "Panorama" more analytical. (LETA)

Celebrations To Mark Riga Technical University's 150th Anniversary

Riga Technical University (RTU) will mark its 150th anniversary with several events this week, RTU Information Centre's Egita Kancane told LETA. The anniversary itself will be celebrated on October 14, 2012, but the entire 2011-12 academic year will see various scientific, cultural and sports events dedicated to the occasion.

At 11am on Friday, an agreement-signing ceremony between RTU and telecommunication company "Lattelecom" at the university's central building will get the anniversary under way.

The agreement provides for full-scope co-operation between RTU and the company in the training of engineering and telecommunication experts, research, joint projects and others. The agreement will be signed by RTU Rector Leonids Ribickis and "Lattelecom" CEO Juris Gulbis. (LETA)

New Automobile Registrations Grow 76.8% In First 9 Months

6,191 new automobiles were registered in Latvia in the first nine months of 2011 - a 76.8% increase on the same period last year, according to the Latvian Authorised Automobile Dealers Association's data. In September, Latvia had 764 new car registrations, which is the second highest monthly figure so far this year.

The largest number of new automobile registrations was in May - 774.

"Volkswagen" was the market leader with 1,025 new automobile registrations and a market share of 23.7% in the first nine months.

"Toyota" was in second place with 742 new car registrations and 11.1% market share, followed by "Skoda" with 342 new automobiles (5.6% of market share), "Peugeot" with 336 new automobiles (5.6%) and "Nissan" with 330 new automobiles sold in Latvia (5.6%).

The majority or 33.3% (2,063 units) of newly registered cars were SUVs. The most popular among them were "Nissan Juke" (150), "Nissan Qashqai" (131), "Toyota RAV4" (127) and "Toyota Land Cruiser" (119). (LETA)

BALTIC ROUNDUP

President Ilves Takes Oath Of Office

Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, whom the Riigikogu elected Estonia's president for a second term of office in August this year, took his oath of office at the Parliament on Monday, Delfi reported. Ilves said in his speech after the oath-giving ceremony that luck favoured those who dared to want and act as "nothing happens by itself". Ilves said in the first speech of his second term of office that it was not possible to reach aims that were set at the start of his first term of office in five or ten years, but "as a state, nation and society, we have moved in the right direction". Ilves noted that there was less corruption now. "We have almost gotten rid of our main fear - whether we would survive," said Ilves. "But we are not as rich or happy as we hoped for. Today we know that greener meadows or more carefree states are not waiting for us somewhere else," he said.

Estonian, French PMs Acknowledge Intensified Ties

Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip and his French counterpart, Francois Fillon acknowledged at a meeting on Friday that co-operation between the two countries intensified during the past year in the fields of economy, culture, and defence, the Estonian government's press service reported. In discussing economic relations, Ansip said he was pleased that France had become Estonia's ninth largest trading partner in the first six months of the year and that France's direct investments into Estonia had also grown.

Lithuania Growth To Reach 3.5% In 2012: IMF

The IMF on Monday supported the Lithuanian government's steps towards financial stability, but presented lower growth forecasts than the ones projected by its Finance Ministry. "The Lithuanian economy will grow by 3.5% in 2012," the IMF mission told the Cabinet at a meeting. The Finance Ministry, meanwhile, predicted the growth to reach 4.7%. Finance Minister Ingrida Simonyte said that such differences between the forecasts were determined by different methods of evaluation and the unstable global economic situation. As the global economy is at the brink of serious problems, the lower budget deficit and liberalisation of the labour market would guarantee the sustainability of public finance, the IMF noted. (LETA)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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. 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. Prosecutors have demanded a jail sentence of seven years.

Kireyev said Tymoshenko sustained a loss to state gas firm Naftogaz of USD 190 million by agreeing a 10 year contract on gas imports from Russia in 2009 when she was prime minister.

Despite being held under arrest since August, Tymoshenko as ever showed up in court with her hair plaited intricately around her head and wearing an immaculate beige dress. She shouted "Glory to Ukraine!" after being led in. (AFP)

Putin Arrives In China After USD 7bln Deals

BEIJING: Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing on Tuesday for talks with Chinese leaders, a day after his gas-rich nation signed deals worth over USD 7 billion with the world's top energy consumer.

Putin is due to meet his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao on his two-day visit - his first abroad since he announced plans last month to reclaim the Russian presidency.

China's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday the two countries had already signed 16 economic and trade agreements worth more than USD 7 billion "in the fields of technology transfer, research and development and mineral development".

It gave no further details of the deals, which were signed at a summit Monday, held ahead of Putin's visit.

Observers say the Russian prime minister may lay out his foreign policy priorities for years to come during the trip.

Putin has paid frequent visits to China - where he is very well known - in his capacities as president and then prime minister since he took power in 1999.

