

# Saddam genocide trial set for Aug 21

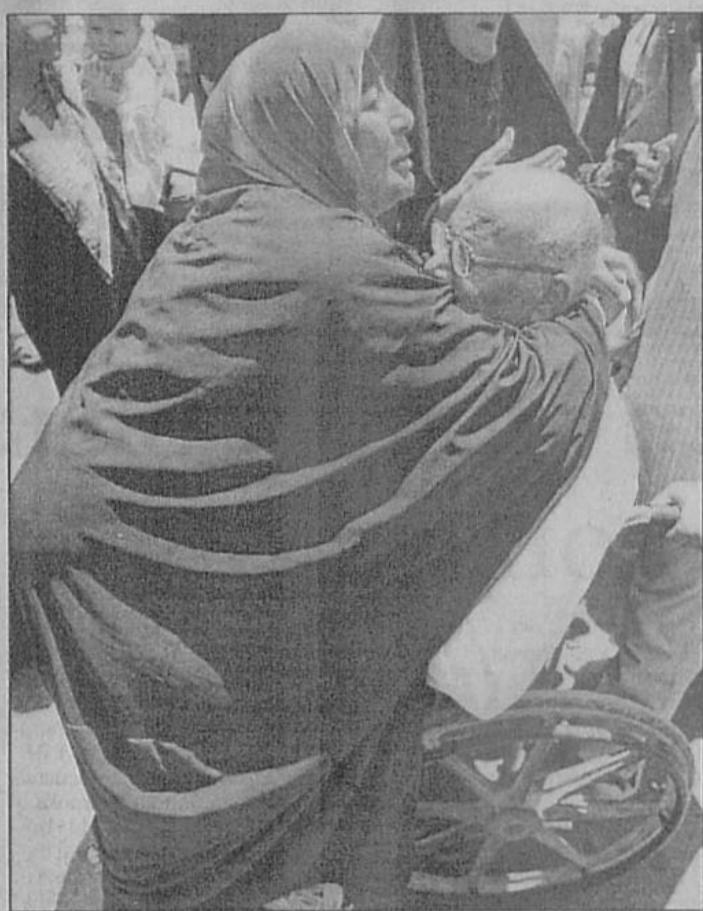


**AFP, Baghdad**  
The trial of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein on charges including genocide for a brutal campaign against Kurds in the 1980s that left 100,000 people dead was set Tuesday for August 21.  
"After the transfer of the investigation results of the Al-Anfal crimes to the criminal court... the tribunal decided on Monday August 21, 2006 as a trial date," the Iraqi High Tribunal said in a statement.  
The court had announced in April that Saddam and six co-defendants including Ali Hassan al-Majid, also

known as Chemical Ali, would face genocide charges over the Anfal campaign against Iraq's Kurds.  
Saddam and seven co-defendants are currently on trial for allegedly executing 148 inhabitants of the Shiite village of Dujaal following an assassination attempt there against Saddam in 1982.  
They face execution by hanging if convicted in the Dujaal case, which is set to resume on July 10. A US official has said a verdict could be issued by mid-September.  
But Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, himself a Kurd, has said that Saddam would be tried for all his crimes before any of the verdicts are implemented.

Aside from Saddam, other defendants in the August trial include the so-called Chemical Ali, notorious for ordering the gassing of Halabja in 1988 which killed 5,000 people.  
However the Halabja case will not be included in the trial.  
Others set to be in the dock include former minister of defense Sultan Hashem Ahmed and high ranking Baathists Saber Abdel Aziz, Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, Taher Mohammed al-Ani and Farhan al-Juburi.  
A US official close to the court said in April that "the evidence that the

court is going to look at involves voluminous amounts of documents, testimonies from a large number of victims and eyewitnesses and forensic evidence from mass graves that have been excavated."  
Prosecutors have described the Anfal campaign as an act of genocide against the Kurdish people, while the former Iraqi regime defended its actions as no more than a necessary counter-insurgency operation during wartime.  
Though estimates vary, it is believed at least 100,000 Kurds died during this period with over 3,000 villages destroyed.



An Iraqi woman hugs her husband, bound to a wheel chair, after he was freed yesterday in Baghdad.

## 450 detainees freed in Iraq

**AFP, Abu Ghraib**  
About 450 detainees held in US and Iraqi prisons were freed Tuesday under an amnesty as part of a national reconciliation plan aimed at ending the bloodshed.  
The move brings the number of those released so far this month to more than 2,500.  
The sixth batch of detainees held at Abu Ghraib and other facilities run by the US military and Iraqis were assembled at the notorious US-run prison west of Baghdad before their release.  
"Your release today is part of the prime minister's national reconciliation plan," Iraq's national security advisor Muwaffaq al-Rubaie told them. "This is not a political game, it is a sincere attempt of reconciliation and to unite Iraq."  
A US military spokesman in charge of detainee operations said all those released since Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki first spoke of a national reconciliation initiative on June 6 are suspected of being involved in the insurgency but have committed no violent crimes like bombing, killing, torture and kidnapping.  
One of the items in Maliki's 24-point reconciliation programme presented to parliament Sunday promises amnesty to detainees who have committed no crimes.

