



A home sits destroyed by a tornado on Monday near Parkersburg, Iowa. Several storms throughout the US Midwest ravaged Iowa and Minnesota on May 25.

## US pact must not harm national interest: Iraq

Iraq's national security council has asked Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to ensure that a pact under discussion to extend the US troop presence beyond 2008 will not harm the national interest. Washington and Baghdad are holding negotiations on a Status of Forces Agreement aimed at giving a legal basis to the US troops after December 31, when a UN mandate defining the current status of foreign forces expires.

The Political Council for National Security recommended continuing negotiations between the two sides to reach a result that is satisfactory to the people of Iraq and does not harm its interests, a government statement said.

The council, headed by President Jalal Talabani, said the negotiations covered a wide spectrum of subjects including security, economic, political and military issues, but did not give details of progress so far.

## Iran may be withholding nuke study info: IAEA

Iran may be withholding information needed to establish whether it tried to make nuclear arms, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday in an unusually strongly worded report.

The tone of the language suggesting Tehran continues to stonewall the UN nuclear monitor revealed a glimpse of the frustration felt by agency investigators stymied in their attempts to gain full answers to suspicious aspects of Iran's past nuclear activities.

A senior UN official familiar with the investigation into Iran's nuclear programme said none of the dozens of agency reports issued in that context had ever been as plain spoken in calling Tehran to task for not being forthcoming. He agreed to discuss the report only if granted anonymity

## US millionaire admits giving cash to Olmert

AFP, Jerusalem

A US millionaire who is the key witness in the latest corruption probe against Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert admitted in sworn testimony on Tuesday that he gave large sums of cash to the premier.

Morris Talansky's evidence in an investigation into claims that Olmert received illegal funds in the years before he became prime minister in 2006 could lead to an indictment and his resignation.

Talansky's deposition -- sworn testimony that can be used later in a trial -- is expected to last for several hours in Jerusalem district court.

"I gave some money to Olmert for his (election) campaigns in 1991 and 1992... He told me that he would prefer cash, and I gave him first some money from my private funds, then some money collected in the United States on his behalf," said Talansky, according to Israeli public radio.

"In 1998 also some money, generally about 3,000 to 8,000 dollars each time, was given, always in cash, because Olmert did not want cheques," he said.

## Israel has '150 or more' nuclear weapons, says Carter

AFP, London

Israel has "150 or more" nuclear weapons, former US president Jimmy Carter said at a press conference over the weekend, a spokesman for the literary festival at which he was speaking confirmed.

Asked how a future US president should deal with the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran, the 83-year-old said: "The US has more than 12,000 nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union (sic) has about the same; Great Britain and France have several hundred, and Israel has 150 or more."

"We have a phalanx of enormous weaponry, not only of enormous weaponry, but of rockets to deliver those missiles on a pinpoint accuracy target," he said at a press conference in Hay-on-Wye, in Wales, on Sunday, according to a spokesman for the Guardian Hay Festival.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear power in the Middle East but has a policy of neither confirming nor denying its arsenal.

## HR rights talks with China 'constructive', says US

AFP, Beijing

The United States held "constructive" talks with China on a wide range of human rights issues, a US envoy said here Tuesday as he praised the communist government for its earthquake response.

China and the United States held two days of talks on human rights in Beijing, the first of their kind since a dialogue was suspended in 2002 amid US criticism at the United Nations over Beijing's rights record.

"We're encouraged by the resumption of dialogue and we look forward to its continuation," David Kramer, the head of the US team, told reporters after the talks.

"Human rights have been a source of tension in our relationship. We want to turn it into a more positive factor," the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour told reporters.

## Archaeologists discover statues of Cleopatra, Aphrodite

AFP, Cairo

An alabaster head of Cleopatra and a mask thought to belong to her lover Mark Antony have been found near Egypt's Mediterranean city of Alexandria, antiquities chief Zahi Hawass said on Monday.

The two treasures, a bronze statue of Goddess Aphrodite and a headless royal statue from the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ruled Egypt between 323 and 30 BC, were discovered by a joint Egyptian-Dominican Republic team of archaeologists in the Tapsiris Magna temple, Hawass said.

Some 20 bronze coins stamped with Cleopatra's face were found in underground tunnels 50 metres (164 feet) deep in the archeological site, Hawass said.

The teams had originally been searching for Cleopatra's tomb but Hawass "categorically denied" that they were any closer to finding the queen's burial place.

## China orders evacuation amid flood fears

AFP, Beichuan

Chinese authorities yesterday ordered the evacuation of 80,000 people as troops scrambled to hold back a dangerously swelling lake formed by this month's devastating earthquake.

