

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 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.

Neighboring 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 Afghans.

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 neighborhood 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 is effect is part of a national neighborhood 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 Imdad, 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-Marabah, arrested in Chicago last week on suspicion of being the link between the hijackers and bin Laden.

Al-Marabah, 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.

American Airlines #77

Boeing 757

8:10 a.m. Departed Dulles for Los Angeles
9:39 a.m. Crashed into Pentagon

Khalid Almihdhar



Nawaf Alhazmi



Majed Moqed



Salem Alhazmi



Hani Hanjour

'Laden in Afghanistan'

AFP, Washington

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

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 pin-point terror suspect Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's network in Afghanistan.

"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 northeast 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

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.

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.



PHOTO: AFP
India's top Muslim cleric, Syed Ahmed Bukhari, addresses Muslims at the Jama Masjid (mosque) before Friday prayers in New Delhi. Bukhari said Muslims around the world would consider a US attack on Afghanistan as an attack on Islam and would not hesitate to defend their religion.

Pak immigrant detained in US

AP, Wilmington

An illegal Pakistani immigrant who requested maps of a hunting area near a nuclear power plant has been accused of violating federal firearms laws, according to court records.

Raza Nasir Khan, 29, was in custody Thursday, accused of illegal possession of firearms.

Federal law enforcement officers searched his Wilmington apartment last week, according to an affidavit submitted to US District Court by an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The search uncovered four long guns and a handgun.

Khan was scheduled to appear in court Friday.

Khan's attorney, John Malik, said he didn't know whether federal prosecutors suspected his client of any involvement in terrorist activities.

Straw warns of more Bin Laden attacks

AFP, London

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."



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

Global relief effort for Afghans swings into gear

AFP, Islamabad

The first wave of emergency UN food airlifts arrived in Pakistan on Friday as aid workers braced for an expected flood of refugees from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Two planes carrying 100 tonnes of high-protein biscuits touched down in the northern city of Peshawar, with similar flights headed for proposed refugee sites along Afghanistan's western border with Iran and Turkmenistan to the north.

Despite ongoing talks at the local level here and intense lobbying from

largely a crisis on paper, with the worst-scenario estimates of up to 1.5 million refugees based on the impact of major US military strikes on Afghanistan, which have yet to materialise.

"But the essential thing is to be prepared," World Food Programme (WFP) spokesman Khaled Mansour said.

"When and if refugees start crossing the border, we need supplies to tide them over until we can set up proper cooking and water distribution facilities."

Despite ongoing talks at the local level here and intense lobbying from

UN headquarters in New York, the Pakistani authorities have refused to reopen the border with Afghanistan, citing national security concerns.

More than 20,000 refugees are believed to be stuck on the Afghan side of the main border crossings near Peshawar and the western city of Quetta, but with the frontier closed, they remain inaccessible to the aid agencies.

"We are still talking with the authorities, but for the moment it's true that our operations are largely limited to pre-positioning," Mansour said.

incursion into Palestinian-controlled territory, a move that angered Washington and cast a pall over the first joint security meeting to be held since July 25.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher called on both sides to "break with past practices" but singled out Israel for particular reprimand, calling the incursions "provocative acts that can only escalate tensions and undermine efforts to bring about a lasting halt to violence."

The incursions started just hours after Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met in Gaza Wednesday to sign an

accord aimed at getting the deadlocked peace process back on track.

The deal was forced through by huge US pressure and was signed even as Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian youth, hours after a Palestinian attack on an army bunker injured three Israeli soldiers.

In the first concrete move to result from the signing, Israel and the Palestinians were holding high-level security talks at a secret location to address issues surrounding the implementation of the truce deal.

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"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.