

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UKRAINE, EU ANXIOUSLY AWAIT TYMOSHENKO VERDICT

KIEV: Ukraine is expected on Tuesday to give the verdict in the trial of opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko, a decision which will have drastic implications for Kiev's future relations with the EU.

Judge Rodion Kireyev retired to consider the verdict in late September after a three month abuse of power trial that EU officials have warned could jeopardise President Viktor Yanukovich's dreams of EU integration.

Prosecutors, who have demanded a jail sentence of seven years, have charged Tymoshenko with losing the budget almost USD 200 million by signing gas deals with Russia in January 2009 that were overly soft on Moscow. But the EU has expressed repeated alarm over the trial, with its envoy to Kiev bluntly stating that the charges would never have been brought to court in Europe as no corruption is implied.

GREECE HOPES FOR IMPROVED DEBT DEAL AFTER EU-IMF TALKS WRAP

ATHENS: Greece held out Monday for improved debt rollover terms from its private creditors as the finance minister said he had concluded key talks with the EU and the IMF on an audit to unlock fresh loans.

"We are expecting a 'PSI plus'," said Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos, referring to a bond maturity rescheduling scheme put forward in July by the EU involving the country's private sector banking creditors.

Croatia To Back Montenegro's EU, NATO Bid: Josipovic

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."

Croatia was admitted to NATO in April 2009, and wrapped up its entry negotiations with the EU this June.

The country is scheduled to become the

block's newest member on July 1, 2013.

Comparing with Croatia, Montenegro's long march to join the EU and NATO is lagging far behind.

Vujanovic congratulated Josipovic over Croatia's success in joining the now 27-member EU, saying said that "it is a success not just for Croatia but also for the region and for its neighbour Montenegro, because it is certain that Croatia will strongly promote Montenegro's strategic interests."

During their meeting, the two presidents also discussed economic co-operation between the two countries and regional issues. (Xinhua)

Western Balkans Hope To Move Slowly Towards EU

When the European Commission announces its progress report on Wednesday, Western Balkans countries hope for small steps forward as the realisation is dawning EU enlargement will be a very slow process.

As the economic crisis continues in Europe, support for EU integration has fallen in most Western Balkans countries, although the majority generally agrees there is no alternative.

Montenegro and Serbia should both get some good news with the commission expected to recommend candidacy status for Belgrade.

For Podgorica, a candidate member since December 2010, it would be a date for the start of accession talks.

Serbia will reap the reward for arresting the last two remaining fugitives of the UN war crimes court, earlier this year. But Belgrade's hopes that it could also set a start date for accession talks have largely evaporated after the recent unrest in northern Kosovo and the decision to ban a gay pride parade.

Leaked drafts of the evaluation report show that the commission will demand Serbia "show a more constructive attitude" on Kosovo, whose 2008 declaration of independence Belgrade does not recognise. (AFP)

Montenegro To Bolster Ties With UAE

Prime Minister Igor Luksic met visiting United Arab Emirates (UAE) Economy Minister Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri and discussed economic and political co-operation between the two countries. The PM said that Podgorica is eager to deepen its ties with the UAE.

Luksic said that increasing co-operation in economic field and several economic agreements will bolster political ties.

Al Mansouri said that Montenegro offers excellent investment opportunities and added that UAE businessmen will be keen to pump in money to various investment projects in Montenegro.

"The government of Montenegro is creating preconditions for new investment in Montenegro's economy and its development, through reforms, infrastructure development and building good business environment," the premier said.

Luksic further underlined huge investment potentials in agriculture, industry and banking sectors in addition to tourism which has already achieved significant success. Both Luksic and Al Mansouri pledged to take necessary steps to improve transport connections between the two countries in order to facilitate business transactions.

 WEATHER

Podgorica: 14 to 24c Partly Cloudy
 Pljevlja: 1 to 13c PM Drizzle
 Tivat: 8 to 26c Sunny
 Niksic: 7 to 19c Partly Cloudy.

35 Active Crime Groups In Montenegro: Police

A report prepared by the police together with Austrian experts said that there are 35 organised crime groups in the country. Most of the rings, according to the document, are involved in narcotics trafficking. The report was compiled to evaluate the presence and threat posed by the organised crime groups.

The report lists narcotics trafficking, black money and arms trafficking as major challenges to the law enforcing agencies in the country.

Montenegro, thanks to easy access to sea route and proximity to the Balkan route, has emerged as a transit point for the criminal groups working in the region.

