



A large crowd of US citizens line up to vote outside the Miami Dade County Elections Department Headquarters in Miami Florida Monday. Some 1.4 million voters out of a total of some 10 million registered voters in Florida have voted early ahead of yesterday's presidential elections. A civic rights group has warned that legal challenges could again delay the outcome of the US presidential election for weeks if the race is as close as opinion polls suggest.

### First election day votes cast in New Hampshire

AP, Hart's Location

The nation's first Election Day votes were cast and counted just after midnight in a pair of mountain hamlets, with 35 votes for President Bush besting challenger John Kerry's 21. Ralph Nader received one vote.

The first votes came from the northern New Hampshire community of Hart's Location yesterday, where 16 voters chose Bush, 14 went with Kerry and one chose Nader. Minutes later, the 26 registered voters in Dixville Notch, about 50 miles to the north, split 19 for Bush and 7 for Kerry.

The tiny communities since 1948 sporadically have been taking advantage of a state law that allows communities to close polls early if all registered voters have cast ballots.

In 2000, both communities chose President Bush over Democrat Al Gore. In Hart's Location, Bush won 17-13. In Dixville Notch, about 50 miles to the north, Bush had 21, Gore five and Ralph Nader one vote.

By state law, polls must be open between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. But nothing prevents a town from opening the polls earlier and closing after all potential voters have cast ballots.



US ELECTION 2004

## US polling places see scattered problems

Thousands of lawyers, computer experts deployed in states

AP, Washington

Polling places experienced scattered problems early yesterday as legions of lawyers, election-rights activists and computer scientists watched, particularly in battleground states, for any trouble that could disenfranchise voters.

New rules, new voters and a tight presidential contest combined to create "a recipe for problems," said Sean Greene, who was assigned to watch Cleveland polls for the Election Reform Information Project, a nonpartisan research group on election reform.

Nearly one in three voters, including about half of those in Florida, were expected to cast ballots using ATM-style voting machines that computer scientists have criticized for their potential for

software glitches, hacking and malfunctioning.

Other major concerns were over provisional ballots, new this presidential election and a potential source of delayed counts, and whether poll workers were adequate and sufficiently trained.

In one Richmond, Va., polling place, voters were confronted with the wrong congressional race on the ballot the 7th District instead of the 3rd.

Once it was discovered about 6:10, 6:15 (a.m.), people were offered a paper ballot," said Virginia Board of Elections executive secretary Jean Jensen. "I think the unknown is how many votes were cast before that happened."

Long lines greeted voters in many big cities in closely contested states: Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Columbus, Ohio, Detroit and else-

where. Five locations in Franklin County, Ohio, opened up to a half-hour late because poll workers did not show up on time.

In Essex, Md., an election judge left a polling place briefly, saying he forgot something at home. Voters who had to wait were allowed to vote by provisional ballot.

One polling location in Mauldin, South Carolina, was forced to switch to paper ballots because of equipment troubles.

In Volusia County, Florida, a memory card in an optical-scan voting machine failed Monday at an early voting site and didn't count 13,000 ballots. Officials planned to feed and count those ballots Tuesday.

Chellie Pingree, president of the citizens lobbying group Common Cause, said she feared poll workers faced with long lines would be

pressured to make quick but bad interpretations on rules governing registration validity and identification requirements.

"There's no question it's going to be a high turnout," Pingree said. "It's going to just add more confusion to already overburdened, understaffed polling places, many of which will have as many lawyers and poll challengers as they have people voting."

By mid-morning EST, an online and phone hotline maintained by nonpartisan and liberal voting-rights activists logged more than 1,650 items, mostly related to complaints or questions about registrations and polling locations. But some voters in New York and Pennsylvania complained to the hotline of troubles with non-electronic machines.

### HR GROUPS SAY

## Legal challenges may delay result for weeks

AP, Washington

Leading US civic rights groups warned Monday that legal challenges could again delay the outcome of the US presidential election for weeks if the race is as close as opinion polls suggest.

Final results in the 2000 presidential race were delayed for 36 days due to disputes over balloting in Florida, and resolved only after US Supreme Court intervention.

"If it stays at ... basically a 50-50 split, I don't see any way in the world that we're going to know who the president is, maybe for weeks and goodness knows how much longer," said Ralph Neas president of the People for the American Way foundation, which is participating in a massive election monitoring exercise.

"I think we'll have huge issues in many states, Florida is obviously ground zero, although I worry a lot about Ohio," said Barbara Arnwine, director of the Lawyers Committee under Civil Law, which is also participating in the Election Protection organization.

"I believe that on Wednesday morning there will be a huge contest and fight over provisional ballots," she said in reference to the ballots cast by voters whose eligibility is challenged.

A report published by the two groups and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on Monday claims that Republicans had a strategy to launch "last-minute challenges to voter registrations by the tens of thousands in several states."

## Americans in Asia ready to party

AP, Hong Kong

More than one million Americans across Asia were eagerly awaiting the climax of US presidential elections yesterday, preparing to break out bunting, balloons and beer for parties to watch the results roll in.

