

### Harkat training camp destroyed in Pakistan

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistan's security forces on Saturday destroyed a terrorist training camp reportedly run by Harkat ul Mujahideen in North West Frontier Province, even as top US officials arrived in Islamabad for talks with Pakistani leadership.

Troops from the paramilitary Frontier Corps and Pakistan Army dismantled a terrorist training facility in Tangir sub-division of Diamir district on Saturday, defence spokesman Maj Gen Shoukat Sultan told reporters.

The raid coincided with US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary Christina Rocca's visit to Pakistan. The American officials are to hold talks with Pakistani leadership on Monday.

The raid followed intelligence reports that there was a terrorist training camp in the area, Sultan said, adding the camp was a terrorist facility involved in domestic terrorism and blockade of the Karakoram Highway. He, however, declined to name the group operating the camp.

"The camp has no connection with al-Qaeda but the possibility of it receiving patronage from outside cannot be ruled out," he said.

### Nepal king calls for end to Maoist attacks

AFP, Kathmandu

King Gyanendra called yesterday for an end to Nepal's seven-year Maoist insurgency and said all sides wanted peace, in a message marking the kingdom's biggest Hindu festival Dasain.

In the message read by announcers on state television and radio, the king said: "Our nation, traditionally bound by fellowship, warmth and cooperation, has since the past few years been in the grip of violence, terrorism and the destruction of development infrastructure.

"Every Nepali desires to see an end to this situation and resumption of development activities and an environment of peace, security and good governance," Gyanendra said.

"As long as there is an atmosphere of recrimination and mistrust, the problems facing the country cannot be resolved," he said.

Gyanendra, in keeping with custom, stood for hours Sunday at his Kathmandu palace to offer holiday greetings to tens of thousands of ordinary people, many of the elderly.

The king applied a smudge of red vermilion on the forehead of each well-wisher, a blessing he also offered to Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa and senior military leaders.

## Democrats decry cost of Iraqi reconstruction

REUTERS, Washington

Democrats on Saturday criticised President Bush's \$87 billion spending request for Iraq, saying the cost of rebuilding the shattered country was draining resources from growing needs at home.

"In a time when money is scarce, we should demand that President Bush place the needs of our own country first on the agenda," Missouri Democratic Gov. Bob Holden said in his party's weekly radio address.

"With record deficits, the worst economy in 70 years, and an administration likely to push even more tax cuts for the wealthy, this funding request raises important concerns

# Bush seeks time for Iraqi self-rule

## Egypt calls for 'specific timetable'

REUTERS, Washington

President Bush on Saturday asked for time in working out a plan for Iraqi self-rule even as he faces doubt from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan about US plans.

"The transition to self-government is a complicated process, because it takes time to build trust and hope after decades of oppression and fear," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

"Yet we are making steady progress, and we will keep our promise to fully return Iraq's government to Iraq's people as soon as possible," he said.

Bush also sought to allay concerns in the US Congress over his \$87 billion spending request for Iraq.

"Our coalition is helping to train and equip Iraq's new army, so that Iraqis can take over border protection and other security duties as soon as possible," he said.

Democrats on Saturday took

Bush to task for his proposals on Iraq's rebuilding, saying too many resources are being drained from domestic needs.

"In a time when money is scarce, we should demand that President Bush place the needs of our own country first on the agenda," Missouri Gov. Bob Holden said in the Democrats' weekly radio address.

"With record deficits, the worst economy in 70 years, and an administration likely to push even more tax cuts for the wealthy, this funding request raises important concerns about what we can afford to spend to rebuild Iraq," he said.

With unease about the costs growing, the administration has been negotiating with members of the United Nations Security Council in hopes of securing a resolution that will encourage contributions from abroad of troops and cash.

But debate over the transition to Iraqi sovereignty has raised serious obstacles to the effort.

The United Nations wants sovereignty handed over within months to an interim government, possibly by expanding the 25-member Iraqi Governing Council, which could then ask for political and military assistance.

The United States wants a constitution written first, possibly within six months, and then elections, while it stays firmly in control of military and civilian structures.

Annan made clear in the past week he did not want the United Nations, which lost senior staff in the Aug. 19 bombing of its Baghdad offices, to risk more lives for a marginal role in Iraq. He said he felt American plans for ending the occupation were on the wrong track.

Annan's comments have caused several Security Council members to express new reservations.

The White House has remained optimistic, however. Spokesman Scott McClellan said on Friday "there is a convergence of views emerging."

