

Opinion poll 90pc Americans for major UN role in fighting terrorism

AP, Washington

Nine of 10 Americans want the United Nations to play a major role in pulling countries together to fight against terrorism, says an Associated Press poll taken after the Sept 11 attacks.

Sixty-four per cent said the United Nations is doing a good job solving problems it must face, while 24 per cent said it was doing a poor job, according to the poll conducted for the AP by ICR of Media, Pennsylvania.

That confidence level in the world body is 10 points higher than it was early this year, and nearly double the confidence level registered in the mid-1990s.

French President Jacques Chirac urged the United Nations this week to take a more active role in fighting terrorism.

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Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains one-page colour photo feature on the 3rd Award Presentation Ceremony for outstanding students of O & A Level (June 2000-June 2001 session) held at Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium at Mirpur on Friday. (Page 10)

Correction

In the news "Young achievers commit to become Nation Builders" in our yesterday's issue, the name of one of our co-sponsors Mr Alok Malik, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Pepsi, was not mentioned among those who spoke. Mr Amitava Ghosh's name appeared instead. We regret the error. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Malik underscored Pepsi's role in Bangladesh in promoting the activities of the youth. He congratulated the young achievers and thanked The Daily Star for taking on Pepsi as a partner on this wonderful occasion.

US military planes land in Uzbekistan Taliban claim shooting down unmanned spy plane

AGENCIES, Tashkent

US military aircraft have landed at a base in the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, which borders Afghanistan, an Uzbek military official told AFP yesterday.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the planes were carrying reconnaissance equipment and were based at the Tuzel air base, just outside the capital Tashkent.

Diplomatic sources also said the United States had helicopters, used earlier in joint exercises between Uzbekistan and NATO forces, stationed in Chirchik, 40 kilometres from Tashkent.

Uzbekistan, like neighbouring Tajikistan, had earlier said it would deny the United States access to its military bases in the case of US military action against Afghanistan.

War with Afghanistan now seems almost inevitable almost two weeks after the devastating terrorist attacks on US cities.

Meanwhile, mystery surrounded a downed aircraft in northern Afghanistan yesterday as the

ruling Taliban issued contradictory statements on whether it was an opposition helicopter or an unmanned US spy plane.

In the latest twist, the Taliban ambassador in Islamabad, Mullah Abdul Saleem Zaef, told Reuters the craft was an unmanned plane that was apparently taking pictures when it was shot down in Samangan province in northern Afghanistan.

That contradicted the Information Ministry in Kabul, which had earlier said its forces had shot down a helicopter belonging to the opposition Northern Alliance.

A Northern Alliance spokesman in the Tajik capital Dushanbe told Reuters the downed craft could not be one of its helicopters because none had been in the area for the past three days.

Zaef said the aircraft was not badly damaged when it came down near Tashqarghan in Samangan province, north of the Hindu Kush mountain range separating the north from the capital Kabul.

"There is no passenger seat and no pilot's seat,"

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GRAPHICS: STAR

Maps show Uzbekistan (left), where US planes landed yesterday as a precursor to a planned attack on Afghanistan, and Samangan, where the Taliban claim to have shot down an unmanned US spy plane.

UAE snaps ties with Taliban govt

AP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates cut diplomatic relations with the Taliban government of Afghanistan yesterday, leaving it recognized by only two nations.

The official Emirates News Agency quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry official as saying that the Emirates had tried during the past few days to persuade the Taliban to comply with the UN Security Council resolution for it to hand over Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect in last week's terror attacks in New York and Washington.

The official expressed regret that the Taliban had failed to respond positively.

"The United Arab Emirates does not believe that it is possible to continue to maintain diplomatic relations with a government that refuses to respond to the clear will of

the international community," the official said.

The decision to cut relations takes immediate effect and Afghan diplomats have been ordered to leave the Emirates within 24 hours, the agency reported.

The undersecretary in the Foreign Ministry, Saif Saeed bin Saed, summoned Charge d'affaires Aziz Ul-Rahman Abdul Ahad, who runs the embassy, and informed him of the decision.

The Afghan Embassy in Abu Dhabi was considered closed, the agency added.

Earlier yesterday, a secretary at the embassy refused to comment on the move, saying the mission had not been formally notified. He declined to give him name.

The move throws the spotlight on Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which are the only remaining countries to

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FBI asks 9 Islamic states to hand over terrorists?

AFP, Damascus

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation has asked nine Arab and Islamic states to hand over hundreds of suspected "terrorists," a pro-Syrian Arabic paper reported yesterday.

Almoharrer weekly said the FBI asked Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen to turn over the suspects or "face the consequences."

The weekly, Syrian-owned but edited in Paris and Beirut, cited European diplomats in France for its report, which was not confirmed by Syrian authorities here.

It said the list given to Damascus included 100 people belonging to Palestinian "extremist groups,"

while the ½-sent to Lebanon featured 40 people "linked to terrorism since the 1970s."

Forty people were on the list sent to Iran, all of whom have been sought since that country's Islamic revolution in 1979, it said.

Among them was Lebanese national Imad Mughniyeh, suspected of the 1984 kidnapping of William Buckley, the CIA's station chief in Beirut.

