

Fresh protests in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Authorities here and in cities across Pakistan were braced Friday for another day of protests against the government's support for possible military action against Afghanistan. Political parties who are sympathetic to Afghanistan's ruling Taliban had called for a major demonstration in this northwestern border city, which is home to hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees. Demonstrations were also planned after Friday prayers in Lahore and Karachi. A Pakistani delegation was Friday visiting the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan on a last-ditch mission to persuade Afghanistan's rulers to comply with US demands to surrender Osama bin Laden.

Policeman goes on rampage in Kashmir, kills 2 colleagues

REUTERS, Jammu

An Indian policeman in the violence-racked region of Kashmir went on a rampage at a police camp and shot dead two colleagues and himself, police said yesterday. The incident late Thursday was at least the fourth this year involving security forces who are battling to quell a 12-year-old insurgency by Muslim separatist guerrillas in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state. Authorities were investigating the reason for the rampage by the Central Reserve Police Force who opened fire on his colleagues, a police official said.

Indian Muslims warns US against attacking Afghanistan

AFP, New Delhi

India's top Muslim cleric Friday said the United States would face the wrath of Muslims worldwide if it attacks Afghanistan. Syed Ahmed Bukhari told a prayer meeting that the US had whipped up war fever "by expressing its intention to attack helpless, poor and hungry Afghanistan on the pretension of suppressing Islamic terrorism". "If the US attacks Afghanistan, Muslims throughout the world would consider it an attack on Islam and so, they would not hesitate to sacrifice all what they have in protection of their religion," he added. "What is the fault of Afghan people? Is the establishment of an Islamic system a crime? Is adopting teachings of Islam a crime?" he asked worshippers at New Delhi's huge Jama Masjid mosque, the largest in India.

UN court charges Milosevic with war crimes

AFP, The Hague

The chief prosecutor at the UN war crimes tribunal has filed new charges against former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic over atrocities committed during the devastating 1991-1995 war in Croatia, her spokeswoman said Friday. But the prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, has delayed plans to indict Milosevic for genocide, the most serious war crimes charge, over the war in Bosnia, said spokeswoman Florence Hartmann. Del Ponte signed the new indictment concerning Croatia, but it will not become formal until confirmed in the next few days by a judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), based in The Hague, Hartmann said. She provided no details of the indictment. Kashmir CM urges Delhi to help stop border firing

AFP, Srinagar

The chief minister of Kashmir Farooq Abdullah Friday urged the federal government to step up efforts to prevent the Pakistani army firing on border villages in the disputed Himalayan region. "I urge the prime minister and the foreign minister to take up the issue of border firing with Pakistan immediately," Abdullah told the state assembly. "Continued firing by Pakistani troops has not only sparked migration but also affected the crop cultivation in border areas," the chief minister said. Abdullah said Pakistan should be told to stop firing at Kashmir villages, "or we will also bombard their areas," he added.

Saudi Arabia to allow US to use its base

AFP, Dubai

Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow the United States use state-of-the-art air command facilities in the kingdom to fight prime terror suspect Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, a Gulf diplomat said Friday. Neighbouring Qatar has also decided to let US cargo planes land to load with supplies pre-positioned in the emirate, the diplomat said. "Saudi Arabia has no objection to the use of the facilities at Prince Sultan Air Base," said the diplomat, who requested anonymity. He denied reports that Riyadh had resisted a request to use the command centre at the US-built base, 110 km southeast of the capital. "The Saudis had simply not decided," he explained, adding that US aircraft were already picking up supplies from Qatar.

The Saudi government has faced a dilemma over how to take part alongside close ally Washington in the fight on terrorism directed at bin Laden, who was stripped of his Saudi nationality in 1994, and at Muslim Afghanisatan. The Washington Post quoted unnamed senior US officials on Friday saying Saudi Arabia had signalled that it will permit US troops and aircraft stationed on its soil to take part in action against bin Laden and Afghanistan, where he is protected by the Taliban Islamic militia. The paper said that after receiving assurances, the Pentagon dropped plans to set up an alternate command centre elsewhere in the Gulf region. All Gulf states, which brand Israel's attacks on Palestinians as state terrorism, have promised full cooperation in the war on terror but have failed to spell out what that means.

US releases photos of suspected hijackers

AFP, Washington

US authorities on Thursday released photos of the 19 men suspected of conducting the deadly September 11 suicide attacks, in what Attorney General John Ashcroft called "a national neighbourhood watch". While agents searched for clues in the assaults, they also expanded a probe into the possibility terrorists planned more strikes in the United States. "It is our hope that the release of these photos will prompt others who may have seen the hijackers or been in contact with them to contact the FBI with any information they may have that would be helpful to the investigation," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "This is another step in what in effect is part of a national neighbourhood watch," he said. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) already is pursuing more than 200,000 leads in what has become the largest probe in US history. And, as authorities investigated a possible plot to use dangerous chemicals in terrorist attacks, 18 people have been arrested for allegedly obtaining fraudulent permits to transport hazardous materials. The FBI was conducting a

nationwide records check on the 2.5 million truck drivers who are licensed to carry hazardous materials, while police flagged down drivers to verify their credentials. Authorities have not publicly linked any of those arrests to the attacks. Meanwhile, ABC News reported that Saudi-born Islamist militant Osama bin Laden planned to free a Muslim leader imprisoned for involvement in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, a blind Egyptian cleric, is serving a life sentence in a federal prison for plotting the 1993 attack. In an interview, a former member of bin Laden's al-Qaeda group, known only as "Max," said while "it would be very difficult for them to do this release, they are trying, even now, just looking for a chance." The probe into the attacks extends beyond US borders as part of a declared war on terrorism by the US government. In Britain, Lotfi Raissi, who was arrested last week under anti-terrorism legislation, was served an international arrest warrant from the United States early Friday, when the previous warrant expired. "The 27-year-old man arrested on September 21 by the Metropolitan Police anti-terrorism branch has today been arrested on

