

Cell phone measure gets poor reception

Plans announced by the government in the wake of the Korydallos Prison helicopter escape to oblige mobile phone users to submit their particulars when they buy prepaid cards met with opposition yesterday, mainly from cellphone companies who fear that it will damage their business. Justice Minister Nikos Dendias announced the measure after it appeared that convicts Vassilis Palaiocostas and Alket Rizai used prepaid mobile phone cards to communicate with the people that helped them escape.

However, the sudden announcement, which drastically changes the current system whereby cus-

tomers do not need to give any personal details when they buy a card, prompted a backlash.

The president of the National Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT), Nikitas Alexandridis, said implementation of the plans would entail many practical and legal difficulties. Meanwhile mobile phone company sources told Kathimerini that if enforced, the decision would prove costly as firms would have to process some 10 million applications, which would also have to pass security checks. Currently, mobile phone cards can be purchased from kiosks as well as

stores, prompting questions about how the checks could be carried out.

Mobile phone firms also believe that it would result in 20 to 30 percent fewer calls being made via prepaid cards, as many people who desire anonymity, not just criminals, would find alternative ways to communicate.

"We are studying the legal frameworks that exist in the European Union so that we can find the right balance between respect for privacy and the maintenance of public order," said Transport and Communications Minister Evripidis Stylianidis.



Great Greeks down to final 10

Alexander the Great is one of the top 10 Greeks of all time.

The verdict is out – at least for now. The list of the 10 greatest Greeks of all time, as voted by the public, was announced. The voting process to determine the most important Greek personalities is part of the "Great Greeks" series developed by Skai Television. Prior to narrowing down the list to 10 personalities, Skai counted votes for the top 100.

The top 10 – in alphabetical order – is as follows: Alexander the Great, Aristotle, Ioannis Capodistrias, Konstantine Karamanlis, Theodoros Kolokotronis, Georgios Papanikolaou, Pericles, Plato, Socrates and Eleftherios Venizelos.

Beginning on Monday, March 2, and every Monday at 10 p.m., Skai will be screening one-hour specials on each of the abovementioned great Greeks. Presenting the one-hour documentaries will be Thanos Veremis, Pemi Zouni, Vassilis Karasmanis, Sia Kossioni, Stefanos Manos, Grigoris Patrikareas, Yannis Smaragdis, Petros Tatsopoulos, Tassos Telloglou and Maria Houkli.

Nine killed as Turkish plane crashes near Amsterdam airport

A Turkish passenger jet crashed as it tried to land at Amsterdam's main airport Wednesday, killing at least nine people and injuring more than 55, Dutch airport authorities have said.



The Turkish Airlines Boeing 737-800, which had 127 passengers and seven crew members according to the airline, broke into three pieces on impact in a field near Schiphol Airport.

The injured included both crew and passengers, said acting mayor of Haarlemmermeer municipality Michel Bezuijen.

The flight data and voice recorders have been recovered, he said, but investigators still need to determine what, if anything, the pilots said in the moments before the crash.

A news photographer at the scene said she saw an unknown number of bodies lying under a white blanket, Maaik Voersma, a journalist with Dutch newspaper De Pers, told CNN.

A passenger on the plane who spoke to Turkish network DHA said he saw injured people trapped and squeezed between the seats when he walked off the plane. iReport: Send your videos, stories

Flight 1951, which originated from Istanbul, Turkey, was trying to land at Schiphol when it went down at about 10:40 a.m. local time (4:40 a.m. ET), Dutch airport officials said.

At least three crew were among the dead. "There are still three crew members in the cabin," said Bob Steensma of the Dutch Justice Department. "I'm sorry to say they are dead. We leave them there because we have to investigate the cockpit before we take the cockpit apart."

All the passengers, however, had been removed from the plane as of about 5 p.m., officials said. Roads around the crash site had been blocked to traffic.

Six people were critically injured, Ineke Van Der Zande of Amsterdam Emergency Services told reporters at a briefing. Twenty-five passengers were severely injured, she said, and 24 others were lightly injured. The conditions of the other 31 people were not immediately known, she said. Some 60 ambulances transported 84 people to 11 hospitals throughout the region, she said. Witnesses said they saw the nose of the plane pitch up suddenly before the crash, according to RTL journalist Greg Crouch.

The plane was broken in three pieces. One tear was in front of the wing, splitting the "Turkish" logo in two, and a larger tear was farther back along the fuselage. See where the plane crashed »

Most of the injured were seated toward the back of the plane, which sustained the most damage, a passenger on the plane told Turkish station NTV. Many of the passengers simply walked off the plane through the cracks in the fuselage, witnesses told NTV.

Medics treated passengers on the ground next to the buckled hulk of the plane, while firefighters and police

examined the aircraft. See rescuers attend the crash scene »

Emergency exits were wide open and there was no signs of fire damage to the fuselage.

Also visible was one of the aircraft's engines, apparently separated from the shattered remains of one of the wings. The plane landed in a farmer's field near the airport, RTL journalist Greg Crouch told CNN. He said the weather at the time was partly sunny with no wind or rain.

Witnesses said they saw the nose of the plane pitch up suddenly before the crash, Crouch said.

A bank manager who was a passenger on the plane told NTV that there were no emergency announcements. The crew's last word to the cabin was an announcement to fasten seatbelts and prepare for landing, the bank manager said.

He said he felt the pilot giving more power to the engines before feeling "turbulence," then a sudden drop. He described the crash as similar to a sudden impact that was over in a matter of seconds.

