

Bush, Gore win in Delaware

McCain finishes second in primary despite not campaigning in state

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Republican George W. Bush won Delaware's presidential primary Tuesday and earned a badly needed boost into a Southern showdown, even as antagonist John McCain burnished his insurgent candidacy by finishing second in a state where he did not campaign.

"I think this is a piece of good news that will buoy our supporters," the Texas governor told The Associated Press after securing the state's 12 delegates.

McCain, who skipped Delaware to focus on the critical Feb. 19 primary in South Carolina, attributed his totals to the momentum generated by his shelacking of Bush in New Hampshire's leadoff primary last week.

"It's bound to give us a boost," the Arizona senator told The AP. "I think there are some good signs for us, but I think we still have a long, long way to go. I'm still the underdog."

With 26 of 28 precincts reporting,

the Texas governor had 51 percent of the votes and McCain 25 percent, a solid victory for the national front-runner. Though far behind Bush, the Arizonan did surprisingly well for a candidate who didn't visit or spend money in the state.

By contrast, conservative Steve Forbes had a disappointing 20 percent after winning the state's primary in 1996 and campaigning heavily in the state this year. He will be under pressure to pull out of the race.

Former ambassador Alan Keyes had just 4 percent of the vote.

Democrats voted Saturday in Delaware, giving Vice President Al Gore an easy victory over Bill Bradley.

Exit polls in Delaware suggested McCain benefited from a wave of post-New Hampshire publicity: Almost half of his supporters decided to vote for him in the week since that primary. And a quarter of his backers were new voters who didn't vote in the 1996 primary.

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George W. Bush

Republican presidential candidate

The surveys showed Bush did best among voters who are middle class, elderly, conservative and believe he is likely to win the presidency. McCain voters tended to be affluent, well-educated and self-identified independents and moderates who said they were looking for a candidate who stands up for what he believes.

Forbes, who has pushed for a flat tax since his failed 1996 run, did well among voters who listed taxes as their top concern.

McCain's victory in New Hampshire erased Bush's lead in South Carolina and dramatically shrunk his advantage in California, Michigan, New York and national polls, as he

sought to draw new and independent voters into the GOP fold.

Looking ahead to South Carolina, Bush and McCain intensified their rivalry with bitterly personal ads.

The Texas governor's spot accuses McCain of hypocrisy over campaign finance reform. McCain says in his new ad that Bush "twists the truth like Clinton."

The overheated rhetoric underscored what is at stake in upcoming contests. Despite his financial and organizational advantages, Bush faces a serious threat from the Arizona senator. And McCain, with just one victory under his belt, can't afford losses to his party's front-runner.

Lebanon hit by Israeli airstrikes

Peace process breaks down as Israel bombs Lebanese border.

KIRYAT SHEMONA, Israel (AP) — Tens of thousands of Israelis living near the Lebanon border huddled in underground shelters or fled south out of rocket range Tuesday, fearing reprisals by Lebanese guerrillas for the heaviest Israeli bombardment in eight months.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak ordered a military state of emergency along the border, a sign that Israel was preparing for extended fighting. Hezbollah guerrillas on Tuesday killed an Israeli soldier — the sixth in two weeks — only hours after Israeli airstrikes cut electricity across parts of Lebanon.

"In all that is connected with the protection of our people, our settlements and our soldiers, we will do everything required," Barak told residents of Kiryat Shmona who had spent the night in shelters.

In its second night of attacks, Israel's air force struck a Hezbollah offices in the coastal city of Tyre and the guerrilla stronghold of Iqlim al-Tuffah, Lebanese security officials said. At least two people were wounded.

The Israeli army confirmed the two attacks on Iqlim al-Tuffah but identified the other target as a Hezbollah radar station.

Israeli leaders blamed Syria for the latest flare-up and said peace talks will not resume with Damascus until it ends the wave of Lebanese guerrilla attacks. Syria is the main power-broker in Lebanon, and Israel says it encourages the violence.

The airstrikes "signal that ... the continuation of Hezbollah action with Syrian encouragement and Lebanese government praise, must be stopped," said Barak's foreign minister, David Levy.

Syria's state media warned that the bombing could hurt the peace process.

"Bombs and missiles are actually striking the already stalled peace process and destroying all prospects of

peace in the region," the English-language Syria Times said.

The airstrikes, early Tuesday destroyed three power stations at Jamhour near Beirut, in the northern mountains east of the port city of Tripoli and in the eastern Bekaa Valley town of Baalbek, a Hezbollah guerrilla stronghold where a base for the group also was targeted. The base remained sealed and damage could not be assessed.

Fifteen civilians were wounded in Baalbek and were treated at hospitals for various injuries from broken glass, debris and shrapnel. Parts of Lebanon were left without electricity and severe rationing was imposed.

The airstrikes were the harshest since a similar strafing by the outgoing hard-line government, just before Barak took office in July.

The escalation in attacks on Israeli troops staffing a buffer zone in Lebanon's south coincided with the collapse in Syrian-Israeli peace in mid-January.