The police claimed that huge money that comes from narcotics trafficking is used in legal banking transactions and later on hotels and dance clubs are bought using this money. Rozaje, Podgorica, Bar and Kotor are listed as major centres of these groups.

Slovenia Expects Date For Montenegro In EC Report

Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar said on Monday he believed the EC would propose on Wednesday a date for the start of accession negotiations with Montenegro and recommend that Serbia be given the status of a candidate for EU membership.

Zbogar made the statement in an interview with Slovenian news agency STA in Luxembourg where he was attending a meeting of EU foreign ministers.

Serbia deserves membership candidate status because it has met the requirements concerning its co-operation with the Hague war crimes tribunal by handing over Bosnian Serb wartime political leader Radovan Karadzic and military commander Ratko Mladic, and it would encourage it to implement reforms and deal with unresolved issues despite tensions in Kosovo, Zbogar said. (HINA)

 SPORTS NEWS

Rooney To Learn UEFA Suspension On Thursday

England striker Wayne Rooney will discover the length of his Euro 2012 suspension on Thursday, European football governing body UEFA said on Monday. The 25-year-old Manchester United player will definitely miss England's first game in the tournament after kicking Miodrag Dzudovic in the 2-2 draw with Montenegro.

The governing body's disciplinary panel could decide to increase the punishment to three matches, but England remain hopeful it will only be a one-game ban after referee Wolfgang Stark admitted Rooney's acceptance of his red card could work in his favour.

England Coach Fabio Capello has warned Rooney that he cannot expect to stroll back into the Euro 2012 reckoning after serving his suspension.

"Yes," replied Capello, when asked if he was prepared to leave Rooney out of his team. "In my life as a manager I have put on the bench a lot of players. I always decided who was the best player at that moment," he added. (AFP)

Bosnia Can Pull Off Miracle Against French: Dzeko

Bosnia-Herzegovina require a miracle to beat France in Tuesday's Euro 2012 Group D qualifier at the Stade de France and win the group but their star striker Edin Dzeko said they could well pull it off.

The 25-year-old Manchester City star - scorer of 19 goals in his 39 international appearances - claimed that whilst France had formidable qualities so did the Bosnians.

"Miracles do exist and it is possible," said Dzeko, who has found himself overshadowed by Argentinian Sergio Aguero at City this season.

"Victory against Luxembourg (5-0 last Friday) was very important, but it will be another story against France, because they are the favourites. It is true that the French are weakened (by injuries), but they were also missing several key players in the first match (in Sarajevo) in September last year, and they still won 2-0," he said.

"It is a dangerous side packed with quality, but I also think that their quality is not much greater than ours," he added. (AFP)

Messi Has Made Me A Better Player, Says Villa

Barcelona striker David Villa says playing alongside Argentina's two-time World Player of the Year Lionel Messi has made him a better player.

"Messi is a player who demands a lot from those who play alongside him because you must always pay attention. Sometimes it seems impossible that he has seen you and yet he has," he said in an interview published in Monday's edition of the newspaper El Pais.

"As of a result of that playing alongside him has helped me improve," added Villa, the top scorer in Spain's national team with 49 goals.

Messi has been the top scorer in the Champions League for the past three campaigns, in which time Barcelona have won the title twice and reached the semi-finals.

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 FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

EUR 1 = USD 1.3666

European Central Bank

The 24-year-old won the World Player of the Year award in 2010 for the second year running. He made his debut for Barca's first team in October 2004 and became the club's youngest league scorer when he netted against Albacete in May 2005 at the age of 17 years, 10 months and seven days. (AFP)

Hamilton Will Bounce Back, Warns Team Boss

McLaren team Chief Martin Whitmarsh has backed Lewis Hamilton to bounce back from his recent string of disappointments to win again and be a title contender next season.

Whitmarsh said he believed the 26-year-old Englishman's difficulties this year have sapped his confidence, but he is just one win away from rediscovering his form as the world's fastest and most exciting racing driver.

Speaking after Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix won by Hamilton's team-mate and fellow-Briton Jenson Button, Whitmarsh said: "He's a great racing driver. His heart is in it and he is very open about his emotions. He doesn't like not winning, but it will come good. I hope that this time next week we are celebrating one of Lewis's greatest ever victories - and that is entirely possible."

"We all know he's got it, we know we've got a car that can win and he has got the capability to do it. We just have to make sure he has the focus and ensure that we do that," he added.

Whitmarsh spoke out as Hamilton avoided being dragged into a new controversy after a brush with Brazilian Felipe Massa of Ferrari in Sunday's race in which Hamilton finished fifth. (AFP)