Earlier this week Jane's Security web site said Israeli military intelligence believes Mughniyeh was one of the masterminds of last week's terrorist attacks in the United States.

The other was named as an Egyptian, Ayman Al Zawahiri, believed to be a senior member of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda net

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Soldiers getting down from a lorry to report at a camp near Bangabandhu National Stadium in the city as deployment of 67,000 officers and troops of Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles across the country began yesterday.

Deployment of Army, Navy, BDR personnel begins

M ANWARUL HAQ

Some 55,000 officers and troops of the Bangladesh Army along with 10,000 Bangladesh Rifles and 2,000 Bangladesh Navy personnel begun full-scale deployment across the country to ensure congenial atmosphere in the run-up to the

October 1 general election.

The Bangladesh Air Force, meanwhile, will provide some 50 officers for election duty and deploy some more personnel for security of the country's airfields. Besides, it will provide transport aircraft and helicopters for deployment and election purposes.

Limited deployment began in the capital and other metropolitan cities. However, a large force reserved for the metropolitan areas will move out shortly. Some 3,000 army personnel along with a few hundred BDR men will be on duty in the capital city alone.

According to sources, bulk of the deployment process will be complete today.

The massive mobilisation involves transporting men and materials of the army, the navy and the BDR, establishing supply lines, putting into place administrative logistics and setting up of operational headquarters at various levels.

Army officers and soldiers, who

have moved out from their garrisons, have already set up camps in designated areas and started patrolling, surveillance and reconnaissance activities. They are making their presence felt in order to deter all types of troublemakers, sources in the Bangladesh Army and the BDR said.

The Bangladesh Army is establishing camps in nearly 373 upazillas while the BDR will set up camps in 87 upazillas, mainly in bordering districts. Bangladesh has nearly 4,427 kilometres of borders of which it shares nearly 4,156 kilometres with India and the rest with Myanmar. The Bangladesh Navy will be on duty mainly in the coastal regions.

Deployment of armed forces will cover all the 64 districts comprising 463 upazillas and four metropolitan cities, concentrating at two levels - the district and the upazilla headquarters.

Earlier on September 18, limited mobilisation of both military and

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Meeting at EC today

Violation of electoral laws high on agenda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) holds a meeting today to review the prevailing situation in the run-up to the October 1 general election, amid widespread speculation of further deterioration of law and order.

The EC has put the violation of electoral laws and code of conduct high on the agenda of the meeting to be held only seven days before the polls, as the candidates, the commission observes, are not complying with the rules strictly.

Other important issues likely to figure in the meeting are: printing and despatching of ballot papers, sending of ballot boxes and other materials to returning officers, announcement of polls results, setting criteria for media coverage for political parties, appointment of presiding and polling officers and its overall preparation for the election, said EC sources.

The commission fixed

September 25, 26 and 27 for sending ballot papers to the returning officers.

About violation of the code of conduct, the commission has so far warned 81 candidates, including Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

After today's meeting scheduled for 11:00am, some other candidates will be given warnings, the sources added.

During electioneering, almost all candidates, the EC officials say, have been disregarding the electoral laws and code of conduct.

Although the law allows a candidate one election campaign centre in each ward, wayside election camps were mushrooming in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Graffiti, colour posters and banners galore the city and its outskirts under the nose of electoral inquiry committees and law-

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Abducting Feni BCL leader held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Detective police yesterday arrested Jahurul Alam, a close associate of Awami League leader Joinal Hazari and vice-president of Feni district unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), from Purba Ukilpara area in the town yesterday.

Jahurul is an accused in at least 20 cases including some for murder and some under the PSA and the Arms Act, filed with Feni Sadar and Sonagazi thanas.

Jahurul has been absconding since August 16 night when a joint team of police, BDR and army per

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CCTVs hardly used at ZIA

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) hardly makes any use of the close circuit televisions (CCTVs) installed at the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

"You rarely find an instance where a breach of law has been detected through the CCTVs and action taken accordingly," said an official at the ZIA.

The civil aviation authorities had 30 CCTVs installed at a cost of Tk 1.75 crore to gear up vigilance at the airport in 1999-2000. The network covers the apron section, customs and immigration enclosure, baggage scanners, loading and unloading bay, arrival and departure lounges, and car park and canopy.

There are monitors at the offices of the director, deputy director and the chief security officer of the airport, and also at the control room. The CCTVs with 24-hour recording facilities keep track of whatever goes on inside the ZIA. With the help of these, the CAAB officials can even detect incidents like smuggling, pilfering, passenger harassment, trespassing into the 'red alert area', etc.

Sources, however, say that the CAAB is well aware of the difficulties that passengers, both incoming and outgoing, face at the airport but seldom takes action for inexplicable reasons.

"Now that they have maximum vigilance support, the officials could

have easily put an end to such offences, had they been a little more sincere," said one official who would not be named. "Passenger harassment and pilferage could be easily checked. Delay in putting luggage on the conveyor belt could also be sorted out."

However, according to a source, the CCTVs are used to monitor activities of rival organisations within the CAAB while people, involved in passenger harassment and other illegal activities, enjoy total freedom.

Passenger harassment and other unlawful activities at the ZIA have frequently hogged the headlines

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