In sharp contrast it will be business as usual for tens of thousands of American soldiers stationed in the region, while others, notably Muslim US expats and aid workers, plan to spend the tense wait in quiet contemplation.

Hotels from Hanoi to Hong Kong were booked up for get-togethers, featuring events such as mock ballots, debates and guest speakers intended to promote democracy as events unfold on big screens.

The US embassy and American Chamber of Commerce in China will host a party for about 1,000 mostly Chinese people at a Beijing hotel from 7:30am Wednesday, with

similar bashes being held in cities across China.

In addition to free food, partygoers will be able to watch election day coverage, while computers will be set up for people to go online. Mock ballots will be available for Chinese guests to vote for the candidate of their choice.

"It's really an opportunity to show how democracy works," said a US embassy spokeswoman. "It's a way to give us an opportunity to explain the election process to our contacts."

Guests include Chinese foreign ministry officials, university scientists, military personnel including generals, deputy ministers and poets.

Expatriate Democrats and Republicans will make a rare display of unity in Hong Kong, giving speeches at a party organised by US trade, political and diplomatic institutions.

### Ohio court okays voter challengers at centres

AP, Cincinnati

A federal appeals court has cleared the way for challengers to be present at polling places throughout Ohio, ruling early yesterday that their presence on Election Day was allowed under state law.

A three-judge panel of the 6th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 to grant emergency stays of two federal judges' orders Monday that barred voter challengers from political parties. The judges also consolidated the two appeals, which stemmed from separate lawsuits in Cincinnati and Akron.

Alphonse Gerhardtstein, attorney for the plaintiffs in the Cincinnati case, said early yesterday that he appealed the 6th Circuit decision to the US Supreme Court.

The federal appeals court said that while it's in the public interest that registered voters cast ballots freely, there is also "strong public interest in permitting legitimate statutory processes to operate to preclude voting by those who are not entitled to vote."

## Misleading phone calls confuse voters

AP, LANSING, Michigan

Some Michigan voters have received phone calls falsely claiming that Sen. John Kerry would make gay marriage legal.

In New Jersey, some voters have heard a man claiming to be former Army Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf backing the Democrat. Elderly voters in Pennsylvania have been called and told they are ineligible to vote.

Republicans and Democrats were furious Monday about the blatantly false, 11th-hour political calls to voters and demanded an end to the messages.

Schwarzkopf has endorsed President Bush, but in a recording of a phone call played for The Associated Press, a man identifying himself as the Persian Gulf War

general says, "In 2000, I voted for George W. Bush, but this year I'm voting for John Kerry. ... John Kerry has a real plan to make our military stronger and to go after terrorists wherever they hide. We need a vote for change, vote for John Kerry."

A voice says the message was paid for by the Democratic National Committee.

In a statement from the Bush campaign, Schwarzkopf said the DNC was making fraudulent phone calls claiming that he had endorsed Kerry, and "nothing could be further from the truth, and I demand that they stop immediately."

DNC spokesman Jano Cabrera said Republicans spliced an ad by Gen. Merrill McPeak, a Kerry supporter, to make it sound as if Schwarzkopf was speaking so they could accuse Democrats of dirty

tricks. Republicans denied being involved.

In Michigan, in a recording of a call played for the AP, a young woman says: "When you vote this Tuesday remember to legalize gay marriage by supporting John Kerry. We need John Kerry in order to make gay marriage legal for our city. Gay marriage is a right we all want. It's a basic Democrat principle. It's time to move forward and be progressive. Without John Kerry, George Bush will stop gay marriage. That's why we need Kerry. So Tuesday, stand up for gay marriage by supporting John Kerry."

Both Kerry and his running mate, Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, oppose gay marriage and say marriage should be limited to a man and a woman. Kerry has said he supports civil unions.

### Arafat keeps on improving

AFP, Paris

Palestinian officials yesterday remained optimistic about the health of their ailing leader Yasser Arafat, and said he was following the US election with close attention.

"The president is improving. Doctors are more convinced that the situation is under control," Arafat's economic adviser Mohamed Rashid told AFP.

Rashid said Arafat had made a series of "important" telephone calls to, among others, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and the senior Palestinian figures Ahmed Qorei and Mahmud Abbas.

"He was in a very good mood and he chatted with them and followed the activities in the territories. He is getting back to his normal activity slowly. Visits will not be allowed before the end of the week and no results are expected before Friday," Rashid said.

## 8 killed in Iraq bombings

American among 4 kidnapped

AFP, REUTERS, Baghdad

At least eight people were killed in a car bombing spree across Iraq yesterday that targeted symbols of the US-backed government, while hundreds of residents fled the rebel-held city of Fallujah after a night of air raids.

The unrest came as the United States voted for its next president after an election campaign that has focused closely on Washington's decision to invade Iraq.

Upping the stakes, at least four staff from a foreign company, including an American, remained missing after kidnappers raided their Baghdad offices on Monday.

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has pledged to restore order to the country ahead of Iraq's own landmark polls, promised by January, and is prepared to use force.

To this end, US and Iraqi troops are massing around the flashpoint cities of Fallujah and neighbouring

Ramadi with expectations high of an all-out assault against militants who strike the government and its allies with a daily barrage of attacks.

