



PHOTO: AFP  
Palestinian teenagers chant as they attend a summer camp organised by Hamas in Gaza City yesterday. Thousands of Palestinian teenagers are taking part in summer camps.

## US removes uranium from Iraq

AP, Washington

insurgents or smugglers crossing to Iran to aid its nuclear ambitions.

What's now left is the final and complicated push to clean up the remaining radioactive debris at the former Tuwaitha nuclear complex about 12 miles south of Baghdad using teams that include Iraqi experts recently trained in the Chernobyl fallout zone in Ukraine.

"Everyone is very happy to have this safely out of Iraq," said a senior US official who outlined the nearly three-month operation to The Associated Press. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

While yellowcake alone is not considered potent enough for a so-

called "dirty bomb" a conventional explosive that disperses radioactive material it could stir widespread panic if incorporated in a blast. Yellowcake also can be enriched for use in reactors and, at higher levels, nuclear weapons using sophisticated equipment.

The Iraqi government sold the yellowcake to a Canadian uranium producer, Cameco Corp., in a transaction the official described as worth "tens of millions of dollars." A Cameco spokesman, Lyle Krahn, declined to discuss the price, but said the yellowcake will be processed at facilities in Ontario for use in energy-producing reactors.

## 15 killed in Iraq attacks

AFP, Baghdad

At least 15 people were killed across Iraq yesterday, including seven by a bomb targeting a local leader of President Jalal Talabani's political party, officials said.

The bomb exploded in the town of Qara Tappa in the restive province of Diyala outside the house of Mohammed Ramadan Eisa, a local leader of Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the town's mayor Sherwan Shukra said.

"Eisa was seriously wounded in the blast but his wife, mother-in-law, his two children, one brother and two of his guards were killed," Shukra told AFP.

Qara Tappa is 70 kilometres (43 miles) north of Baquba, the provin-

cial capital.

"The incident occurred when all the victims were standing in front of the house. They were probably getting ready to go somewhere," Shukra said.

A local police officer said three more of Eisa's guards were wounded in the blast.

In another attack in Diyala province, this time in the town of Kana'an, one civilian was killed and four were wounded when an army patrol was targeted by a roadside bomb, a police officer said.

Another civilian was killed when police clashed with "rogue" members of a local anti-Qaeda group in central Baquba, the officer added.

Diyala remains one of the most dangerous provinces in Iraq, and

despite several military assaults against insurgents there the region has seen sustained attacks, especially suicide bombings by women.

In Baghdad a car bomb targeting a police patrol exploded near a market, killing at least six people and wounding 11 security officials said.

The explosion occurred in Baghdad's northeastern Shia Al-Shab neighbourhood, they said.

A woman was among the dead, an interior ministry security official said, adding that the wounded also included three policemen.

Despite the latest attacks Baghdad has seen a reduction in the number of bombings in recent months amid a steady decline in violence across the country since late last year.

## 22 more Afghan civilians killed in US airstrikes

AFP, Jalalabad

An Afghan district governor said 22 people, most of them women and children, were killed yesterday when US-led coalition airstrikes hit a wedding party in eastern Afghanistan, but the force insisted only militants were killed.

"I confirm that 22 people, three of them men and 19 of them women and children, were killed," said Hamisha Gul, governor of Deh Bala district in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

Gul said his information came from police and other officials he had dispatched to the area near the Pakistan border to investigate after reports of civilian casualties in the incident.

His claim could not be immediately confirmed with more senior

Afghan officials nor independently verified as the area is remote and difficult to access.

The US-led coalition rejected the allegations.

"It was not a wedding party, there were no women or children present. We have no reports of civilian casualties," coalition media officer Captain Christian Patterson told AFP.

The coalition said in a statement earlier that "several" militants were killed in the air strike.

It was the second time in three days the coalition was accused of inflicting heavy civilian casualties in airstrikes.

Afghan officials have said strikes on Friday in northeast Nuristan province, also on the border with Pakistan, killed more than a dozen civilians.

The coalition insists only militants were killed. President Hamid Karzai has ordered an investigation.

The seven-year internationally supported campaign to fight a bloody Taliban-led insurgency has seen several incidents in which civilians were killed, as well as claims of civilian casualties that have proven untrue.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed in international military action against insurgents, most of them in air strikes on remote areas even though the forces employ several measures to confirm the identities of their targets.

