

LITHUANIAN DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

December 3, 2007

With Complement From

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- UPCOMING EVENTS FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007 IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - The following events are scheduled for Tuesday, December 4, 2007, in Lithuania:

PRESIDENT Valdas Adamkus to meet with advisers and work with documents.

PRIME MINISTER Gediminas Kirkilas to hear oath of government's representative in the Utena county Petrikas at 9 a.m.; to attend second discussion of the state budget at the parliament at 12 p.m. and to attend official event to honor winners of the contest The Best Representative of

Small- and Medium-Sized Business 2007 at 1:30 p.m.

PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER Viktoras Muntianas to attend a meeting of Seimas elders at 8:30 a.m.; to preside over a Seimas plenary meeting at 12 p.m. and attend a charitable campaign in the Municipality Square at 6:30 p.m.

AIR FORCES COMMANDER Brigadier General Arturas Leita to meet Baltic colleagues in Latvia.

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- YOUNG MAN DIES OF MALARIA IN KLAIPEDA, LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - A young man died of a rare disease - tropical malaria - in a hospital in Klaipeda, western Lithuania, last week.

BNS was told at the Center for Prevention and Control of Contagious Diseases that the young man had contracted the dangerous disease not in Lithuania. The center has been notified of the case, however, has refused to provide further detail.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease widespread in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which claims 1.5-2.7 million lives around the globe every year. More than 10,000 tourists getting the disease on an annual basis, and 1 percent of them dies.

According to data provided by the Center for Prevention and Control of Contagious Diseases, two Lithuanian residents contracted malaria abroad in 2007, in addition to the 44 registered since 1999.

The young man who died on Sunday studied at the Klaipeda Navigation School and had spent the past six months at the coasts of Africa on an internship.

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- MOST LITHUANIANS DETAINED IN SPAIN HAVE PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORDS

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - The majority of crimes committed by Lithuanian citizens in Spain include property crimes, crimes against person and attempt to illegally hire other Lithuanians, the Lithuanian Interior Ministry said on Monday.

According to the press release, most Lithuanians detained in Spain have prior criminal records and convictions.

Almost 3,000 Lithuanian citizens have declared their permanent residence in Spain over the past five years, shows data provided by the state register, however, the actual number of Lithuanians living in the southern European country could be tenfold.

The Lithuanian Interior Ministry said that the share of crimes committed by Lithuanian citizens in Spain is not high as compared with crimes attributed to other migrants. However, the figure is rather high considering the relatively low number of Lithuanians living in the country.

The issue of Lithuanian criminality was high on the agenda of the Monday's meeting of Lithuanian Interior Minister Raimondas Sukys with his Spanish counterpart, Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba, in Madrid. The two ministers signed an agreement on cooperation, investigation and prevention of crimes.

According to the press release, the document aims to enhance cooperation between relevant institutions of both countries, with a particular focus on crimes, investigation of which require coordinated actions of competent state institutions.

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- ELECTION IN RUSSIA BRING NO SURPRISES TO LITHUANIAN POLITICIANS

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - The results of the Sunday's elections to the Russian State Duma did not come as a surprise to Lithuanian politicians - President Valdas Adamkus, Parliamentary Speaker Viktoras Muntianas and leaders of the country's largest parties say the victory of the party supporting President Vladimir Putin was predictable.

"I am not surprised and the world is not surprised either. The people of Russia made their choice, God help them. From the view of international policy, I can only regret over the signs, which indicate that Russia has taken a step

backwards instead of taking a step forward with the help of democratic privileges and principles," the Lithuanian president told journalists on Monday.

Muntianas, the parliamentary speaker, also said he had expected a similar outcome of the polls - the pro-presidential United Russia party was likely to play first fiddle from the very beginning.

"I believe that the elections took place using political and administrative resources. From what we have seen, the results were virtually decided in advance, therefore, I personally had no doubts regarding the election results. There was nothing to surprise me," the Seimas speaker told BNS.

Chairman of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, Justinas Karosas, expressed regret that the core of Russian administration continues lying in representation of one group of interests, however, voiced certitude in further development of Lithuanian-Russian ties.

"There are many pragmatic aspects of the relations, which I believe will be addressed regardless of the political administration. Our relations should still develop in a normal way because we are neighbors and share some common interests," Karosas told the Lithuanian national radio.

Irena Siauliene, elder of the Social Democratic Party group, said regretfully that the pro-presidential United Russia refused to have public debates with the opposition. In her words, this is a disgrace to the victorious party and does little to enhance democratic positions.

The only person surprised over the election results in Russia was deputy leader of the Conservative party Rasa Jukneviene. In her words, it is unbelievable that the "pro-Putin" used all possible administrative resources and the president for the election campaign and ended up with "merely" 64.1 percent of the vote.

"I am very astonished over the "bad" showing of the Putin party, I expected it to win around 80 percent of the votes and sweep everything, considering the propaganda, the pressure, the administrative involvement and the participation of Putin himself. I am highly astonished," Jukneviene told BNS.

