

Fight against terrorism

India urges world to shed 'selective approach'

Indian President K.R. Narayanan Thursday urged the world not to adopt a "selective approach" in its fight against terrorism. "I sincerely hope that in the effort to smoke out the enemy, let not the international coalition adopt a selective approach," he told a conference on international law in New Delhi.

but wants the struggle to also focus on separatists in Kashmir whom it brands "terrorists" and claims are trained and supported by Pakistan. On Tuesday, Powell condemned a suicide attack on the state legislature in Indian-administered Kashmir, which killed 38 people, as "terrorism" and assured visiting Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh that the coalition would not ignore such acts.

Annan tipped to win Nobel Peace Prize



AFP, Oslo

be a tightly-guarded secret until it is announced on October 12. But observers are practically unanimous in their belief that it will go either to Annan, the United Nations, or both. "My personal feeling is that it will definitely be Kofi Annan," Stein Toenneson, the head of the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO), told AFP.

Rumsfeld, Blair on tour to bolster support

The US-led anti-terror campaign gained momentum Thursday as top Western leaders toured key countries to rally more support and the pressure mounted on Afghanistan, the prime target of the global offensive. US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in Saudi Arabia, was to head on to Oman, Egypt and Uzbekistan, while British Prime Minister Tony Blair was scheduled to go to Moscow, with possible later stops in Oman and Pakistan.

Plane hijack turns out to be a hoax

AFP, New Delhi

Amid jitters over last month's terrorist attacks in the United States, commandos stormed an Indian airliner here on Thursday after receiving what turned out to be a false alarm that the plane had been hijacked. Civil Aviation Minister Shahnawaz Hussain said the reported hijacking of the Alliance Air Boeing 737 was a "false alarm" triggered by a call to air traffic controllers (ATC) that a plane had been hijacked.



Prakash Dixit (C) speaks to a reporter on Thursday at the domestic airport in New Delhi, as his wife (L) who was waiting for him breaks down in tears after his arrival. Dixit was a passenger on a plane from Bombay, which was incorrectly believed to have been hijacked, after a "false alarm". The plane landed in New Delhi and was stormed by commandos after air traffic controllers received a threat that turned out to be false.

Musharraf against imposing Afghan govt from abroad

'New Afghan govt must be broad-based, multi-ethnic'

Pakistan's president says any new Afghan government must be "broad-based" and "multi-ethnic" - and not imposed from abroad. President Gen. Pervez Musharraf outlined his position Wednesday as US Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld was travelling through the Middle East preparing allies for possible military strikes in Afghanistan. Saudi officials expressed concern Wednesday that a war on terrorism could create harmful "secondary effects" in the Muslim world.

Pakistan's longtime Afghan clients. Pakistan's population is heavily Muslim and the prospect of the government here joining in an alliance with non-Muslims to attack another Islamic state has angered the country's small but politically active Muslim parties. According to a summary of the president's remarks provided by the government information service, Musharraf said any retaliatory attack would not be aimed at Afghanistan and its 21 million people but "against terrorists and those who provide sanctuary to terrorists."

Taliban to put UK reporter on trial

REUTERS, Islamabad

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban plan to put British journalist Yvonne Ridley on trial for illegally entering the country, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said yesterday. "She will be tried because she broke the laws of our land and entered our country without permission," AIP quoted Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Mullah Abdur Rahman Zahid as saying.

Israel, PA to hold truce talks

AP, Jerusalem

Despite a bloody exchange that left eight Palestinians and two Israelis dead, Israel and the Palestinians agreed to resume high-level truce talks at the urging of a senior European envoy, officials said Thursday. However, there was little expectation that a meeting between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and two senior Palestinian negotiators, Ahmed Qaria and Saeb Erekat, would help stabilize the brittle cease-fire.

but that a time has not been set. On Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel was stopping talks with the Palestinians "until the Palestinian Authority has taken control and stop terrorism." The European Union envoy in the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos, met separately Wednesday with Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and urged them to resume truce talks, said a European diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Laden warned of 'major operation' against US

AFP, London

Osama bin Laden warned his associates that a "major operation" was in preparation against the United States shortly before the devastating September 11 terrorist attacks, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Thursday. The evidence against bin Laden for the attacks was absolutely beyond doubt, he told parliament in an emergency statement. "A range of people were warned to return to Afghanistan because of action on or around September 11," the prime minister added.

