

Crisis mounts as Kuwaiti cabinet quits

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwaiti ministers resigned en masse yesterday, the official news agency KUNA reported, in the latest political crisis to hit the oil-rich Gulf emirate.

"First deputy premier and defence minister and the rest of ministers have submitted their resignations to Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah," state minister for cabinet affairs Faisal al-Hajji said.

A number of MPs said the prime minister will submit the cabinet's resignation to deputy emir and crown prince Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah as the ruler is out of the country.

The emir has faced calls recently to sack the government, appoint a new premier and hold early parliamentary polls in the emirate, which has undergone a series of political crises in recent years.

Leading liberal MP Ahmad al-Mulaifi last week said the government should go, and called for the reform of the ruling Al-Sabah family. He said the premier, a nephew of the emir, had failed to carry out reforms and resolve the nation's crises.

Child dies of bird flu in Vietnam

AFP, Hanoi

Vietnam yesterday registered its fifth bird flu death of the year, national health officials said.

The victim was an 11-year-old boy from the north of the country who died on Friday, the director of the national hygiene and epidemiology institute, Nguyen Tran Hien, told AFP.

As of March 11, the World Health Organisation had confirmed 371 human cases of H5N1 bird flu worldwide, 235 of which were fatal. The latest fatality would be the 52nd in Vietnam and the 236th worldwide.

Officials said last week that a new outbreak of bird flu had also hit another province in the south of the country, killing hundreds of ducks on a poultry farm.



Asif Ali Zardari, (R) widower of slain former Pakistani premier Benazir Bhutto and co-chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) shares a word with former premier Nawaz Sharif during their joint parliamentary meeting prior to the inauguration of the new parliament in Islamabad yesterday. Once arch foes, both of their parties have now joined hands making a tough front to face US-backed President Pervez Musharraf, and vowing to end his "dictatorship".

US hopes new Pak govt will remain strong ally

THE DAWN, Washington

As the new Pakistan parliament met in Islamabad, policy-makers in Washington hope that the new set-up in Pakistan will retain the country's position as a strong ally in the 'war against terror'.

US officials, in background briefings, stress that President Pervez Musharraf no longer enjoys a pivotal role in US policies towards Pakistan.

Instead, the focus is on the fight in the tribal areas, particularly Waziristan where Americans believe that Al Qaeda and the Taliban have established a safe haven and are supervising terrorist operations in Pakistan and abroad from there.

US intelligence officials also have noted that the militants have recently set up a hospital in North Waziristan called Zaqem, where people injured while fighting US

and Pakistani troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan are being treated.

At a recent congressional hearing, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the US hoped the new Pakistani government would continue military operations in the tribal region.

This spells out trouble for the new government which hopes to engage the militants in a dialogue to end the crisis.

But there is also a strong realisation in Washington that within Pakistan, the US needs to build up its relationship with political forces. This too, however, is linked to the US desire to fight terrorism.

"Successful American engagement with a stable and democratic Pakistan is vital to our national security interests," says Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte. "It's the US emphasis on the war

on terror that still causes some policy makers in Washington to wish to see President Musharraf continue, even if only as a titular head.

In their recent briefings, both White House and State Department officials referred to this new role for Musharraf, saying that he would be a "ceremonial head of state" in the post-election arrangement in Pakistan.

Before the election, the Bush administration had publicly championed Musharraf as an "indispensable" ally and even after the election President Bush telephoned his Pakistani counterpart to express his continued support to him.

The change in Washington's attitude followed a post-election alliance between the PPP and PML-N, forcing US policy-makers to concede that it has depleted whatever political clout Musharraf had after the election.

If some in Washington still want to see Musharraf continue as a titular head, it is because US policy-makers feel that the presence of a general, even if retired, in the government is useful for the war against terrorism.

Diplomatic sources in Washington point out that it will be difficult for a purely civilian government to keep the army in the tribal areas for a long period.

The sources also note that no civilian government could have survived if more than 1,000 soldiers had been killed fighting the militants, as they did under the Musharraf government.

Strangely, some in Washington argue that Asif Ali Zardari is better placed to allow Musharraf to continue as a ceremonial head of state than any other Pakistani politician and that's why they predict they see the two working together in the near future.

Top Turkish court studies demand to ban ruling party

AFP, Ankara

Turkey's top court yesterday studied a chief prosecutor's demand to ban the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) for anti-secular activities, a move that threatens political instability.

"The indictment has been distributed to our members and we are in the process of appointing a rapporteur to study the indictment," constitutional court deputy chairman Osman Alifeyaz Paksut told reporters.

Paksut said a "preliminary study" would be finished within 10 days.

The 11 constitutional court members have to approve Court of Appeals Chief Prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalçinkaya's indictment against the AKP on procedural grounds before a court case can begin. A final verdict is not expected for several months.

