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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

The High Representative's Collegium to meet in Leeds, Lagumdzija says judiciary reforms among top Ashdown's priorities

The first, two-day meeting of the recently established Collegium (sic!) of the High Representative of the international community in BiH is to be opened in Leeds on Tuesday, Dnevni Avaz reports. The meeting will be attended by the current High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, his successor, Paddy Ashdown, and the heads of the international organizations engaged in BiH. They are expected to discuss the new body's plan of action. The prime ministers of the BiH entities, Alija Behmen and Mladen Ivanic, and the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, have been invited to join the Collegium on Wednesday, following a ceremony in Strasbourg in regard of the BiH's accession to the Council of Europe. Two days ago, Ashdown, who is expected to assume the duties of the High Representative at the end of May, met with Lagumdzija in London. "I am very satisfied with the meeting," Lagumdzija told the newspaper, adding that the fight against corruption and organized crime, as well as the judiciary reform were among top Ashdown's priorities.

Alliance for Change supports adoption of the law on BiH PBS

At a session in Sarajevo on Monday, the Coordination of the Alliance for Change supported the adoption of the draft law on the BiH Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and appealed on all delegates to the state parliament to vote for the draft, since it was about a very important project that will ensure legal integration of the BiH information system. "This law is the

second most important issue for us following the decision on the changes of the Entities' Constitutions, because it means a reintegration of the BiH information space. The aim is that the media is not established as an exclusively ethnic house, but that all peoples, languages and cultures are equally represented," the Coordination chairman, Ilija Simic, told journalists following the meeting. (Oslobodjenje just mentioned the support, Avaz and FTV Pogledi quoted Simic)

Constitutional Reforms

The Alliance for Change calls for urgent implementation of the Petritsch's decisions

The Alliance for Change will make a plan for urgent implementation of the decisions related to the constitutional changes in the BiH Entities made by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, last Friday, the journalists were told following a regular meeting of the Alliance's Coordination in Sarajevo on Monday. Oslobodjenje quoted the Coordination Chairman, Ilija Simic, as saying that the Alliance would also in the coming period initiate constitutional changes at the level of BiH, particularly those related to the election of the BiH Presidency members and the deputies to the state parliament.

LDS satisfied the new BiH's constitutional-legal re-arrangement has started

According to Fena and Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Liberal Democratic Party (LDS) leader, Rasim Kadic, told journalists in Sarajevo on Monday that his party was satisfied with the fact that the story about the equality of all peoples and citizens in BiH had been, at least on the paper, ended. Kadic emphasized that, for the LDS, this was only the beginning of the new BiH constitutional-legal arrangement, and that the next phase had to be the amendment of the state Constitution.

Dnevni Avaz: Interview with Kasim Begic, a BiH Constitutional Court judge

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz, Kasim Begic, a BiH Constitutional Court's judge, said the amendments to the Constitutions of the Entities undoubtedly represented a big step forward in re-shaping the constitutional-legal system in BiH. "However, I cannot agree with widely-expressed opinions that these amendments represent a full implementation of the Constitutional Court's decision (on the constituency of the peoples). In particular, I disagree with stands that the constitutional reform has been completed by these amendments," Begic said.

Federation

BiH Federation Government discusses financial issues, disputes

Oslobodjenje and ONASA report that, at a session in Sarajevo on Monday, the BiH Federation Government discussed the implementation of the Budget in the first three months of the year. It agreed on measures to improve collection of the budgetary revenues. Regarding the disputed pay-out of the 1.7 million KM deposit to the AM Sped Company in Orasje, the Government decided to initiate a disciplinary procedure against two Assistant Finance Ministers involved in the transaction. It also concluded that the Sarajevo-based Universal Bank could not anymore act as the BiH Federation deposit's bank, since it had not followed the given instructions.