an international warrant originating from the USA," a police spokeswoman said. Abu Imard, 44, who was arrested in Birmingham, central England last week also remained in custody, the spokeswoman said. Anti-terrorist officers released Raissi's French-born wife Sonia, 25, without charge on Tuesday. His 29-year-old brother, Mohamed Raissi, of Hounslow, west London, was released without charge last week. Meanwhile, police in continued to interview three men arrested in Leicester on Tuesday over possible links to planned attacks on US targets in Europe. One of the men, French national Kamel Daoudi, 23, was believed to have fled Paris when seven suspected Islamic terrorists were rounded up there last week. In Toronto, police raided four addresses linked to Nabil al-Marabh, arrested in Chicago last week on suspicion of being the link between the hijackers and bin Laden. Al-Marabh, who entered Canada in 1994, was charged in June by Canadian authorities with carrying a false passport as he tried to cross into the United States, but he later disappeared after missing a court appearance.



This collage of photographs released on Thursday by the US Department of Justice shows the suspected hijackers that were believed to be on board American Airlines flight 77 when it crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, on September 11. The FBI is seeking information from the public concerning any of the individuals shown in the photos.

Straw warns of more Bin Laden attacks

AFP, London

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw warned Friday of the risk of further attacks by alleged terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden and his network, and likened them to the Nazis. "You cannot negotiate with these people," Straw told BBC radio, just as it was impossible to negotiate with Germany's Nazi leaders in the run-up to World War II. "The best historical parallel, I'm afraid to say, is those at the top of the Nazi regime. It wasn't possible to negotiate with (Adolf) Hitler, although some people understandably but naively thought that it was." He also agreed with the assessment from junior foreign minister Peter Hain late Thursday that bin

Laden may be plotting new terror attacks. Bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network stand accused of the bloody September 11 suicide plane attacks against New York and Washington that are feared to have killed nearly 7,000 people. "We have to work on the basis that this organisation is still there, and that there continues to be a risk of them making further attacks," Straw said. "We would be complacent and irresponsible not to warn people." Hain, speaking on a BBC discussion show Thursday evening, said he understood that bin Laden was "preparing for high-impact terrorist attacks in the coming weeks, if he's able to."



South Korean paratroopers display the South Korean flag on their parachutes during the 53rd anniversary of South Korea Armed Forces Day in Keryongdae military headquarters near Taejon on Friday

'Laden in Afghanistan'

AFP, Washington

The man blamed by the United States for plotting this month's devastating US terror strikes, Osama bin Laden, is still hiding in Afghanistan, a representative of the opposition said here Thursday. "He is still in Afghanistan, according to the latest information we have," said Daoud Mir of the Northern Alliance, who is Afghanistan's former ambassador to UNESCO. The ruling Taliban militia are believed to be sheltering Saudi-born bin Laden, whom Washington blames for the September 11 terror strikes in New York and Washington. The extremist dissident would not strike a target and then "dissolve into the population of Pakistan or another country," Mir said, adding that Afghanistan was a perfect and safe hideout base for the fugitive. Mir -- who also represented Ahmad Shah Masood, the chief of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, who was assassinated on September 9 by Arab men who alliance members have claimed were sent by bin Laden -- proposed his movement's assistance in its bid to track down bin Laden. "We can offer military cooperation" and intelligence help, said the official who, together with colleague Haroon Amin, is trying to convince the US administration and Congress to cooperate with the Northern Alliance to topple the Taliban and find bin Laden. "We want to avoid a situation where the United States and Europe would make the mistake of sending troops to Afghanistan to get killed."

Anti-Taliban forces seek Western support

AFP, Faizabad

Deposed Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani called on Western countries Friday to provide logistical support to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, who he said were on the "frontline of the war against terrorism." "We support the principle of a well-prepared operation" against terrorism in Afghanistan, said Rabbani, who was ousted by the Taliban in 1996 but is still recognised as the country's legitimate president by most of the international community. Rabbani was speaking from the capital of his stronghold of Badakshan, in the extreme northwest of the country, the only province still controlled by the anti-Taliban forces. However, Rabbani only specified a need for logistical support and steered clear of calls for the deployment of western troops in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, as the United States prepares to launch an anti-terrorist war in Afghanistan, it faces pressure to rearm the opposition, which still relies on antiquated Soviet-era weaponry. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, anti-Taliban forces have stepped up their calls for the United States to cooperate with them in striking at terrorist bases in Afghanistan. In other words, they are proposing a deal: give us the means to defeat the ruling Taliban and we will provide you with the intelligence to pinpoint terror suspect Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's network in Afghanistan. "No matter what level of intervention, if it is not in cooperation with us, it will not succeed," warned General Babajan, a senior commander on the front north of Kabul. "I have studied the history of war, this is neither Belgium or Austria. Afghanistan is a mountainous country, it has a very difficult geography, we know it like the back of our hand," he added. Unlike the Taliban, which has received huge military backing from Pakistan in recent years, the coalition of opposition forces is mainly equipped with weaponry that dates back to the 1979-89 Soviet invasion. At a military demonstration organised for foreign journalists in this town, some 40 km north of the Kabul frontline, a phalanx of Soviet-made tanks polished to look new stood at the top of a dusty plain. Two suddenly sped off with black smoke belching, came to a halt and started firing at a target on top of the hill as soldiers climbed the summit letting loose a hail of bullets from automatic weapons.