

IN BRIEF



Flight upheaval on Thursday, metro may be suspended today

A strike by the civil servants' union AD-EDY, planned for Thursday, when legislative provisions affecting the pensions of civil servants are to be voted on in Parliament, will disrupt public services. Flights will be suspended between 8 a.m. and noon as air-traffic controllers walk off the job. Tax offices and schools will be closed and hospitals will be operating on emergency staff. There might be a suspended service on the Athens metro today after employees said they would proceed with a 24-hour strike deemed illegal and abusive by an Athens court.

Officer changes testimony

Epaminondas Korkoneas, the policeman charged with the murder of teenager Alexis Grigoropoulos in December 2008, yesterday told a court in Amfissa, central Greece, that he fired his service gun while looking at a crowd of youths that had earlier attacked him and his partner – a contradiction of previous testimony. “I fired while looking at the crowd – it was as if my mind went blank,” Korkoneas said. In earlier testimony, he claimed to have fired his gun while running away.

Mantelis in court

Former Transport Minister Tasos Mantelis is due to appear before investigating magistrate Maria Nikolakea tomorrow as part of a judicial probe into his admission that he accepted money from Siemens Hellas. Mantelis insists that the cash was a campaign donation and not a bribe. The money was deposited in a Swiss bank account that had been opened by Giorgos Tsougranis, the godfather of Mantelis's child.

Kozani fault line

Engineers in Kozani, northern Greece, yesterday inspected a 300-meter-long fault line that has opened up in the ground near the village of Mavropigi and which residents are blaming on the activities of the Public Power Corporation, which operates coal-fired electricity plants and mines in the area. The crack, which was discovered by local residents last week, is 1.5-meters deep and half a meter wide, according to Spyros Mytrou, community leader of Mavropigi.

PASOK worries hound premier

Prime Minister George Papandreou has escaped Athens for a few days so that he can host a meeting of economists and opinion leaders on the island of Poros, but it seems that he cannot escape the anxiety that is building up within the ruling PASOK party.

The Socialists seem on edge following a suggestion by Justice Minister Haris Kastanidis that the government might need fresh legitimacy, sparking a new round of speculation about early elections. They are also apprehensive about upcoming reforms of public servants' social security benefits and the payment of hospital debts. Some PASOK deputies have already threatened to vote against the measures.

Sources said Deputy Prime Minister Theodoros Pangalos is trying to coordinate and speed up the actions of the ministers concerned, amid fears of deep rifts developing within the ruling party. Some PASOK lawmakers could not conceal their anger at Kastanidis's inference that

Papandreou should call a snap election to renew the Socialists's mandate.

“The holding of elections would be a crime against the country,” said Miltiades Papaioannou.

“The country does not need elections, it needs a government that can handle emergency situations,” said Ektorasi Nasiokas. “People feel that there is no clear and comprehensive plan to exit the crisis.”

Papandreou is unlikely to tackle the problem until he returns from Poros, where he is hosting the Symi Symposium. He is due back in Athens tomorrow or on Thursday. Speaking at the 13th edition of the event yesterday, Papandreou identified some of the factors he believes have caused the crisis in Greece and other parts of the world: “the major lack of transparency that existed in the financial system, the lack of democratic controls, the inequality that exists in the world and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few people.”



PM George Papandreou speaks with Luis Ayala, secretary-general of Socialist International, on Poros yesterday.

Greek hairdresser takes out national L'Oreal trophy

Frank Apostolopoulos has taken out Australia's Golden Globes of hairdressing for his magazine cover look interpretation. The BIBA Fitzroy hairdresser, together with fellow hairdresser Mariam Enegd was awarded the L'Oreal Professionnel Colour Trophy Award last Sunday at the Melbourne Convention Centre.

Apostolopoulos along with 25 finalists from around the country reproduced a magazine cover look in front of a panel of high profile judges. His messy, street inspired men's cover look also earned him the L'Oreal Professionnel Men's Colour Award.

“The experience was surreal... and the first time ever that someone had won two awards in the competition,” said Apostolopoulos. Judges included Director of L'Oreal International Professional Development, Michel Claire from France, Editor of Marie Claire Australia Jackie Frank and L'Oreal Paris Make Up Director Rae Morris. The winners now share in over \$250,000 of prizes, education and national endorsements including trips to London to attend an industry hair seminar.



Mariam Enegd and Frank Apostolopoulos took out the L'Oreal Professionnel Colour Trophy Award.



Pedestrians struck

A retired policeman ran over 10 people late on Saturday night when he lost control of his car on a pedestrianized street on the island of Thasos, authorities said yesterday. The 62-year-old was involved in the incident after arguing with an acquaintance, police said. He struck seven Greeks and four foreigners aged between 34 and 58. Three were hospitalized. Officers said the retired policeman was breathalyzed but was not found to have been drinking.

Shooting deaths

Forensic police officers in northern Greece were yesterday examining a car discovered in Sidirokastro, near Serres, on Sunday with two bodies in the driver's and passenger's seats. Both men had been shot in the head at close range. The man in the passenger seat, believed to be the owner of the vehicle, was identified as a 40-year-old Russian national who acquired Greek citizenship a few years ago and had been living in Thessaloniki with his family. The identity of the second victim, found in the driver's seat, remained unclear. Police believe the double killing to have been a settling of accounts.