



Greek authorities to evacuate hospital in quake-struck city

ATHENS, Greece: Greek authorities say they will evacuate a hospital in the western city of Patras that was damaged in last weekend's deadly earthquake. A spokeswoman for the Health Ministry says patients will be moved from the Aghios Andreas Hospital as a precaution after inspectors found cracks in the building. State NET television reported Wednesday that 85 patients will be transferred early Thursday. The magnitude-6.5 quake near Patras killed two people and injured 240 on Sunday.

New Driving Licenses

Greek authorities will start issuing new credit card-style driving licenses in early 2009. The new licenses will have the holder's photo on, as well as several personal data. Those who already have a driving license do not have to replace it with the new one. If they wish, however, to travel outside Greece, they will have to get a new one paying 30 euros.

Expatriates will have to register property in Greece until Dec. 30.

In less than four years, a total of 6.7 million title deeds will be registered, corresponding to 310,000 hectares of real estate and two-thirds of the country's population. Deputy Foreign Minister Theodoros Kassimis has already addressed letters to Greek consulate authorities to appoint more personnel in order to facilitate ethnic Greek expatriates.

Greek industrialist's abductors demand 50 mln euros

ATHENS, June 11 (Reuters) - *The kidnappers of a prominent Greek industrialist are asking for 50 million euros to release him, police said on Wednesday.*

George Milonas, 49, chairman of the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece and CEO of aluminium company Alumil, was snatched at gunpoint late on Monday outside his home in the northern city of Thessaloniki by unknown assailants.

"A person claiming to know Milonas's whereabouts contacted his wife early this morning demanding 50 million euros for his release," a police

official who declined to be named told Reuters.

Kidnappings in Greece are rare but the country suffered a spate of assassinations of businessmen and diplomats from 1975 to 2003, mostly the work of the now-dismantled November 17 group of extreme leftist urban guerrillas.

Although the abduction of Milonas is not considered to be the work of urban guerrillas, authorities have not ruled it out.

Road blocks have been set up throughout the city and across northern Greece. Police have set up tight controls at the country's northern borders with Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania to prevent the culprits fleeing.

Milonas is married with three chil-



dren and has been CEO of Alumil group since 1988. The business is active throughout Greece, the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East.

Trading in shares of Alumil (ALMr.AT: Quote, Profile, Research) was suspended on Tuesday.

Milonas's family have appealed to the press to avoid excessive coverage, which may hurt the police investigation.

Greek court considers Lesbos vs lesbians case

ATHENS - **A** Greek court is considering a request by residents of the Aegean island of Lesbos to ban use of the word lesbian as a term to describe gay women, a court official said on Wednesday.

Three Lesbos residents brought the case, arguing that the use of the term "lesbian" in reference to gay women insults their identity.

The island of Lesbos, off the Turkish coast, is the birthplace of the ancient Greek poet Sappho, whose love poems inspired the term lesbian. The island has become a mecca for gay



Greek-American Paul Thymou (C), resident of the Aegean island of Lesbos, holds a banner, reading: "If you are not from Lesbos, you are not a Lesbian," outside of an Athens courthouse, June 10, 2008.

women the world over.

"The court heard both sides and will deliver a ruling on the case in two months at the latest," said a

court official who declined to be named.

The plaintiffs, who argue the northern Aegean island's residents are the only true Lesbians, told the court the dispute was over identity and not sexuality.

"Gay women have every right to define themselves as they wish, but they don't have the right to appropriate our national identity," Lesbos resident Ioannis Achlioptas said.

At the packed courtroom, one of the islanders wore a badge that read "I am Paul and I am a Lesbian" and later unfurled a banner which read "If you are not

from Lesbos, you are not a Lesbian".

"I have a hard time explaining to my daughter that we Lesbians are not homosexuals. My mother, my sister and my daughter are all Lesbians and it's incredible the amount of ridicule they suffer because of this," Achlioptas told the court.

Evangelia Vlami, representing the Gay and Lesbian Community of Greece, said such fears of ridicule were unfounded.

"Let's stop playing around with words, protests like this are nothing but prejudiced. The term can be used by both sides without insulting anyone," she said.

An attorney for the defense argued not all Lesbos residents were embarrassed and many saw the term as beneficial.

"The term has been used worldwide for centuries and has even helped the island, boosting tourism," said defense witness Themistocles Kefalas. "My daughter has no problem being called a Lesbian, even though she's not a lesbian."

Greek Church to donate 500,000 euros to earthquake victims

The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, chaired by Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos, on Tuesday announced that the Greek Church will give 500,000 euros for the relief of victims of last Sunday's destructive earthquake in Ilea and Achaia.

The Synod's press spokesman, Thessaloniki Metropolitan Anthimos, said the Church had mobilized its non-government organization Allilegii (Solidarity) and had already delivered large quantities of humanitarian aid, such as tents and bedding, clothing, food and drinking water to be distributed to the victims of the quake. A team of technicians had also been sent to examine and list damage to churches in the region, he added. In addition to the above, the Synod issued a statement that homosexuality violated the will of God and the teachings of the Bible, Anthimos said.