Oslobodjenje: Initiative failed on the formation of the Croat political parties block in BiH

The New Croat Initiative (NHI), the Croat Peasant's Party (HSS) and the People's Party "Working for Prosperity" are

likely to form a coalition and jointly participate in the next general elections in BiH scheduled for October 5 this year. This means that the idea on the establishment of a Croat national block of political parties launched by the Croat National Community's (HNZ) leader, Miljenko Brkic, has definitely failed.

Republika Srpska

RS Prime Minister's advisor for cooperation with the ICTY says crimes cannot be ranked

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes RS Prime Minister's Advisor for cooperation with the ICTY, Sinisa Djordjevic, as saying at a news conference in Banja Luka yesterday that in the next couple of months it will be known whether the ICTY will press charges against former Bosniak leader, Alija Izetbegovic or not. He said if the ICTY pressed charges against Izetbegovic nothing would be the same and that it would become very clear what was happening in this area during the war. "Otherwise, we shall know what to do next", said Djordjevic. According to him, in the next two weeks the RS Government will come up with a proposal that will be a kind of surprise. "In sports jargon, we shall throw the ball into the opponent's court and see what happens. We shall show that we are ready to put our cards on the table, but we want the other side to do the same", said Djordjevic. He said the proposal would define whether the RS was cooperative with the ICTY or not. He also said that it was pointless to keep saying that the RS is un-cooperative because the RS authorities have not arrested Radovan Karadzic given that SFOR cannot do it as well. "Besides, the RS does not have an information on Karadzic's whereabouts nor does the SFOR. Head of the RS Government's Bureau for cooperation with the ICTY, Dejan Miletic, told press that the ICTY would probably

press charges against war commander of the Srebrenica Brigade, Naser Oric, and other persons responsible for crimes committed against Serb civilians in the Srebrenica region. Miletic also said that the process of collecting the evidence for crimes committed against Serbs in Srpski/Bosanski Brod and the convoy of JNA soldiers, that was withdrawing from Tuzla in the beginning of the war, has reached its final phase. Nezavisne Novine quotes ICTY Spokeswoman, Florence Hartmann, as saying that the ICTY will not tolerate any pressures when it comes to pressing charges against Alija Izetbegovic. "The ICTY is independent and nobody can exert pressure on it. You cannot exert pressure on any democratic country not to mention a international court. The ICTY presses charges when there is enough evidence against a person who allegedly committed crimes. It is not about the quantity of material that one sends, but about the quality of the material. If you send 50 kg of material in which you can find 2 to 3 elements which reminds of the evidence that can be used before the court, then it is not a serious evidence. The court needs serious evidence and not statements and stories", said Hartmann. She also said that the ICTY did not intent to render accounts to the Banja Luka authorities. "The Banja Luka authorities are the ones who have to cooperate and respond to requests we sent and not to send documents to us. The ICTY does not work under anybody's pressure, but on the basis of evidence and Banja Luka has the obligation that it has to meet", said Hartmann. She reiterated that the Banja Luka authorities do not support and respect its obligation to the ICTY when it comes to investigations of Serbs suspected of committing war crimes.

Zivko Radisic is not founder of National Party of Socialists

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that the Democratic Socialist Party of the RS, whose authorized signatory is Dusko Bajic, was registered in April 2000 in Doboj. The paper also reports that the

headquarters and the name of the party has been changed with the Banja Luka Basic Court and that the new name of the party is National Party of Socialists of the RS (NPS). Glas srpski learns from a source in the Banja Luka Basic Court that the new authorized signatory is Milovan Milutinovic and not Zivko Radisic as Monday's papers claimed.

Poplasen again a nominee for RS Radical Party President

In a statement for FENA, the General Secretary of the Republika Srpska Serb Radical Party (SRS), Ognjen Tadic, said the party convention scheduled for May 2 in Bijeljina would decide on who would be the next SRS President. He added that, naturally, Nikola Poplasen, who had been banned from holding public office by the High Representative, would be among the nominees for the post.

