

World

ROMANIA: Romania plunged deeper into political turmoil Tuesday when Prime Minister Emil Boc and his Liberal Democrats lost a no-confidence motion in parliament, the first government to do so since 1990.

FRANCE: President Nicolas Sarkozy lamented Tuesday that his son, Jean Sarkozy, had been "thrown to the wolves" after the 23-year-old's imminent appointment to manage France's top business district whipped up a storm.

IRAQ: A spate of bombings across Iraq on Tuesday killed ten people, including two Iraqi soldiers and the leader of a Sunni Arab militia allied with the United States. Fourteen others were wounded in the attacks in the village of Buhruz, northeast of Baghdad.

CHINA: Exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer Tuesday said a court's decision to sentence six Uighurs to death over July unrest when nearly 200 people were killed would serve only to "further enrage" her people.

GABON: Ali Bongo will be sworn in as Gabon's president this week, succeeding his late father, after a top court upheld his victory in hotly disputed presidential polls. The opposition had petitioned the court, alleging the elections were rigged.

PAKISTAN: The Pakistani Taliban on Tuesday claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing carried out by a teenage boy in northwest Shingla district, which killed 45 people at a busy market.

Obama health care push clears Senate hurdle

President Barack Obama's ambitious drive to remake health care cleared a major hurdle Tuesday, as the Senate Finance Committee approved sweeping legislation to enact his top domestic priority. With support from one solitary Republican, Obama's Democratic allies pushed through a 10-year, \$829-billion plan to cut costs and insure some of the 46 million people in the United States who currently lack coverage. "The bill we passed today puts patients

and doctors - not insurance companies - in the driver's seat," Democratic Senator Max Baucus, the committee's chairman, said in a statement after the 14-9 vote. The panel's top Republican, Senator Charles Grassley, charged earlier that the Baucus bill amounted to "sliding rapidly down the slippery slope to more and more government control of health care," a frequent Republican criticism. Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine provided the sole Republican vote, and Demo-

crats stuck together to hand Obama a significant yet symbolic victory that took him one step closer to signing a major overhaul in 2009. "When history calls, history calls," said Snowe, who warned that she should not be taken for granted as the process churns forward: "My vote today is my vote today, it doesn't forecast what it will be tomorrow." Ultimately, the Senate and House must pass the same bill - after agreeing on a compromise version if, as seems likely, they first approve different

measures. The next step is for top senators, led by Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid, to huddle with senior White House officials and merge the Baucus bill with health care legislation that has cleared the Senate's health committee. "We remain committed to passing legislation that lowers costs, creates competition, improves quality of care and preserves choice," said Reid, who underlined that he wanted "a bill that can garner 60 votes in the Senate."

Clinton and Russia seek to show unity on Iran

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Tuesday sought to present a united front with Russia on the Iranian nuclear crisis but Moscow stopped short of supporting tougher action if talks failed. On her first trip to Russia, Clinton praised Moscow for its "extremely cooperative" behavior in the standoff over Iran's program, which Western nations fear is a veiled attempt to build a nuclear bomb. But she appeared not to win any firm public commitment from Moscow that it

would back tougher sanctions against Tehran if negotiations did not make progress, something aides said ahead of her visit she had hoped to achieve. "We didn't ask for anything today. We reviewed the situation and where it stood," Clinton said after talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Clinton said she agreed with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's assessment that sanctions against Tehran may be inevitable.

Obama 'approved 13,000 more troops' to Afghanistan

President Obama has approved the deployment of an additional 13,000 US troops to Afghanistan beyond the 21,000 he announced publicly in March, The Washington Post reported Tuesday. The additional troops are primarily support forces - such as engineers, medical specialists, intelligence experts and military police - the paper said, bringing the total build-up approved by Obama to 34,000. "Obama authorized

the whole thing. The only thing you saw announced in a press release was the 21,000," an unnamed defense official familiar told the paper. The maximum number of US forces expected in Afghanistan by year's end - 68,000 - would remain the same, the paper said. Defense Secretary Robert Gates had said previously he would be sending more support troops or "enablers" to Afghanistan even as Obama weighs the best war strategy going forward.

