



Venizelos in hospital for check-up

Evangelos Venizelos, leader of Greece's socialist PASOK party, was admitted to hospital on Sunday in the country's second-largest city of Thessaloniki for a scheduled health check, PASOK said.

Following Venizelos's admission, it was declared necessary for him to remain hospitalized for one day for a complete gastrointestinal and cardiovascular examination, according to an e-mailed statement from Athens-based PASOK.

PASOK is one of three parties that supports Greece's coalition government led by Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. Venizelos underwent surgery in Nov. 2011 after being admitted to hospital with stomach pains.



Dockworkers extend their strike

Greek dockworkers have extended their strike, leaving ferries tied up in port until Wednesday morning.

The strike, which began Thursday, is demanding back pay for the workers from ship owners, a collective wage agreement, and an

end to undocumented and uninsured employees. The workers also want the government to cancel a plan to regulate the minimum number of dock workers required in each crew, saying that would lead to layoffs.

The strike has been hard on the

many Greek islands that have no airports and rely on ferries to deliver their basic supplies.

Greek media reported Sunday that the government is considering using emergency powers to force the dock employees back to work.

Golden Dawn in contact with Bavarian neoNazis to expand presence in Germany

Golden Dawn is attempting to establish a presence in Bavaria and is being monitored by the state's intelligence agency, according to a report in Der Spiegel on Monday.

The Greek neofascist party announced the creation of a cell in Nuremberg last month and has recently been in contact with German neoNazis in Bavaria.

"Bavaria's state intelligence agency is particularly interested in meetings that have been taking place between right-wing extremists from Greece and those in Bavaria," reported Der Spiegel.

Several thousand Golden Dawn supporters marched to the US embassy in Athens on Saturday on the anniversary of a dispute between Greece and Turkey over the Imia islets.

Greek Foreign Ministry condemns Turkish reports about terrorist training

The Greek Foreign Ministry has issued a statement condemning Turkish media reports about alleged training of terrorists in Greece.

"We categorically reject and deny these claims, which have of late – in a groundless, arbitrary and suspicious manner – been reappearing in certain Turkish newspapers," the ministry said.

"Neither terrorist camps nor terrorist training centers have existed or exist in Greece. Greece has been a victim of terrorism and is on the front line of the international fight against terrorism."

Greek authorities also pointed out that the issue was not mentioned when Prime Minister Antonis Samaras met his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Qatar last week.

"If this had been the case, the Greek Prime Minister would have given the appropriate response," the ministry said.

Reports in Turkey have suggested that the militant who blew himself up at the United States embassy in Ankara on Friday had crossed into the country from Greece.

The bomber, identified as 40-year-old leftist militant Ecevit Sanli, killed himself and a Turkish

Ex-associate sheds light on tycoon

FORMER CHEMICALS FIRM OWNER REVEALS HOW LAVRENTIADIS BUILT EMPIRE WITH BAD LOANS

Testimony given to an investigating magistrate by Constantinos Ballis, one of several former associates of Proton Bank's one-time major shareholder Lavrentis Lavrentiadis, has reportedly shed light on how the latter built his business empire by transferring hundreds of millions of euros in loans to companies linked to his interests.

Ballis, the former owner of a chemicals firm based in Thessaloniki, submitted a 10-page deposition to magistrate Ioanna Hatzaki, in which he allegedly claims to have been convinced by Lavrentiadis into selling his firm for 5.5 million euros.

In an attempt to convince the magistrate that he had no idea that the sale or merging of companies had been aimed at securing illegal loans for Lavrentiadis, Ballis reportedly claimed to have only realized that he had

been duped after the Lavrentiadis scandal broke in 2011.

The former chemicals firm owner reportedly claimed to have been unaware of an earlier deposition attributed to him that supported the interests of Lavrentiadis. Ballis also allegedly blamed several one-time close associates of Lavrentiadis including Yiannis Papavassiliou, chief financial officer at Alapis SA, who was arrested over the weekend on a warrant issued by the prosecutor investigating the Proton Bank embezzlement case.

Papavassileiou is expected to be summoned in the coming days to answer to charges of fraud and money laundering. Lavrentiadis and several other key suspects in the embezzlement case are currently in custody.

