



## 2012 US POLLS Obama says he is 'underdog'

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama said Monday he was "absolutely" the underdog as he embarks on a tough reelection fight in 2012 but promised he was steeling for a fight over "values and vision" with Republicans.

The president also admitted that Americans were "not better off" now than they were four years ago, an admission of the tough political conditions clouding his bid for a second White House term.

In an interview with ABC News and Yahoo!, Obama was confronted with a poll showing 55 percent of those asked thought he would be a one-term president, and he conceded the sickly economy complicated his political prospects.

Downplaying expectations for his campaign and asked whether he would be an underdog when faced with a Republican rival next year, Obama said "absolutely."

"Given the economy, there is no doubt that whatever happens on your watch ... I don't mind, I am used to being an underdog."

But Obama, who is in a close fight with both leading Republican candidates Rick Perry and Mitt Romney in national matchup polls, argued that American voters would be offered a clear choice next year.

"There is going to be a contest of values and vision in 2012. Nobody is going to deny that we are not where we need to be," he said, in a reference to the economy and high unemployment.

The campaign argued that Republicans were also out of step with mainstream Americans on issues like immigration, banking reform, tax, healthcare, economic regulation and education.

# Wall Street protests spread in US

AFP, New York

They say they are inspired by revolutions in the Middle East, but protests over economic grievances in Spain and elsewhere in Europe are a closer comparison as anti-corporate demonstrations spread across the United States.

When anti-capitalist activists first unfolded sleeping bags and brandished handmade placards in a small park near Wall Street two weeks ago, they said they were following the example of Egyptian protesters in Tahrir Square.

In reality, the differences outweighed any similarities: numbers of protesters were tiny compared to Cairo, no one was attempting to bring down the government, and there was zero risk of being shot by security forces.

Yet as the Occupy Wall Street protest entered its third week Monday, it is being taken more seriously. Similar sit-in demonstrations have popped up from Boston to Chicago and Los Angeles and this week the New York protest expects to swell with support from trade unions.

So what do these would-be revolutionaries want?

Ask 10 of the mostly young, often well-educated demonstrators bedding down in Manhattan's Zuccotti Park and you might get 10 different answers.

Anger over the government bailouts of big Wall Street institutions, joblessness, student debt, global warming, police brutality: these are just for a start.

Finding a leader to speak for the group is harder still.

Even one man who could be clearly seen organizing logistics in the camp refused to admit he was in a position of responsibility.

"Everyone has a different reason and goal for being here," Anthony, 28, said.

His own, rather esoteric aim was to turn the camp around the corner from the New York Stock Exchange into permanent utopia: "a safe space autonomous from the rules from outside."

But as their numbers grow, the US protesters could yet coalesce into something more resembling a genuine protest movement.

In Los Angeles, some 300 people have been demonstrating since Saturday. In Boston, about 100 people were camped out.

In Chicago, where some 50 people have been camped in the financial district for 11 days, grievances were as diverse as in New York, but the determination was as strong.

"It took Vietnam to get people my age into the street and we changed things. I'm seeing the same thing happening here. It always starts small, but time will tell. All great movements start from scratch," says Eleanor Buckley, 61, who came with water and food for the mostly young protesters.

Probably the closet parallels are not in Tahrir Square but Europe, where simmering frustration and anger at the fallout from recession and financial crises have spilled onto the street.



PHOTO: AFP

A protester protests with Occupy Chicago outside the Federal Reserve Bank on Monday in Chicago, Illinois. The protest is one of many around the country held in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street protests currently taking place in New York City.

## Fighting, air strikes kill 17 in Yemen

REUTERS, Sanaa

Mortar fire killed two Yemenis and wounded six in Sanaa yesterday in what appeared to be more fighting in the capital between soldiers loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh and troops siding with anti-government protesters.

North of Sanaa, a newly appointed general was killed by armed pro-opposition tribesmen on his way to a military base in the mountainous region of Naham, where he was due to take command after his predecessor died in combat with tribal fighters last week.

A doctor said the victims in Sanaa were all civilians who were hit by a mortar round that landed in a market on Hayel street in a district contested by government troops and those of a rebel general, Ali Mohsen, a former Saleh ally. One of the dead was aged 14.

The doctor said he had received death threats for helping the wounded and a bag of bullets had been slung into his yard as a warning.

Violence has been sporadic since Saleh's surprise return to Yemen from Saudi Arabia 10 days ago, but tensions are running high in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country, which is awash with guns.

Last month in Sanaa, political deadlock gave way to a military showdown between Saleh loyalists and Mohsen's forces. More than 100 people were killed in the fighting, most of them protesters caught in the middle.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis have so far failed.

