INTERNATIONAL

Taliban 'hit list' REUTERS, Berlin

A German public television station said Monday it had obtained what it described as a "hit list" allegedly drawn up by Afghanistan's Taliban rulers and naming opponents supposedly marked for death.

The list, purportedly signed by Taliban spiritual leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in July, comprised the names of 106 opponents of the Taliban, including former Afghan King Zahir Shah, the producers of the ARD channel's Report Mainz investigative current affairs program said in a statement.

A journalist working on the program, due to be broadcast later Monday, told Reuters that the list, supposedly drawn up months before the present U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan, did not include names of Western leaders.

German police said they had received a copy of the list from ARD and were checking its authenticity.

Some of the names on the list, said to have been faxed to Taliban representations abroad, were followed by the word "killed," written in English, ARD said.

The rest of the four-page document was written in Pashto, language of the big Pashtun ethnic group in Afghanistan. A foreword to the list read: "A solution has to be found for those that live abroad. You have a free hand to decide what to do about these people.'

Canadian parliament partly closed in chemical scare

REUTERS, Ottawa

Parts of Canada's Parliament were sealed off on Monday after two separate incidents in which women reported rashes after handling a magazine and an envelope, but there was no immediate indication

Fire department staff in head-totoe hazardous material suits had stripped down and washed about 35 employees as a precautionary measure. At least one woman was sent to hospital but was reported to

"We are acting out of an abundance of caution. There is no reason at this moment to think there is a risk, but obviously we want to take every measure possible." Marlene Catterall, a senior official for the ruling Liberal Party told reporters.

Indo-Pak troops exchange fire in Kashmir

REUTERS, Srinagar

fierce gunbattle through Monday night across the frontier in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir even as Washington asked the nuclear rivals to cool tensions.

A senior security official in the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir state told Reuters yesterday that troops exchanged heavy fire along the border in the state's southern Jammu region.

"Tensions are high but the borders have been quiet since daybreak." he said.

The official said he was waiting for detailed reports of an earlier incident on the border on Monday in which the army launched heavy mortar fire at Pakistani posts in the same region to stop cross-border infiltration.



UK honours **NY Mayor**

AP, New York

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani received an honorary knighthood Monday from Queen Elizabeth II for his "outstanding help and support to the bereaved British families in New

The queen also conferred honorary titles - Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire - on the city's police and fire

commissioners The titles were announced during a City Hall visit by the queen's

son, Prince Andrew, the Duke of Giuliani, who was named Knight

Commander of Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, does not get the right to call himself "Sir Rudolph." But he can put the initials "K.B.E." after his name

Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik and Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen can use the initials "C.B.E.

Baby contracts anthrax as alert reaches into US senate

A seven-month-old boy has become the fourth person infected with anthrax in the United States and the deadly bacteria has also been detected in the office of the US Senate majority leader, as suspicion of a bioterror attack grows.

As fear of a disease that was wiped out decades ago spreads across the world, US President George W. Bush did not rule out entirely a connection with the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

Asked if he believed terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden could be behind the scare Bush said: "I wouldn't put it past him, but we have no hard evidence.

The baby Monday became the fourth person diagnosed with anthrax. The boy was diagnosed after visiting his father's workplace

ABC News President David Westin said it was believed the boy was infected with skin anthrax during a visit lasting several hours September 28.

. "I would emphasise this is cutaneous anthrax...that is of course the much less dangerous one, the one that can be treated with antibiotics," he said. "My understanding is that the child has responded well and the prognosis is excellent."

Westin said no other employees had shown any signs of contracting the disease and that so far no traces of anthrax had been found at ABC headquarters in New York.

Westin said there was no evidence to prove the baby had been infected with anthrax at the ABC building, although he said it was "quite a coincidence" following the confirmed case of anthrax Friday at the NBC News offices

nary tests found traces of anthrax in a letter sent to Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle. Staff members who handled the package were being treated with antibiotics.

Fielding concerns that the White House may be the next target, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said she was unaware of any tainted letters reaching Bush's home and refused to provide details of security precautions there.

"Like everybody else, we're being very cautious about what we open," she said.

Meanwhile, a 73-year-old employee of American Media Inc. in Florida was found to have the more serious respiratory form of the deadly disease.

Ernesto Blanco was previously

publisher who had tested positive for exposure to anthrax but who had not developed the illness. A detective and two laboratory technicians investigating the NBC case in New York have also been exposed to the bacteria.

have now been confirmed to have anthrax, while nine other people have been exposed but have not developed the illness. One person The two other people who devel-

oped the disease this month were employees of media companies, triggering fears of a concerted bioterrorist campaign.