In the general elections to the lower chamber of the Russian parliament - the Duma - last Sunday, the United Russia with President Vladimir Putin at the top of the candidate list won the majority with 64.1 percent of votes.

The second came the Russian Federation Communist Party with 11.6 percent of votes. The other two parties to cross the seven-percent threshold was the ultra-national Russian Liberal Democratic Party with 8.2 percent of votes and the Fair Russia with 7.8 percent. The latter party is headed by chairman of the upper

parliamentary chamber, Sergey Mironov, ardent supporter of Putin's third tenure as president.

All three parties are broadly represented in the current parliament.

The remaining seven parties including the opposition Right Force Union and Yabloko, did not win mandates in the Duma after collecting 1 percent and 1.6 percent of votes, respectively.

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- RUSSIA TOOK STEP BACKWARDS -- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus has given a critical opinion of the Sunday's elections to the Russian State Duma, expressing regret over their undemocratic character.

On the other hand, he was not surprised by the results of the elections.

"I am not surprised and the world is not surprised either. The people of Russia made their choice, God help them. From the view of international policy, I can only regret over the signs, which indicate that Russia has taken a step backwards instead of taking a step forward with the help of democratic privileges and principles," the Lithuanian president told journalists on Monday.

According to preliminary data, the United Russia party of President Vladimir Putin won more than 64 percent of the votes on Sunday, ensuring the constitutional majority - 315 seats in the State Duma.

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- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT URGES PARLT TO "TIGHTEN BELT"

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - With the upcoming vote on the next year's budget, Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus has urged the parliament to give another critical view of the projected spending.

"There is a rule that limitation of spending and balanced budget is the key instruments for the curbing of inflation. I call upon members of the Seimas with a request to vote for an economical budget in order to mitigate the possible economic decline in the country. Let us take responsibility for the people of Lithuania and reduce our operational spending by at least a few percent," Adamkus said in his address.

In his opinion, the failure to balance the 2008 budget would make it even more difficult to achieve a balanced budget in the following year because experts forecast a slow-down in economic development. Lithuania's economic growth could also be affected by higher prices of energy resources and unclear development prospects of US and European economies.

The second debate of the budget draft is scheduled for Tuesday, with the final vote planned for Thursday.

In 2008, the state budgetary income is projected to amount to 25.571 billion litas (EUR 7.4 b) and spending to 26.572 billion litas, with the deficit of 1.001 billion litas.

(EUR 1 = LTL 3.45)

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- ILLEGAL GRAFFITI IN VILNIUS REPLACED BY FRANK ZAPPA STYLE DRAWINGS

VILNIUS, Nov 03, BNS - A square in Vilnius, which has been home to a monument in commemoration of American musician Frank Zappa, will as of now interest onlookers with original drawings as well.

To this day, the famous artist's monument had been surrounded by walls sprayed with illegal graffiti, but over the past weekend, Art academy students and professors have been bustling about the square with a quest to "inspire more culture" into chaotic street art.

"Some illegal graffiti have been painted over, others were incorporated into new drawings and the new square has become more beautiful than it had been to this day. There are lots of flat planes there, and each plane became a sort of a separate drawing, however all compositions are united in a spirit of the oeuvre of Frank Zappa: a bit of irony, some humor, joy of life", one of the initiators of the renovation of the square, photographer Saulius Paukstys told BNS.

In the opinion of Paukstys, the "cultured" square should become a bigger attraction to locals and tourists.

The monument for Zappa was built in 1996 by his fans and is the only monument for the famous musician of the 20th century in the world yet.

Zappa (1940 - 1993) was an American composer, guitarist, singer, film director. He is called the father of the modern music. Zappa also released the first conceptual rock music album. The music of Zappa features psychedelic style and

elements of parody, it connects features of rock, jazz, vanguard and electronic music. The musician is acknowledged as one of the most outstanding composers of the last century.

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- PRETTIEST FARMING GIRL CHOSEN IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - A unique beauty pageant was organized in Lithuania over the weekend, when the prettiest farming girl was chosen.

Daily paper Lietuvos Rytas reports that this contest was a first not just in Lithuania, but in all of Europe as well.

A total of 154 girls aged 16 to 28 participated in the contest. One of the essential conditions of the contest was that the girls' parents had to be farmers.

After posting the pictures and surveys of the applicants on the internet, a voting took place in order to select the 12 finalists. The youngest finalist was 16 years old, the oldest - 23.

The jury declared 19-year-old Egle Zilyte from central-western Lithuanian district Raseiniai, the prettiest farmer girl in Lithuania. The winner got a jeweler-created silver crown and a check worth 5,000 litas (EUR 1,449).

The girl's parents are famous for their ecological farm, and this holds true not only on the local level, but around Lithuania as well.

Zilyte, who is currently a first year student in the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy is determined to return to her native village after completing studies.

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- RAINY WEATHER TO CONTINUE IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - Rainy weather will persist in Lithuania over the next few days.

Rain is forecast for the night to Tuesday. The temperature low at night will range +1-+6 degrees. Occasional precipitation, mostly rain, expected during the day. The highest temperature will reach +2-+6 degrees Celsius.

