

Plot fears cripple Zimbabwe's opposition

AFP, Harare

Fears of an assassination plot prevented Zimbabwe's opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai from taking part in the start of his election campaign on Sunday ahead of a presidential run-off next month.

As his party prepared the first rally of his latest push for the presidency, which he had been scheduled to address, Tsvangirai was set to stay in South Africa because of fears for his life should he return, his party said.

The former trade union leader, who will face veteran President Robert Mugabe in a June 27 second-round poll, has been out of the country for more than a month after winning a first-round election at the end of March.

After several delays, he had been finally expected back on Saturday but pulled out at the last minute after his party said they had discovered via a credible source that an assassination plot had been mounted against him.

Obama seeks focus on end of primary campaign

AP, Eugene

Attempting to lay a symbolic claim to his party's presidential nomination, Democrat Barack Obama will mark the latest round of primary voting with a rally in Iowa, where his solid win in January caucuses propelled him to his status as the front-runner.

Obama was campaigning Saturday for primaries Tuesday in Oregon and Kentucky as his aides announced the rally on primary night in Iowa, which they described as "a critical general election state that Democrats must win in November."

Rival Hillary Rodham Clinton has a strong lead in polls in Kentucky, but Obama has the advantage in Oregon.



A rescue worker passes a Chinese woman crying after offering prayers for her dead daughter at the earthquake damaged town of Beichuan in Sichuan Province yesterday. A powerful aftershock rattled China's southwest early Sunday, hampering frantic efforts to find earthquake survivors and help nearly five million people facing the risk of disease and flood.

PHOTO: AFP

ME peace needs 'tough sacrifices', says Bush

Palestinians 'angered' by US president's Knesset speech

AFP, Sharm el-Sheikh

US President George W. Bush said on Sunday that peace in the Middle East was possible by the end of the year but that it needed action on both sides and "tough sacrifices".

Bush, on the final leg of a Middle East tour, also again took aim at archfoe Iran over its nuclear drive and criticised the nations of the region over the lack of political freedom and human rights.

"I firmly believe that with leadership and courage, we can reach that peace agreement this year... This is a demanding task, and it requires action on all sides," he said.

"Palestinians must fight terror and continue to build the institu-

tions of a free and peaceful society. Israel must make tough sacrifices for peace and ease restrictions on Palestinians."

Bush wraps up his tour with a speech to the Middle East World Economic Forum and talks with regional leaders, facing Arab scepticism over the chances of Israeli-Palestinian peace with negotiations so far failing to make any visible progress.

"We said very clearly we are seeing progress," US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley told reporters, hinting the president could visit the region for a third time this year.

"But we are not at the point where the president is going to have a meeting with (Palestinian)

president (Mahmud) Abbas and (Israeli) Prime Minister (Ehud) Olmert to try to declare a vision."

According to a copy of his address to the forum in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, Bush called on the world to prevent Tehran from obtaining the nuclear bomb and to isolate Iran and its closest regional ally Syria.

"Every peaceful nation in the region has an interest in stopping these nations from supporting terrorism," Bush said.

"To allow the world's leading sponsor of terror to gain the world's deadliest weapon would be an unforgivable betrayal of future generations. For the sake of peace, the world must not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

Opec member Iran has repeatedly denied seeking the atomic bomb and says its nuclear programme is aimed solely at generating energy.

Meanwhile, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said on Sunday that US President George W. Bush's speech to Israel's parliament had angered Palestinians.

"Bush's speech in front of the Knesset angered us," Abbas told reporters in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, the official MENA news agency reported.

Bush addressed the Israel parliament at the start of a regional tour as the Jewish state marked its 60th anniversary, sparking Arab anger over his perceived bias towards Israel.

'Diseases pose threat to quake homeless'

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Saturday warned that mass epidemics in China's Sichuan province are a live threat in the aftermath of Monday's 7.9-magnitude earthquake.

"Action is needed to prevent the risk of disease outbreaks in quake-affected areas, where absence of safe drinking water and proper waste disposal and cramped living conditions in temporary shelters can be conducive to outbreaks," it said in a statement.

"Preventing communicable disease outbreaks is the key public health issue now facing the People's Republic of China."