# Chen apologises to nation for scandals

## Survives parliament vote to oust him

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian apologised to the nation for the corruption scandals dogging his family and called Tuesday for dialogue with his opponents and China after surviving a parliamentary vote to oust him.

The 55-year-old Chen survived the recall motion after the opposition failed to win support of 148 lawmakers, or two-thirds of the 221-seat parliament.

If it had passed, the recall motion - the first in Taiwan's history - would have triggered a national referendum on whether to oust Chen before his second term ends in May 2008.

In recent months, political unrest has worsened and the atmosphere of confrontation has heightened to seriously damage Taiwan's internal solidarity," Chen said in a statement released by his office.

President Chen "humbly accepts criticism... and looks forward to pushing for political dialogue at home and cross-strait peace talks (with rival China) to unite Taiwan and promote social harmony," it said without elaboration.

The president "again apologized



Chen Shui-bian

to the people for the issues involving him and his family" and urged the opposition to help restore calm on the island.

The recall motion was launched by the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) and People First Party (PFP) who demanded Chen step down over a series of corruption scandals involving his son-in-law, his wife and some of his top aides.

But only 119 legislators cast ballots in favor while all 88 lawmakers from Chen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) boycotted the vote. Twelve members of the

DPP-allied Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and two independents cast invalid ballots.

KMT chairman Ma Ying-jeou called the result "a victory for corruption" and blasted DPP legislators for "standing side by side with corruption."

"The DPP used to be known among the public as a clean party, but now they have lost their ideals," Ma told a press conference.

Earlier Tuesday, Ma called for calm while addressing thousands of anti-Chen demonstrators outside the parliament building.

Thousands of Chen supporters also demonstrated waving banners and shouting slogans but some 5,000 police were mobilized to ensure peace, using barbed wire barricades to separate the two groups.

"We are expressing our anger and discontent over the corrupted and incompetent government of Chen Shui-bian in a rational and responsible way," Ma said.

"Whether or not the recall motion was passed, it wrote a new page in Taiwan's democratization."

Some opposition supporters broke into tears after the motion was rejected and others burned effigies of Chen.

# New Vietnam PM, president take over

AFP, Hanoi

Vietnam on Tuesday chose a new prime minister and president in a generational leadership change for the communist country heading fast into an era of closer integration with the world economy.

The sweeping reshuffle puts in charge two politicians from the south, the country's industrial growth engine, who are party loyalists but have voiced support for speeding up a two-decade-old process of market reforms.

Nguyen Tan Dung took over as premier from veteran leader Phan Van Khai, 72, who retired last weekend after nine years on the job during which Dung served as his deputy and understudy in charge of economic and security affairs.

Dung is seen as a politically conservative all-rounder, with police and army experience and stints as state bank chief and deputy public security minister under his belt. At 56, he is post-war Vietnam's youngest prime minister.

Shortly before the vote, Dung vowed to "develop in a sustainable way, pull the country out of backwardness... fight corruption, waste and bureaucracy and meet the aspirations and wishes of the party, the army and the people."

The national assembly voted by 92 percent to appoint him.

Nguyen Minh Triet, 63, the party boss in the commercial hub of Ho Chi Minh City, was earlier appointed to the presidency in a national

assembly vote to replace Tran Duc Luong, who also just retired aged 69.

A trained mathematician with a career politician's easy manner, Triet is popular with the foreign business community and is expected to bring a more hands-on approach to the largely ceremonial post.

He vowed Tuesday to "bring the spirit of reform to national development, with my experience as the leader of the most dynamic city in the country."

Both men were chosen in a carefully choreographed political ritual in the one-party state, months after they were announced by regime elders at a party congress. There were no other candidates in Tuesday's votes.

In the reshuffle, the assembly also chose Hanoi party chief and old-school ideologue Nguyen Phu Trong, 62, as its new chairman on Monday.

Some observers saw the choice of northerner Trong as an attempt to balance the presence of the two more reformist leaders from the south, a region that has never been so well represented in post-war Vietnamese politics.

The 496-member assembly was also due to appoint new ministers to portfolios including foreign affairs and finance.

The changes come in a busy year for the country which in May signed a crucial trade deal with the United States that all but paved the way for Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organisation in the coming months.

## Hyderabad Nizam to pay ex-wife \$1m in alimony

AFP, New Delhi

The grandson of the last ruler of India's princely state of Hyderabad has been ordered by a court to pay his third wife, a former Miss Turkey, one million dollars as part of a divorce settlement.

The court also asked the Nizam of Hyderabad, Mukarram Jah Bahadur, to pay 15,000 dollars a month for the maintenance of his ex-wife Manolya Onur and their 15-year-old daughter, the Indian media reported Tuesday.

The settlement, ordered by a court Monday in the southern city of Hyderabad, is one of the largest in Indian history, analysts said.

"I am very happy with the verdict," 62-year old Onur told the Times of India newspaper by telephone from Turkish city Istanbul, where she lives.

Onur filed for a settlement two years after she divorced the royal in 1994.

She told the newspaper that she would file a separate case demanding a palace worth millions of dollars in Hyderabad city's upscale area.

