

Hilary calls for 'orderly transition' in Egypt

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called yesterday for an "orderly transition" in Egypt but stopped short of demanding President Hosni Mubarak step down as protests engulfed his regime.

Mubarak, who appointed military intelligence chief Omar Suleiman as his first ever vice president on Saturday and named a new premier to try to assuage his people's thirst for change, must go further, Clinton said.

"That is the beginning, the bare beginning of what needs to happen, which is a process that leads to the kind of concrete steps to achieve democratic and economic reform that we've been urging," she told ABC News.

As the anti-government revolt in Egypt raged into a sixth day amid increasing lawlessness and mass jail breaks, Clinton did a sweep of yesterday morning talk shows in the United States to outline the US position.

"We're trying to promote an orderly transition and change that will respond to the legitimate grievances of the Egyptian people, which the protests are all about," she told CBS.

"We are urging the Mubarak government, which is still in power, we are urging the military, which is a very respected institution

in Egypt, to do what is necessary to facilitate that kind of orderly transition."

President Barack Obama's administration has performed a delicate balancing act over the past week, pushing for reform while refusing to cut off its crucial military aid or call directly on Mubarak, a longtime ally, to go.

"There is no discussion as of this time about cutting off any aid" to Egypt, Clinton reiterated on ABC.

US military aid to Egypt amounts to \$1.3 billion a year, and the total American aid bill to the country averages close to \$2 billion annually.

In 2007, Washington committed to providing \$13 billion in military aid to Egypt over 10 years as part of a wider military aid package for its Middle Eastern allies.

Meanwhile, as the protests continued for a sixth day and the toll soared above 100, the United States has started organizing the evacuation of their nationals.

"The US embassy in Cairo informs US citizens in Egypt who wish to depart that the department of state is making arrangements to provide transportation to safehaven locations in Europe," an embassy statement said.



PHOTO: AFP
A looter snatches items following a mass break-out at the Abu Zaabal prison (upper left), Egyptians army soldiers arrest a looter (lower left) near Cairo museum and a man holds-up a defaced posters of President Hosni Mubarak, as he protests in Tahrir Square, in the capital Cairo yesterday, on the sixth day of mass demonstrations against Mubarak's regime amid increasing lawlessness, a rising death toll and a spate of jail breaks.

South Sudan chooses to secede

Shows official result

AFP, Juba, Sudan

Close to 99 percent of south Sudanese chose to secede from the north in a landmark January 9-15 referendum, according to the first complete preliminary results announced yesterday.

Earlier partial results had put the outcome of the vote beyond doubt but official figures were announced publicly for the first time during a ceremony attended by president Salva Kiir in the southern capital Juba.

Chan Reec, the chairman of the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau in charge of polling in the south, said a whopping 99.57 percent of those who voted in the south chose secession.

Turnout in the south stood at 99 percent and only 16,129 people voted for Africa's largest country to remain united, said Reec.

NEWS IN brief

Somalis accused of piracy are flown to South Korea

BBC ONLINE

A group of Somalis suspected of piracy have been flown to South Korea to face possible criminal charges.

Five men were seized when South Korean special forces stormed the Samho Jewelry, a cargo ship which had been hijacked in the Arabian Sea.

South Korean officials say eight of the 13 pirates on board at the time were killed during the rescue mission.

The five young men, who reportedly deny involvement in the kidnapping, were flown to Seoul and then taken to Busan.

Blasts at Venezuela arms depot wounded 40

AP, Caracas, Venezuela

A fire set off a series of explosions at a military arms depot in the city of Maracay yesterday, injuring about 40 people and leading authorities to evacuate the area, an official said.

Residents were being evacuated from areas within six kilometres surrounding the arms depot, Aragua state Gov. Rafael Isea told state television. He said about 40 people were reported injured in the explosions.

The cause of the fire was unclear. Information Minister Andres Izarra went on state television calling for calm and saying that authorities were tending to the situation.

Three NATO trucks attacked in Pakistan

AFP, Quetta, Pakistan

Gunmen in southwestern Pakistan attacked three trucks after they returned from delivering supplies to NATO troops in Afghanistan, police said yesterday.