International Community

Guardian: America used Islamists to arm the Bosnian Muslims

The Srebrenica report reveals the Pentagon's role in a dirty war – Commentary by Richard J Aldrich, published on Monday, April 22)

The official Dutch inquiry into the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, released last week, contains one of the most sensational reports on western intelligence ever published. Officials have been staggered by its findings and the Dutch government has resigned. One of its many volumes is devoted to clandestine activities during the Bosnian war of the early 1990s…Now we have the full story of the secret alliance between the Pentagon and radical Islamist groups from the Middle East designed to assist the Bosnian Muslims – some of the same groups that the Pentagon is now fighting in "the war against

terrorism". Pentagon operations in Bosnia have delivered their own "blowback". (Dnevni Avaz carried the article)

Milan Martic will voluntarily turn himself in to the ICTY

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that former president of the Republika Srpska Krajina (Serb enclave in Croatia from 1991-1995), Milan Martic, will voluntarily turn himself in to the ICTY. Martic is indicted for war crimes committed against civilian population in Croatia because on May 2nd and 3rd 1995 he ordered mortar attacks on Zagreb when 5 persons died while 20 persons were wounded. Martic told press he would not testify against anyone in The Hague. Glas srpski also reports that during the attacks on Zagreb, the Croatian Army launched a military operation, also known as the "Flash" operation, during which 400 Serbs, mostly civilians were killed on the road between Okucani and the village of Nova Varos. The paper also quotes Martic's lawyer, Strahinja Kastratovic, as saying that Martic could go to The Hague in 15 to 20 days. He said that in The Hague Martic would defend himself, Serb people and Serbs from Krajina. Both papers also report that another two persons, indicted for war crimes, have already contacted the FRY authorities and said they would voluntarily turn themselves in to the ICTY. These persons are former Chief of Staff of the FRY Army, Dragoljub Ojdanic and FRY Army officer, Vladimir Kovacevic. Ojdanic is indicted for crimes committed in Kosovo, while Kovacevic is indicted for crimes committed in the Dubrovnik area.

Radovan Karadzic's book presented in Belgrade

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

A new book by the former RS leader, Radovan Karadzic, indicted by the Hague Tribunal for war crimes in Bosnia, was promoted

on Monday in Belgrade, report all Belgrade-based newspapers. Karadzic, who graduated psychiatry, has written several books, mainly poetry. The title of his latest book that was promoted Wednesday is “Sitovacija”, a newly-created word that does not exist in the language, but reminds of the word “situacija” (situation”). Head of the International Committee for the truth on Radovan Karadzic, Belgrade professor Kosta Cavoski spoke about the drama whose sub-title is “an easy humorous piece”.

“This book testifies best to the fact that our hero is not only feeling very well, something we all wish him from the bottom of our hearts, but that his spirit is high, and that he not only has a sense of humor, but also a sense of irony and satire”, said Cavoski. “Of course, not only will we continue to support the publishing of such books, but we will also try to publish them as often as we can. We are counting on Radovan Karadzic for poetry, books for children and for the young, notes, essays, war correspondence and all his other works”, said Cavoski. Nezavisne novine also carries similar report.

Military protection for Mladic cancelled

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Beta news agency quotes sources close to the FRY Government as saying that the military protection for former RS Army Commander, Ratko Mladic, has been cancelled, Nezavisne Novine reports. Ratko Mladic is on the list of 23 persons that the FRY Government called upon to voluntarily surrender to the ICTY.

Vecernji List: Ivo Sanader re-elected Croatian HDZ President

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

All Croatian dailies and Dnevni List prominently cover the HDZ of Croatia party elections that took place over the last

