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INTERNATIONAL

Peru holds elections

By Monte Haves ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LIMA, Peru — A U.S.-trained economist with Indian roots led a crowded field of candidates in elections yesterday to choose a successor to disgraced former President Alberto Fujimori but will face a runoff, according to exit polls.

The economist, Alejandro Toledo, fin-ished second to Fujimori in elections last year but ended up boycotting a fraudulent election runoff against the autocratic leader, who fled Peru in November amid mounting corruption scandals.

Toledo, 55, received 40.1 percent of the votes, falling short of the majority needed to avoid a runoff, according to Apoyo, Peru's most prestigious polling firm. Two other polling firms gave similar results.

He faced his strongest challenge from Alan Garcia, a discredited ex-president ancestral homeland.

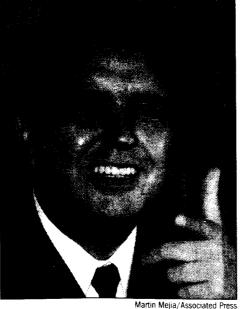
returned from exile, and Lourdes Flores, a conservative former congresswoman. In all, eight candidates were competing.

The Apoyo poll gave Garcia 24.3 percent and Flores 22.8 percent, but Apoyo said the race for the second spot in the runoff was too close to call until official results were in. Alfredo Torres, director of Apoyo, said 30,000 voters were interviewed and the margin of error was 5 percentage points.

The election was Peru's first since the ouster of Fujimori, Peru's iron-fisted ruler for more than a decade.

A vear ago, Fujimori trampled constitutional restrictions and won a third five-year term in elections marred by fraud and dirty tricks.

But he fled in November amid mounting corruption scandals involving Vladimiro Montesinos, his intelligence chief, and he now lives in self-imposed exile in Japan, his



Presidential candidate Alan Garcia speaks during a news conference in Lima, Peru.

French fryer cause of **Netherlands** airport fire

By Marcel Van De Hoef ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands - Thousands of people were evacuated from Schiphol international airport in Amsterdam yesterday after an explosion and fire in a fast-food restaurant in the passenger terminal

The fire department said the blaze started when a french fryer overheated in the airport's Burger King - billed by the company as its busiest outlet in the world.

Workers said they scrambled over the counter and ran when they heard the explosion in the kitchen.

Fire chief Pieter Heere said no one was injured, but a police statement said one person was treated for smoke inhalation.

"We closed the airport just to make sure it wasn't more dangerous," said Heere.

The explosion sent a burst of flame through the ventilation shaft to the roof where it was visible from outside, prompting an erroneous report on Dutch television that the building had caught fire.

wenty minutes after the fire started, smoke and heat from the ventilation system set off the fire alarm in an upper story office,

win Great Prizes

the airport's three terminals. Immediately after the blast, dozens of ambulances and police vehicles screamed into the airport, one of Europe's busiest. Traffic was halted from highways leading to the airport, and all entrances were

Stranded passengers walk near Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. Yesterday, the police blocked all

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the roads to the airport following an explosion and fire in a fast-food restaurant.

blocked. Police turned away passengers at roadblocks who pleaded that they would miss their flights. The Schiphol train terminal, below the air-

said the same fryer had given off sparks ear-

Incoming and outgoing flights were

delayed, but the airport said the flight sched-

ule would return to normal by the end of the

day. Passengers were evacuated from one of

lier in the day, but was ignored.

port's arrival area, was also closed. The terminal is on the main route injured.

bv Charles

police said. Police spokesman Ruud Wever between the largest cities in the Netherlands.

Dusan Vranic/Associated Press

Eli van Goudoever said he was serving customers at the counter when he heard a horrific noise from the kitchen.

"We had the feeling that the roof was caving in," he said.

"I jumped over the counter. Everyone was in a panic at first."

A news release from Burger King several weeks ago said the Schiphol outlet was its busiest in the world.

Hans Reus, who works at an airport shop, said he closed his store when he smelled the smoke, walked into the mall and saw people running from the smoking restaurant.

"The police were taking everyone out of the airport," he said, but he saw no one

MIA team's helicopter crashes, no survivors

By David Thurber ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HANOI, Vietnam — Officials yesterday recovered the bodies of 16 people — includ-ing seven Americans — who died in a helicopter crash while searching for Americans missing in action from the Vietnam War.

The bodies were carried on stretchers down the hillside where the Russian-made MI-17 helicopter crashed Saturday near Thanh Tranh village in Quang Binh province's Bo Tranh district, about 280 miles south of Hanoi.

Vietnamese officials initially reported 20 people were on board the helicopter, but changed the figure to 16 early yesterday. Pentagon spokesman in Washington, D.C., Lt. Cmdr. Terry Sutherland, said seven Americans and nine Vietnamese were killed in the crash. There were no survivors.

U.S. officials said the American victims were military service people, but were withholding their names until the next of kin have been notified. The cause of the midafternoon crash is being investigated. The sky was hazy at the time.

The U.S. military's Pacific Command said in a statement on its Web site that the team was "preparing for a recovery operation involving unaccounted for Americans lost during the Vietnam war."

A spokesman for the command in Hon-

olulu, Lt. Sean Kelly, said the service members killed were all on a mission for Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, a group based in Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii.

The task force has searched for remains from the Indochina War in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and southern China since 1992, and in recent years has expanded operations to include World War II and Korean War MIA recovery cases.

President Bush expressed his condolences on Saturday and urged Americans to "remember their sacrifice."

'The families of the service personnel lost in today's tragic accident know better than most the contribution their loved ones made in bringing closure to scores of families across America," the president said in a statement issued at the White House.

"Today's loss is a terrible one for our nation," Bush said.

There are currently no large-scale MIA excavations under way in Vietnam, but some Americans remain in the country year-round doing advance work for future digs.

Since 1973, the remains of 591 American servicemen formerly listed as unaccounted for have been identified and returned to their families.

There are 1,992 Americans still unaccounted for from the war in Southeast Asia. including 1,498 in Vietnam.

Bush to send missing pilot's wife 'humanitarian' response

By Scott Lindlaw ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON, D.C. - President Bush is sending a letter to the wife of the missing Chinese fighter pilot as a humanitarian gesture, Secretary of State Colin Powell said yesterday.

The wife, Ruan Guoqin, had written a letter to Bush that accused him and his administration of being "too cowardly" to offer an apology for the collision a week ago between the Chinese jet and a U.S. spy plane.

Ruan wrote that the administration defamed her husband, missing pilot Wang Wei, according to the official Xinhua news agency

"Our 6-year-old son has kept asking me when his father will come home," she wrote. "I pray and call out time and again hoping in tears that there will be a miracle.'

Ruan entered a Beijing hospital yesterday, overcome by stress. according to a Beijing newspaper. 'What is incredible is your and your gov-

ernment's apathetic attitude toward my husband's life," the news agency quoted from the letter.

Powell said on Fox News vesterday that he could not disclose the contents of Bush's response to her because he had not seen a final draft.

The purpose of the letter is to respond in a humanitarian way, in an American way, to a widow who is grieving." Powell said. Whatever you think about the politics of it. she's lost her husband."

Two White House officials said the letter would not be released publicly.

It had not been sent as of late yesterday morning, but was likely to go out later in the day, they said. It would not include an apology, one official said.





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