

■■■■■ In Brief

Ship dispute

The owner and captain of a Greek cargo ship that became embroiled in a row with activists who wanted to transport humanitarian aid to Gaza last week were released yesterday after testifying before an Athens prosecutor on charges that they abducted the campaigners. According to sources, the prosecutor disagreed with the investigating magistrate appointed to probe the affair. The activists claim they had struck a deal and were brought to Piraeus against their will. The owner and captain of the Strofades IV insist that the foreign activists, mostly Britons, tried to seize control of the vessel while it was docked at the Libyan port of Derna with the aim of forcing the captain to go to Gaza. The shipowner is suing the activists.

House fire

A 38-year-old woman died late on Sunday after suffering third-degree burns in a fire that broke out on Saturday in her home in a social housing complex at the Aghios Haralambis settlement near the main port of Zakynthos. Meanwhile, the woman's 19-year-old son, who also suffered serious burns in the fire, is undergoing intensive-care treatment in a hospital on the island. According to police, the fire broke out on Saturday afternoon when a plastic container filled with petrol was ignited under circumstances that remained unclear. It is thought that the youth tried to move the container after it caught fire but that he and his mother became trapped in the narrow entrance hall of their home. Firefighters arrived quickly but both residents had already sustained serious burns.

Nioplis out

Soccer champion Panathinaikos has parted company with coach Nikos Nioplis "by mutual consent" and has temporarily replaced him with veteran Polish manager Jacek Gmoch. In yesterday's Super League games Iraklis beat Aris 1-0, Kavala downed Asteras 1-0 at Tripoli, while Panserraikos and Olympiakos Volou shared a 2-2 draw.

Arson attack

A homemade explosive device placed in front of a private journalism school in the central Athens district of Kolonaki by unidentified arsonists caused serious damage to the five-floor building housing the enterprise when it detonated early yesterday but no injuries were reported. The force of the blast blew out all the windows on the first three floors, according to police, who said the device had comprised 27 gas canisters and cans of petrol.

Fatal knifing

Police on Lesbos yesterday made public the photograph of a 26-year-old Albanian man believed to be behind the fatal stabbing of a 21-year-old compatriot on Sunday in the island's southern resort of Plomari. According to police, the suspect knifed the victim in the chest in Plomari's main square at around 8.30 p.m. on Sunday following an argument.

Store raid

Two gunmen netted about 18,000 euros after holding up a supermarket in Thessaloniki early yesterday morning. The robbers burst into the store at around 6 a.m. when only the manager and one other employee were present. According to the employees' testimonies, the robbers forced them at gunpoint to open the safe before locking them in the store and fleeing with the loot.

Swimmer safety resource backed by pros



Swimmers can now reduce their risk of injury via a new resource developed by Swimming Victoria and Smartplay.

The Preventing Swimming Injuries Fact Sheet was launched on the weekend by Australian Swimming Champion, Marieke Guehrer. The resource offers practical advice for all recreational and competitive swimmers to aid in injury prevention.

As swimming has one of the highest participation rates, injuries do occur. From 2002-2007, 363 people were admitted to Victorian hospitals, an average of 73 per year while 1,045 people visited emergency departments for swimming-related injuries, an average of 174 per year*.

Marieke believes safety while swimming is crucial, with this resource being a great starting point to educate swimmers on how to be safe when entering the water.

"During my swimming career, the training regime has been hard, but it would have been much harder if I didn't have excellent therapists and practitioners helping me with injury maintenance and prevention," said Ms Guehrer.

"I have learnt self-management is just as important as 'doing the kilometres' in the pool, if not more important.

"I urge all young athletes, and recreational swimmers alike, to practise stretching, correct technique, proper warming up and cooling down before races and hard training, and to follow the pool rules so that swimming is as enjoyable and successful as it has been for me," said Ms Guehrer.

Executive Officer of Sports Medicine Australia Victorian Branch Lynne Sheehan said all those in-



Australian Swimming Champion, Marieke Guehrer with swimmers from Gippsland - District 21 (regional swimming district) holding the Smartplay Preventing Swimming Injuries Fact Sheet.

involved in swimming have a responsibility to safety.

"Everyone involved in swimming can and should practise safety. If coaches, clubs and participants are aware of their responsibilities a safer swimming environment can be achieved," said Ms Sheehan.

"Through the development of this resource it is hoped that the correct safety precautions are known and most importantly undertaken," said Ms Sheehan.

Safety tips for swimming

- Seek instruction from an accredited swimming coach to learn proper technique.
- Swim in a supervised area.
- Avoid swimming with a pre-existing illness or injury. If in doubt, talk to a sports medicine professional.

- Undertake training prior to competition to ensure readiness to swim.
- Gradually increase the intensity and duration of training.
- Practise pool etiquette, e.g. if lap swimming, swim in a lane corresponding to your ability.
- To avoid eye irritation, purchase swimming goggles which fit correctly.
- Ear and nose plugs can increase comfort in the water.
- Check the pool area before swimming for potential accident hazards.

The resource provides information on the number, causes and types of injuries involved in swimming; risk factors; and safety tips for swimming.

Download the Smartplay Preventing Swimming Injuries Fact Sheet at www.smartplay.com.au

Organizers of the annual protest march commemorating the bloody student uprising against the junta on November 17, 1973, are expecting a much higher turnout this week than in previous years, largely due to the economic crisis, which has prompted police to draft an extensive security plan in an attempt to prevent violence.

Events to mark the crushing of the student revolt at the Athens Polytechnic, now the National Technical University of Athens, began yesterday and there was already a

On tenterhooks for march

strong student presence within the institution's grounds. Organizers are anticipating a big turnout for the traditional rally, to be held tomorrow and which ends with a march on the US Embassy, as many people are expected to use the march as an opportunity to voice their opposition to the austerity measures and the presence of the International Monetary Fund. There is concern that small groups intent on causing violence might hijack the proceedings.

"The same groups

that are taking part in the commemoration and the political parties have to ensure that the events inside the grounds of the Polytechnic and the march on the US Embassy go smoothly," Nikos Triantafyllou, a member of a group representing exiles during the 1967-74 military junta, told Kathimerini.

Triantafyllou said that organizers have asked the police to maintain a discreet presence along the course of the march to avoid provoking any flare-ups with protesters.

As was the case last year, some 7,000 officers will be deployed to police the event tomorrow. Police sources told Kathimerini that there was no proof that hardcore groups are planning to cause trouble.

Nevertheless, there will be a strong police presence around universities and government buildings, as well as at the US Embassy. Police chiefs have also drawn up plans for officers to be on duty through the night in central Athens to ensure that trouble does not erupt after the march, which is due to take place tomorrow afternoon.