Light precipitation expected in most areas on the night to Wednesday. The temperature will range -1--4 at night with 0--5 during the day.

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- FLAG DISAPPEARS FROM POLISH EMBASSY IN VILNIUS

VILNIUS, Dec 03, BNS - A flag disappeared from a Polish diplomatic establishment in Vilnius.

An employee of the embassy noticed that the Polish flag was missing from the building located on Vasario 16 street.

The event was reported to the Vilnius city general police commissariat today.

Police officials are investigating the circumstances of the incident.

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- LITHUANIA: RULING PARTY, OPPOSITION NOT BOGGLED AT IDEA OF PREMATURE ELECTIONS

VILNIUS, Dec 3, BNS - As politicians and analysts start speaking up about the incompetence of Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas's lead government and the pending economic crisis, Seimas is getting busy with discussions of the possibility of premature elections.

Lietuvos Zinios daily reports that Vice-Chairman of the Social Democrats, the National Defense Minister Juozas Olekas had publicly announced last week, that under certain conditions, Social Democrats would probably agree to test their power against the voters. "We are prepared for either two of the possibilities. Either work to the end of our term, or, should the circumstances not allow this case scenario, we are prepared to face the voters and organize early elections", the minister has said on an interview to Lithuanian news radio.

Leader of the Homeland Union, Andrius Kubilius, assures that his party sees premature elections as one of the solutions to the situation at hand. However, in the opinion of the Conservatives, it is Valdas Adamkus, the nation's leader, who should take charge of solving this problem. "We should be talking to the country's president, because one of the most eminent options at the moment would be his consent to resignation of the government and letting go of the Seimas", Kubilius has told the daily paper.

No volunteers for organizing premature elections have surfaced in Seimas. Vice-Chairman of Seimas, representative of the Liberal and Centre Union Algis

Caplikas has told the daily paper that it currently seems that by talks of premature elections, politicians seek to build on political capital.

It is predicted that the planned passing of the national budget might cramp the current government. Should the budget not get confirmed, the government should retreat, but under the current conditions, another ruling minority is hardly imaginable, therefore the possibility of premature elections can not be discounted.

It is also expected that even if the premature elections were to be held, division of power wouldn't radically change in Seimas. Sociologists predict that the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Social Democrats and the Labour Party have the best chances at the moment. The situation wouldn't be much different from back in 2004, when the general Seimas elections took place. The only difference is the fortification of the Liberal Democrats on account of the Laborists.

The general Seimas elections are due in the fall of next year.

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- POLISH PM SEES FRIENDSHIP WITH LITHUANIA MORE THAN STANDARD -- POLISH PRESS

VILNIUS, Dec 01, BNS - "The friendship between Lithuania and Poland is more than standard," the majority of Polish Saturday dailies cited Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk as saying in Vilnius on Friday.

Long time ago did the Polish media provided such a broad coverage of the prime minister's visit in Lithuania. The new Polish premier's trip to the neighboring Baltic state was broadly covered in the press, the radio and the television.

One of the major dailies, Rzeczpospolita, titled the article A Lithuanian and a Pole - Two Brothers, stressing that all conversation of the Polish diplomat in Vilnius were sincere, open and friendly.

According to the Trybuna daily, Tusk chose Lithuania for his first official foreign trip in the new capacity because "every other destination would have required many explanations, while with Lithuania we share a deep friendship, so my announcement of the plans to go to Vilnius drew no questions."

The Trybuna said: "Although the visit did not yield any specific results or decisions, we believe it solved last disagreements and eased the tensions caused by the uncompromising stance of the (earlier) government of Jaroslaw Kaczynski."

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- LITHUANIAN-RUSSIAN INTERGOVT PANEL TO DISCUSS BIPARTITE COOPERATION IN KALININGRAD

VILNIUS, Dec 01, BNS - The Lithuanian-Russian intergovernmental commission is to meet in Svetlogorsk in the Russian enclave Kaliningrad to discuss bipartite economic, social and cultural cooperation issues on Dec. 3-4.

The commission is co-chaired by Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas and Russian Transport Minister Igor Levitin.

The Foreign Ministry announced that Lithuania is planning to raise questions of national importance such as gas supply security and renewing petroleum supply through the Druzhba pipeline, investments' security, repayments of monetary deposits held by Lithuanian inhabitants in the ex-Vneshekonombank's Lithuanian branch, and retrieval of exported cultural valuables and archives.

The proposal to establish a standing Lithuanian-Russian business forum made by the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists is also to be discussed.

Another topic of the commission's sitting will be the Lithuanian and Russian governmental agreement on navigation in the Curonian Lagoon and the water paths of Lithuania and Russia's Kaliningrad enclave.

The intergovernmental commission sitting was to be organized a month ago; however it was postponed after the death of Vaitiekunas' father.

The intergovernmental commission was established in 1996 under an agreement between Lithuanian and Russian governments on trade and economic relations. The body sets guidelines for trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

The commission includes seven task forces for cooperation in fields of trade and economy, culture, science and education, energy, transport and social, which also address of real estate and financial regulation issues of diplomatic missions.

This will be the fifth meeting of the commission.

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