Bush was ending a tough week on Iraq, one in which the Justice Department opened an investigation into whether someone from the White House, CIA, Pentagon or State Department illegally disclosed the identity of a CIA operative whose husband challenged Bush's Iraq weapons threat claims.

In addition, a preliminary report by the top CIA weapons hunter, David Kay, found no weapons of mass destruction, which the war was fought over.

AFP adds: Egypt wants a "specific timetable" that would lead to the transfer of power in Iraq to Iraqis "as soon as possible." President Hosni Mubarak said Sunday.

"What's needed is a specific time table for the return to normalcy, to allow the Iraqi people to govern themselves as soon as possible," Mubarak said in a televised speech on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1973 war against Israel.

### Indo-US joint naval exercise begins today

PTI, Kochi

Over 750 US naval personnel and an equal number of Indian Navy personnel would participate in the fifth Indo-US joint exercises, 'Malabar 2003', commencing on Monday off Kochi.

Addressing a joint press meet in Kochi on Sunday, Captain Edward M Boorda of 'USS Chosin', a US frontline warship, which is participating in the exercise, said the joint exercise between the two navies would help enhance and promote regional cooperation. Working together provides great opportunity for both the navies, he said.

From the US side, besides USS Chosin, 'USS Fitzgerald', another frontline warship, Los Angeles class Nuclear Submarine USS Pasadena, P3C Orion Maritime patrol aircraft and a product Tanker would take part in the exercise, he said.



PHOTO: AFP

Soldiers ride on Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) during the 58th military anniversary in Denpasar yesterday. During the ASEAN summit about 5,000 police and a similar number of troops will be deployed along with a police patrol boat, seven warships and police helicopters, as part of a massive security operation.

### Poland says sorry to France for missiles report

REUTERS, Warsaw/Rome

Poland apologised to France on Saturday for saying its troops had found advanced French-made missiles in Iraq that had been produced this year.

The report sparked criticism from French President Jacques Chirac, who called it wrong and drawn up without proper checks.

But neither Polish nor French authorities denied that the Roland-type anti-aircraft weapons were found near the Iraqi town of Hilla in a zone controlled by the Polish-led military force.

"I apologised to France for this information, which had been issued without my authorisation," said Defence Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski, adding that an investigation had been ordered.

He said Polish troops were likely to have interpreted the 2003 inscription on the missiles as the year of their production. "And this could have been, for example, the date up to which they are fit to be used," he said.

The Defence Ministry said on Friday that Polish troops in Iraq had discovered four French-made Roland missiles, which are part of short-range air defence systems in many countries including France and Germany.

## Nuke command chain in place: Fernandes

### Delhi takes serious note of Musharraf's 'threat'

PTI, New Delhi

Declaring that both short and medium-range nuclear-capable Agni ballistic missiles were ready for deployment, Defence Minister George Fernandes yesterday said the country's nuclear command chain, including alternative "nerve centres," was in place, giving India an effective retaliatory capability.

"We have established more than one (nuclear control) nerve centre," he said in an interview in which he disclosed that other nuclear command and control structures like nuclear command shelters and VVIP shelters have also been established.

To a question whether action has been taken to safeguard the country's nerve centres like North Block, South Block and Parliament, Fernandes said "all necessary steps to provide these vital places protec-

tion" have been taken.

On the possibility of the use of Delhi Metro underground tunneling as nuclear shelter, he merely said "some countries have modified underground railway network to turn into shelters".

Elaborating on the process of deployment of 700 km-range Agni-I and 1500 to 2000 km-range Agni-II missiles, Fernandes said "these have been handed over to the Army for deployment". He said the production of longer-range variant of the missile -- Agni-III -- was under production and its exact timing for its test firing were being finalised.

In the interview, the Defence Minister said that Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) set up would be in place within a "few months" and that pace of modernisation of armed forces had been accelerated.

Expanding on the Nuclear Command authority, Fernandes

said that any nuclear power has to take care of issues like having a credible second strike capability and setting up of nuclear command and nerve centres.

Meanwhile, India has taken serious note of the recent statements of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on his country's nuclear capability, which it feels he may be using to build up a case for a pre-emptive strike against India.

Government sources, who have read "more than the usual" anti-India rhetoric in Musharraf's recent statements including the one accusing New Delhi of playing "dangerous" games in Pakistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan, feel that it is the General's latest "propaganda innovation" against India.

### World leaders condemn suicide attack in Israel

AFP, Paris

World leaders sharply condemned a suicide attack in northern Israel Saturday that killed 19 victims including five children on the eve of the Jewish faith's holiest day.

