

US to allow Fulbright scholars to leave Gaza

AFP, Jerusalem

The United States has convinced Israel to allow seven Fulbright scholars to travel to Jerusalem for visa interviews, an Israeli official said on Monday.

"There is still no change in policy. There has been a request resubmitted by the US and they are currently planning to allow them to go to the (US) consulate for the meetings," Major Peter Lerner, a spokesman for the Israeli military's Gaza coordination office, told AFP.

In a letter sent to the Gaza scholars whose grants were withdrawn last week because of Israeli restrictions on the isolated territory, the consulate said it was working on allowing the students to leave Gaza.



Pakistani policemen remove a body following a suicide attack outside the Denmark embassy in Islamabad yesterday. A suicide bomber in a car was responsible for a blast outside the Danish embassy in the Pakistani capital in which eight people were killed, a security official said.

Hillary takes Puerto Rico, continues fight to win

AFP, Washington

Hillary Clinton said in comments published Monday that she may challenge a decision by Democratic Party leaders on convention delegates, threatening to prolong her nomination fight against Barack Obama.

The comments to The Washington Post, indicated Hillary is not ready to throw in the towel, even though Obama is widely seen as having gained the upper hand.

Democrat in the two states had been initially denied the right to send convention delegates because they broke party rules by holding their primary votes in January.

from Saturday's two-state compromise, which was not nearly enough to secure her nomination.

But even as momentum and the delegate count favoured Obama, she vowed in the interview to continue her political fight.

"I am focused on winning the nomination," she said. "So I'm going to stay focused on what is the business at hand, which is making my case to the delegates, and there'll be time, oh, way in the future to consider the campaign, because it's still very much alive and ongoing."

While the superdelegates have been moving toward Obama in recent weeks, the New York senator made clear she believed the trend can be reversed.

"One thing about superdelegates is they can change their minds," she told The Post.

The former first lady triumphed in Sunday's Puerto Rico primary by a margin of two to one.

Hillary pressed her claim to undecided party grandees that she leads in the national popular vote, and would be a far more potent candidate to take on Republican John McCain in November.

"I am in this race because I believe I am that candidate, and I will be that president," she said in her Puerto Rico victory speech.

Gibbs predicted that "sometime this week, we'll probably have a nominee for the Democratic Party and then we can get to the need to bring change to this country."

"If it's not Tuesday, I think it will be fairly soon," he told Fox News Sunday, noting ahead of the Puerto Rico vote that Obama needed just 66 more delegates to reach the revised winning line of 2,118.

Obama was set to address thousands of supporters on Tuesday night in the same conference hall in St. Paul, Minneapolis where the Republican convention will be held in September.

Obama spokesman Robert

Macedonia poll fails int'l standards

AFP, Skopje

Foreign observers said Monday that Macedonia parliamentary polls at the weekend failed to meet international standards as they were marred by violence between ethnic Albanian activists.

"Key international standards were not met," the monitors said in a statement issued by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the continent's elections watchdog.

"Organised attempts to violently disrupt the electoral process in parts of the ethnic Albanian areas made it impossible for voters ... to freely express their will," it said.

The elections - the fifth in Macedonia since independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 - had been seen as a test of the landlocked Balkan state's democratic credentials and its hopes of joining the European Union.

But they were marred by unrest, with one person dying in one of several gun battles in ethnic Albanian-populated areas where polling was also tainted by allegations of intimidation and ballot fraud.

"Violence and attempts to manipulate the campaign sadly

cast a shadow over otherwise well-run elections that gave most voters a real choice between an array of political forces," said OSCE official Pia Christmann-Moller.

"The violence we noted in ethnic Albanian areas is an unacceptable breach of peace and peoples' democratic rights," Christmann-Moller said in the statement.

Mevlut Cavusoglu, the head of a delegation of European Commission observers, said while "well-organised," a large number of voters were deprived of the right to take part in the Macedonian elections.

This, he said, was "due to the irresponsible, violent and destructive actions of activists of the two major Albanian parties," the Democratic Union for Integration and the Democratic Party of Albanians.

"Such actions are not conducive to the democratic process and the integration of this country in European and transatlantic structures," he stressed.

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski claimed victory for his conservative VMRO-DPMNE party after results showed it had won twice as many votes as its nearest rivals, the Social Democratic Union.

Australia's Howard accused of 'war crime' over Iraq

AFP, Sydney, White House

An alliance of Australian lawyers, academics and politicians wants former prime minister John Howard to be prosecuted for war crimes over the invasion of Iraq, a report said Monday.

A legal brief had been sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) alleging that Howard committed a war crime by contributing troops to the US-led invasion in March 2003, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation said.

A spokesman for the organisers, the Melbourne-based ICC Action group, told the broadcaster that Howard should be held accountable for sending soldiers to a war not sanctioned by the United Nations.

"We have produced a 52-page brief of evidence which states to the chief prosecutor of the criminal court that we allege John Howard's actions are war crimes under article 8 of the Rome Statute," said spokesman Glen Floyd.

Senator Lyn Allison of the Australian Democrats, described as one of several eminent people supporting the move, told ABC that accountability was important.

Howard was ousted in elections in November by now Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who announced in parliament Monday that Australia's 550 combat troops

had begun withdrawing from Iraq in line with a pledge made ahead of the vote.