The incident took place near the town of Wadh, some 380 kilometres south of Quetta, the capital of the restive oil- and gas-rich Baluchistan province which borders Iran and Afghanistan.

"Unknown gunmen fired at three NATO trucks, one of them overturned and the two other trucks were set ablaze by the attackers," local police official Juma Khan told AFP.

Oman busts UAE spy ring: security official

AFP, Muscat

Oman has dismantled an Emirati spy ring that was targeting the government and the military in the Gulf sultanate, a security official said yesterday.

"Security forces (of Oman) were able to discover a spy ring belonging to the state security forces of the United Arab Emirates targeting the regime in Oman and the mechanism of governmental and military work there," the official was quoted by the official ONA news agency as saying.

Man dies after falling off Japanese roller coaster

AFP, Tokyo

A 34-year-old man died after falling off a roller coaster at a popular amusement park in Tokyo yesterday, in the third incident there in three months, officials said.

The man fell from a four-seat vehicle on the Spinning Coaster Maihime (Dancing Princess) when it reached a curve some eight metres (26 feet) above the ground.

Police suspected the man, whose name was not immediately released, might have failed to properly

Tunisian Islamist leader returns from exile

AFP, Tunis

Tunisian Islamist leader Rached Ghannouchi returned to his homeland after more than 20 years in exile yesterday, eyeing a political future for his Ennahda movement after the fall of Tunisia's regime.

British Airways told AFP his plane from London had landed in Tunis airport.

The 69-year-old said he was elated as he checked in for his historic flight at London's Gatwick airport, where he posed with a Tunisian flag and embraced relatives before boarding on his way to a country he has not seen since 1989.

"When I return home today I am returning to the Arab world as a whole," he told reporters, adding that Ennahda now planned to register officially as a political party and take part in the country's first democratic elections.

The new interim government installed in the north African state after the fall of president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in a wave of social protests has allowed several key exiles to return despite bans on them from the old regime.

Ghannouchi, a former radical preacher

who says he now espouses moderate ideals similar to Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), was persecuted in Tunisia ever since founding his Islamist movement in 1981.

He still officially has a life sentence hanging over his head although the new government has drawn up an amnesty law for political convicts like Ghannouchi, which has to go before parliament for final approval.

"There is still confusion regarding the political situation... The interim government is changing its ministers every day, it's not stable yet and its powers are not clear yet," Ghannouchi told reporters before leaving.

In contrast to his preachings from the 1970s in which he condemned the rise of secular ideas in his homeland and the advance of women's rights, Ghannouchi also said that Sharia Islamic law now had "no place in Tunisia".

Some feminist groups are worried that Ghannouchi's return may signal a rise in political Islam that could endanger their hard-won rights.

German train crash kills 10

BBC ONLINE

At least 10 people are reported to have died in a train crash in eastern Germany.

A local passenger train and a goods train collided head-on in the state of Saxony-Anhalt late on Saturday, near the city of Magdeburg.

The passenger train, the HarzElbeExpress, was travelling on a single track section between Magdeburg and Halberstadt.

The cause of the crash, which left 33 injured, is unclear.

Several carriages were derailed after the collision near the village of Hordorf at about 2130 GMT.

"Rescue operations are still ongoing. The death toll may well rise further," said regional police spokesman Frank Kuessner said.

Sarkozy urges early reform of UN Security Council

AFP, Addis Ababa

French President Nicolas Sarkozy yesterday challenged the United Nations to reform its powerful Security Council this year to include one or more permanent African members.

"I have long been convinced that Africa does not have the place it deserves in world governance," the French leader said in an address to African Union leaders here.

"Carry out the reform of the Security Council as early as this year," Sarkozy told UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Joseph Deiss, the president of the UN General Assembly who were both attending the AU summit.

The UN Security Council has five veto-wielding members -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- and 10 non-permanent members.

"Do not wait. Do not make a speech. Make decisions... Give the billion Africans the place they are entitled to and France will support you," he added to loud applause from delegations of AU members.

Earlier Deiss also underscored the need for an expanded Security Council so that this body "can better reflect the new world order."

He also expressed regret that the UN has become "marginalized by the emergence of other actors", referring to the G20 group of the world's most powerful economies.

