



PHOTO: AFP

Hungarian mobs attack a 'riot police water-cannon truck' in front of the Hungarian national TV headquarters after the building was occupied by right-wing demonstrators yesterday. Protestors came to ask for Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany to resign for having "lied" to voters by concealing plans for a tough austerity programme.

Uneasy calm in Budapest after night of rioting

AFP, Budapest

A day after protests that turned violent in the centre of the Hungarian capital, an uneasy calm descended over the debris yesterday as demonstrators vowed to maintain the pressure on the government of the socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany.

Outside the national television station -- which was looted and partially burned in the night of rioting -- burned out cars, torn-up benches and discarded tear-gas canisters bore witness to the violence of the previous hours.

Some 150 people were injured in the country's worst riots since the fall of Communism, but as commuters returned to work as normal Tuesday the square remained sealed off by police, with no sign of new trouble.

The focus of the protest movement shifted not far away to Kossuth Square by the parliament building, where a crowd of some 250 gathered during the morning to demand Gyurcsany's resignation.

Annan pleads for ME peace in farewell to UNGA

AFP, United Nations

UN chief Kofi Annan bid farewell to the General Assembly here yesterday with an impassioned plea for Middle East peace and a spirited defense of the world body he has led for 10 years.

Kicking off the 192-member assembly's annual debate, the 68-year-old secretary general singled out the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the most important security challenges facing the world community.

"No other conflict carries such a powerful symbolic and emotional charge among people far removed from the battlefield," he told the nearly 90 world leaders gathered here.

"As long as the Palestinians live under occupation, exposed to daily frustration and humiliation; and as long as Israelis are blown up in buses or in dance-halls, so long will passions everywhere be inflamed," he said.

He warned that failure by the UN Security Council to end the nearly 60-year-old conflict "by bringing both sides to accept and implement

its resolutions" would lead to declining respect for the United Nations and questioning of its impartiality.

"So long will our best efforts to resolve other conflicts be resisted, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, whose peoples need our help just as badly, are entitled to it."

Annan also touched on the continuing bloodshed in Sudan's Darfur region.

"Sadly, once again the biggest challenge comes from Africa -- from Darfur, where the continued spectacle of men, women and children

driven from their homes by murder, rape and the burning of their villages makes a mockery of our claim, as an international community, to shield from the worst abuses," he added.

But the UN chief, who steps down at the end of December after completing two five-year terms, also made a spirited defense of the United Nations, saying: "I remain convinced that the only answer to this divided world must be a truly United Nations."

Japan, Australia slap sanction on N Korea

AFP, Tokyo

Japan and Australia slapped financial sanctions Tuesday on North Korea in the first fresh measures against the communist state since the UN Security Council demanded action over its July missile tests.

The two US allies blacklisted companies and an individual for alleged links to weapons programmes in North Korea, which says it has a nuclear bomb and may be preparing to test one.

In Japan, the sanctions were announced by Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, a sworn hawk on North Korea who is all but certain to win a vote Wednesday to replace Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

"The government wants to use this occasion to call again on North Korea to respect the UN Security Council resolution, to stop missile-related activities, confirm its moratorium on missile launches and to return unconditionally to the six-way talks," Abe told a news conference.

UN voices fear of Iraqi civil war

Federal debate put off, violence kills 50

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq's parliament again delayed debate of a divisive bill on federalism yesterday after a fresh wave of violence killed 50 people and the United Nations warned that Iraq could descend into civil war.

In Baghdad, where US commanders are expecting an increase of violence by al-Qaeda and other Sunni militant groups ahead of the start of Ramadan next week, a car bomb killed two people and wounded 24 near a factory to fill gas canisters.

During a heated session that drew some calls for reviewing the presence of US-led troops, a senior Shia lawmaker demanded that the Interior and Defense ministers take urgent steps to stop bloodshed and avert all-out communal war.

In some of his bluntest remarks

on Iraq, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told an international conference on Monday that there was a "grave danger that the Iraqi state will break down, possibly in the midst of full-scale civil war."

Those remarks came on a day which saw a bout of car bombs, shootings and sectarian killings across Iraq. The last three days have seen dozens killed from ethnically mixed Kirkuk to Baghdad and Anbar province.

Shia, Sunni and Kurdish legislators put off the debate on federalism, an issue that some Iraqis fear could unleash more bloodshed and break up the country.

Suicide bombers have staged deadly attacks in the past two days to the north and the west of the capital, areas where US forces have diverted troops from battling Sunni insurgents to focus on security in Baghdad.



Cirrhilabrus cenderawasih, a new species

50 new marine species found in Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

Scientists have found at least 52 new marine species off the western coast of Indonesia's Papua, deeming the waters there to be one of the richest in the world, a conservation activist said yesterday.

A new reef shark species, various prawns, corals and anemones were among the "extraordinary and important" findings on expeditions this year, said Jatna Supriatna, executive director of Conservation International Indonesia.