The upheaval is fanning international fears that weakening government control may help al Qaeda's local wing expand its foothold in Yemen, which borders oil giant Saudi Arabia and lies near shipping routes through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

## Castration for child molesters!

AFP, Moscow

Russian lawmakers prepared to give early backing yesterday to a bill allowing judges to order the chemical castration of convicted child molesters.

The tough new measure was proposed by President Dmitry Medvedev in May and is almost certain to be approved by the Kremlin-controlled State Duma lower house of parliament in the first of three required votes.

"This is a response to society's concerns over the rise of sexual crimes against children," leading ruling party lawmaker Oleg Morozov said in televised remarks.

Medvedev's bill is a watered-down version of a 2009 plan that would have made chemical castration mandatory for paedophiles.

That measure never reached the floor for a vote and the new version would only apply the penalty against repeat offenders who are diagnosed with psychological problems by doctors.

## Libyan forces plan 'final' attack on Sirte

REUTERS, Sirte

Bullet-ridden cars carrying terrified, ill and hungry civilians crawled out of Muammar Gaddafi's home town yesterday as anti-Gaddafi fighters said they were planning a final attack.

Government forces who had for three weeks been pinned down by artillery and rocket fire on the eastern edges of Sirte were able to advance several kilometers (miles) into the city on Monday, capturing the southern district of Bouhadi.

Commanders of forces loyal to the ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) are now talking of a "final" huge push to take the town as, backed by Nato warplanes, they continue their bombardment of pro-Gaddafi positions inside.

Aid agencies say they are concerned about the welfare of civilians inside Sirte, one of the last pro-Gaddafi bastions left in the country, who are trapped by the fighting and running out of food, water, fuel and medicine.

Concerns about the humanitarian crisis have focused on the Ibn Sina hospital. Medical workers who fled Sirte said patients were dying on the operating table because there was no oxygen and no fuel for the hospital's generators.

"It's a disaster," a doctor who gave her name as Nada told Reuters as she fled the

city yesterday. "They are hitting the hospital. Two kids have died there. There is random shooting at the hospital from both sides."

On the east of the city yesterday, NTC fighters said they were trying to clear a corridor to the hospital but that they were being hampered by pro-Gaddafi snipers.

Gaddafi's spokesman, and some civilians leaving Sirte, have blamed Nato bombing and NTC shelling for killing civilians and destroying buildings in the town.

Red Cross workers have managed to deliver supplies to Ibn Sina in recent days and a spokesman for the organization in Geneva confirmed that they had seen damage.

Civilians driving out of the town yesterday looked in poorer condition than people had in previous days, Reuters journalists on the east and west of Sirte said.

A military spokesman for the interim government, the National Transitional Council, told a television channel that Gaddafi's son Mutassim was hiding in the hospital.

Libyans ended Gaddafi's 42-year rule in August when rebel fighters stormed the capital. Gaddafi and several of his sons are still at large and his supporters hold Sirte and the town of Bani Walid, south of Tripoli.

A city of about 75,000 people, Sirte holds symbolic importance. Gaddafi transformed his birthplace from a sleepy fishing town into Libya's second capital.

## MID-EAST PEACE TALKS Quartet to meet by weekend

AFP, Washington

The United States said Monday it expects to meet with its Quartet partners by the weekend in a bid to bring the Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table.

The United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations called September 23 for the Palestinians and Israel to resume direct peace talks within a month and commit to seeking a deal by the end of 2012.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Washington expects "a Quartet meeting some time by the end of this week or on the weekend, to try to see what we can do to encourage the two sides to come back to the table."

"We continue to believe that the Quartet has put forward a good timetable, an appropriate roadmap for these parties to begin working directly together."

## Amanda Knox wins murder appeal

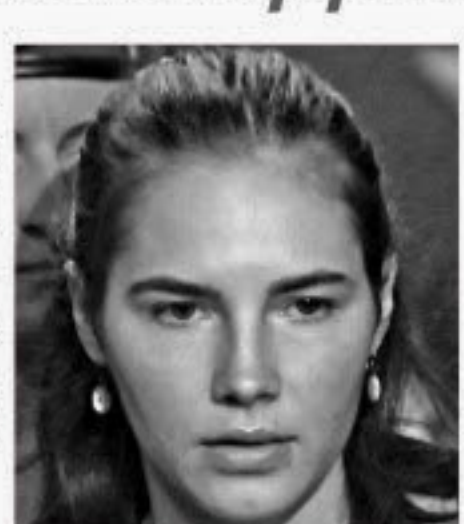
### Prosecution seeks to appeal verdict

REUTERS, Perugia

US student Amanda Knox was acquitted of murder and sexual assault by an Italian court on Monday after breaking down in court and pleading for mercy in a dramatic end to her four-year legal battle.

