

Gore, Bush come out on top in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush won the Iowa caucuses Monday night, validating their front-runner status in the opening contest of the 2000 presidential election season.

Gore won big over Bill Bradley, while Bush's victory was tempered by a dramatic second-place showing from conservative publisher Steve Forbes.

Forbes, who has poured millions of his own dollars into his second bid for the presidency, was running close to Bush with Alan Keyes a respectable third. John McCain, Gary Bauer and Orrin Hatch were trailing.

In the Democratic race, Gore's victory blunted Bradley's challenge and validated status as front-runner going into the New Hampshire primary next week. Bradley has polled even with Gore, or even ahead, in the Granite state.

With 89 percent of the vote tallied, Bush was about 10 points ahead of Forbes. Gore was running about two-to-one against Bradley.

The caucuses were expected to draw no more than 100,000 voters from each party, concluding a lengthy run of debates, fund raising and grass-roots campaigning here. Iowa launches the presidential race into a frantic six-week

stretch, with the New Hampshire primary a week away.

Bradley faltered in his effort to propel his challenge to Gore on the Democratic side, while Forbes mounted the most vigorous opposition to Bush, calling on fundamentalist and conservative support to the more moderate Bush. Sen. John McCain declined to campaign here, but the Arizona Republican was still listed on ballots.

Keyes hoped to emerge from among second-tier GOP candidates, battling Sen. Hatch and Bauer.

"The only thing that will deter turnout is complacency," Bush said Monday as he stopped at a Des Moines restaurant to shake hands.

Gore, also trying to make sure supporters didn't ease off too soon, warned against "the slightest hint of complacency."

Hours before the voting, Forbes said he would "feel good about a good, strong second." Bradley indicated he was in for the long haul: "The longer the competition goes, the better chance that candidate is going to have ... in the fall."

En route to the early contests, Republicans squabbled over taxes and abortion, courting religious conservatives who make up a third of the caucus-going population.

"The longer the competition goes, the better chance that candidate is going to have ... in the fall."

Bill Bradley

Democratic presidential candidate

Bush carefully calibrated his anti-abortion views to make clear his opposition to the Supreme Court ruling. Democrats were poised to campaign on the issue if Bush were to win the GOP nomination.

Gore and Bradley differed in tone more than substance. They wrestled primarily over alternative approaches to federal health insurance policy. While Bradley promised to provide big ideas to solve a few big problems, Gore said the next president should not limit himself to a handful of issues.

After a faltering start, Gore led Bradley by more than 20 percentage points in most pre-caucus polls. A string of setbacks, including recurrence of a minor heart condition, threw Bradley off track in Iowa even as polls showed a tight race in New Hampshire.

On the Republican side, Texas' two-

term governor, Bush, led Forbes by about 20 points in pre-caucus polls. Former ambassador Keyes, conservative activist Bauer and Hatch of Utah jockeyed for third place, knowing anything less would jeopardize their campaigns.

Iowans were attending caucuses at 2,100 sites across the state. In a display of basic grass-roots politics, voters here braved the winter weather and visit classrooms, libraries, fire stations, church basements, grain co-ops and even a few private homes to play their unique role in the American political system.

The process will yield 47 delegates to the Democratic convention and 25 delegates to the GOP convention, a tiny fraction of the total a candidate needs to win the nomination. The true rewards of Iowa are momentum or a validation of candidate's campaign.

Rebels keep hostages in 22-hour standoff

Heavily armed

Myanmar rebels capture hospital and hold an estimated 900 people Monday.

RATCHABURI, Thailand (AP) — Ending a 22-hour standoff, Thai security forces stormed a hospital Tuesday and killed nine heavily armed Myanmar rebels who had held hundreds of patients, visitors and staff hostage.

The approximately 900 people who were in the walled, six-acre compound when the ordeal began Monday morning were either freed, had escaped or were rescued during the siege Tuesday morning, said Lt. Gen. Thawep Suwannasingha, regional Thai army commander.

No hostages were injured, but two police officers were.

"It was a successful operation," Thawep said.

Once Thai troops secured the front

of the hospital, a fleet of ambulances drove in and began ferrying exhausted survivors to another hospital for medical checks.

The rebels belong to God's Army, a fringe group that took the hostages to pressure the government to help its beleaguered movement.

The group is from the ethnic Karen minority and is led by twin 12-year-old boys believed to have magical powers. The twins were not involved in the takeover.

Like many Karens, the followers of God's Army are fundamentalist Christians in a predominantly Buddhist country. They accuse Myanmar's military regime of widespread murder, rape and arson.

Thai media reported that a tenth gunman was hunted down and killed, but that report could not be immediately confirmed.

Once the siege began, shooting erupted, and police and soldiers armed with M-16 assault rifles on foot and in trucks sped into the walled, six-acre

hospital compound.

Automatic weapons fire and explosions thudded in the night, possibly from grenades, bombs or mines that the hostage-takers had rigged around the hospital. The pre-dawn assault lasted for an hour.

After the area was secured, explosives experts with mine detectors combed the compound seeking booby-traps.

The hostage-takers had been in control of the five-story central administration and emergency room buildings but couldn't keep a grip over eight outlying buildings. Many patients and staff there escaped Monday.