A photo editor died October 5 from respiratory anthrax at American Media Inc. in Boca Raton, Florida, and an assistant to NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw is currently recovering after contracting



South Korean masked postal employees screen mail at a post office in western Seoul yesterday as global fears grow that Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network are using germ warfare. Four people, in the United States, have now been confirmed to have anthrax, which sometimes has spread in a letter.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair (L) shakes hands with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat inside No 10 Downing Street on Monday. Blair called for the creation of a "viable" Palestinian state after talks with Arafat.

2000 US elections plagued by problems

problems, from inaccurate voter

registration lists to difficulty in

recruiting workers, to making polling

places accessible, to needing more

voting assistance for military and

overseas voters, to a lack of guid-

ance on how to handle mismarked

ballots." said David Walker, US

comptroller general and head of the

asked for the investigation after the

contested 2000 election suggested

serious problems in the nation's

voting system. The GAO has been

investigating the problems since the

Daschle of South Dakota said the

report underlined the need for

Congress to act on election

changes as quickly as possible.

The report also found:

Senate Majority Leader Tom

beginning of the year.

Top lawmakers in Congress

Blair lends voice to creation of Palestinian state

British Prime Minister Tony Blair threw his support behind the creation of a Palestinian state on Monday as he pressed on with a U.S.-British diplomatic effort to win Arab backing for Western air strikes against Afghanistan.

After meeting Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in London, Blair told a news conference: "A viable Palestinian state, as part of a negotiated and agreed settlement, which guarantees peace and security for Israel, is the objective."

Such comments rarely go down well in Israel. But Blair wants to help revive stalled Middle East peace moves to shore up Arab and other Islamic support for the U.S.-led campaign in response to last

said that they still have polling

places that were not fully accessible

money necessary to improve their

election systems. A lack of money is

the primary problem elections

officials face in expanding efforts to

-- Elections officials said resolv-

-- The vast majority of elections

-- Despite states' attempts to

ing voter eligibility questions at the

polls is one of the major problems

officials were satisfied with their

make it easier for military and over-

seas residents to vote, many voters

need a better understanding of

procedures and deadlines for

registering and returning ballots.

they faced in the 2000 elections.

-- Many jurisdictions lacked the

to disabled voters

educate voters.

month's attacks on New York and Washington.

Arafat used the joint news conference with Blair to condemn last month's attacks on the United States and to urge Israel to resume Middle East negotiations "immedi-

After talks in Dublin later with Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and Foreign Minister Brian Cowen, Arafat called for international help to revive the stalled talks.

"I spoke to the prime minister tonight about the wonderful opportunity that we see open for reaching a permanent agreement between us and Israel... based on the establishment of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel." he said.

"We need Europe's help, need the US's help, we need the

Right-wing party

Defection of an ultra-nationalist bloc

from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's

broad-based government could

allow it to show a more conciliatory

face toward the Palestinians and the

United States, but Sharon doesn't

small parties announced its resigna-

tion from Sharon's government on

Monday, objecting to steps the

government took to ease restrictions

The exit does not endanger

Sharon's coalition government.

which still commands a solid major

ity of 76 out of the 120 members of

the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

The National Union bloc of two

defects from

AP, Jerusalem

see it that wav.

on the Palestinians.

Sharon's govt

international community's help in order to resume negotiations with our Israeli colleagues as soon as possible.

"I reiterate my commitment to peacemaking, to continue this endeavour to achieve a comprehensive, lasting and just peace for our children and the Israeli children." he

But Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said more had to be done before talks could get under

'What we have to do now is to start introducing the complete cease-fire, then we can start completing the negotiations," he told reporters during an official visit to

be most deadly

A painless heart attack, when suffer-

ers have shortness of breath and

discomfort in the chest but feel no

ache, can be the most deadly,

Heart attacks without pain are

common and people who have them

are twice as likely to die within a

month and have three times the risk

of dying within a year than other

patients because they may not get

group of patients represents a high-

risk population that is less likely to

receive treatment strategies of

proven diagnostic benefit," said

Professor Alistair Hall of Leeds

General Infirmary in northern

"We have shown that this sub-

British doctors said yesterday.

Painless heart attack can

Israel has noted a sharp reduction in the level of violence since

REUTERS, London

the best treatment.

on September 26. For its part, Israel has renewed

its internationally condemned trackand-kill strategy. It said it shot dead an Islamic militant at his home on Sunday and Palestinians blamed Israel for a blast that killed another militant on Monday.

Israeli Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said Arafat had ignored demands to round up Palestinians on its wanted list.