Meanwhile the White House Monday rejected Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's charges of twisted pre-war intelligence on Iraq, saying "the entire world" agreed on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

"We acted on the intelligence that we had, and that the entire world had. No-one else in the world, no other government, had different information and so we acted based on what was the threat that was presented to us," said spokeswoman Dana Perino.

Meanwhile the White House Monday rejected Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's charges of "abuse" of pre-war intelligence on Iraq, saying "the entire world" agreed on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein.

"We acted on the intelligence that we had, and that the entire world had," spokeswoman Dana Perino told reporters after Rudd alleged "abuse of intelligence information" on the regime in Baghdad.

"No-one else in the world, no other government, had different information and so we acted based on what was the threat that was presented to us. When the intelligence community presents you with their concerns, you'd better take them seriously," said Perino.



An earthquake survivor cooks in front of her collapsed home in the Hongbai township of the Shifang county, in China's southwestern province of Sichuan yesterday. The death toll from China's earthquake has risen to 69,019, with another 18,627 missing, the government said yesterday.

Iran orders suspension of news agency

AFP, Tehran

Iran on Monday ordered the Fars news agency, one of the country's most prominent news organisations and normally considered close to the government, to close for three days for publishing "false news".

"We have received a letter from the commission for surveillance of non-governmental press agencies ordering us to halt our operations for three days," the agency's editor-in-chief Abbas Tavangar told AFP.

The official IRNA news agency reported that Fars had been "suspended for publishing false news and disturbing the public order."

No further details were given but Fars had on Sunday published a report saying that Iran's central bank governor Tahmasb Mazhari was stepping down and being replaced by Vice President Parviz Davoudi.

It later issued another report denying the story.

The conservative news website Bornas said the story about Mazhari was the reason for the temporary closure.

Tavangar said Fars would cease operations for three days with immediate effect. The last story on its news wire was at 11:30 am (0700 GMT) Monday.

Fars, which is known for its security contacts and regularly publishes interviews with top military commanders, is normally considered supportive of Ahmadinejad's government.

52 dead in Mongolia snowstorm

AFP, Beijing

At least 52 people have been killed in Mongolia by a severe snowstorm that has also frozen to death more than 200,000 livestock, Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Monday.

Fourteen children were among those killed by the storm, which has raked various parts of the country with strong winds and heavy snow, it said in a report from the landlocked nation's capital of Ulan Bator.

As well as the 200,000 livestock dead, another 200,000 were missing in the storm, it said, citing the Mongolian General Authority for Emergency Management.

It did not specify what sorts of livestock were included in those totals but much of Mongolia's population of roughly three million people rely on subsistence herding of cattle, goats and sheep.

The snowstorm has also caused some damage to power supplies and communication systems in affected areas.

Such storms this late in the spring are not uncommon in Mongolia, which lies just south of Siberia.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পাট গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
মানিক মিয়া এডিনিউ, ঢাকা-১২০৭

Table with 4 columns: S.N, মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ, কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়, and বিজ্ঞাপন/নাম ও ঠিকানা. Contains details about a government tender for rice cultivation.

Mugabe's presence clouds FAO summit

AFP, Rome, London

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's attendance at a UN food crisis summit in Rome is "particularly unfortunate," British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's spokesman said Monday.

"We think it's particularly unfortunate that he has decided to attend this meeting given what he has done in relation to contributing to difficulties on food supply in Zimbabwe," said the spokesman.

Britain will be represented at the summit by International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander, he added. "Obviously he will not be meeting Mr. Mugabe or having anything to do with them," said the spokesman.

Meanwhile activists, leftist politicians and Jewish groups on Monday slammed the attendance of Zimbabwean and Iranian presidents Robert Mugabe and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a UN food agency summit in Rome.

"It is in no way legitimate for the people of Zimbabwe to be represented by a head of state who has been disowned by the international community and who is unwanted by his own people," Sergio Marelli, Italian host of a forum on food sovereignty coinciding with the summit, told AFP.

Italy's libertarian Radical Party plans a sit-in against both leaders' presence on Tuesday, the first day of the three-day summit of the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

"We are against all dictatorships," Radical Party spokeswoman Anita Friedman told AFP. Participants will include several Jewish groups as well as peace and political refugee groups.

Ahmadinejad's presence at the FAO summit "addressing the tragedy of hunger in the world symbolises the devastating contradiction between the violence of totalitarian governments and their demagogic statements," organisers

Egypt frees price hike protestors after torture

AFP, Cairo

Three men detained over deadly protests at Egypt's biggest textile plant over price hikes and pay demands have been released after weeks of "torture", one of the workers said Monday.

"We were subjected to electric shocks, to beatings and there was no food and no drink for the first few days," blogger Karim el-Beheiri told AFP a day after his release. "We went through weeks of torture and humiliation."

Beheiri, Tarek Amin and Kamal al-Fayoumy were arrested on April 6 at the Misr Spinning and Weaving company in the Nile Delta industrial city of Mahalla after riots which left three people dead and hundreds detained.

They were accused of "inciting unrest, damage to property and demonstrating," a security official told AFP.

The three were fired from their jobs after their arrest, said Beheiri, whose detention was condemned by international rights groups.

PUBALI BANK LIMITED ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION (ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT) HEAD OFFICE 26, DILKUSHA C/A, DHAKA. INVITATION FOR RE-TENDERS