



'Kallikratis' the codename of new municipality architecture

Interior, Public Administration and Electronic Governance Minister Yiannis Ragoussis presented during Sunday's cabinet meeting the main principles of the new architecture for municipalities which will bear the codename "Kallikratis", the name of one of the two architects of the Parthenon.

The minister revealed that the programme will be ratified by May at the latest and local government elections on November 14, 2010, will be taking place in the new municipalities and regions.

Rangoussis clarified that land planning will be carried out in the second phase of the bill's consultations. He added that the new architecture concerns both levels of local administration.

With the "Kallikratis" programme the foundations will be laid for second stage regional local administration and 13 regions will be created in the place of the 76 prefectures. From the 1,034 municipalities currently existing less than 370 will be established, while the approximately six thousand legal entities and municipal corporations will be limited to 2,000. In addition, seven general administrations will be formed that will replace the present 13 state regions and the decentralised state entities, whose existence is imposed by the Constitution.

According to what Rangoussis said, regional local administration will constitute the "vehicle" for green development. He also said that there will be a change in the way of controlling local administration resources, there shall be a compulsory presentation of administrative decisions in the Internet and an autonomous service for checking local administration bodies will be established.

Moreover, funds amounting to 650 million euros from ESPA will be revised and adjusted to support this change and for the hiring of the necessary scientific staff.

Cypriot games turning fans on

THERE'S something truly unique about a tennis crowd. About its ability to screech random words and phrases of utter silliness that reverberate around centre court.

The supporters in attendance for the first round of the Medibank International Sydney could not drag Australia's best tennis player, Sam Stosur, off the canvas - even if they'd been chanting her name from the start of the warm-up.

Nor could they lift 21-year-old Novocastrian Nick Lindahl to extraordinary things.

He lost to Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis 6-2 7-5, although his rousing second-set display suggests we should be focusing more on Lindahl as The Next Big Thing than Bernard Tomic - the teenager he defeated to win a wildcard to next week's Australian Open in Melbourne.

"Oh Nicky, you're so fine! You're so fine you blow my mind, hey Nicky! Hey Nicky!"



Fan favourite... Marcos Baghdatis. Picture: Gregg Porteous Source: The Daily Telegraph

What was evident, though, in the furnace of Ken Rosewall Arena yesterday, is that a large proportion of the country is about to start its love affair with Baghdatis again. You will remember him as the unknown, unseeded player who shot down a constellation of stars - Andy Roddick, Ivan Ljubicic, David Nalbandian - at the Australian Open in 2006 before the fairytale was abruptly ended by Roger Federer in the final.

It was a magical ride that captured the Australian public's imagination. It was

only enhanced when he replied to questions about his next matches with unforgettable lines such as: "I think my coach will watch and I'll be sleeping with my girlfriend."

His support amongst the Greek and Cypriot communities was on show again against Lindahl, and the blue and white of the Greek flag fluttered around the stands.

Random words and phrases spoken in his native tongue reverberated around centre court.

"The crowd was great," he said. "I always love coming

here."

Australia loves having him. But the support in the stands will only get him so far. There have been lean times for the impressively tanned Cypriot with back and ankle issues in particular curtailing him in the past year.

He is currently ranked 42 in the world - a far cry from the eighth spot he once had nailed down.

"I have a physio with me 24 hours, seven days a week," he said of his battles with injury.

"Basically that's all. I work a lot on my body."

When he pulled Lindahl's name out of the tournament trophy last Saturday, as the men's player given the honour of doing the draw, he said: "Who? Never heard of him."

When asked if he knew who he could be coming up against for the rest of the tournament - he could face Lleyton Hewitt in the quarter-finals -, he replied: "To tell you the truth, I didn't see the draw."

Which is strange. Because he did it. Just another reason to love him.



Orders for ships still strong

Greek shipowners charted a course against the current of the international crisis, ordering a relatively high number of new and used vessels last year and despite the considerable reduction in funding to shipping by major banks.

According to data released by Clarksons shipbroking company, Greek shipowners ordered 35 newly built ships, consisting of 16 dry-bulk carriers, 17 tankers and two passenger carriers. However in 2008 the number of new orders had reached 204 vessels. Greek interests also spent over \$3.16 billion for the acquisition of 164 used ships, while the Chinese spent less (\$2.79 billion) to buy a greater number of used vessels (204). Norwegian and Turkish shipowners followed with \$650 million and \$250 million euros spent, respectively.

The most active Greek shippers in 2009, regarding the ordering of new vessels, were the Tsakos Group, Evangelos Marinakis's Capital Ship Management and Dimitris Prokopiou's Centrofin. The Tsakos Group ordered four tankers (two Suezmax and two Panamax vessels), while Capital Ship Management ordered five Handysize dry bulkers and Centrofin placed orders for three Suezmax tankers.

Ancient Greek artifacts discovered in southern Gaza

GAZA, -- A number of ancient Greek relics were discovered in southern Gaza Strip, a Hamas official in Gaza said Monday. "These pieces include pottery fragments, black basalt rocks and a piece painted with the Red Cross, in addition to the discovery of some walls and arches and a large number of ancient coins," said Asa'ad Ashour, protection director in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the deposed Hamas government. The Ministry had put its grip on the site of ancient ruins on the border town of Rafah after it was found by accident.

The Ministry also launched a project to excavate and document "Tel Zo'rob" Archaeological site, when it found a long narrow basement under the ground end up with a large rock. "The site was discovered by workers by coincidence, so we came and put our grip on it because it's considered an ancient ruins site," said Ashour, adding that "it still requires a lot of hard work and exploration."

"It's like a narrow passage located underground which is built in a sort of descending stairs, at the end of this passage is the border line with Egypt and we discovered some ancient letters on the rock," he added.

Around 1,500 ancient coins belonging to the Greek era have been found in the site. The coins were in an earthen pot buried since that period.