"He does not arrest terrorists from the list we gave him. Out of the list of 108 people we sent him, one has been arrested," Ben-Elieze told members of his Labour Party.

He said Israel would continue a strategy of "targeted prevention," the term Israeli officials use to describe the killing of militants suspected of planning attacks.

England.
Hall and his colleagues studied

nearly 2000 patients who had been

treated for a heart attack in 20

hospitals in northern England during

a three-month period. Slightly more

than 20 per cent did not have chest

When the researchers com-

ared the treatment and survival of

the two groups of patients, those

who had chest pains lived longer

pains during the attack

court issued an arrest warrant yesterday for former first lady Imelda Marcos on four counts of

The Sandiganbayan court said Fardinand Marcos was expected to would have to go to the court for eleased on 120,000-peso bail (dlrs

The charges stem from alleged ill-gotten gain during her time as minister of human settlements in the 1970s, according to court docu-

The charges are part of a much

than those who did not. 'This may result in part from a failure to use beneficial treatment the country strategies," Hall said in a report in

her collection of 1,200 pairs of the medical journal Heart. Heart disease is the major cause of death in most western countries. Smoking, high blood pressure and a family history of disease are major popular revolt in 1986.

"There was a wide range of -- In many jurisdictions, officials Jihad recruitment drive sweeps Pakistan tribal area

REUTERS, Peshawar

no training

AP, Washington

More than half the voting jurisdic-

tions nationwide experienced

problems conducting the 2000

election that involved problems with

equipment, poll workers and proce-

dures for overseas ballots, accord-

the General Accounting Office, an

investigative arm of Congress, said

the problems were found in almost

every area of elections and were

of voting jurisdictions nationwide

had significant problems, with half

finding at least some difficulty in

getting sufficient numbers of poll

workers. The investigation found

that many poll workers had little or

widespread around the country.

The study found that 57 per

The report released Monday by

ing to a government report.

Anger in Pakistan's often lawless tribal belt has fuelled a recruitment drive of thousands of young men eager to fight a jihad (holy war) if US troops invade neighbouring Afghanistan, tribal sources say.

They say Islamic fundamentalist parties kept on a tight leash elsewhere in Pakistan are openly running pro-Taliban recruitment and donation drives along the edge of the North West Frontier Province. where tribesmen claim special links with fellow Pashtun tribes across the border.

Tribe members say Mullah Mohammad Omar, spiritual leader of the fundamentalist Taliban movement ruling Afghanistan, has asked them not to enter the country until Washington -- which is now bombing Taliban targets daily -- sends in

The big question now is how many of these cheering untrained "jihadis" will actually fight and what difference they can make when faced with crack Western commando teams backed by the world's only superpower.

"They're willing to go and fight. When Mullah Omar calls, they will be ready," said Sabir Afridi. a trader in a smugglers' market and member of the Afridi tribe, the largest in Pakistan's Khyber Pass area. "Ninety per cent of the people

signing up are Afghan refugees anyway," said Wilayat Afridi, a local representative of the Pakistan People's party. "They're mostly uneducated people manipulated by the religious parties."

The Pashtuns, Afghanistan's largest ethnic group but a minority in Pakistan, have long ignored the 1893 Durand Line separating them. Islamabad has cracked down on

pro-Taliban fundamentalist parties in the rest of Pakistan, but cannot stop them in the tribal lands bordering eastern Afghanistan because tribal elders are traditionally the supreme authority there. Nobody knows how many men

may have signed up, and estimates have to be taken with a grain of salt, but the movement appears to have won thousands, perhaps a few tens of thousands, of signatories. "At least 5.000 have signed up in

the Khyber Agency alone and another 3,000 in Mohmand," said Rehmat Gul Afridi, a journalist specialising in the tribal belt. Recruiting was considerably stronger in North and South

Waziristan, two of the seven agencies or districts in the povertystricken tribal belt where about five million Pakistani Pashtun live Foreigners are barred from entering



Members of the Defence Council of Afghanistan, a coalition of religious fundamentalist parties in Pakistan, collect donations for Afghan humanitarian aid during a pro-Taliban rally in Karachi on Monday.

Former Soviet Union produced hundreds of tons of anthrax

From St. Petersburg in the north to the steppes of Kazakstan, from small towns near Moscow to the Ural Mountains and a barren island in the Aral Sea -- the old Soviet Union produced hundreds of tons of anthrax at its sprawling biological weapons facilities.