But an Italian public prosecutor said yesterday he would appeal against the acquittal after disappointed family of the victim vowed that their search for justice would go on.

Seattle native Knox and Italian computer student Raffaele Sollecito had appealed against a 2009 verdict that found them guilty of murdering 21-year-old Kercher during what prosecutors had said was a drug-fueled



sexual assault four years ago.

Kercher's half-naked body, with more than 40 wounds and a deep gash in the throat, was found in 2007 in the apartment she shared with Knox in the Umbrian hill town of Perugia where both were studying.

"We will appeal," prosecutor Giuliano Mignini told Reuters in a telephone interview. "The (higher) court will decide whether to confirm the first sentence or the second sentence."

The prosecution will appeal to the Court of Cassation, Italy's highest appeals court.

Kercher's sister Stephanie said they would wait for the written explanation of the acquittal verdict in the hope that all the killers would eventually be found.

## China mine explosion kills 13

AFP, Beijing

At least 13 workers were killed after an explosion in a coal mine in southwestern China yesterday, state media said, in the latest mining accident to hit the country.

Another five miners were still missing in the Anping Coal Mine in Guizhou province, the official Xinhua news agency said, citing a local official.

Thirteen miners escaped the blast but three of those died in hospital, the report said.

China's coal mines have a notoriously poor safety record, which the government has repeatedly pledged to address.

## Possible Nobel Peace Prize winners

AFP, Oslo

Here are brief profiles of some of the people believed to be contenders for the Nobel Peace Prize to be announced on Friday in Oslo.

The list of candidates is known to include a record 241 names, but the Norwegian Nobel Committee keeps the names a well-guarded secret.

LINA BEN MHENNI

A 27-year-old blogger who chronicled Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution under the pseudonym "Tunisian Girl". In January, she slammed the repression of Zine el Abidine Ben Ali's regime. Ben Ali fled the country after more than 23 years in power.

The daughter of a left-wing activist who was jailed for six years, she began writing about human rights abuses in her

country on her blog in 2007. She teaches English at the University of Tunis.

Wael Ghonim

A Google executive and icon of the "Facebook revolution" in Egypt that mobilised youths in the country against Hosni Mubarak.

He shot to fame on February 7 after an emotional television appearance on a popular talk show recounting his 12 days in detention by security services. He was treated to a hero's welcome in Cairo's Tahrir Square the following day.

ESRAA ABDEL FATAH & AHMED MAHER  
Cyber activists who co-founded the April 6 Movement in Egypt which mobilised Egyptian youths to rise up against the regime of President Hosni Mubarak, inspiring the massive demonstrations on Tahrir Square in Cairo in



January and February that ultimately led to Mubarak's ouster.

Svetlana Gannushkina

69: Co-founder of the Russian human rights group Memorial, which she created with dissident Andrei Sakharov. The organisation, created in 1989, has emerged as the most prominent fighter against rights violations in the sometimes violent world of post-Soviet Russia under strongman leader Vladimir Putin.

Sima Samar

A pioneering Afghan doctor and inspirational activist who has endured death threats, war and the Taliban to battle tirelessly for women in Afghanistan. She chairs the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission, the first in the country that monitors and investi-



## World Teachers Day 2011

### Congratulations to all Teachers around the world

World Teachers' Day is celebrated across the world on 5th October to acknowledge the contribution of the teachers and appreciate their role to make education meet the needs of future generations and emerge as future leaders. This year the focus is on the role of teachers to bring about gender equality. We demand gender equality at all level irrespective of sex, ethnicity and poverty level. It is therefore essential to ensure effective implementation of the National Education Policy 2010 along with other gender responsive acts and policies.

### We believe that teachers can play a supportive role in achieving gender equality if:

- teachers are gender responsive
- pay equal attention to both boys & girls
- avoid actions that may humiliate the learners
- make teaching learning an enjoyable process
- facilitate proper implementation of National Education Policy 2010 at the school level
- encourage female teachers to take active interest and assume leadership in Teachers' Associations.
- encourage women in decision making process within School Management Committees
- create equal opportunity for access to education irrespective of socio economic status i.e cleaners, sex workers, domestic workers, street children, and children from hardcore poor
- respond to the special needs of children with disability
- create safe environment for learners within and outside school
- encourage and develop interest among learners on dignity of labour, and the importance of technical and vocational education
- implement flexible school calendar in Char, Haor and other naturally and geographically disadvantaged areas

## Teachers for Gender Equality



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