

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

Ultimately, literature is nothing but carpentry. With both you are working with reality, a material just as hard as wood. - Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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.

Abbas To Visit, Says Chavez

CARACAS - President Hugo Chavez said Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas would visit Caracas on Tuesday. The leftist Chavez has long championed the Palestinian cause and has hosted Abbas on previous occasions. In a telephone interview on state television, he said Abbas had requested to pass through Venezuela on his way to Europe.

Abbas and French President Nicolas Sarkozy is scheduled to meet in Paris in the coming days to discuss the Palestinian bid for United Nations recognition, Abbas's envoy said.

Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Ryad al-Maliki said Abbas would depart for France after meeting on Tuesday with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos on the request for UN Security Council recognition of an independent state.

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

Venezuela Seeks 'Unity, Discipline' In OPEC

CARACAS - There is a need to "support unity and discipline" within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which is the "only authority to coordinate oil policy," Minister of Energy and Petroleum Rafael Ramirez said.

Speaking during a recent television interview, Ramirez said the OPEC must "correct what needs to be corrected" within the organization.

Venezuela "will continue to protect OPEC, because there are several members that have a common interest with our country: to defend the price of oil because this commodity is a key element for our economic development," he stressed, noting that major industrialized countries seek to weaken and divide the organization and "capture" some member states.

Last week, President Hugo Chavez proposed the creation of a new organization of "oil giants" composed of "not more than four or five" countries. He explained that such move "would not at all mean that OPEC would suffer."

Maliki told AFP on Monday.

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

"We are in favor of peaceful negotiations leading to the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel," Abbas said in Bogota, where he was 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.

The Middle East Quartet - the United States, Russia, the United Nations and the European Union - has called for a resumption of negotiations.

Israel on Sunday accepted with reservations a plan proposed by Quartet envoy Tony Blair, while the Palestinians have said there will be no negotiations until Israel freezes settlement - a demand they say is written into the Quartet proposal. (AFP)

Chavez To Return To Cuba For Medical Tests

CARACAS - President Hugo Chavez will return to Cuba next week to undergo a series of medical tests to evaluate his cancer treatment.

"I'll be in Cuba next week because they have to conduct very rigorous examinations that are possible thanks to Cuban technology," Chavez said during a brief telephone interview broadcast on state television.

He added that he is undergoing constant treatment, exercising and meeting with doctors as part of his efforts to recuperate. He even revealed sunbathing under the Caribbean sun.

The president, who finished what he described as his fourth and final round of chemotherapy in Cuba last month, said he is "under constant observation of my doctors" while attending to day-to-day government tasks.

Chavez vowed last week to win next year's presidential election and govern Venezuela for another six years or more. He said he is drafting a national development plan that would run through 2030. (AP)

460 Kilos Of Cocaine Seized

CARACAS - The Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) on Monday confiscated 460 kilograms of cocaine from a cargo ship in southern Bolivar state. The ship was from Spain and was to pick up an iron load and then to leave for France, said Miguel Vivas, GNB's anti-drug command chief. Some 22 foreign crew members were arrested, he added.

So far this year, the authorities have seized 35.2 tons of illegal drugs, National Anti-Drug Office Deputy Director Edilberto Molina told state television. In June, seven tons of cocaine were seized in Palua wharf, also in Bolivar, the country's largest state bordering Brazil. (Xinhua)

11 Rebels, 7 Colombian Troops Killed In Border

BOGOTA - 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 Brig Gen Fernando Pineda told reporters.

Two police were injured of the operation in Norte de Santander, he added.

Just hours earlier, seven Army troops were killed in a clash with leftist rebels in southern Colombia, Defense Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon said.

Pinzon said leftist insurgents attacked the military patrol on a rural road in Caloto, Cauca department as it was transporting supplies to another group of troops. "They were cruelly attacked with explosives," the defense chief said on a visit to the city of Cali. (AFP)

REGIONAL NEWS

Hidrolara Conducts Major Pipe Overhaul In Lara

BARQUISIMETO - The state government of Lara, through Hidrolara, has undertaken a major pipeline reconstruction in the parishes of Juan de Villegas, Union, Concepción and Catedral with an estimated value of VEF2.91 million.

The parishes of In a press release, Hidrolara metropolitan chief operating officer Engr Michael Rojas said the repair of 300 linear meters of pipe in Alambique sector has recently been completed, benefiting 200 families in the community.

In the community of El Carmen in Fortunato Orellana sector, Union parish, the replacement of 137 meters of pipe will be worth VEF352,000.

In San Lorenzo community, VEF176,000 will be allocated for the installation of 64 meters of new pipe.

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.

Rojas noted that VEF1.6 million will go to the replacement of pipes in other areas. He said that the pipeline system in some areas of the state required replacement due to damages caused by major flooding and erosion. Other factors causing the deterioration of pipes include the piling of debris and sediments.

