



US Republican presidential candidate John McCain (L) and Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama (R) take part in the first US Presidential Debate at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi on Friday.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Obama passes presidential threshold in first debate

AFP, Washington

Neither Barack Obama nor John McCain landed a knockout blow in their first presidential debate late Friday, but the youthful Democrat may have just scored a points victory by standing his own.

By his debate performance, a lot of viewers apparently felt persuaded that Reagan was sufficiently presidential that he could function at that level.

Obama's Republican opponent John McCain said such threats were unhelpful. "You don't say that out loud," he said.

Obama vows to 'take out' terror targets in Pakistan

AFP, Oxford

Democratic White House contender Barack Obama said Friday he would launch military strikes on extremist targets inside Pakistan if the Islamabad government is unwilling or unable to act.

Car bomb kills 17 in Syria

AP, Damascus

A car packed with explosives detonated on a crowded residential street yesterday, killing 17 people and wounding more than a dozen others, state-run television reported.

Zeinab, a holy shrine for Shia Muslims that is frequently visited by Iranian and Iraqi pilgrims about five miles away.

The last major explosion to strike Damascus was in February when a car bomb killed Imad Mughniyeh, one of the world's most wanted and elusive terrorists.

They take part in attacks against US and Iraqi forces. The country has seen violence by Islamic extremists in recent years, with security forces clashing with al-Qaeda-inspired militant groups on several occasions.



(L-R) EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and ME Quartet representative former British prime minister Tony Blair chat before a meeting of the Quartet members at UN headquarters in New York on Friday. The Quartet met to discuss the Middle East peace process.

ME Quartet is pro-Israel Says Hamas

AFP, Gaza City

The Islamist Hamas movement on Saturday denounced statements made in New York by the Middle East Quartet, claiming the diplomatic group is biased towards Israel.

150 kidnapped Afghan labourers freed

AP, Kabul

Taliban militants on Saturday released the last of approximately 150 Afghan labourers they had abducted for almost a week after suspecting the workers of being Afghan soldiers, officials said.

Hospital deaths of 40 newborns shocks Turkey

AP, Ankara

Outside the Zekai Tahir Burak maternity hospital stands a bronze statue of a mother nursing a baby with an inscription from the Prophet Mohammed: "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother."

In July, the Ankara facility became the scene of any parent's hell. A total of 27 newborns died there within 24 hours, apparently from tainted IV treatment.

Now Turkey is reeling from a similar tragedy at another hospital, this time in the western city of Izmir, where 13 premature babies died last weekend within 24 hours, apparently from tainted IV treatment.

Six powers agree to confirm existing UN Iran sanctions

AFP, United Nations

Six major powers papered over differences on Iran Friday and circulated a new Security Council draft resolution that reaffirms existing UN sanctions over Tehran's nuclear programme.

The United States and its European allies have pushed for new sanctions against Tehran but have run into resistance from Russia and China.

Friday's meeting gained new urgency after the UN nuclear watchdog reported last week that Tehran continued to defy international pressure to cooperate with its investigation.

Koirala slams Prachanda for undermining Nepali democracy

PTI, Kathmandu

Nepal's former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala today accused the Maoist leadership of hatching a conspiracy to end parliamentary democracy in the country.

Obama vows to 'take out' terror targets in Pakistan

AFP, Oxford

Democratic White House contender Barack Obama said Friday he would launch military strikes on extremist targets inside Pakistan if the Islamabad government is unwilling or unable to act.

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