

GULF NEWS



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Tony Blair writes about ugly options left to save the euro



WEEKEND REVIEW

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A Queen Sonia or Prince Rahul could easily fit into the scenario



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The Phelps show the way to beat hyperactivity

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Hunger eats into children

Unicef estimates that 267,000 suffer from malnutrition with strife adding to their misery

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Massive bomb plot busted

Afghan officials say five militants linked to Haqqani group suicide squad were killed

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Residents in a fix

Air-cooling system breaks down in two buildings in Abu Dhabi



On VVIP service



British Prime Minister David Cameron hands out chocolate brownies as he meets with soldiers on security duty near 10 Downing Street in London yesterday. **SEE ALSO A24**

Power crisis hits Pakistan hard

Electricity shortage is the nation's overriding concern as expatriates cancel travel plans

KARACHI/DUBAI

By **NASHEET JAFFER KHAN**
Deputy Editor - International
AND **MOHAMMAD ASHRAF**
Correspondent

Terrorism is not the talk in Pakistan today, the power crisis is.

People are taking to the streets to protest against the electricity shortage gripping the nation. "Yes, the power crisis is taking its toll and it is clearly visible that it has troubled the government more than any other national issue," Professor Tauseef Ahmad Khan, a prominent political analyst, said.

Mohammad Ali, 38, a teacher from Rawalpindi, has never faced such a tough Ramadan. The dry weather because of the delayed monsoon and sizzling heat have made the prolonged power outages unbearable. "The

supply is fine as we are getting about 11,000 to 12,000 MW in our system and if we fuel all the thermal power stations we could get even more electricity," said Tahir Bashart Cheema, head of Pakistan's Energy Management Cell.

The power deficit ranges between 3,000 to 5,000 MW against the national demand of 15,000 to 16,000 MW.

Analysts believe that electricity could play a pivotal role in the upcoming elections. Pakistani expatriates are thinking twice before going home this summer.

"My children's well-being is prime priority. If we are to go 16 hours without power, what is the point of taking them home for a holiday?" said Owais Anjum, a 36-year-old businessman and resident of the Gardens in Dubai.

Akbar Ali Shah would make elaborate plans to spend time with his family on Eid. The power cuts have forced him to look for alternatives, as flying home is out of the question.

SEE ALSO A2, 3

Annan quits, says Al Assad will go

OBAMA SIGNS ORDER TO OFFER COVERT SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

Afrustrated Kofi Annan said yesterday he was stepping down as international envoy for Syria, complaining that his April peace plan had not received the support it deserved.

As the Syrian army used fighter jets against rebels armed with tanks around the commercial capital Aleppo, Annan regretted an "increasing militarisation" of the 17-month conflict. At least 50 people were killed in clashes across the country yesterday.

Annan bemoaned the lack of consensus on the UN Security Council, where China and Russia vetoed a resolution that would have threatened sanctions against Syria if it failed to act on Annan's peace plan.

"I did not receive all the support that the cause deserved," Annan told media in Geneva after his resignation was announced by UN chief Ban Ki-moon in New York. Annan predicted that Al Assad would go "sooner or later".

Ban's statement added that Annan had said he would not renew his mandate when it expires on August 31.

Meanwhile, US President

Barack Obama authorised secret support for Syrian rebels, CNN has reported. Citing unnamed officials, it said that the order was signed in the past few months, and allows the CIA and other agencies to provide clandestine support to the uprising.

The nature of the assistance was not specified, but reports said the US was providing intelligence on the movements of Syrian troops. In addition to this, the US has provided the opposition with \$25 million of non-lethal assistance, an official in Washington said.

—With input from agencies
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Ramadan and prayer timings

IFTAR 19:05	
Fajr 04:27	Shuruq 05:47
Jum'a 12:30	Asr 15:57
Maghrib 19:05	Isha 20:35
IMSAK 04:17 (Saturday)	

Add 4 minutes for Abu Dhabi, deduct 4 minutes for RAK and 6 minutes for Fujairah

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