

Today High: 50 Low: 29 Precip: 0%	Wednesday High: 71 Low: 47 Precip: 20%	Thursday High: 78 Low: 49 Precip: 30%
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were taken into custody on immigration violations rather than criminal charges.

Chen, speaking through an interpreter in his native Mandarin, identified one of the workers as Kong's wife, who is Chen's older sister.

She was later released from custody, he said.

Iran mosque fire kills 59, injures more than 250

TEHRAN, Iran — A fire raged through a crowded mosque in Tehran during evening prayers Monday after a female worshipper's veil caught the flames of a kerosene heater, killing at least 59 people and injuring more than 250, Iran's official news agency reported. The Arg Mosque was filled with about 400 worshippers, more crowded than usual because this is the Islamic month of Muharram, a holy period for Shiite Muslims.

Gas explosion in Chinese mine kills 25

SHANGHAI, China — A gas explosion at a mine in northeastern China has killed at least 25 miners and left another 194 trapped underground, the government said today.

The explosion Monday afternoon at the Sujiawan mine of the Fuxin Coal Industry Group occurred 794 feet underground, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. It said rescue operations began immediately.

The cause of the blast in the Liaoning province was under investigation.

China's mines are by far the world's deadliest, with floods, explosions and fires taking the lives of more than 6,000 people in 2004.

Mine owners and local officials are frequently blamed for putting profits ahead of safety, especially as the nation's soaring energy needs increase the demand for coal.

— The Associated Press

Iraqi leaders work to refine government after elections

BY JAMIE TARABAY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A French-educated finance minister and a former London physician emerged Monday as the top candidates to be Iraq's next prime minister after the clergy-backed Shiite Muslim alliance failed to get the necessary majority of votes to control the legislature.

The prominence of urbane, moderate, Western-oriented figures appeared designed to counter concern in Washington that Iraq after a Shiite-dominated government takes power — even though the ultimate decision may rest with a reclusive elderly cleric.

Adel Abdul-Mahdi, the interim finance minister, and Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the interim vice president, were said to be the leading candidates for prime minister as backroom trading for the top posts in the new government began in earnest Monday.

The consultations were necessary because the United Iraqi Alliance failed to secure the two-thirds majority in the newly elected assembly that would have allowed it to control the legislature and install whomever it wanted as president.

The Kurds, who are poised to become kingmakers in the new Iraq, have already said they want Jalal Talabani, a secular Sunni Kurd and leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to be Iraq's next president, a largely ceremonial post. The Shiites may seek a deal with the Kurds to back Talabani for president in return for

Kurdish support for their prime ministerial choice.

The Kurds, who comprise about 15 percent of Iraq's population, have demanded the new constitution legalize Kurdish self-rule in the north. They also want an end to what they call "Arabization" of Kirkuk and other northern areas where most of the Arabs are Sunni Muslims.

But the Shiites know they must move carefully, particularly if they want to extend a hand to the minority Sunni Arabs to form an inclusive government and tame a virulent insurgency. Many Sunni Arabs, who make up about 20 percent of the population, stayed home on election day, either out of fear of violence or to support a boycott call by radical clerics opposed to the U.S. military.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamel Kharrazi welcomed the results of the Jan. 30 elections and said his country expected Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority to work with the country's other ethnic groups.

"Certainly it is promotion of democracy and in that respect we welcome that," Kharrazi said Monday during a visit to Hungary. "We hope there will be very good relations between Iran and the future government of Iraq."

Iran, though not Arab, is predominantly Shiite, and its government has close ties with many Iraqi Shiite leaders.

Kharrazi also said the elections in Iraq were an indication of changes in the region.

"So far, the Shiite population, although they are the majority, have

been deprived of their rights," Kharrazi said. "Now, after this election, they have the majority, but this does not mean that they would neglect or deny the rights of the minorities."

The election results for the National Assembly, announced Sunday, gave the clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance 48 percent of the vote, the Kurdish alliance 26 percent, and the ticket led by interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite who supported strong ties to Washington, only 14 percent.

The National Assembly's first task is to elect a president and two vice presidents by a two-thirds majority. The three then choose a new prime minister subject to assembly approval.

The parties that make up the alliance — the Islamic Dawa Party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and former Pentagon protegee Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress — huddled for talks to decide on a prime ministerial candidate.

Al-Jaafari was the Dawa Party's choice, while SCIRI nominated Abdul-Mahdi, said Humam Hamoudi, a spokesman for the United Iraqi Alliance. He said the alliance would decide today.

But it may ultimately be Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani who decides. Al-Sistani's tacit endorsement is believed to have led to the Alliance's electoral victory. An official in al-Sistani's office said representatives from the alliance would visit the elderly cleric on Tuesday but that he has not endorsed anyone.

CONGRATULATIONS!
2005 WHO'S WHO AWARD RECIPIENTS!

This year's University of Oregon recipients are:

This evening, 101 students from the University of Oregon will be recognized as national outstanding campus leaders by Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. The Who's Who award is given to students who demonstrate excellence in their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities and potential for continued success. They join an elite group of students from more than 2,000 institutions of higher learning in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and several foreign nations.

- Robert Adkins
- Diana Aguilar
- Kyle Allred
- Christina Argenti
- Matthew Auxier
- Kelly Baird
- David Berney-Needleman
- Lindsay Brown
- Emily Buck
- Macy Burnham
- Marcus Cederstrom
- Chat Chatchaisucha
- Dunya Chirchi
- Aryn Clark
- Katelyn Colborne
- Cristina Cruz-Urbe
- Heather Daniel
- LaMan Dantzler
- Lynn Dean
- Kimberly Evans
- Kema Ferrall
- Lisa Force
- Kathleen Fox
- Jamie Fryback
- Leslie Frye
- Sarah Gahagan
- Laurence Gellert
- Teresa Gonzalez
- Reem Haj
- Sarah Henselman
- Jose Alfredo Hernandez
- Forrest Herring
- Casey Higgins
- Laura Hindley

- Ava Hirschsohn
- Helen Hudson
- Maria Hwang
- Suyoung Jeong
- Marques Johnson
- Faryl Kagan
- Jong Yoon Kim
- Rochelle Koerner
- Audrey Lane
- Kira Lee
- Amber Lindros
- Megan Loperena
- Tammy Luoh
- Meghan Madden
- Thomas Maffai
- Michael Martell
- Ian McConnaha
- Westin Mclean
- Kyle McMahan
- Lucia Meza
- Jessica Miller
- Anna Moyer
- Cleopatra Neculae
- Sara Nelkin
- Tyler Norwood
- Jordan Oberhaus
- Daniel Occhipinti
- Mark Padoongpatt
- Stephanie Pan
- Maceo Persson
- Adam Petkun
- Kate Porter
- Brandy Potterf
- Kristie Price

- David Rand
- Mena Ravissipour
- Jonathan Reed
- Jose Reyes
- John Rowland
- Catherine Ryan
- Crissy Jo Serviss
- Gabe Shaughnessy
- Austin Shaw-Phillips
- Michael Sherman
- Tara Siebenlist
- Brenda Lee Sifuentes
- Ryan Slunaker
- Jodi Smith
- Allison Solberg
- Michael Sorondo
- Benjamin Strawn
- Karissa Strickland
- Elizabeth Thomas
- Heather Van Vactor
- Jennifer Wagner
- Allie Warner
- Alison Waterkotte
- Kyle Waters
- Lauren Weiner
- Kari White
- Julie Whitecotton
- Hannah Whitney
- Ben Wolfram
- Stephanie Woodlee
- Theodora Yang
- Ayaka Yonezawa
- Andrew Young