Yalçinkaya's indictment, handed to the court on Friday, charges that the AKP, which emerged from a banned Islamist movement, is turning its religious rhetoric into action, attempting to infiltrate state institutions to establish an "Islamist-inspired" system.

Yalçinkaya called for the party to be banned and that 71 party members, among them Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul, be barred from politics.

The prosecutor's move is the latest round in the battle between Turkey's secular forces -- among them the army, the judiciary and academia -- and the AKP since the party came to power in 2002.

Army officer, top rebel, die in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

A top Pakistani militant commander, an Indian army officer and a soldier were killed in a fierce gunbattle in northern revolt-hit Kashmir, the army said yesterday.

The fighting erupted late Sunday near the town of Sopore, about 50 kilometres north of Indian Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, after Indian troops received a tip-off, army spokesman Anil Mathur told AFP.

"During the fighting our troop killed a dreaded Pakistani militant," he said, identifying the rebel as Hafiz Nasir, the chief commander for the hardline Lashkar-e-Toiba group in the Muslim-dominated Kashmir valley.

"We also lost a lieutenant colonel and a soldier," he said.

Egypt utilises army to tackle bread crisis

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has mobilised the army's ovens to deal with the country's massive bread shortages amid rising social unrest, official media reported yesterday.

Mubarak has told the army and the interior ministry, which control bakeries usually used to make bread for the troops, to increase their production in order to "put an end to the bread crisis," Al-Ahram daily said.

Egypt is in the grip of a serious bread crisis brought on by a combination of the rising cost of wheat on world markets and sky-rocketing inflation.

Four people have been killed in fights that broke out in bread queues in recent weeks, a security official told AFP.

Mubarak said that the phenomenon of bread queues "must disappear." While most bread in Egypt is subsidised, the price of non-subsidised bread has risen by more than 26 percent over the last year.

"Where's the problem?" the official MENA news agency quoted Mubarak as asking. "If it's the production, then it should be increased. If it's the distribution, then new distribution points should be opened."

Badawi expected to unveil cabinet today

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to unveil a new cabinet today, which observers said would indicate his appetite for reform after humiliating election results.

Badawi has defied calls to quit after the March 8 polls and is promising "new faces" in a cabinet tipped to be trimmed in size after the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition lost its two-thirds majority for the first time since 1969.

Badawi's previous cabinet had whopped 32 ministers, 39 deputy ministers and 20 parliamentary secretaries, with jobs handed out to many of the 14 race-based parties that make up the coalition.

The large cabinet had been criticised as unwieldy and wasteful, and there is speculation that some ministries could be merged now that there will be just 140 Barisan Nasional lawmakers, compared to 198 in the outgoing administration.

However, newspaper reports have said Badawi faces a headache in reducing positions while still mollifying coalition members who are being courted by opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim.

Badawi has said that the new line-up will reflect the coalition's racial power-sharing concept and include all the communities -- majority Muslim Malays and minority ethnic Chinese and Indians.

But observers have said he will have difficulty finding ethnic minority candidates to fill prominent posts, after the Chinese and Indian parties in the coalition were punished in the elections.

The only Indian cabinet minister in the outgoing administration, Samy Vellu, lost his parliamentary seat, which he had held since 1974.

The minority parties in the coalition bore the brunt of voter anger over rising "Islamisation" of Malaysia and criticisms the government was insensitive towards the needs of minorities.

Four Nato soldiers killed in Afghanistan

AFP, Kandahar

Four Nato soldiers were killed in new attacks in Afghanistan, including a Taliban suicide bomb yesterday, that also took the lives of three Afghan civilians, security forces said.

Two Danes and a Canadian were among the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers killed in the violence in the south of the country, which sees the worst of a Taliban-led insurgency.

A suicide car bomb ripped into an ISAF convoy as it was travelling on the main road linking the southern city of Kandahar with Herat in the west, a witness said.

Three ISAF soldiers were killed and four wounded in the attack in Helmand province, the alliance force media office in Kabul said, revising an earlier death toll of four.

ISAF does not release the nationalities of its casualties but the Danish military said two of its troops were killed and one injured. The soldiers were from a Danish unit that works on reconstruction projects, it said.



Peruvian President Alan Garcia (L) and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda walk out after they signed a cooperation agreement at the latter official residence, in Tokyo yesterday. Peruvian President Alan Garcia appealed for Japan to invest in his country, saying that a long cold spell in ties due to a row over former strongman Alberto Fujimori was a "serious mistake."



