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Hellenic News, Culture & Lifestyle



Thessaloniki eyes 'Alexanderland' theme park

The deputy governor of Central Macedonia, Giorgos Tsamaslis, who is responsible for Thessaloniki, on Tuesday unveiled an ambitious plan to create a 30-hectare theme park in the northern port city dedicated to Alexander the Great. "Alexanderland," as the project is being dubbed, is aimed at casting light on the history of the ancient Macedon king with interactive displays, simulated battles, audiovisual presentations and exhibitions.

Three state-owned plots are being considered for the project, while Tsamaslis's office is already in talks with experts at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University in regard to drafting a comprehensive proposal.

Extrovert character has to be preserved

Last year has left a bittersweet taste for the country's exporters, the Panhellenic Exporters' Association said on Monday, stressing that extrovert companies have to be supported to help the economy rebound in the context of the euro's rise.

Association president Christina Sakellaridi stated that although a new record of exports was registered in 2012, exceeding 24 billion euros, there was also a worrying decline in exports to European Union countries, particularly after a significant drop in December that was attributed to the rise in the euro's exchange rate with the US dollar.

"There is a dire need for top priority to be given to actions of genuine support to extrovert companies, through the utilization of funds from the National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA), immediate value-added tax returns, lightening the tax and bureaucracy load, and the reduction of non-salary production costs," said Sakellaridi.

Building permits destroyed by flooding at Aghia Paraskevi town planning office

All building permits issued by the Aghia Paraskevi town planning office in northeastern Athens in the last eight years were destroyed in flooding last week, Skai reported on Monday.

Authorities said that the water level reached 1.5 meters in the basement where the files were kept after heavy rain on Friday.

Athens saw its heaviest rain for more than 50 years on Friday morning, causing flooding in various parts of the capital.

Building permits issued more than eight years ago by the Aghia Paraskevi office have been transferred to a warehouse in Aspropyrgos, west of Athens.



Greek Ambassador discusses future of teaching of Greek in Australia

On Tuesday, February 19, 2013 at 4pm Greece's Ambassador to Australia, Mr Charalambos Dafaranos, accompanied by the Consul General of Greece in Sydney Mr. Tolios and Education Coordinator Mr. Gokas Kingdom, visited the headquarters of ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) in Sydney. The meeting was requested by the Greek Ambassador in order for Greece to thank this independent authority for the inclusion of Greek as a second language in the Australian national curriculum and be informed on the progress of work on the writing of the School this Program. The Greek delegation was welcomed by Mr. Robert Randall (Chief Executive Officer) along with his colleagues Mr. Nicolas Perkins and Mr. John Gougoulis. The Ambassador stressed that this decision is of historic importance for the future and cultivation of Greek Language in Australia. It will also be an opportunity for students who do not have Greek cultural backgrounds to become part of this great culture and will further strengthen the multicultural nature of Australian society.

Mr. Randall welcomed the interest expressed as the Greek side and referred to the work group, consisting of specialists in the

methodology of teaching the Greek language from various States of the country, that is writing the new curriculum. This group consists of: Maria Dikaiou (Victoria), Panagiota Panagiotopoulou (Renmark, South Australia), Gina Douka and Polyxeni Christodoulides (New South Wales).

Both sides explored the areas where collaboration can exist and declared their willingness to remain in contact in order to achieve the best results.

The draft of the National Curriculum (up to Year 10) will be ready by next May for public consultation. The aim of the Australian side is, after consultation, its adoption by the end of the year, taking into account suggestions and comments received.

The chiefs of ACARA were extremely receptive to the issues we raised, eg exploiting as much as possible the experience of the University of Crete regarding the Greek language. The thoughts of both parties regarding a possible endowment of the course as an option with corresponding molecules were noted. The Department of ACARA explained that its responsibility is to design the curriculum, not the implementation.

Nobel economics laureate Christopher Pissarides to head Cyprus's economic council

Cyprus's President-elect Nikos Anastasiades has appointed Nobel economics laureate Christopher Pissarides to head the country's newly formed economic policy council.

The new body will oversee the country's economy and issue proposals to the president regarding macroeconomic issues, Pissarides told Cypriot state broadcaster CyBC on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, appointed Finance Minister Michalis Sarris had a long consultation with outgoing minister

Vassos Shiarly ahead of Sarris's trip in view of his participation in next week's Eurogroup meeting of eurozone finance ministers.

Sarris will travel to Brussels on Saturday to consult with various European Union officials ahead of the Eurogroup scheduled for March 4.

Elected president of Cyprus on Sunday, Anastasiades has promised to move fast to secure foreign aid to help the country emerge from its worst financial crisis in four decades.