The United Nations said last month that nearly 700 Afghan civilians had lost their lives in insurgency-linked violence this year, nearly two-thirds in militant attacks and about 255 in military operations.

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber exploded a car bomb near a EU police training mission jeep in northern Afghanistan Sunday, injuring seven people including three Germans, officials said.

The attack was outside the town of Kunduz in the north of the country, an area which has seen an increase in militant strikes but far less of the insurgency-linked violence in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

Four people inside the vehicle were lightly wounded, European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) spokesman Andrea Angeli told AFP, describing them as three German police officers and their Afghan interpreter.

Provincial governor Mohammad Omar said three children were also hurt.

## Bush urges Myanmar to free Suu Kyi

AFP, Toyako

US President George W Bush yesterday renewed his call for Myanmar's military regime to free opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.

Bush said he intended to raise concerns about Myanmar as he opened talks in Japan ahead of a summit of the Group of Eight major powers starting on Monday.

"I'm deeply concerned about that country," Bush told a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, the host of the summit.

"And we urge the regime to free Aung San Suu Kyi," Bush said.

The junta, defying international pressure, in May extended the house arrest of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent most of the last 18 years confined to her home.

The military government also came under criticism for waiting weeks before accepting international relief workers after Cyclone Nargis, which left more than 138,000 dead or missing when it pounded ashore on May 2.

"Their response to the recent natural disaster was unwarranted, at best," Bush said.

The Group of Eight includes Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

## Obama struggling to explain his Iraq plan

AFP, Washington

After months vowing to get US troops home from Iraq, Barack Obama has succumbed to the war's political entanglements, struggling to explain his plan in the light of recent security gains.

More than five years after the US invasion, the Iraq war is now enmeshing not only the Bush administration which started it, but both men fighting to inherit it, Democratic White House hopeful Obama and Republican John McCain.

Obama is torn between a vow to end the war, which underpinned his win over Democratic foe Hillary Clinton and Republican claims his plan invites US humiliation, would

delight terrorists and waste gains bought in American blood.

The war remains broadly unpopular, but it has fallen behind the economy as the top campaign issue, following a lull in violence. Last month, more American troops were killed in Afghanistan than Iraq.

Under rising Republican pressure, Obama on Thursday said he may "refine" his policies after meeting US commanders in Iraq on a trip expected this month.

But hours later, he hurriedly called a second press conference to insist he had not made the "flip flop" on Iraq that many observers are expecting, as he retools his message for the political centre ground.



PHOTO: AFP  
A firefighting Erickson Air-Crane helicopter drops Phos-Check fire retardant at the Gap fire, now officially the top priority fire in the state, as hundreds of wildfires burn in central and northern California on Saturday near Goleta, California.

## Israel successfully tests missile interceptor

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel has successfully tested a new defence system designed to intercept rockets fired from southern Lebanon and the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, public radio reported yesterday.

The "Iron Dome" system is expected to be fully operational within a year and will be able to intercept the military-grade Katyusha rockets used by Lebanon's Hezbollah militia and the cruder Qassam rockets favoured by Hamas.

Citing Israeli security officials, public radio said the system would also be effective against mortar fire which has a much smaller window of warning.

In January Prime Minister Ehud Olmert viewed a prototype of the 200-million-dollar (140-million-euro) system, which is being developed under contract by Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, an Israeli arms manufacturer.

Iron Dome is part of a multi-layered defence system aimed at protecting Israel from both short-range missiles fired by militants in Gaza or Lebanon and longer-range missiles in the arsenals of regional foes Iran and Syria.

## One shot dead as Indian diamond workers protest

AFP, New Delhi

One man was shot dead by a factory guard Sunday and 14 others were injured as thousands of diamond workers demonstrated for higher wages in a gem processing hub in western India, an official said.

"There was a big mob trying to enter a factory. The guard tried to stop them and he was beaten up," administrative official Pradip Shah told AFP by telephone from the city of Bhavnagar in western Gujarat state.

"Then he opened fire and one man was shot. He has died."

Shah added that two others were injured in the incident, and one was in serious condition.

The official estimated that about 15,000 people working at small diamond workshops in Bhavnagar and its surrounding areas gathered in the streets early Sunday to demand higher wages.

