

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UKRAINE, EU ANXIOUSLY AWAIT TYMOSHENKO VERDICT

KIEV (AFP): 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.

LIBYA FORCES DRIVE TO CENTRE OF KADHAFI HOMETOWN

SIRTE (AFP): Libya's new regime forces were battling block by block towards the centre of Sirte, eyeing the symbolic prize of finally capturing Muammar Gaddafi's hometown after a month-long siege.

Ukraine Criticises US Plans To Deploy Missiles In Romania

Ukraine, along with France and Russia, criticised plans to deploy the US ballistic missile defence system in Romania at the Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest.

The Ukrainian delegation voiced concern that the decision to deploy elements of the missile defence system is not compatible with the neighbouring states, and in particular to whether a military contingent based in Deveselu would threaten the national security of neighbouring countries, and the Black Sea region as a whole.

France's socialist Jean-Michel Boucheron, the NATO PA Vice-President, stressed the inefficiency and economical inexpediency of the US-Romanian decision.

"The system doesn't ensure security as it would be able to intercept only 1/4 of missiles," he emphasised.

The French parliamentarian also noted that "amid reduction of budget costs it would be

more appropriate to direct these funds for other social programmes."

Russia also raised the question of co-ordination with other NATO members.

Representatives of the Russian Federation also asked whether the anti-missile shield is part of the European or US security system.

Moscow and Kyiv officials asked the question about whether Romania is authorised to sign an interstate defence treaty with the US. They also demanded that the Romanian side provide an explanation how strong today the threat missile attack is.

Romanian Foreign Ministry State Secretary Bogdan Aurescu hastened to assure that the system is part of a new concept of collective security of NATO, and "elements of the US missile defence system in the country will not be targeted against anyone, as they are of purely defensive nature." (Ukrinform)

NATO Calls For Maintaining Defence Budgets

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly said investments in security, diplomacy and international aid are important, even amid a harsh economic climate.

Officials at NATO made these remarks on Monday during a resolution named "Facing a difficult tax climate: The economic crisis, the tax consolidation and the risk posed by Europe's strategic irrelevance," that was adopted on the last day of the Parliamentary Assembly held in Bucharest.

According to the appeal, member states should take measures to make the public understand that investments in security are important matters of national interest, even during hard economic times.

NATO urged allied governments and legislatures to avoid cutting expenses to a level where the national and international security might be affected during the periods of tax consolidation.

The document invites NATO member states to bear in mind the "powerful potential" of the Alliance as an effective partner in the field of defence and security.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen will now put together three teams to identify areas where allied countries better cooperate to make efficient use of defence budgets, prevent spending cuts in defence budgets and boost appropriate military purchases. (PNA)

Top Judges Accused Of Taking Gifts

The anti-corruption prosecutors have charged two top judges with accepting gifts in exchange for rulings. Gabriela Barsan and Iuliana Pusoiu serve on the country's highest court.

Prosecutors alleged on Monday that the two received jewellery, plane tickets and free accommodation in France from a Romanian businessman from May 2010 to May 2011 in exchange for favourable judgements in litigation cases.

A lawyer and the businessman who is accused of paying the bribes, Gabriel Chiriac, also have been charged.

Attempts to reach the judges or their lawyers were not immediately successful on Monday. However, in a statement broadcast on television on Friday, Barsan called the case "a media circus." Romania is waging a crackdown on corruption amid pressure from the EU. (AP)

 WEATHER

Bucharest: 9-19c Mostly Sunny
 Constanta: 9-17c AM Light Rain
 Timisoara: 7-16c Mostly Cloudy
 Galati: 9-18c Partly Cloudy

EUR 6.14bn Trade Deficit After 8 Months

The country's trade deficit after the first eight months of the year stood at EUR 6.14 billion, approximately the same level as in the same period of 2010. A report published by the National Statistical Institute (INS) said that in the same period, export continued to grow faster than import.

Exports increased by 25.1% and imports by 19.9% in the first eight months.