Moreover, one had played a "key role" in the deadly bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, and an attack on the USS Cole last year. He also said there was evidence "of a more direct nature" which it was not possible to disclose because it came from intelligence agencies and other sensitive sources. "For myself, and all the other government ministers who have studied the full information, we have absolutely no doubt that bin Laden and his network are responsible for the attacks on September 11."



File picture dated March 2, 2000 shows former US president Jimmy Carter (R) shaking hands with Saudi businessman Yahya bin Laden (2nd L) during his visit to Al-Hikmah University in the Red Sea port of Jeddah. Yahya, the representative of the Saudi Bin Laden Group company, is a brother of Saudi-born dissident Osama bin Laden. He told the press on Wednesday that five of Osama bin Laden's children currently live as normal citizens in Saudi Arabia, the eldest being 20 years old. Earlier, the kingdom announced that it would protect the relatives of the prime terror suspect just the same as all other citizens.

Lucky escape for Duchess of York

AP, London

The Duchess of York, who was due to be in the World Trade Center on the day of the terrorist attack, has described the unique spirit of New Yorkers in dealing with the tragedy. "The spirit of New York, I've never seen anything like it," the duchess told ITV television in an interview to be broadcast later Thursday. "The linking and gluing together of community, it's really unique. It's a worldwide example for people."



Newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Cambodia Hemayetuddin presented his credentials to King Norodom Sihanouk on October 1 at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. King Sihanouk warmly welcomed the new envoy and expressed his optimism that the friendly relations between the two states would be strengthened further in future.

'Afghan children caught between life & death'

AFP, Berlin

Hundreds of thousands, if not millions of children, will die of hunger and cold this winter in Afghanistan if emergency aid does not reach them in the next few weeks, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) special representative for Afghanistan warned Thursday. Appealing in Berlin for aid donations, Nigel Fisher said UNICEF was preparing for a "worst-case scenario" in the event of international action against the Taliban regime.

years of internal conflict, drought, hunger and cold, and now renewed displacement," he said. In addition to refugees reaching the country's borders, UNICEF is also planning for a further 1.25 million internally-displaced people, on top of one million people already internally-displaced before September 11, Fisher explained. "Most of these women and children are without the means or the capacity to reach the borders, and their own coping mechanisms are very near exhaustion. "So it's essential today to pursue all possibilities for immediate surface access to towns, to communities, and to concentrations of people displaced inside Afghanistan, and to provide support to Afghan organisations which are still able to operate inside Afghanistan today."

Taliban rulers profit from drug trade: US

AFP, Washington

Despite their public denunciations of drug trafficking, Taliban rulers in Afghanistan are directly profiting from opium trade and may even be trying to manipulate the market to maximise their gains, according to intelligence data released by the US government Wednesday. "Credible DEA source information indicates ties between the Taliban and the drug trade," said Asa Hutchinson, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, appearing before the House Government Reform Committee. "The Taliban directly taxes and derives financial benefits from the opium trade," he stressed. Last year, Afghanistan produced over 70 percent of the world's supply of illicit opium, according to the DEA.

produced in 2000, according to the DEA. At the same time, the price of a kilogram of opium skyrocketed in the region from 44 US dollars last year to 400 dollars before the terrorist attacks and 746 dollars after, the agency said. But according to US law enforcement officials, the price shock was not felt outside Southwest and Central Asia where many clandestine processing plants are located. That led the officials to conclude that previously accumulated stockpiles of opium mass were being fed to the market from Afghanistan at new prices, with middlemen absorbing the loss. "The price increase, which was limited to the immediate region and did not resonate to international markets, appeared to be a means for the Taliban to capitalise on a rise in the price of a commodity over which they exercise nearly total control," Hutchinson pointed. Such crop hoarding is typical for Afghanistan where up to 60 percent of the annual opium crop is traditionally stored for future sales, according to the DEA, which cited UN data.