weekend in Zagreb. All the dailies are more or less unanimous in saying that divisions within the HDZ with Ivo Sanader leading one and Ivic Pasalic leading the other fraction of the party will remain, given the results of the 7th Convention of the HDZ when Ivo Sanader, who is perceived as a moderate conservative, defeated Ivic Pasalic, widely regarded as the HDZ hard-liner, by only 93 votes to become new (old) President of the HDZ of Croatia (1005 v 912 votes). It prompts the dailies to say that Sanader is not an outright winner because of the fact that other important party bodies such as the Central Board and the Presidency are not controlled by Ivo Sanader. Moreover Vecernji List reads that Sanader will have to settle with Pasalic if he is to lead the party without turbulence. To back the stories/assessments up, all the dailies report that the HDZ Central Board, a highly important body without whose consent no major decisions can be taken, will be controlled by Pasalic because of the fact that Pasalic has 15 of his people in the body (out of 25 members). Furthermore the HDZ Presidency, also an important party body, is being controlled be neither Pasalic nor Sanader. The elections for the Presidency are not complete yet but, as newspapers report, it is likely that there could be an even balance within the Presidency with 7 members controlled by Pasalic and Sanader each.

Reactions of Croatian politicians vary. President Mesic did not want to comment the election of Sanader saying that he would await Sanader and the party's leadership's first moves and the direction the HDZ policy would take. President of SDP of Croatia's Main Board Gordana Sobol stressed that nothing historic happened within the HDZ and that it is irrelevant who head the HDZ, Pasalic or Sanader. "Their rhetoric at the Convention was more or less the same apart maybe that one was a bit smoother than the other", says Sobol. Damir Kajin (IDS) and Luka Trconic (HSS) assess that the HDZ could become a serious contender for taking over the power in Croatia if it overcomes internal divisions and transform to a modern party.

Kajin hopes that the Croatian electorate will not allow HDZ to come back whilst Trconjic says that when HDZ is in question anything is possible.

Vecernji List: Leaders of Croat parties in BiH welcome Sanader's election assessing that he is better solution than hard-liner Ivic Pasalic

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries reactions to the outcome of elections within the HDZ of Croatia. All four interviewees, namely Kresimir Zubak (NHI), Ilija Simic (HSS), Petar Milic (Croat Christian Democrats) and Milenko Brkic (HNZ) welcome the election of Ivo Sanader to the helm of the HDZ in Croatia saying that Sanader is a better solution for both Croatia and BiH Croats. Milenko Brkic says that, regardless of perception in the public, Sanader will honour obligations towards Croats in BiH stipulated in the DPA and Croatian Constitution. "I am convinced that he will not support the International Community if the majority of Croat parties in BiH is not happy with some solutions, as it is the case with the constitutional changes that have been hastily supported by the current Croatian authorities. Anyhow, we expected and desired Ivo Sanader's victory", says Milenko Brkic, reads Vecernji List. **Slobodna Dalmacija** carries a letter that Ante Jelavic, unrecognised President of the HDZ BiH, sent to Ivo Sanader congratulating him on re-election to the office of the President of the HDZ Croatia. Besides congratulating him, Jelavic hopes that the HDZ of Croatia will transform into a modern people's party which will win in the next elections in Croatia and that the "two sister parties" will have a better co-operation to the mutual benefit.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- The BiH Federation Supreme Court hesitates to order apprehension of the former AID heads

Dnevni Avaz

- Corruption in the BiH Federation Refugee Ministry?

Jutarnje Novine

- Team of Berlin cardio-surgeons arrives in Sarajevo: 27 patients wait for surgical operations on their hearts

Dnevni List

- Scandal at trials against accused for murder of Jozo Leutar at Sarajevo Cantonal Court continues: Key witness, rapist and criminal Merim G got one million marks for false testimony
- Thanks to Alija Izetbegovic: Three thousand world terrorists hold BiH passport
- Milan Martic voluntarily go to The Hague

Vecernji List

- Reactions to elections in HDZ of Croatia: Pasalic's defeat weakens Jelavic
- After removals of officials: Ten-odd politicians sue Petritsch

Glas Srpski

- Martic is voluntarily going to The Hague;
- Forcible tax collection in Srpsko Sarajevo – Two private enterprises temporarily closed;

Nezavisne Novine

- RS Tax Administration continues with forcible tax collection – Two gas stations in Lukavica and Sokolac sealed;
- Martic, Ojdanic and Kovacevic first to leave for The Hague;