

Clinton Remains Hopeful



Hillary Rodham Clinton staved off elimination in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, defeating Barack Obama in the Pennsylvania primary and reviving her hopes of becoming the United States' first female president.

The former first lady was winning 55 percent of the vote Tuesday to 45 percent for her rival with 90 percent of the vote counted, AP said.

She hoped for significant inroads into Obama's overall lead in the competition for delegates who will choose the party's nominee at the Democratic National Convention in August.

Her victory, while comfortable, set up another critical test in two weeks in Indiana. North Carolina votes the same night, with Obama already the clear favorite in a state with a large black population. Clinton scored her victory by winning the support of working-class voters, women and whites in an election where the economy was the dominant concern. More than 80 percent of voters surveyed as they left their polling places said the United States was already in a recession.

N. Korea Close to Nuke Declaration

The "last work" on securing North Korea's declaration of its nuclear activities is underway and six-nation negotiations could resume next month, AFP quoted South Korea's foreign minister as saying on Wednesday.

Yu Myung-Hwan was speaking a day after a team of US experts met the North's top nuclear envoy Kim Kye-Gwan in Pyongyang to discuss the declaration.

The group is led by Sung Kim, director of Korean Affairs office at the State Department. It is due to return Thursday to South Korea after crossing the heavily fortified border.

"North Korea's nuclear declaration has been long delayed but the US team is conducting the last work in Pyongyang," the minister said in a speech. "If work is done as scheduled, I expect six-party talks to be held again within May so that the momentum can be maintained."

Yu later told YTN TV news, "We don't have much time left. I hope that progress will be made as early as possible in order for the six-party talks to maintain momentum."

Japan Calls For EU Partnership



Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, meeting leaders of the European Union, called on Wednesday for cooperation to weather a global economic slowdown and fight the spread of nuclear weapons.

According to AFP, Fukuda held an annual summit with the European Union, meeting with Prime Minister Janez Jansa of Slovenia, the 27-nation bloc's current president, before being joined by European Commission Chief Jose Manuel Barroso.

"I hope Japan and the EU will further strengthen their strategic partnership for the sake of peace in the international community," Fukuda said at the beginning of the meeting with Jansa.

A Japanese government official earlier said that Fukuda would talk with EU leaders about climate change, which is set to be a major topic at the G8 summit.

Fukuda and the Europeans are also expected to discuss assistance to Africa as Japan will host its fourth summit of African leaders in May—the so-called Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

Maoists Seeking Gov't Allies

Nepal's ex-rebel Maoists were pushing Wednesday to form a coalition government with mainstream rivals following an upset victory in landmark elections as vote counting neared completion.

"We will lead the government, there is no doubt about that, but we want other parties to join us in the government," senior Maoist leader Dinanath Sharma told AFP.

The Maoists are comfortably ahead in the vote for a 601-member constituent assembly, whose first job will be to abolish the 240-year-old monarchy.

"By Wednesday evening, we will get the results of all the votes in proportional representation but we might declare the final numbers on Thursday," election commission spokesman Laxman Bhattarai said.

"We have asked them to join us, but there are factions within both the NC and UML who are against it," said senior Maoist Sharma.

"Maoists want the NC and UML in the government to give it international legitimacy and to ensure that the constitution-drafting body can function smoothly," Ameet Dhakal of the Kathmandu Post told AFP.

Mugabe Ahead in Recount

Compiled by Zahra Salimi



A polling agent holds voting papers during a recount on April 19 at the Domboshava Training Center, 35 km northwest of Harare.

President Robert Mugabe's party won in the first of 23 constituencies to complete a recount of votes from last month's general elections, AFP quoted Zimbabwe's state media as saying on Wednesday.

Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was confirmed as the winner of both the election for a seat in parliament and the largely symbolic senate in the Goromonzi West constituency, a rural district near the capital, "The Herald" newspaper reported.

While recounts in 21 of the constituencies were ordered in seats won by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change following complaints of irregularities by ZANU-PF, Goromonzi West was one of only two districts to hold a recount in a seat won by Mugabe's party.

The MDC was initially declared to have taken 109 seats against 97 for ZANU-PF in the 210-seat chamber, but Mugabe's party will regain its majority if it can reverse the results in seven or more of the seats under review.

