

Israel, Palestinians narrowing security differences: Powell

Hamas rejects Sharon's 'threats'

AFP, Jerusalem
Israel and the Palestinians are narrowing their differences over an Israeli army pullout from some occupied areas but have yet to reach an accord, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said here Friday.

meeting with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz.
Powell arrived in Jerusalem amid so-far unsuccessful efforts to bring Islamic militants on board a ceasefire deal. But he and Shalom agreed a truce was not enough and that groups such as Hamas must be stripped of their armed capacity.

terror", he said.
Citing Israeli moves to free Palestinian prisoners and to start dismantling some Jewish settlement outposts in the occupied territories, Powell praised the Israelis for "their energy and their efforts to meet those commitments" they made at Aqaba.

mate right of the Palestinians to resist" Israeli occupation.
"That's what the Palestinian factions have explained to the Palestinian prime minister" Mahmud Abbas in talks held in Gaza City on Wednesday and Thursday, he said.



A local train makes its way along flooded rail tracks as it enters the Mumbai central railway station on Friday. The city has seen monsoon rains for the last four days, which disrupted movements of public transports.

'More time needed to judge Iraqi WMD'

REUTERS, Washington
US intelligence analysts who testified at a closed Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Thursday stood by their basic prewar assessment that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, two attendees said.

weapons of mass destruction and the capacity to create "voluminous quantities" of such weapons.
He and other Democrats who attended the hearing said either they could not make judgments about whether the Republican administration hyped the intelligence or they did not believe outright deceit had occurred.

EU calls on Hamas to declare ceasefire

AFP, Porto Carras
The European Union called Friday on the militant Palestinian group Hamas to declare a ceasefire and urged Middle East countries to condemn terrorism, in draft conclusions from the EU summit.

Hamas, behind scores of anti-Israeli attacks, said Thursday it was mulling over proposals for a ceasefire, but Israel says Palestinian groups would only use any temporary truce to regroup and reararm.

US truck driver pleads guilty to al-Qaeda support

REUTERS, Washington
An Ohio truck driver, who met Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and plotted to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge, has pleaded guilty to providing support to the al-Qaeda network, US officials said on Thursday.

N Korea vows retaliation if censured by UN

REUTERS, Seoul
North Korea vowed on Friday to take "strong emergency measures" to retaliate if the United States succeeds in taking Pyongyang's nuclear programs to the United Nations Security Council.

completely dismantle its nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible manner" and fully comply with international nuclear safeguard requirements, according to a copy of the text obtained by Reuters.

and provoke a second Korean War."
South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan told reporters in the Cambodian capital on Friday, that Seoul wanted more time to allow a North Korean response to proposals for multilateral talks on the eight-month-old nuclear crisis.



PHOTO: AFP
Afghan women make their way back home after collecting grass for their cows on the outskirts of Islamabad on Friday during the World Refugee Day. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) commemorated World Refugee Day with the theme "Refugee Youth: Building the Future", in order to highlight the plight of one of the most vulnerable segments of refugee populations world-wide. Pakistan has sheltered some 3.5 million Afghans and about 1.5 million of these returned to Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime.

Russia won't stop nuke cooperation with Iran

AFP, Moscow
Russia has brushed off increasingly loud US demands to halt its nuclear cooperation with Iran, remaining the foremost world power helping the Islamic regime develop what many fear is a nuclear weapons program.

IAEA asks Iran to accept stricter nuke inspections

AFP, Vienna
The UN's nuclear watchdog called Thursday for Iran to unconditionally allow stricter inspections of its nuclear facilities, a day after US President George W. Bush urged the world to warn Tehran against developing nuclear weapons.

leader Saddam Hussein, upping the pressure on the Islamic Republic.
President Bush welcomed the UN agency's appeal Thursday, despite the fact that the IAEA motion was viewed as weak by Washington, which sought a clear condemnation of Iran's nuclear program.

bottom of" this program.
"We expect to hear back from the IAEA soon in that regard," he said, referring to a report to be presented in September based on continuing inspections.

EU to boost crackdown on illegal immigrants

AFP, Porto Carras, Greece
EU leaders agreed Friday to boost cooperation to crack down on illegal immigration, although they failed to back a controversial British plan on asylum seekers, according to draft conclusions from their summit here.

Carras agreed notably to "reinforce existing cooperation" in the area of returning illegal immigrants to their countries of origin.
They also reiterated their aim of setting up a Europe-wide coordinated asylum system to process claims rapidly and efficiently, according to a draft final declaration.

Prince William turns 21

AFP, London
William, the elder son of Prince Charles and Princess Diana who celebrates his 21st birthday on Saturday, seems to prefer an anonymous, ordinary life to the role of pretender to the throne that his family want to see him play.



PHOTO: AFP
Prince William blows out the candles on a birthday cake held by an unidentified girl on Thursday during a visit to the Anglesey Food Fair in north Wales. The Prince turns 21 today. William and his father, Prince Charles, are in Wales for the day, and are later visiting Newport Action for Single Homeless in South Wales.