Police arrived to restore order but 12 of them suffered injuries after the crowd threw stones at the forces, he said, adding that the protesters had since dispersed.

**International Finance Corporation**  
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**Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund**

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**CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**RESEARCH GRANTS ON BANGLADESH INVESTMENT CLIMATE IFC BICF Small Grants Program**

**Deadline for submission of proposal: 17th July 2008**  
**Deadline for completion of final report: 15th December 2008**

Economic Research Group (ERG) and BMB Mott MacDonald are implementing a Small Grants Program designed and financed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Bangladesh Investment Climate Fund (BICF). The Small Grants Program aims to a) support academics and individual researchers interested in undertaking research on investment climate issues across Bangladesh; b) enhance the knowledge base and increase awareness of investment climate issues; and c) provide inputs to policymaking.

IFC BICF will provide grants ranging from US\$ 5,000-15,000 for innovative and relevant in-depth research on any subject relating to the investment climate and better governance in order to promote and improve investment and the business environment in Bangladesh.

Any person, group of people or organisations with adequate qualification for undertaking research on a wide range of issues may apply. Details of these issues are available at [www.ergonline.org/ifc](http://www.ergonline.org/ifc).

The deadline for submission of proposals for selection is 17th July 2008, and the short-listed applicants should be prepared to make their presentations on or around 26th July 2008 at a venue in Dhaka. Decisions on final selections will be made by 31st July 2008, and the awardees should be ready to undertake research from 1st August. The first draft of the research report must be submitted by the first week of November 2008.

A full proposal for research should be submitted on or before July 17 2008 by 1800 hours BST at the following address: Economic Research Group, House: 3, Road: 16, Gulshan-1, Dhaka: 1212, Bangladesh. E-mail [info@ergonline.org](mailto:info@ergonline.org).

Detailed guidelines for submission and relevant evaluation criteria are available at [www.ergonline.org/ifc](http://www.ergonline.org/ifc).

BICF is managed and executed by the IFC and funded by the U.K. Department for International Development and the European Commission

## US to consult allies before commenting on Iran nuclear response

AFP, Aboard Air Force One

The US said Saturday that it would talk with allies before commenting on Tehran's response to a plan from six world powers offering Iran technology and negotiations if it suspends uranium enrichment.

"We're going out to consult with our allies about what Iran's response means," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said aboard Air Force One, carrying President George W Bush to the G8 Summit in Japan.

She said the US was already consulting the "P5+1" group -- the five permanent members of the UN security council plus Germany -- on how to respond to Tehran.

"We'll just have to see how that is received by others before we make a formal response," Perino said.

Iran on Friday delivered its response to the package of incentives for it to halt the enrichment of ura-

nium, which the west fears is aimed at producing nuclear weapons but which Tehran insists is peacefully-oriented.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili has said his country submitted a "constructive and creative" response with "a focus on common ground," but he did not elaborate on the contents.

On Saturday however Tehran offered to negotiate on its nuclear drive but without giving up uranium enrichment.

"Iran will not go back on its rights on the nuclear issue," government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said.

"Iran insists on negotiations (with world powers) while respecting its rights and avoiding any loss of international rights," he said, referring to Tehran's refusal to give up on nuclear enrichment.



PHOTO: AFP  
Former French prime minister Dominique De Villepin (C) has lunch with former French-Colombian hostage Ingrid Betancourt (R) and her mother Yolanda Pulecio (L) yesterday at a restaurant in Paris. Betancourt said in an interview on Sunday that she would return to Colombia "in a few days" to write a play about her experience after being held in the jungle for six years.

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

A large well-reputed health care organization working for the last 33 years wishes to recruit the following professionals in senior positions. The company seeks high caliber candidates who would join us and meaningfully contribute to the efforts to reach the organization's goal.

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- Some background in working with advertising agencies for developing communication materials useful. Good communication skill and excellent proposal writing capacity required.
- Excellent Program Management, Leadership and Facilitation skills required.
- Good level of application skill in MS Word, Excel and Power Point needed.

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- Medical Graduate preferably with MBA/ MPH. Master Degree in Social Science/ Life Science will also be considered.
- Minimum of 10 years of experience in Program Management, Strategy Development and Communications related to behavior change communication/ disease prevention mandatory.
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