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**Kosovo** Media Highlights

**Delawie: Special court to push Kosovo towards EU (*Kosova* *Sot*/*RTK*)**

The United States Ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, told public broadcaster ***RTK*** on Wednesday that the establishment of the special court for war crimes is an important step for Kosovo on its way towards European integration. “I have full confidence in this court’s ability to serve justice fairly and responsibly for the crimes committed during the war in Kosovo,” Delawie said. While in regards to border demarcation agreement with Montenegro, Delawie said that Kosovo should ratify this agreement as soon as possible. “The EU has made its ratification a condition for visa liberalisation. I support Kosovo’s ability to integrate into European institutions and to have the opportunity to travel if the EU allows this, but of course this is not my decision. But I think that the Assembly should ratify this agreement. I would encourage the people of Kosovo to talk to their MPs and explain how important it is for them to meet the EU’s conditions,” Delawie said.

**Rakic: Wall will not be demolished, only redesigned (*Zeri*)**

The Mayor of Mitrovica North, Goran Rakic, told the paper on Wednesday that the wall in northern Mitrovica will not be demolished but only be redesigned with stairs. Rakic said that the Serbian side reached an agreement with the EU and the Kosovo side on this matter. “The wall will not be demolished, only redesigned. It will be shorter and for this we have agreed with the international community and Kosovo,” Rakic said. According to him, this wall will result in a very beautiful project which has nothing to do with any divisions. On the other hand, Kosovo’s Minister for Dialogue, Edita Tahiri, told the paper that the wall will be demolished soon. International officials in Kosovo meanwhile have said that the issue should be resolved between Pristina and Belgrade.

**Foreign Ministry rejects Djuric’s request to enter Kosovo (*Gazeta* *Express*)**

Kosovo’s Foreign Ministry has rejected the request of Marko Djuric, director of the Office for Kosovo in the Serbian Government, to enter the territory of Kosovo. Citing unidentified sources, the news site reports that Djuric asked for permission to visit Kosovo on Thursday. “The Foreign Ministry has rejected this request,” said Bashmir Xhemaj, chief of staff at the Foreign Ministry. Xhemaj said that Djuric along with several other officials had plans to visit some fuel stations in northern Kosovo which are not licensed by Kosovo authorities.

**The northerners call the parallel structures legal (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports on its front page that the “latest clashes between northern Kosovo Serbs have highlighted the role and advantage that Serbian parallel structures have over the municipal authorities elected in 2013”. The paper notes that Zoran Todic, a Serb from northern Kosovo, is chairman of the Leposavic Municipal Assembly and also member of the so-called Serbian provisional body in this municipality. According to the paper, such dualisms led to the recent clash between the legal and illegal structures in northern Kosovo, most notably the initiative of illegal structures to dismiss the Mayor of Leposavic, claiming that he is working against the interests of Serbs and Serbia in Kosovo. Todic told the paper on Wednesday: “the municipal governments that emerged from the 2013 elections, according to the Kosovo system, regulate only certain important issues for the citizens, while the Provisional Authority regulates almost all areas of life for our citizens”. The Kosovo Ministry for Local Government has received a note from the Leposavic Municipal Assembly requesting the dismissal of Mayor Dragan Jablanovic. But the Ministry has yet to say what it will do on the matter. The paper recalls that it was the Minister for Local Government, Ljubomir Maric, along with mayors of northern municipalities and representatives of the provisional bodies that called for Jablanovic’s dismissal saying that he has betrayed Serbs by cooperating with Pristina.

**“Government is responsible for Kosovo’s isolation (*Epoka e Re*)**

Vetevendosje MP, Ismajl Kurteshi, said in an interview for the paper that early parliamentary elections are the only solution to overcome the current situation in Kosovo. Kurteshi argued that it is senseless to continue with the same government and Assembly, “because these institutions are not capable of resolving the problems that the state is facing”. He added that the border demarcation with Montenegro would have been resolved quickly if the Kosovo government was willing to do so. Kurteshi also called on central institutions to abandon the talks with Belgrade in Brussels, “otherwise the situation will deteriorate further”.

**Thaci’s visits to Serb memorials are seen as political games (*Koha Ditore*)**

The paper reports that for several months now, Kosovo President Hashim Thaci has been visiting and paying homage at the monuments dedicated to Serbs that were killed during and after the war in Kosovo. However, political commentators are arguing that Thaci’s visits are more aimed at improving his image abroad and in the eyes of Serbs, whereas families of missing Albanians have criticised Thaci’s visits by calling them political games.

**Serbian oil company trying to act illegally in Kosovo (*Epoka e Re*)**

Kosovo’s Minister for Dialogue, Edita Tahiri, announced on Wednesday that she has officially informed the European Union about the attempts of a Serbian trading fuel company to illegally open its sales branches in Mitrovica North, Zubin Potok and Zveçan/Zvečani. She added that she possesses information that this company, has brought Russian fuel to Kosovo. “We should be maximally vigilant to prevent any Russian impact in Kosovo because it could be dangerous for national security, our Euro-Atlantic state and with geostrategic risks for Kosovo and the region. This issue should be treated by our state institutions within the context of Russia’s dangerous ambitions of eventual geostrategic interference throughout the Balkans,” Tahiri said.

**Air pollution in Pristina on Wednesday breaks all records (*Insajderi*)**

The news website reports that the air quality in Pristina on Wednesday, measured by the U.S. Embassy, reached the highest level of pollution recorded this year. The level of pollution on Wednesday reached 330 which is extremely hazardous to health. The news website further notes that according to official estimates, the air pollution ranging from 301 to 501 is poisonous and everyone is advised to stay indoors. The Pristina-based Breathe Initiative has called for a protest against air pollution on Friday.

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