Sarkozy stressed that if the UN Security Council "represents the world in its diversity, then there won't be any need for other organisations."

Sudanese police clash with students in Khartoum

REUTERS, Khartoum

Sudanese police beat and arrested students yesterday as protests broke out throughout Khartoum demanding the government resign, inspired by a popular uprising in neighbouring Egypt.

Hundreds of armed riot police fired tear gas on students demonstrating in central Khartoum and in at

least two universities in the capital, which were surrounded by police reinforcements. At one, students hurled stones at police cars.

Police beat students with batons as they chanted anti-government slogans like: "We are ready to die for Sudan" and "Revolution, revolution until victory".

Groups have emerged on social networking sites calling themselves "Youth

for Change" and "The Spark", since the uprisings in nearby Tunisia and close ally Egypt this month.

"Youth for Change" has attracted more than 15,000 members.

"The people of Sudan will not remain silent anymore," its Facebook page said. "It is about time we demand our rights and take what's ours in a peaceful demonstration that will not involve any acts of sabotage."

Sudan has a close affinity with Egypt as the two nations were united under British colonial rule. The unprecedented scenes there inspired calls for similar action in Sudan, where protests without permission, which is rarely given, are illegal.

Buriganga recovery

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would be prepared to supply equipment by then based on the first round of tender.

Before the WDB launched its restoration work, the government had conducted a survey of the rivers and the Institute of Water Modelling is now updating the survey data.

On the other side, the water board is designing sluice gates on the Jamuna near the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge from where the waters would be diverted to the Buriganga.

The WDB is also preparing tender for dredging of another 15 km waterways in Pungli and Bangshi rivers.

"Our aim is to divert 300 metre cubes of water per second from the Jamuna to the Buriganga during the lean season. Currently, the project may not have gathered momentum, but by next year there will be a lot of activities," said the high official.

Under the restoration project, the WDB would remove seven crore cubic metres of waste and silt from the 162 km waterways. Majority of this silt would be removed manually, while about 1.5 crore cubic metres

of silt will be removed by dredging.

Side by side with implementation of the project, the government would have to ensure relocation of the Hazaribagh tanneries to Savar. The relocation is vital, but it has remained stalled for several years due to delay in setting up a centralised Effluent Treatment Plan in Savar so that these industries do not cause large-scale water pollution in future.

Pollution in the Buriganga is so acute that the river has no marine life for many years and its water poses high health hazards. Besides, Dhaka dwellers have also been deprived of using more surface water. Dhaka's overreliance on the subsoil water has caused an alarming depletion of water table.

While the leather sector brought home hundreds of millions dollars in export earning over the decades, its pollution took its toll on the fish resources, the economic value of which had never been calculated.

The tanners also avoided taking any responsibility in treating their waste till recent years.

Birds use quantum theory to literally 'see' Earth's magnetic field as they fly

THE DAILY MAIL ONLINE

Birds may be able to 'see' the Earth's electromagnetic field as they fly through the sky, scientists have suggested.

Many creatures, including all birds, navigate by sensing the direction of the magnetic forces around our planet to guide them.

But now researchers have found that different reactions are produced in the eyes of all avian creatures depending on which way the field spins.

These reactions could create a picture of the field in different shades of light and dark across the bird's eye, they have suggested.

Scientists said that if true it would be another example of Mother Nature's wonder - in tests using the most exotic chemicals they could find, they could not

match the bird's eye for its ability to do what it does.

The complex theory involves examining the process by which light goes through a bird's eye, which has intrigued the scientific community for more than 30 years.

In the late 1970s the physicist Klaus Schulten concluded that birds navigate by relying on geomagnetically sensitive biochemical reactions in their eyes.

Since then research has identified special cells in the eye which carry out this function using the protein cryptochrome.

When a light photon enters the bird's eye, it comes into contact with the cryptochrome and is given an energy boost which puts it into quantum entanglement, a state where the electrons are spatially separated but still able to affect one another.



PHOTO: AFP
A handout picture from the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) shows Sudanese celebrating following the announcement of the preliminary results in the Southern Sudan referendum in Juba yesterday. South Sudan voted overwhelmingly for independence from the north, with close to 99% in favour of secession.