It was never known how many people they held at gun-point during the siege, though officials guessed it might have been 200.

The hostage-takers included at least one member of a faction of exiled Myanmar students, the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors, who seized their country's embassy in Bangkok last year, said Interior Minister Sanan

Kachornprasart.

Myanmar's military regime was outraged when Thailand allowed the embassy captors, whom they considered terrorists, to go free under a deal to release their dozens of hostages unharmed.

Myanmar closed the border for two months in retaliation. Relations warmed after Thailand vowed to arrest them if it got the chance.

"We tried the soft way before," Thawep said Tuesday, explaining the decision to launch the assault. "We were concerned about patients in the hospital and other innocent people. We had to do it."

The hostage-takers demanded Monday that Thailand grant refuge to civilians and combatants and stop shelling their positions.

The episode began early Monday when the rebels hijacked a bus near the border and forced the driver to take them 45 miles to Ratchaburi, where they took over the sprawling provincial hospital compound.

Freshmen students are increasingly stressed, overwhelmed, study says

Daily Bruin
University of California-Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (U-Wire) — A record-high percentage of today's college freshmen are feeling increasingly stressed-out and overwhelmed by what they have to do, according to a study released today by the Higher Education Research Institute at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

The annual American Freshman Survey, in its 34th year and conducted at UCLA since 1973, is the nation's longest-standing assessment of student attitudes and plans.

Increasing since 1985, when 16 percent of respondents reported feeling stressed, 30 percent of freshmen this year reported feeling "frequently overwhelmed by all I have to do," a slight increase from 29.6 percent in 1998.

The 1999 survey, which includes responses from 364,546 students at 683 of the nation's two- and four-year colleges and universities, is statistically adjusted to be representative of the 1.6 million freshmen entering col-

lege as first-time, full-time students.

Broken down by gender, 38.8 percent of women reported feeling frequently overwhelmed, compared to 20 percent of men.

According to the study, women spend more time studying, performing volunteer work and participating in student clubs/groups.

Men tend to spend more time exercising, playing sports, partying, playing video games and other stress-relieving activities which may provide a recreational outlet for stress, the report said.

Harold Pruet, director of Student Psychological Services at UCLA, suggested some reasons for the gender disparity.

"I think women are in a much more conflicting situation in trying to be competitive and successful because there is always a cultural, societal notion that they should be caretakers and raise families," he said.

Students appear to be more academically disengaged than ever before, with 39.9 percent of students reporting frequently feeling bored in class, compared to the 1985 low of 26.4 percent.

World and Nation

Datelines

■ Miami

Meeting site for Cuban boy, grandmothers in dispute

MIAMI (AP) — Elian Gonzalez's grandmothers flew from New York to Miami on Monday in hopes of meeting with their 6-year-old grandson before they return to Cuba. But the site of the get-together was in dispute.

The boy's maternal grandmother, Raquel Rodriguez, and paternal grandmother, Mariela Quintana, were invited to dinner Monday at the home of Elian's Miami relatives, who insisted the meeting take place there.

But federal officials said the grandmothers were hoping to meet privately with Elian at a neutral site.

The Miami relatives have been caring for Elian since he was found clinging to an inner tube off the Florida coast on Thanksgiving. His mother and 10 other Cubans died in their ill-fated attempt to reach the United States.

■ Sudan

Sudanese president appoints new loyalist government

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — President Omar el-Bashir reappointed an entirely new government Monday in an effort to further purge Hassan Turabi, a Muslim fundamentalist leader who had long been seen as the real power in Sudan.

El-Bashir fired 10 ministers and retained 15 ministers, including foreign, interior and defense, in the new government, which is now packed with his loyalists. Two ministries were disbanded. El-Bashir also appointed 25 new state governors.

The shake-up came a day after the governing National Congress Party stripped an advisory council headed by Turabi of its authority to appoint top party posts, and set up a panel headed by el-Bashir with the mandate to nominate a new Cabinet.

■ Jerusalem

Israeli, Palestinian talks

to shift into high gear

JERUSALEM (AP) — With three weeks to go and not even a draft agreement in sight, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators announced plans Monday for marathon negotiations aimed at meeting a Feb. 13 deadline on the outline of a final status agreement.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak, limping on the Syrian track, is eager to show results with the Palestinians. His office said in a release Monday that negotiations would be held "with the intent of speeding up the talks."

The talks will likely start Feb. 1, according to Palestinian officials, who spoke anonymously. They will address the issues of borders, Palestinian refugees, the status of Jerusalem and the future of Jewish settlements.

■ Russia

Chechen rebels, Russians

fight house-to-house

GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Russian troops and Chechen rebels fought house-to-house in the ruins of Grozny neighborhoods Monday, while Russian shells screamed into rebel-held areas in the capital and to the south.

The Russian forces appeared to be making little progress in their weeks-long campaign to wrest Grozny from the rebels. In some areas, the Russians have made advances during the day, then retreated at night when more vulnerable to rebel ambushes.

Taking Grozny would be the war's biggest political prize, and Russian commanders frequently claim they are close to defeating the city's well-entrenched rebels.

WEATHER

TODAY

Sunny,
high 33, low 13

TOMORROW

Scattered snow showers,
high 22, low 14

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