At least six people were killed and another 21 wounded when a suicide car bomb tore through a line of cars outside the education ministry in northern Baghdad at about 9:30 am (0630 GMT), medics and police officials said.

"It was a suicide attack, we found the body of the driver inside the charred remains of the car," said police lieutenant Bassam Bahr.

The bomber attempted to ram the gates outside the heavily-protected ministry compound but was stopped by guards before detonating his charge, one of the guards on duty said.

Minutes earlier another car bomb exploded in western Baghdad on a US military patrol, wounding one soldier and damaging an Iraqi truck, the army said in a statement.

Two national guardsmen were also hurt when a roadside bomb exploded as their convoy drove through the town of Abu Ghraib on the western outskirts of the capital.

Adding to the bloodshed, a national guard commander, General Rashid Falih, and at least one other guardsman died and 11 others were wounded in two separate car bomb attacks in Iraq's main northern city of Mosul, Iraqi police officials said.

In a separate crisis, four people -- an American, a Filipino, a Nepalese and an Iraqi -- remained missing after kidnappers raided a Saudi trading company's Baghdad offices on Monday, another employee said.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi cameraman working for Reuters was shot dead during clashes in rebel-held Ramadi Monday, while a US war plane bombed nearby Fallujah overnight, the military and news agency said Tuesday.



A little girl holds her teddy bear as she wipes her tears standing next to her mother at the gate of their home, meters away from a car bombing yesterday, in the center of Baghdad. At least six people were killed when a suicide car bomb tore through a line of cars outside Iraq's education ministry in Baghdad in the latest attack against the interim government.



Palestinians take part in a demonstration in support of ailing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Hebron yesterday. Palestinian officials said that they remained optimistic about Arafat's health and that he was following the US election with close attention.

## BABRI MOSQUE DEMOLITION Court issues notice to Advani, Thakeray

PTI, Lucknow

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court yesterday issued notices to BJP leader LK Advani, Shiv Sena chief Bal Thakeray and 18 others on a CBI petition challenging the 2001 order of the Special CBI Court dropping proceedings against them in the Babri Masjid demolition case on technical ground relating to the chargesheet.

Justice MA Khan passed the order on a revision petition filed by the CBI seeking quashing of the May 4, 2001 order of the Special Judge (Ayodhya case) SK Shukla by which proceedings against all these accused persons were dropped.

The CBI has prayed for setting aside the order of the lower court and sought direction to the trial court for proceeding against all the accused persons in the Babri Masjid demolition case.

The court fixed December 16 next for further hearing of the matter.

The CBI had filed a joint chargesheet against 49 accused persons, including Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti, Kalyan Singh, Thakeray, Ashok Singhal, Vinay Katiyar and others in the Special Court (Ayodhya case) in the Babri Masjid Demolition case.

The CBI later moved a revision petition in the High Court against the lower court order.

Meanwhile, the accused persons had already filed a petition in the High Court challenging the Uttar Pradesh government notification constituting the Special Court for their trial.

On their petition, the high court quashed the government notification on the ground of technical flaw, but said that the state government could, if it so desired, issue a fresh notification.

The then Mayawati government later pleaded in the court that there was no need to issue a fresh notification and the trial could proceed at the special court constituted at Rae Bareilly.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, R&H  
Road Division, Madaripur

### Amendment Notice

to Lease Quotation Notice No. 01/EE/MRD/2004-2005 (4<sup>th</sup> call)  
The undermentioned amendments are brought to the lease quotation

Matter stated in lease quotation notice		Lease quotation to be read as amended	
Sl. No	Name of offices to receive tender	Sl. No.	Name of offices to receive tender
7	(1) Executive Engineer, R&H, Madaripur. (2) Sub-Divisional Engineer, R&H, Road Sub-Division, Madaripur	7	(1) Additional Chief Engineer, R&H, Barisal Zone, Barisal. (2) Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Dhaka. (3) Superintending Engineer, R&H, Road Circle, Faridpur. (4) Superintending Engineer, R&H, Procurement Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka. (5) Executive Engineer, R&H, Road Division, Madaripur.
Sl. No. 8	Date & time of selling quotation tender 30-10-2004/15-8-1411 BS up to office hours.	Sl. No. 8	Date & time of selling quotation tender 8-11-2004/24-9-1411 BS up to office hours.
Sl. No. 9	Last date & time of receiving quotation tender 31-10-2004/16-8-1411 BS up to 12-30 hours.	Sl. No. 9	Last date & time of receiving quotation tender 9-11-2004/25-9-1411 BS up to 12-30 hours.
Sl. No. 10	Date, time & place of opening quotation tender 31-10-2004/16-8-1411 BS at 3-30 hours at the office chamber of the undersigned.	Sl. No. 10	Date, time & place of opening quotation tender 10-11-2004/26-9-1411 BS at 10-00 hours at the office chamber of the undersigned.

Other terms & conditions of quotation tender shall remain unchanged and the amendment notice shall be treated as inseparable part of the said lease quotation tender.

DFP-25948-28/10  
G-1047

Executive Engineer, R&H  
Road Division, Madaripur