Lara Unveils Drug Rehabilitation Program

BARQUISIMETO - The Ministry of Popular Power for Health, in cooperation with the state government of Lara and the Jose Felix Rivas Foundation, has launched a Plan for Addiction Treatment. The drug rehabilitation program was officially unveiled last Wednesday in Barquisimeto.

Public Ministry officials, lawyers, journalists and doctors attended the opening ceremony, in which general objectives of the plan, rehabilitation strategies and methods of intervention for people with addiction were explained.

The addiction treatment will be facilitated by members of the foundation and the National Anti-Drug Office.

Organizers said at least 150 patients will initially be given workshops, seminars and free medical advice. Medical professionals participating in the treatment are expected to analyze the situation of patients before providing legal, medical, psychological, occupational and social advice.

Coffee Farmers Attend Agricultural Conference

TRUJILLO - Coffee farmers in Trujillo recently participated in an agricultural conference organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Land. The event was held in the municipality of Escuque. Workshops taught coffee farmers ways and techniques on how to avoid pests and handle crop losses in times of natural disasters such as typhoons and flooding.

In behalf of Gov Hugo Cabezas who was unable to attend the conference, Cafe Plan coordinator Benjamin Zapata said that the activities were organized for the benefit of coffee farmers in 13 municipalities of Trujillo state.

He noted that since he began managing the Cafe Plan in the region, he has observed the need to further develop the methods of farmers to help increase their harvests and improve their living conditions.

Community council representatives who attended the conference were also encouraged to give suggestions and ask questions regarding agricultural development. After the conference, participants also received relief goods.

Municipal Schools Get Free 1st Aid Kits

TRUJILLO - The Ministry of Popular Power for Education, through the Trujillo Educational Zone, recently distributed free first aid kits to municipal schools in Trujillo state. The event was presided by Prof Maria Paredes, regional coordinator of the Community Center Protection and Student Development Zone.

Educational Zone director Dayana Pinto said that the initiative aims to encourage educational institutions to protect the health and welfare of students.

In other developments, the Day of Secretaries was recently observed in Trujillo state.

Officials and personnel from various educational institutions in the region attended an event to celebrate the occasion. School heads gave speeches to acknowledge the important roles played by secretaries as noble and dedicated administrative staff of various organizations and institutions.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Ecuador Files USD500-Million Suit Against Burlington

QUITO - Ecuador on Monday filed a pair of lawsuits worth more than USD500 million against United States-based oil company Burlington Resources, prosecutors said. The suits were filed with the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), an autonomous part of the World Bank.

Burlington Resources was working in two oil blocs in Ecuador alongside France's Perenco in 2008, but halted operations after Ecuador demanded more compensation after the price of oil rose.

Ecuador declared the oil contracts with the Franco-US consortium null and void on July 22, 2010, turning its oil blocs over to state oil giant Petroecuador.

That prompted Burlington Resources to sue Ecuador for USD400 million in the ICSID.

In its counter-suits, Quito argues that Burlington did environmental damage at its abandoned blocs in the Amazon basin region. In August 2010, President Rafael Correa's leftist government began renegotiating 33 foreign oil contracts following a July 26 law reforming the sector to give Ecuador 100% ownership of its crude oil production. (AFP)

China, Russia Sign Deals Ahead Of Putin's Visit

BEIJING - Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin travels to China on Tuesday for talks likely to focus on a gas deal mired in discord, a day after the two countries signed trade deals worth more than USD7 billion.

Putin will be accompanied by a 160-member delegation for his two-day visit - his first abroad since he declared a planned Kremlin comeback - during which he will meet his Chinese counterpart, Wen Jiabao, and President Hu Jintao.

China's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the two countries had already signed 16 economic and trade agreements worth more than USD7 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 on 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, which follows last month's announcement that he plans to reclaim the presidency.

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. (AFP)

Under-Pressure Europe Postpones Key Debt Summit

BRUSSELS - 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.

As the debt crisis claimed its first bank, with France and Belgium bailing out Dexia, European Union president Herman Van Rompuy announced that a two-day meeting of leaders scheduled for October 17 and October 18 has been put back to Sunday, October 23.

In between times, there will be an extra gathering of finance ministers from the 27 EU states, and more talks among the 17 from the eurozone.

The finance ministers were not due to meet again until November 7 and November 8 Van Rompuy's goal, following talks Sunday between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy on recapitalizing banks, is to come up with a "comprehensive" solution to the nearly two-year-old emergency. (AFP)

Bolivia's Teachers Getting 'Presidential' Laptops

LA PAZ - Bolivia's government is giving school teachers free laptops with a prominent detail that is generating criticism for President Evo Morales. A stenciled image of a smiling Morales is on the back of each computer. Teachers union leader Jose Luis Alvarez in La Paz says that is just promoting idolatry. He says teachers will cover the image.

Education Ministry Roberto Aguilar said on Monday that government officials originally planned to put on an image of Bolivia's nine-colored indigenous flag but manufacturer Lenovo recommended something simpler.