Five days after the enormous quake that the government esti-

mates killed more than 50,000 people, there were rising concerns over potential disease outbreaks among the nearly five million people who have lost their homes.

Aside from the ongoing rescue effort, authorities are focused on supplying fresh drinking water and improving sanitary conditions for survivors housed in tent cities or in the open.

The WHO's China representative, Dr Hans Troedsson, said the Beijing government had responded appropriately to the immense health and logistics challenges it faces, particularly around the epicentre in Beichuan County.

However, the Chinese health ministry also acknowledged Saturday the danger of large-scale epidemics.

Britain hub of Islamic terrorism: EU report

PTI, London

Britain's controversial foreign and military policy has made UK the hub of Islamic terrorism across Europe, and turned the country into a fertile ground for jihadist recruiters, a report by the EU warned.

The EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report revealed that British foreign policy presented critical dangers for all Europe: "The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have a large impact on the security environment of the EU."

The analysis of the terrorist threat by Europol, the European Police Office, warned that the Britain was seen as fertile ground for radical Islamists seeking

recruits to their militant campaigns, with "young, radicalised British citizens" often used to mount attacks. The Independent daily of Britain reported on Sunday.

It concluded that the dangers posed by militant groups rose to unprecedented proportions in 2007, with steep increases in the number of arrests, plots and attacks.

The report highlighted Islamic terrorism, particularly through a rejuvenated al-Qaeda, as the most significant security threat to UK.

Europol, which co-ordinates law enforcement information across the EU, warned that al-Qaeda was stepping up its campaign against Britain and its European allies, after "rebuilding its capabilities".

Advertisement for the Public Party, featuring a portrait of a man and text in Bengali. The text includes the party's name and a list of points regarding its platform and goals.

Lebanese rivals struggle to iron out differences

AFP, Doha

Rival Lebanese leaders pressed on with talks on Sunday to try to end a feud that pushed the nation towards all-out sectarian war, with the focus on a disputed electoral law and the divisive issue of Hezbollah weapons.

The Qatari hosts of the Arab-brokered talks succeeded on Saturday in defusing a clash over the weaponry of the powerful Syria- and Iran-backed Shia militia by offering to come up with a proposal on the thorny issue while Lebanese negotiators focused on other matters.

Although no timeframe for the talks has been announced, Arab League secretary general Amr Mussa said he expected Sunday to be a "decisive" day.

Lebanon's rival factions agreed last Thursday to renew a dialogue to try to resolve a protracted political impasse, which erupted into days of deadly sectarian fighting and saw Hezbollah and its allies temporarily seize swathes of west Beirut.

The US-backed ruling coalition and the Hezbollah-led opposition

have been locked in a political dispute for 18 months that has prevented the election of a president.

The 14 political leaders in Qatar did not meet again after a first session on Saturday. Instead, a joint committee tasked with addressing an electoral law for a parliamentary poll due next year began work.

"We are trying to resolve differences," opposition MP and committee member Ali Hasan Khalil told reporters.

The factions differ on the delineation of constituencies, fearing they would lose parliamentary seats due to demographic changes which would follow any alteration of boundaries.

In addition to the electoral law, another committee was formed to discuss a proposed unity government, Lebanese pro-government newspaper An-Nahar reported.

Both sides have already agreed on army chief Michel Sleiman to succeed Damascus protege Emile Lahoud, who stepped down as president in November at the end of his term, but they disagree on power-sharing in a unity government.

Advertisement for Child Sight Foundation, a vacancy announcement for a General Manager (Operations). It includes the foundation's logo, contact information, and a list of qualifications and competencies required for the position.

Advertisement for Heidelberg Cement Bangladesh Limited, including a notice of the 19th Annual General Meeting. It provides details about the meeting date, location, and agenda, along with contact information for the company secretary.

Advertisement for British Council English for Life courses. It features a photograph of a bride and groom, along with details about course dates, enrollment, and contact information for the British Council Teaching Centre and Dhaka office.

Advertisement for British Council English for Life courses, featuring a portrait of a woman and details about course dates, enrollment, and contact information for the British Council Teaching Centre and Dhaka office.