US officials suspect that some scientists of the former Soviet Union who worked on lethal germs have or may be helping regimes develop biological

Back in 1972, Moscow joined the Biological Weapons Convention banning germ warfare. Officials later admitted the country violated the treaty for 20 years, until then-President Boris Yeltsin signed an April 1992 decree promising to comply with the convention. Some research has clandestinely continued in later years under the

guise of defensive programmes, says Ken Alibek, who defected to the

United States in 1992 after serving as deputy head of the huge Biopreparat

venture linked to germ warfare. The Soviet and then Russian biological warfare programme was so vast that it employed up to 70,000 people by the time of its official termination. Among their achievements was developing anthrax said to be resistant to

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in an interview Monday on

CNN's "Larry King Live," said Russia was out of the biological weapons

"I would like to refer to today's statement by Russian officials, the minister of public health and another official in charge of chemical weapons, it's very important what they both said, that there are no programmes for the development of biological weapons in Russia, there is only research for medical purposes." Gorbachev said.

The country Gorbachev was running when it collapsed had facilities in Sergiev Posad and Obolensk near Moscow, the Institute for Extra-Pure Biological Preparations in St. Petersburg, in Kirov in central Russia, in Yekaterinburg in the Urals, in Aralsk and Stepnogorsk in Kazakstan and a test site on an Aral Sea island with the deceptive name of Vozrozhdeniye

(Resurrection), according to Russian officials. Attention now is focusing on Kazakstan, where a US military team helping to decommission a former Soviet biological weapons factory in Stepnogorsk found anthrax spores in a pipe last week, US Defence and State Department officials said.

The plant was built starting in 1982 to replace another Soviet factory in Yekaterinburg that accidentally released anthrax into the air in 1979, killing about 70 people. Yeltsin, then the local Communist Party boss in the city that was known as Sverdlovsk, has said he did not know about the germ warfare facility at the time, pointing to a KGB cover-up.

Kazakstan on Monday angrily denied any connection between "Ameri can citizens' infection with anthrax and the possibility of the anthrax breed from Kazakstan falling into the hands of extremists" and said it was meeting its commitments to prevent the spread weapons of mass destruction.

But back in 1999, according to The New York Times. US scientists found live anthrax spores on the Vozrozhdenive island, described as "the world's largest anthrax burial ground." Shared by Kazakstan and Uzbekistan, the island is becoming even more dangerous as the Aral Sea dries up.

The anthrax could have come from any of the nations that run suspected germ warfare programmes -- Iraq, Iran, Libya and Syria among others Russia has been cited as one potential source of some of their supplies.

A US intelligence report written in 1994 said Russia might have supplied biological warfare technology to North Korea and Iraq, suspected of having stockpiled thousands of gallons (liters) of anthrax.

Media reports also have said Russia was in negotiations on a multimillion dollar deal to sell Irag a huge fermentation tank that could be used to brew deadly germs. The Iraqi negotiators reportedly came from Al Hakam, a site where Iraq has admitted producing anthrax and botulinum toxin.

Russia has strongly denied the accounts, saying most of the equipment for developing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme originated in

Philippine court

orders arrest of Imelda Marcos AP, Manila

The Philippines' main anti-graft corruption.

the warrant for the flamboyant 72year-old widow of late dictator be served later in the day. She fingerprinting, then could be

wider case against Imelda on allegations of plundering the economy in 1968-86 while her husband ran Imelda is known worldwide for

shoes that were discovered after she and her husband fled their palace after being ousted by a

Fernandes re-inducted as defence minister

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee re-inducted George Fernandes into his cabinet on Monday despite protests from the mainstream opposition parties. Fernandes, who quit office on

March 15 this year on "moral grounds" in the wake of a news portal's expose of corruption in defence deals, takes over the defence portfolio from External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. Jaswant, given the additional

responsibility following Fernandes' resignation, was reported to have found managing two key portfolios a little too heavy and was understood to have requested the prime minister to relieve him of the dual responsibilities.

Fernandes' re-induction puts to rest intense speculation both in political quarters and the media over his return to the cabinet and, that too, with the defence portfolio ever since he guit following the tehelka.com expose.

Fernandes is one of the two persons reinstated as Vajpayee carried out a limited expansion of his jumbo-sized council of ministers. The other person is Harin Pathak, a BJP member in the Lok Sabha from Gujarat who too had to resign some months back after being named in a rioting case.

The Vajpayee government has set up a judicial commission, which is probing the tehelka.com expose, and it was felt at one stage that Fernandes might return to the

ministry only if cleared by the panel. Fernandes' political grouping Samata Party, a constituent of the Vajpayee government, had questioned the authenticity of video expose into corruption in defence deals. But the judicial commission only a few days ago rejected the party's charge that the videotapes were doctored or not genuine.