

Sharon's comments 'unacceptable': W House

AFP, Washington Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's warning to the United States not to act like 1938 appeasers of German leader Adolf Hitler is "unacceptable," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said yesterday.

United States Thursday: "Don't try to conciliate the Arabs at our expense. We won't accept it." "I call upon the western democracies, and first of all the United States as the head of the free world, not to commit again the terrible mistake made in 1938 when European democracies sacrificed Czechoslovakia for a temporary solution," he said.



A model displays a diamond necklace at the 'Diamond Vivaha Jewellery - 2001' show at Kolkata organised by P.C.Chandra Jewellers yesterday.

Afghan students learn English, Urdu & Osama at school

AP, Islamabad Down a forbidding hill of mud, in a courtyard fashioned of clay and reeds, a group of Afghan children spend their days studying four subjects - English, Urdu, their native Pashtu, and Osama bin Laden.

The teacher, Sayed Waqab Hussain, has been running the school for a year. He says he uses bin Laden and the Taliban as a way to teach his students about Afghanistan, especially in recent days.

Most refugee camps are in the border areas of Peshawar and Quetta. But this city of mud - which residents call a "kachiabadi," meaning unfinished village - sits near Islamabad, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) from Afghanistan.

Ukraine defence minister denies missile shot down Russian plane

AFP, Kiev Ukraine's defence minister insisted yesterday that it was technically impossible that the Russian airliner which exploded and crashed into the Black Sea this week was accidentally shot down by Ukrainian missiles fired during a military exercise.

Alexander Kuzmuk acknowledged that Ukraine had been carrying out military exercises, which US intelligence sources have linked to Thursday's explosion. But he said, "All the missiles used in the exercises ... are equipped with self-destruct mechanisms" that would have prevented such an accident.

He added that the Sibir military Tu-154 was out of range of the missiles when the explosion sent it crashing into the sea. But defence analysts argued that the self-destruct mechanisms may have failed to activate due to the lack of maintenance widespread in the Ukrainian military since the end of the Soviet Union a decade ago.



The explosion was the result of a Ukrainian missile hitting the aircraft. But Russian fleet officials later denied the report. In Washington, a US official who spoke on condition of anonymity said it was "possible that this was a tragic accident and not terrorism" and that "at the moment we believe it was shot down by the Ukrainian government."

10 Palestinian children hurt in Israeli attack

AFP, Gaza City Ten stone-throwing Palestinian children were hit by live bullets yesterday during clashes with Israeli soldiers at the Karni border crossing into Israel, Palestinian hospital sources said.

One of the boys was seriously injured. The army opened fire after the children started pelting them with rocks, the source said.

UN states meet to focus on humanitarian aid for Afghans

AFP, Geneva Twenty-two United Nations member states began a two-day meeting with humanitarian agencies here yesterday to discuss a strategy for supplying badly-needed aid to Afghanistan.

Organised by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the closed-door discussions will also have a "political dimension", UNHCR Rued Lubbers told reporters on Friday.

As well as donor nations, countries bordering conflict- and drought-stricken Afghanistan, such as Pakistan and Iran which both host huge populations of Afghan refugees, will also take part in the "Afghan Forum".

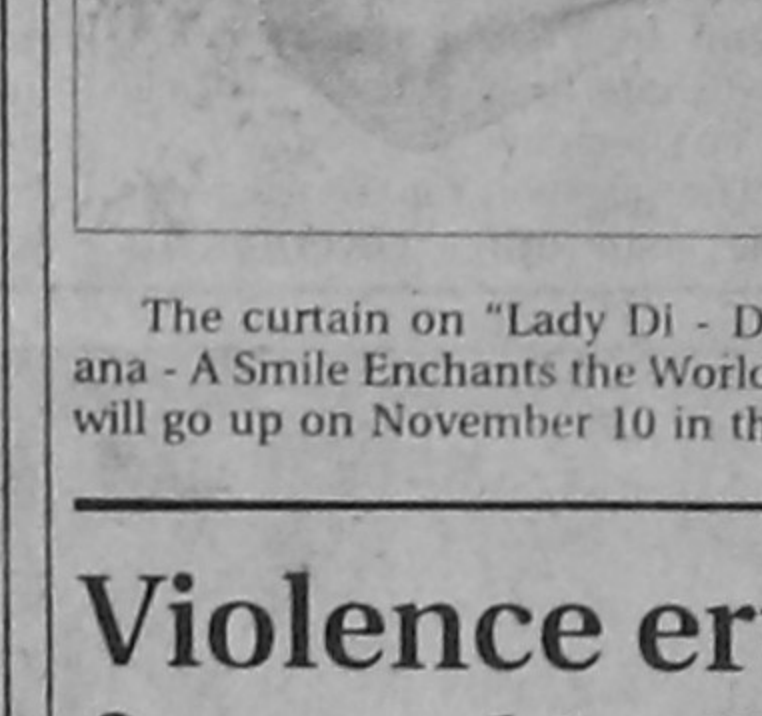
Russia will be present too, and a number of non-governmental organisations.

It's about developing in the first place a good strategy for the Afghans," Rubbers told a news briefing. He said they wanted to show "that we consider their problem to be our problem."

UN agencies, including the UNHCR, have urged Iran and Pakistan which closed their borders with Afghanistan shortly after the September 11 terror attacks on the United States, to reopen them.

Musical on Diana's life to premiere in Germany

AFP, Frankfurt A musical on the life of Diana will premiere in Germany next month, offering a "psychological portrait" of the Princess of Wales, its author said on Thursday.



The curtain on "Lady Di - Diana - A Smile Enchants the World" will go up on November 10 in the southwestern city of Saarbrücken with a cast of British actors singing and speaking in German.

Violence erupts around funeral in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi Police fired tear gas yesterday and made 200 arrests as violence broke out before and after funeral prayers for six Shiite Muslims gunned down in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi.

Witnesses said about 3,000 people had gathered outside a mosque in the city's fashionable Defence Colony neighbourhood ahead of the prayers. The prayers ended, resulting in more volleys of tear gas and police baton charges that injured some protesters.

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