Syria wants a prior commitment from Israel that it will withdraw from

the disputed Golan Heights before talks ensue; Israel refuses, and says the resumption of violence is a crude effort to get Israel to cave in.

Barak was getting closer to playing his own card against Syria — a unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon that would leave Syria without its single most effective method of pressuring Israel, and would raise uncomfortable questions about the presence of 30,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon.

"If we will not reach an agreement (with Syria) in the next two months, I believe — I know — that the Israel government will meet and decide if we will withdraw unilaterally," Cabinet minister Haim Ramon, a Barak confidant, told The Associated Press. Ramon is in favor of a unilateral pullout, and says most other ministers are as well.

While such talk could influence a Syria that is eager to end its international isolation, it will have little influence on the Hezbollah.

Should the violence torpedo the peace, that would sit well with a militant group that negates the very existence of the Jewish state.

Navy seeks broken piece of Alaska plane

PORT HUENEME, Calif. (AP) — The Navy will try to find a piece that may have broken off the Alaska Airlines plane as Flight 261 began its fatal plunge into the Pacific Ocean, the National Transportation Safety Board chief said Tuesday.

A loud noise heard on the cockpit voice recorder corresponds to radar signals picked up when the MD-83 begins its final dive into the sea with 88 people aboard, NTSB Chairman Jim Hall said at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

Radar showed what could have been parts of the aircraft carried by the wind up to 2½ minutes after the plane struck the water. The Navy will search an area four miles from the main wreckage, where investigators believe any pieces might have landed, Hall said.

"These primary radar hits might be indicative — and I emphasize might be indicative — of something coming off Flight 261 near this point," Hall said.

Officials revealed that the MD-83 had two "maintenance write-ups" late

last year for problems with its horizontal stabilizer, the wing-like piece of equipment on the jetliner's tail that is the focus of the crash investigation. In October, the system was checked and the plane returned to service.

A month later, mechanics replaced a switch. It was unknown what prompted the concerns, and Hall did not elaborate.

The Navy on Monday night recovered two parts of the horizontal stabilizer, including an 8-foot section.

The NTSB described the final minutes of the flight, when the plane abruptly dropped 7,000 feet and leveled off before free-falling nearly 18,000 feet in one minute.

Analyzing the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder, investigators determined Flight 261 was cruising on autopilot at 31,000 feet 12 minutes before the Jan. 31 crash.

The horizontal stabilizer, which controls the plane's up and down motion, moved to an apparent full "nose-down" position as the pilots simultaneously disengaged the autopilot, Hall said.

World and Nation Datelines

■ England

Four men fall 20 feet out of hijacked plane's cockpit

STANSTED, England (AP) — Four men dropped from the cockpit window of a hijacked plane and ran to safety Tuesday night, fleeing the Afghan aircraft that has been parked for two days at a British airport while negotiators sought the safe release of more than 150 passengers.

In the darkness shortly before midnight, the men fell about 20 feet to the ground and ran toward positions manned by police.

It was not immediately clear if the four were hostages or hijackers. Police said they were trying to gauge what effect the escape was having on the people aboard the plane. It appeared all was calm on the aircraft, they said.

Earlier, negotiators warned that the talks, which gained the release of a ninth hostage during the day Tuesday, could go on for days.

■ California

Scientists say asteroid will not collide with earth

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An asteroid initially thought to be on a possible collision course with Earth in 2022 will miss the planet, astronomers said Tuesday after reviewing new data collected by scientists around the world.

Using the latest calculations, researchers determined that the orbiting rock will come no closer than 3.5 million miles in the next 50 years, said Andrea Milani, a mathematics professor at Pisa University in Italy.

The half-mile-wide asteroid, 2000 BF19, is the fifth discovered in the last two years that researchers feared could hit Earth. A rock that size could do tremendous damage but would not cause planet-wide destruction.

■ Russia

Russians capture Grozny, head toward south

URUS-MARTAN, Russia (AP) — Russian aircraft focused their bombing runs on Chechnya's southern mountains Tuesday, while ground troops tried to seal off routes used by rebels to move men and supplies to southern strongholds.

The Russians are looking south now that they claim to have seized the breakaway republic's capital, Grozny. But the city's skyline was punctuated by black plumes of smoke Tuesday from oil refineries hit by continued Russian shelling.

■ Washington

Clinton bars job discrimination based on genetic testing

WASHINGTON (AP) — Christine DeMark worried about her medical future when her mother was diagnosed with Huntington's disease. But she didn't know her life would change by taking a test to see if she had inherited the genetic abnormality.

Soon after learning she had the gene that causes the degenerative nerve disorder, DeMark was fired from her job at a Milwaukee management consultancy.

President Clinton sought Tuesday to focus attention on the plight of people like DeMark.

Clinton immediately barred federal agencies from discriminating against employees on the basis of genetic tests and urged Congress to prohibit the private sector from refusing to hire people at risk for health problems and insurers from refusing to cover them.

WEATHER	
TODAY	TOMORROW
Partly cloudy high 58, low 35	Scattered showers high 51, low 25

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