As the death toll from the May 12 quake jumped to 67,000, state press said that emergency workers aimed to move the residents from their homes near the so-called "quake lake" by midnight (1600 GMT) Tuesday.

Around 70,000 people were

evacuated earlier from Beichuan County as concern rose that the lake -- formed when the quake triggered landslides that blocked the Jian river -- could overflow and surge downstream.

Heightening the sense of fear still stalking China's southwestern Sichuan province, another strong aftershock measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale rattled the area and was felt in the provincial capital Chengdu.

About 30 minutes later another aftershock measuring 5.7 shook neighbouring Shaanxi province, China's state news agency Xinhua

reported. Authorities have had to cope with thousands of aftershocks and a myriad of other dangers while trying to provide food, shelter and medical help for the millions left homeless across an area the size of South Korea.

In Beijing, cabinet spokesman Guo Weimin said the confirmed death toll stood at 67,183, with a further 20,790 missing.

One of the most urgent tasks now is trying to prevent the lake -- one of 35 said to be at risk -- spilling over and swamping an area of

some 1.3 million people. Troops armed with dynamite are trying to blast channels through the debris blocking the river to reduce the level of the lake, thought to be holding some 130 million cubic metres (4.6 billion cubic feet) of water.

Liu Ning, the water resources ministry's chief engineer who is supervising the operation, said people were being moved for their own safety.

"It's better for them to complain about the trouble that the evacuation would bring than to shed tears after the possible danger," he said.

## Peacekeepers 'abusing children'

BBC ONLINE, London

Children as young as six are being sexually abused by peacekeepers and aid workers, says a leading UK charity.

Children in post-conflict areas are being abused by the very people drafted into such zones to help look after them, says Save the Children.

After research in Ivory Coast, southern Sudan and Haiti, the charity proposed an international watchdog be set up.

Save the Children said it had

sacked three workers for breaching its codes, and called on others to do the same.

The three men were all dismissed in the past year for having had sex with girls aged 17 - which the charity said was a sackable offence even though not illegal.

The UN has said it welcomes the charity's report, which it will study closely.

Save the Children says the most shocking aspect of child sex abuse is that most of it goes unreported and unpunished, with children too scared to speak out.

## Israel obliged to negotiate with Syria, says Olmert

AFP, Jerusalem

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told MPs on Monday that Israel was left with no choice but to launch indirect peace talks with Syria, a top Israeli official said.

"What tipped the scales was the burning question of what might happen if, heaven forbid, we would be drawn, due to a miscalculation, into a violent confrontation with Syria," he said before parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

"Then, I would be asked: How can it be that they were seeking peace and you did not even examine the

possibility?" Olmert told the committee which meets behind closed doors, according to the official who requested anonymity.

"Anyone in my chair understands that these moves need to be made with the utmost caution, and secrecy is a necessary part of that," said the premier, noting that he initiated the process with Syria in February 2007.

"There is not a single party in the world that told Israel not to negotiate for peace... I certainly shared our thoughts and developments with our closest friends," Olmert said, referring to the United States, Israel's key ally.



A young Chinese girl places incense beside the photo of her sister yesterday during a memorial service at the collapsed Beichuan Middle School, where up to 1,300 children and teachers may have died in the May 12 earthquake, in Beichuan, southwest China's Sichuan province.

মেয়ে, ক্যামেরার চোখ থেকে সাবধান

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চট্টগ্রাম: পাহাড়ের পাদদেশে হাড়িঞ্জি ও বসতি বন্ধ হয়নি

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### NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR APPOINTMENT OF C&F AGENT

Sealed Quotations are invited from reputed C&F agent for custom clearance and transportation of various types of Pharmaceutical raw/packing materials, commodities, machinery, equipment, spare parts and others from Dhaka Airport, Chittagong Sea Port, Benapole Land Port and ICD Kamalapur, Dhaka. Detail specification, terms & conditions have been mentioned in the Tender Schedule.

Tender documents will be issued on cash payment of TK. 500.00 (five hundred) only (non-refundable) on all working days during office hours from 29.05.2008 to 09.06.2008. No tender documents will be issued after 09.06.2008

Earnest Money of TK. 50,000 (fifty thousand) in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh must be submitted along with the Tender documents without which the Tender shall be rejected outright.

Tenders will be received in the office of the undersigned up to 15:00 pm on 10.06.2008 and will be opened on the same day at 15:15 pm in presence of Bidders who may like to be present. No Tender shall be received after the above mentioned date and time.

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