The recount also covers votes cast in a simultaneous presidential election in which Mugabe is seeking a sixth term in office. None of the results from the presidential election have so far been announced.

Mediation

Meanwhile, a pro ruling party academic said on Wednesday that regional countries should mediate negotiations in Zimbabwe for a transitional government of national unity led by President Robert Mugabe to organize new elections, Reuters said.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Mugabe's ZANU-PF were locked in an election stalemate over delayed parliamentary results and a possible presidential runoff that has raised fears of widespread violence.

The opinion piece on The Herald's website said political tensions make it impossible to hold a run-off, which the MDC rejects.

MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai has said he won the election outright and accused Mugabe of seeking a run-off to rig victory in the biggest challenge to his 28-year rule.

According to Reuters, Tsvangirai has appealed to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and foreign powers to intervene to guarantee a democratic poll result and prevent widespread violence.

Regional Impatience

There are signs of growing regional impatience with Mugabe from neighbors who have refused to take a hard line with the former lib-

eration hero despite an economic crisis that has brought millions of Zimbabweans to their knees.

Maritime southern African states refused to allow a Chinese ship carrying arms to landlocked Zimbabwe to unload, in unprecedented action towards Mugabe by long-passive neighbors, including traditional allies.

The action indicated a tougher response by the region, which has been criticized, particularly by the United States, for not doing more to end a three-week delay in issuing results from a presidential election on March 29.

The opinion piece in The Herald, seen as a barometer of the official mood, said that a transitional government should seek the help of the SADC and the international community to write a new constitution adopted after a national referendum.

"It stands to reason that, the transitional government of national unity, negotiated by the two leading contending parties, under the mediation of SADC, supported by the international community, should be led by the incumbent president," academic Obediah Mukura Mazombwe said.

The MDC deprived Mugabe's ZANU-PF party of its majority in parliament in a parallel vote on March 29 but there has also been a delay to a partial recount of votes from that poll.

News in Brief

Anwar Promises

Better Prospects



Opposition figure Anwar Ibrahim said for the first time he would likely become prime minister if his coalition takes power, and vowed to clean up Malaysia's corruption and halt its colonial-era jailing of suspects without trial.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday, Anwar said he was in no hurry to take control of government despite his opposition alliance's spectacular gains in elections in March.

But when he was asked whether he would take the job of prime minister if his People's Alliance were to come to power, he said, "There is a likelihood."

Political commentators and aides have often talked about Anwar's prime ministerial ambitions, but this was the first time he spoke in depth about how he would handle the top job. He said he would be a better prime minister than current leader Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his predecessor Mahathir Mohamad.

"Well, I wouldn't detain people without trial," Anwar said, referring to a colonial-era law that allows for indefinite detention without charges. The law often was used by Mahathir, and Abdullah has exercised it a few times.

Khmer Rouge Leader

In Genocide Court

The former Khmer Rouge head of state appeared before Cambodia's genocide tribunal for his first hearing Wednesday, where famed French lawyer Jacques Vergès will argue against his detention.

According to AFP, Khieu Samphan, who was detained by the UN-backed court in November on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, listened stony-faced as head judge Prak Kimsan read out the background of the case against him.

He stood as he was asked to confirm his name, age, hometown and job to the court, which was set up to try former Khmer Rouge leaders for genocide and crimes against humanity during their brutal 1975-1979 rule.

"I have had no job since leaving the jungle. (I have) only my wife, who struggles to feed me and my family," Khieu Samphan said in Khmer, referring to his 1998 defection from the then-dying Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement based in the remote northwest.

Tibetans Invade UN Complex



Tibetan protesters invaded a UN compound in Nepal's capital to deliver an appeal to the world body urging it to put pressure on China to end its crackdown in Tibet, AFP cited officials as saying.

It was the second time in a month that Tibetan protesters had succeeded in gaining entrance to the tightly guarded compound, officials said.

"Nine Tibetan protesters rushed into the UN compound after the main gate was opened to let in a UN vehicle," UN spokesman John Brittan said. The protesters left the premises after handing over their appeal, officials said.

The protesters entered the compound after police said at least 50 Tibetan protesters, including monks and nuns, were held earlier in the day when police broke up a rally near the Chinese embassy elsewhere in central Kathmandu. The protesters, shouting anti-China slogans, tried to run towards the embassy compound but were blocked by dozens of police.