BRIEF United States in

ENRON: The Supreme Court agreed Tuesday to hear former Enron chief executive officer Jeffrey Skilling's appeal of his conviction for his role in one of the biggest corporate scandals in US history. Skilling's lawyers argued that the ensuing media blitz prevented him from receiving a fair trial in Houston, Texas and are also challenging a federal law punishing executives who fail to provide "honest services."

HIJACKING: A US man who fled to Cuba 41 years ago pleaded not guilty Tuesday to allegedly hijacking a New York airliner, three days after voluntarily returning to the United States to face trial. Luis Armando Pena Soltern, 66, pleaded not guilty in a federal court to charges of conspiracy to commit air piracy and kidnapping, interference with flight crew members, aircraft piracy, and kidnapping, and remained in custody.

AL-QAEDA: The financial strength of Al-Qaeda is weakening in part due to global sanctions but the Taliban in Afghanistan is gaining from the heroin trade and other criminal activity, a US official said.

SPANISH PM: Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero arrived at the White House on Tuesday on his first visit since President Obama's election last year.

CISCO: Cisco announced Tuesday it has agreed to buy wireless equipment

maker Starent Networks for \$2.9 billion, the latest in a string of acquisitions by the networking giant.

REPUBLICANS: The Republican Party launched a redesigned website Tuesday with a heavy emphasis on the social media tools that Democrat Barack Obama used so effectively to win the last presidential election.

T-MOBILE: Wireless carrier T-Mobile temporarily halted sales of the Sidekick mobile phone Monday after a server failure caused many customers to lose personal data such as contacts and calendar items.

JACKSON: Michael Jackson "stole" the tapes of a song released almost four months after his death and his estate did not initially credit its co-author. Singer-songwriter Paul Anka revealed that he co-wrote the song with Jackson in 1983 but was not given due credit on the new version.

NAPA VALLEY: Napa Valley wine makers on Monday toasted a 2009 grape harvest brimming with "outstanding fruit that looks and tastes to be a spectacular vintage."

WILD THINGS: The long-awaited movie of the children's book "Where the Wild Things Are" finally arrives in cinemas this week after a three-year journey every bit as arduous as the imaginary voyage of its hero.

Sports

SCOREBOARD: MLB PLAYOFFS NLDS

Philadelphia 5, Colorado 4 (Philadelphia wins series 3-1)

NFL: Miami 31, N.Y. Jets 27

TENNIS: A bad season continued Tuesday for Andy Roddick as the American was forced to retire after injuring his knee in a second-round match at the Shanghai Masters. Swiss Stan Wawrinka advanced 3-4 after Roddick hurt his knee at 40-all in the eighth game and immediately went to his chair.

NFL: Michael Vick's work to repair his image in the wake of a dogfight conviction continues with his new National Football League club, which has unveiled a new animal support program. The Philadelphia Eagles awarded \$50,000 grants to city, county and national humane society programs as part of Treating Animals With Kindness.

DOLPHINS: Ronnie Brown scored on a two-yard touchdown run with six seconds remaining to give the Miami Dolphins a 31-27 victory over

the New York Jets on Monday in a thriller with five fourth-quarter lead changes. Brown's second touchdown run of the night capped a 13-play, 70-yard march that lasted 5:06 as Dolphin quarterback Chad Henne drove Miami upheld after the Jets had reclaimed the lead for the second time in the final minutes.

BASEBALL: The Chicago Cubs, whose 101-year title drought is the longest in American sport, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Monday in a move to help the Major League Baseball team's ownership

change. The move is connected to Cubs owner Tribune Company's bankruptcy case that began 10 months ago.

PHILLIES: Jayson Werth homered and singled in the deciding run in the ninth inning Monday to give Philadelphia a 5-4 victory over Colorado and advance the Phillies in the Major League Baseball playoffs.

SOCCER: United States and South Korea will make their first visits to Denmark for international football friendlies next month as all three squads prepare for the 2010 South Africa World Cup.

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