"I condemn unequivocally the vicious act of terrorism," US President George W. Bush said in a statement.

A woman suicide bomber walked into an upmarket restaurant in the port city of Haifa after midday on Saturday and detonated her explosives, killing herself and 19 other people, and wounding about 50.

The radical Palestinian movement Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack in an anonymous telephone call to AFP.

"This murderous action, aimed at families gathered to enjoy a

Sabbath lunch" is a "despicable attack," said Bush.

The European Union, which is a member of the diplomatic quartet that drafted the "roadmap" for peace in the Middle East, expressed its "deep consternation at this new and most serious attack."

EU foreign ministers, meeting in Rome to discuss a new European constitution, underlined "the absolute necessity of putting an end to the spiral of violence in the Middle East, to restart dialogue in the context of the peace process."

The peace process has stalled over the past few months amidst renewed violence, Israel's threat to expel Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and the construction of a security barrier along the West Bank.

## EU leaders hope to endorse constitution in mid-Dec

AP, Rome

European Union leaders said Saturday they hope to endorse their new constitution in mid-December, setting a tight deadline for overcoming a power struggle between small and large nations.

The leaders emerged from a four-hour summit in Rome promising the constitution will take effect in 2005. By then, 10 more nations will have joined the bloc, raising the EU membership to 25.

But tough bargaining lies ahead in the next 10 weeks.

As the leaders left the summit Saturday, their foreign ministers began the first of a series of debates to settle disagreements over the text.

"We have opened a new page in Europe's history," French President Jacques Chirac said.

Chirac and other leaders cautioned against a wholesale re-

negotiation of the draft.

The constitution foresees an EU president, a foreign minister, a structured defense policy and provisions to make it more difficult to wield vetoes that cause bureaucratic gridlock. It also calls for an EU executive of only 15 members, denying each state the automatic right to one European Commissioner.

Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi, whose country holds the EU presidency, said "a very difficult task awaits us" in overcoming differences.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw suggested that divisions over the war in Iraq should not stop EU nations from seeking an integrated security and foreign policy, saying "we are stronger when we are united."

The leaders met amid heavy security at the Palazzo dei Congressi, a Fascist-era convention complex in southern Rome, away from the city's historic centre.

Police cordoned off a 2 1/2-mile zone around the venue to guard against thousands of anti-globalisation protesters, who swung wooden clubs at a line of riot police. Authorities responded with tear gas.

After a standoff around the summit site in a southern Roman suburb, several thousand marchers tried to push past a thick line of police. They hurled eggs and rotten fruit and then used a large shield to try to breach the barrier, shouting: "Murderers! Murderers!"

About 6,000 people took part in the anti-globalisation protest in the southern suburb of EUR, police said, while 15,000 others gathered for a calm demonstration in the city centre. Protesters elsewhere gutted an employment agency, vandalised two gas stations and a bank, and threw rolls of toilet paper at police. Authorities detained about 50 demonstrators.

## Japan seeks to counter China's dominance in Southeast Asia

AFP, Nusa Dua

Japan wants to widen its largely business-oriented ties with Southeast Asia to counter China's aggressive political, economic and security forays but the region is playing hard to get.

At a summit meeting on Indonesia's Bali resort island this week, China is set to sign three key pacts with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), including a "strategic" tie-up accord that has raised the eyebrows of many analysts.

The ASEAN-China Declaration on Strategic Partnership, to be signed by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and his counterparts from the 10 ASEAN member states, will elevate cooperation to "a higher and more comprehensive dimension," an ASEAN official said.

"This is the first time ASEAN is calling an agreement with any of its dialogue partners as strategic -- strategic in the sense that it is all-encompassing cooperation," the official added.

Aside from the pact, China will sign documents acceding to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation -- effectively a non-aggression pact -- and endorse a protocol that will give several Southeast Asian states early benefits under a free trade area to be jointly developed by 2010.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi meanwhile has only one agreement scheduled for signing with the ASEAN leaders -- the Framework for Comprehensive Economic Partnership -- aimed at strengthening linkages with a provision for a joint free trade area sometime in the future, officials said.



PHOTO: AFP

People gather in front of the Grande bibliotheque de Paris (Library) for the second Nuit Blanche de Paris (Sleepless Night) on Saturday. About a million Parisians and tourists celebrated the night without sleep during which dozens of artistic and cultural events were staged throughout the hours of darkness and into the dawn.