Calculated in RON, exports were up 25.7% to RON 122.83 billion and imports grew by 20.4% to RON 148.53 billion, accounting for a trade deficit of RON 25.69 billion.

The report further said that the value of intra-community trade in the period from January until August 2011 was EUR 20.76 billion outgoing and EUR 25.34 billion incoming, representing 70.9% of the total exports and 71.5% of total imports.

Baneasa Airport To Restrict Night Flights

Beginning October 29, night flights at Baneasa Airport, near Bucharest, will be restricted from 22:00 hours to 06:00 hours. According to reports, as a result of the new rules, several flights will need to be rescheduled.

Among the airlines, Wizz Air, the largest operator at Baneasa airport, has already announced the reschedule of 10 % of its flights. Baneasa airport had banned night flights of planes larger than 50 tonnes in 2009 at the request of the inhabitants in Baneasa area, who complained about the noise emitted by these large planes.

 SPORTS NEWS

Football: Scots Plot Shock Downfall Of Mighty Spain

Scotland manager Craig Levein sees no reason why a famous victory can't be achieved against world champions Spain on Tuesday that would guarantee his team a place in the Euro 2012 play-offs.

Currently sitting in second place, one point ahead of the Czech Republic in Group I, Scotland need a result that equals or betters their rivals who play away in Lithuania.

"We are in a position where it is ours to lose," said Levein.

"A position that I would have taken at the start of the group. If we win on Tuesday, we are second, that's a fact. There is nothing for us to fear," he added.

Levein underlined his confidence in his team to get a result in Alicante.

"We are playing the world champions, of course, but I believe wholeheartedly in the players and their ability to rise to the challenge," he said. Defending champions Spain, who top the group after seven straight victories, already did the Scots a big favour by beating the Czechs 2-0 in Prague on Friday. (AFP)

Football: Danes In Must Win Game With Resurgent Portuguese

Denmark will look to give long-serving coach and Danish football great Morten Olsen the chance of a final golden farewell with a place in next year's Euro 2012 by beating Portugal on Tuesday in their final qualifier.

Olsen, who captained Denmark to their first ever World Cup finals in 1986, announced last year he will stand down at the end of the present campaign but his reign will be extended to summer next year if the Danes beat a revitalised Portuguese side which would see them top the group at their rivals' expense.

The 62-year-old, capped 102 times, has guided the Danes to three major championships - the 2002 and 2010 World Cup finals and Euro 2004 - in the 11 years he has been in charge.

Whilst they are level on points with Portugal a draw would not suffice as they would finish second because the Portuguese have a better head to head record having beaten them 3-1 at home.

Denmark's highly-rated young midfielder Christian Eriksen believes that he and his team-mates have no reason to fear their opponents despite that defeat, because they had come off best in their two 2010 World Cup qualifiers, beating Portugal in Lisbon and drawing at home.

"It would be better to avoid the play-offs, but we can only avoid them by getting a win," the Ajax star told uefa.com. (AFP)

Football: Pint-Sized Giovinco Set For Full Italy Debut

Italy coach Cesare Prandelli confirmed on Monday that diminutive Parma striker Sebastian Giovinco will start for the Azzurri for the first time in Tuesday's Euro 2012 qualifier against Northern Ireland. Giovinco - who stands just 1m64 (5ft 5in) tall - is preferred to Giuseppe Rossi as partner to AC Milan's Antonio Cassano for the game in Pescara.

"For me his size has never represented a problem," said Prandelli.

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 FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

USD 1 = RON 3.163

EUR 1 = USD 1.3593

"I have always been convinced that if a player is good enough to make it to Serie A then it shows that he is prepared to climb any mountain. I never thought that a little guy like Giovinco could not break through," Prandelli went on, adding that he considers the ex-Juventus player to be an out-and-out striker rather than a trequartista (a creative player positioned behind the strikers).

Giovinco has been capped four times as a substitute, all under Prandelli, and has yet to score for Italy despite sitting at the top of the Serie A scorers' charts just now along with Genoa's Argentine frontman Rodrigo Palacio. (AFP)

F1: 'Hamilton Will Bounce Back'

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."