The government is handing out 130,000 laptops worth more than USD50 million. They have Intel processors, Windows and Linux operating systems and 320-gigabyte hard drives. (AP)

Jump In Cholera Cases Seen In Haiti's Capital

PORT-AU-PRINCE - The number of cholera cases seen in the Haitian capital has jumped about threefold in recent weeks, an official with a foreign aid group said on Monday.

Pascale Zintzen, deputy head of mission for Doctors Without Borders, said the group's four treatment centers in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area have handled as many as 850 cases in a single week lately.

FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Buying rate: USD 1 = VEF 4.2997

Selling rate: VEF 4.2897

Banco Central de Venezuela

That compares with about 250 cases a week more than a month ago.

The rise is largely attributed to the second rainy season of the year, when showers and floods cause the waterborne disease to spread freely in the crowded and unsanitary capital, Zintzen said.

One cholera treatment center in the densely packed Port-au-Prince area of Martissant has 90 beds for patients but is almost out of space, she said.

"We are not far from it," Zintzen said by telephone. "We are worried about what we see at the moment." Despite the jump in cases, the weekly number is still far below what foreign aid groups saw in the initial peak last November after the disease surfaced a year ago. (AP)

SPORTS NEWS

Reborn Argentina Set For Venezuela Test

Venezuela Vs Argentina: 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.

"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.

Venezuela, on the other hand, will have to dig deep at Puerto La Cruz as they bid to lose their unwanted tag of being the only South American side never to reach the finals.

"The qualifiers are not just about one game, and we have to bounce back from the loss and get points on the board," said coach Cesar Farias. (AFP) **Other Matches:** Bolivia Vs Colombia, Chile Vs Peru, Paraguay Vs Uruguay.

 WEATHER

Caracas: 24-29c Thunderstorms
 Valencia: 23-28c Thunderstorms
 Barquisimeto: 21-31c Thunderstorms
 San Fernando: 22-27c Thunderstorms

Scots Plot Shock Downfall Of Mighty Spain

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

Currently sitting in the European Championship qualifiers at 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."

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."

Defending champions Spain, who top the group after seven straight victories, already did the Scots a big favor by beating the Czechs 2-0 in Prague on Friday. (AFP) **Other Matches (Selected): (Group A)** Germany Vs Belgium; **(Group C)** Italy Vs Northern Ireland; **(Group D)** France Vs Bosnia and Herzegovina; **(Group H)** Denmark Vs Portugal.

MLB - Cruz Hits Grand Slam; Texas Beats Tigers

Texas Rangers 7 - Detroit Tigers 3: The Texas Rangers are on Cruz control in the AL championship series. Nelson Cruz hit the first game-ending grand slam in postseason history, lifting the defending American League champions over the Detroit Tigers in 11 innings on Monday for a 2-0 series lead.

Cruz doubled early, chased Tigers starter Max Scherzer with a tying home run in the seventh and was hit by a fastball near his right wrist that sent him crumbling to the ground in pain in the ninth.

Then, with nobody out in the 11th after a misplay in the Detroit outfield loaded the bases, Cruz hit a high drive to left off Ryan Perry that sent 51,227 fans into a towel-waving frenzy.

Cruz's trip around the bases ended with him getting mobbed at the plate by the Rangers. Game 3 is Tuesday night in Detroit. Colby Lewis, 4-0 in five career postseason starts, pitches for Texas against Doug Fister. (AP) **Other Result: (National League Playoff)** Milwaukee Brewers 3-12 St Louis Cardinals.

NBA Cancels 1st 2 Weeks Of Regular Season

NEW YORK - National Basketball Association (NBA) commissioner David Stern canceled the first two weeks of the 2011-12 regular season after several hours of meetings failed to result in a new labor deal. Stern said he is canceling all scheduled regular season games through November 14 after the two sides met for seven hours on Monday.

He explained that the last-ditch effort to end the lockout of the players and begin the season on time failed because the two sides are miles apart on a number of key issues that need to be resolved. "We just have a gulf that separates us," Stern said.

"With every day that goes by, I think we need to look at further reductions in what's left of the season."

All of the NBA's 114 preseason games have already been wiped out by the contract dispute. "Despite extensive efforts, we have not been able to reach a new agreement with the players' union that allows all 30 teams to be able to compete for a championship while fairly compensating our players," the NBA said in a statement. (AFP)

Hamilton Will Bounce Back, Warns Team Boss

SUZUKA - 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)

Andy Roddick Survives Shanghai Scare

SHANGHAI - 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 avoided a second ignominious first-round exit in a week in China.

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The American tenth 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 No 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.

The American, 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," Roddick said of his opponent. (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.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals posted a USD5,000 bounty for information leading to an arrest. The Federal Aviation Administration said any pilots dropping turkeys could lose their licenses.

People at the festival wore "I am the Phantom Pilot" T-shirts, and at least one sign offered a USD10,000 reward for the arrest of the PETA employee who came up with the USD5,000 bounty.