18 - 19 March 2008

Australian Education Exhibition

Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel Time: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Participants

- ACN / La Trobe University
- Australian Institute of Commerce & Language
- Canberra Institute of Technology
- Curtin University of Technology
- Deakin University / MIBT
- Melbourne Institute of Technology
- Monash University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of New South Wales
- University of South Australia
- University of Southern Queensland


Organised by:

Australian Centre for Education (IDP Education Pty Ltd)

For further information please Contact:

House No: 4-A, Road No: 54-A, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212. Tel: +(880) 2 9883545, 8821067, 9895913, 9896134

Fax: +(880) 2 8823343, 8828737, Email: info.bangladesh@idp.com, Web: www.idp.com



ENGLISH FOR LIFE

Enrol for courses

13 - 20 March

9.30 - 5.30

Placement test fee Tk700

Course Dates

22 March - 18 May

- General English
- Young Learners
- IELTS Preparation
- Business English

British Council Teaching Centre

754b Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205

Tel: 00880 (0)2 911 6171, 911 6545, 914 5557-8

Fax: 00880 (0)2 811 6554

British Council Dhaka

5 Fuller Road, Dhaka

Tel: 00880 (0)2 861 8905-7

Fax: 00880 (0)2 861 8867-8

e-mail: learnenglish@bd.britishcouncil.org

www.britishcouncil.org/bangladesh

TOSHIBA

Toshiba recommends Windows Vista® Business.

Your first notebook should be Fun!

NEW

Tk49,990

FREE Color Printer

Business Durability

Call for Promotional Price

FREE 1GB RAM

Satellite L40-N503

Model No.: PSL4CL-090001

WideScreen Portability at Great Value

- Intel® Core™ Duo Processor T7100 (1.86GHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- 512MB DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 2048MB
- 80GB SATA with shock absorbers
- DVD SuperMulti Double Layer Drive (DVD±RW/RAM)
- 15.4" WXGA Clear SuperView TFT display
- Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator X3100, up to 251MB shared video memory
- 5-in-1 Card Reader
- 10/100Mbps Ethernet LAN
- Integrated 802.11b/g WLAN
- Metallic Onyx Blue Chassis
- 1-year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)
- No Operating System

Light Value

Now: Tk63,990

Usual: Tk69,990

Tecra A9-P560

Model No.: P7552L-01H001

Putting Quality First for Carefree Mobility

- Intel® Core™ Duo Processor Technology
- Intel® Core™ Duo Processor T7100 (1.86GHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 800MHz FSB)
- Intel® PRO/Wireless 3945BG Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Intel® 865GM Express Chipset
- Genuine Windows Vista® Business Edition
- 512MB DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 4096MB
- 15.4" WXGA TFT display
- DVD SuperMulti Double Layer Drive (DVD±RW/RAM)
- Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator X3100, up to 251MB shared video memory
- 4-in-1 card reader
- Bluetooth™ V2.0 w/ Enhanced Data Rate
- 10/100/1000Mbps Gigabit LAN
- 3-year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)
- Free Microsoft® Office 2007 Professional (60 days trial)
- Toshiba EasyGuard™

Protect & Fix: Shock Protection Design, HDD protection system (3D motion sensor), Spill Resistant keyboard, Toshiba PC Diagnostic, Connect: Toshiba ConfigFree™, Toshiba Summit

Satellite M200-A411

Model No.: PSMC1L-03P004

Perfect Balance of Portability and Style

- Intel® Pentium® Dual-Core Processor T2310 (1.46GHz, 1MB L2 Cache, 533MHz FSB) with Intel® 64-bit Architecture
- Genuine Windows Vista® Home Basic Edition
- 512MB DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 2048MB
- 80GB SATA with shock absorbers
- DVD SuperMulti Double Layer Drive (DVD±RW/RAM)
- with LabelFlash™ Technology
- 14.1" WXGA (2000T) Clear SuperView TFT display
- Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator X3100, up to 251MB shared video memory
- 5-in-1 Card Reader
- 10/100Mbps Ethernet LAN
- Integrated 802.11b/g
- 2.26kg with Glossy Onyx Blue Chassis
- 1-year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

Satellite Pro M200-A451

Model No.: PSMC1L-00F001

Affordable Business Mobility

- Intel® Core™ Duo Processor Technology
- Intel® Core™ Duo Processor T2450 (2.00GHz, 2MB L2 Cache, 533MHz FSB)
- Intel® PRO/Wireless 3945BG Network Connection 802.11b/g
- Intel® 865GM Express Chipset
- Genuine Windows Vista® Business Edition
- 512MB DDR2 SDRAM
- 80GB SATA HDD with shock absorbers
- DVD SuperMulti Drive (DVD±RW/RAM)
- 14.1" WXGA Clear SuperView TFT display
- Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator X3100, up to 251MB shared VRAM
- Fingerprint Security Suite
- Integrated Bluetooth™ V2.0
- 5-in-1 card reader, Gigaset Ethernet
- 2.28kg with Glossy Onyx Blue chassis
- 1-year carry-in International Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

1.3 megapixel built-in web camera for web/video conferencing

Shock Protection System

HDD Shock Protection

Spill Resistant Keyboard

Toshiba ConfigFree™

Fingerprint Reader

Hotline 9862551

Intel Centrino inside

Performance to go