Onur and Bahadur, who is also based in Turkey, lived in Hyderabad for some time after their marriage in 1989.

Bahadur, who is in his seventies, is now married to a 22-year-old Moroccan.

# Nepal rebel leader for new council to replace parliament

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist rebel leader has proposed that a council comprising political leaders, Maoists and members of civil society be implemented to replace parliament, politicians said Tuesday.

The once-elusive rebel leader arrived in the Nepalese capital Saturday to meet with political leaders and push forward a peace agenda agreed after King Gyanendra ended 14 months of direct rule following weeks of bloody protests.

Earlier this month the rebels and new government, who have been observing a ceasefire since the end of April, reached a landmark power-sharing agreement under which an interim constitution is to be drafted and an all-party interim government formed. In a meeting with a senior politician Monday, the rebel leader proposed additionally that the recently reinstated parliament be replaced.

"He (Prachanda) proposed the formation of a council which would comprise representatives of the seven (political) parties, Maoists and civil society as an alternative to the current house of representatives," said Ram Baran Yadav, joint general secretary of the Nepal Congress party.

Yadav gave no further details about the rebel proposal.

The Maoists confirmed that they had discussed the forming of a replacement body to the house of representatives, but declined to give detailed information.

"We (Maoists) have begun discussions on the formation of a body that will replace the present house of representatives, but we have not reached any conclusion," said rebel spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara.

"At the moment our prime focus is on drafting the interim constitution and in the meantime we are preparing for the second round of high-level peace talks," said Mahara.

The interim constitution had been expected to be released Friday, but delays in the formation of the drafting committee mean that the interim constitution is still at least two weeks away, the committee leader told AFP Tuesday.

King Gyanendra took direct control of the impoverished nation in February 2005, claiming that the elected government was corrupt and had failed to stem a decade-long insurgency.

Late last year, seven sidelined political parties entered a loose alliance with the rebels, and the parties and Maoists organized the mass protests in April in concert.



Kuwaiti men and women are separated by a curtain as they attend a parliamentary election rally on Monday in Dahiyet Abdullah al-Salem in Kuwait City.

# Kuwaiti women eye parliament seats, but chances slim

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwaiti women hope to make a historic leap into parliament when they take part in legislative polls for the first time on Thursday, but the chances of women being elected are seen as slim.

Women won the right to vote and stand for public office in a landmark vote in the conservative Gulf state's parliament in May 2005, and the first woman minister was appointed to the cabinet a month later.

Most of the 28 female hopefuls have campaigned vigorously and drawn large crowds to their rallies, especially fellow women, with several outshining their male rivals.

Candidates such as leading women rights activists Rula Dashti, Nabila al-Anjari and Fatima al-Abdali came up with ambitious election programmes and appeared more organised than some male counterparts.

Although they had little time to prepare their campaigns, after parliament was dissolved and an early election was called a year ahead of time, a number of female candidates were optimistic about their chances.

"This is the first time Kuwaiti women are taking part in the election. They will make history" by winning seats, Dashti told an election rally.

But analysts say that under the

current electoral system, which has been at the center of a bitter political crisis, it will be difficult - if not impossible - for women to enter parliament.

"I think we need a miracle," said Luhwa al-Mulla, secretary general of the Social and Cultural Women Society, the main women's organisation in Kuwait.

"Under the current 25-constituency system, I think women candidates don't have any real chances of success," she told AFP.

Currently, each constituency elects two members to the 50-seat parliament, which makes the chances of newcomers such as women very weak, she said.

"We need to slash the number of constituencies to five to increase the number of MPs in each district. This will boost women's chances," Mulla said.

Women candidates had very little time to prepare for the ballot because "we were working on the assumption that parliamentary elections would be held in 2007," she added.

The number of eligible women voters is 195,000, as against 145,000 men. This is mainly because military personnel, almost all male, are barred from voting.

Women voters outnumber men in 21 of the 25 constituencies, and in some districts by large margins. But it is not yet clear if women will vote for female candidates.

# 7 killed in violence in Thailand's south

AFP, Bangkok

Seven people have been killed by suspected Islamic insurgents in attacks in southern Thailand, including a bombing that left five security officers dead, police said Tuesday.

In the deadliest incident insurgents ambushed a military convoy that was protecting teachers on their way to school early Tuesday in Yala, one of three Muslim-majority provinces on the southern border with Malaysia, police said.

A 20-kilogram (44 pound) bomb exploded under a military truck and killed a Buddhist soldier on the spot, police said. The blast left a crater two meters (six feet) deep.

Four Muslim men who volunteered as security officers survived the initial blast, but at least 20 militants waiting nearby then shot them in the head at point-blank range, police Colonel Jirasak Wikraicharoenying told AFP.

A second bomb exploded nearby just moments later. Jirasak said that explosion was meant to prevent security forces from rescuing the men.

Students in Narathiwat found a fourth bomb outside a school as they were arriving for classes but police defused it.

Insurgents often target schools and teachers because they are seen as imposing Thai Buddhist culture on a region that is mainly Muslim and ethnic Malay.

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