Russia is the world's largest energy producer and its plans to pump gas to China are expected to top discussions, although Chinese state media played down the prospect of any breakthrough on a long-delayed deal. (AFP)

FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

USD 1 = LVL 0.519

EUR 1 = LVL 0.7061

Abbas, Sarkozy To Meet In Paris: Palestinian Envoy

BOGOTA: Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and French President Nicolas Sarkozy will meet in Paris in the coming days to discuss the Palestinian bid for UN recognition, Abbas' envoy said.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said Abbas would depart for France after meeting Tuesday with Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos on the request for UN Security Council recognition of a Palestinian state.

Both Colombia and France are on the 15-member council. We are going to have a meeting with the French president Sarkozy on the same subject, because France is also a permanent member of the Security Council," Maliki told AFP Monday.

Earlier, Abbas said he was willing to restart peace negotiations with Israel "at any moment".

"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. (AFP)

Egypt Probes Deadly Sectarian Clashes

CAIRO: 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 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.

 WEATHER

Scattered showers are expected in Riga. Minimum temperature will be 4c while maximum temperature could rise up to 12c.

The SCAF, which took power when President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in February, stressed it "continues to bear national responsibility to protect the people" until it hands over to an elected civilian authority.

Thousands of people attended a service at the Copt cathedral for the funerals of 17 demonstrators. Live television showed the coffins being brought in a procession from the Copt hospital in downtown Cairo where autopsies were carried out. (AFP)

US Duo Wins Economics Nobel, Could Shed Light On Crisis

STOCKHOLM: Two US researchers won the 2011 Nobel Economics Prize Monday for research on how different events affect economies and which could help find answers to the current crisis, the Nobel jury said.

Thomas Sargent and Christopher Sims, both 68, have developed methods that untangle "the causal relationship between economic policy and different macroeconomic variables, such as GDP, inflation, employment and investments", the Nobel jury said.

"Their combined work constitutes a solid foundation for modern macroeconomic analysis. It is hard to envisage today's research without this foundation," it added.

Economies are constantly affected by both anticipated events, like long term fiscal policy and shifts in monetary policies, and unanticipated events like sudden hikes in the price of oil or an unexpected drop in household consumption.

The laureates' work, carried out in the 1970s and 80s, provides methodologies that facilitate understanding of how both systemic policy shifts and so-called "shocks" affect the macroeconomy in the short and long run.

Sargent, an economics and business professor at New York University, has worked with structural macroeconomics, analysing the reciprocal relationship between the expectations of the private sector regarding future policy and actual long-term policy decisions about wages, prices and investments. (AFP)

 SPORTS NEWS

Tennis: Sevastova Drops To 108th Place In WTA Rankings

Latvia's top ranked female tennis player Anastasija Sevastova lost 31 places in this week's WTA women's singles rankings. She is now ranked at 108th. At the moment, Sevastova has 638 WTA ranking points.

Last week, Sevastova did not participate in Beijing WTA "Premier" tournament and was not able to defend the 280 WTA ranking points she earned last year for reaching the tournament's quarter-finals.

This week, Sevastova will take part in Linz WTA "International" series tournament, where she will play the sixth-seed Julia Goerges (Germany) in the first round.

Among the other Latvian players in the WTA rankings, Diana Marcinkevica climbed four places to her career-high 353rd, whilst Liga Dekmeijere - 13 places to 628th.

Lina Lileikite lost six places to rank at 974th. Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark) is still ranked first in the WTA rankings, followed by Maria Sharapova (Russia) and Victoria Azarenka (Belarus), who are ranked second and third respectively. (LETA)

Ice Hockey: KHL Results

Amur Khabarovsk 6 Spartak Moscow 1; Sibir Novosibirsk 6 Salavat Ulaev UFA 3; Pen. Avangard Omsk 3 HC Torpedo 2; Metallurg Magnitogorsk 5 UHC Dynamo 6.

Tennis: Roddick Survives Scare In Shanghai

A frustrated Andy Roddick dug deep to beat Taiwan's Lu Yen-hsun 6-2, 3-6, 6-2 at the Shanghai Masters 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. (AFP)

Football: Spectre Of 1993 Haunts France's Euro 2012 D-Day

France may require just a point at home to Bosnia-Herzegovina on Tuesday to reach Euro 2012, but Les Bleus have been here before and thrown it all away in heart-breaking fashion. Eighteen years ago, France approached consecutive home games with Israel and Bulgaria needing one point to book their place at the 1994 World Cup in the US.

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Tel: +357 25340360

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It should have been a straightforward conclusion to a straightforward qualifying campaign, but instead it turned into one of the most traumatic episodes in the country's sporting history.

Stunned 3-2 by an Israel side that had not previously won a game, France were drawing 1-1 with Bulgaria in their final game when a last-minute counter-attack for the visitors ended with Emil Kostadinov lashing in an unforgettable winner.

Laurent Blanc was the defender who hurled himself vainly at Kostadinov's feet and in the build-up to Tuesday's game, the France coach has been obliged to re-visit that agonising November night at Parc des Princes.

"You can make a parallel (with 1993), but it's starting to get a bit old," he said last week. "The media are always there to remind us about it," he added. (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. (AFP)