## INTERNÂTIONAL

## Laden leading Tora Bora defence in person

Osama bin Laden was said to be leading about 1,000 men "in person" in the defence of his bomb-blasted mountain hideouts in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday as tribesmen feuded over former Taliban stronghold Kandahar.

A spokesman for the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance said anti-Taliban forces had pushed bin Laden's Al-Qaida fighters out of their bases in the cave-riddled Tora Bora heights and were attacking them in nearby forests.

"Osama himself has taken the command of the fighting," Mohammad Amin told Reuters by satellite phone from the eastern city of Jalalabad. "He, along with around 1,000 of his people, including some Taliban officials, have now

dug themselves into the forests of Spin Ghar after we overran all their bases in Tora Bora,

"He (Bin Laden) is here for sure. The American planes have been carrying out regular

and severe bombings to kill him," he said, adding that at least one of the Saudi-born militant's Arab fighters had been killed in "very intense" fighting. There was no independent confirmation of Amin's account.

Waves of US B-52 heavy bombers and smaller warplanes pounded Tora Bora from daybreak, CNN reported from the scene.

It said Al-Qaida fighters dug in there had kept up a barrage of mortar fire for several hours on Saturday, cutting a road leading into Tora Bora and forcing their opponents'

An Afghan news service said US planes had dropped "nine mysterious coffin-shaped objects" overnight in the Melawa area of Tora Bora, about 55 km south of Jalalabad. The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP), quoting anti-Taliban fighters returning from the Melawa frontline, said the unidentified objects had been dropped by para-

cohabitation

Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in

as Sri Lanka's new prime minister

on Sunday, ushering in a period of

uneasy cohabitation with his arch-

rival, President Chandrika Kuma-

National Party (UNP) won Wedn-

esday's parliamentary elections,

beating Kumaratunga's People's

Alliance (PA) by 37 seats in the 225-

tation with the newly elected opposi-

tion-led parliament by allowing

Wickremesinghe, 52, to choose his

own cabinet, but tensions are sim-

reopen talks with Tamil Tiger sepa-

As the military campaign against the

Osama bin Laden, his Al-Qaida

officials here caution that Saddam

Hussein is far from the only "evil-

doer" that President George W.

The hopes for an end to five decades

of violent insurgency in India's north-

eastern state of Nagaland has bright-

ened with Prime Minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee holding peace talks in

Japan with top Naga tribal separat-

meeting in Osaka on Saturday with

Isak Chishi Swu and Thuigaleng

Muivah, chairman and general secretary respectively of the out-

lawed National Socialist Council of

Nagaland (NSCN), signalled that the

peace process was well underway. The NSCN is fighting for an inde-

Nagaland leaders said Vajpayee's

Wickremesinghe has pledged to

Kumaratunga avoided a confron-

member assembly

Wickremesinghe's United

Lanka enters era of uneasy

ratists in a bid to resolve Sri Lanka's

long-running civil war and faces a

formidable challenge in reviving an

economy mired in its worst perfor-

relationship were fired by Kumar-

atunga who tried to take the shine

off Wickremesinghe's hour of glory

by blocking a live broadcast of the

Wickremesinghe's brother was

banned from entering Kumar-

atunga's tightly-guarded home to

nearby temple to seek Buddhist

blessings at an impromptu cere-

they were blocked from carrying the

Wickremesinghe later drove to a

State television announced that

The television network owned by

The first shots in the uneasy

mance in more than 50 years.

official swearing-in ceremony.

cover the ceremony

As Pashtun tribes jostled for control of Kandahar, US Marines focused on the hunt for bin Laden and his aides, as well as Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar who was thought to have been holed up in the city before it changed hands. Karzai has said Omar must face a trial after missing his last chance to renounce

orism and repudiate bin Laden. "We're still looking for identified terrorists, specifically Al-Qaida," Marine Captain

Stewart Upton told reporters at a desert airbase near Kandahar on Saturday.
"We're not necessarily looking for Taliban soldiers."

The United States launched strikes on Afghanistan on October 7 to try to catch bin Laden and destroy his Al-Qaida network Upton said all Marine officers above the ranks of sergeant were carrying photographs

of key al Qaida members. Travelling by helicopter, in military vehicles and on foot, they had for the last two days, been monitoring possible escape routes from Kandahar after the Taliban's collapse, he

Pakistan has stepped up border controls, deploying extra men and helicopter gunships to try to prevent Taliban or Al-Qaida leaders slipping across the long, porous border with Afghanistan. Pakistani paramilitary troops took control of no man's land ahead of the frontier town of Chaman on Saturday night, border officials said. They said they had

ved back to a checkpost abandoned since Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Several Pashtun factions are vying for control of Kandahar and the border town of

The local tribal commander, interviewed in the Pakistani border town of Chaman, said ces loyal to Gul Agha were confronting those of Mullah Naqibullah, who took the Taliban's surrender, at the city's airport to the south.

swearing-in ceremony live because

of "obstacles" placed by Kumar-

Officials said the president was

"furious" over news reports that she

had agreed to shed the key finance

and defence ministries, which she

herself holds in addition to six other

handed over the finance and

defence portfolios to Mr. Wickrem-

esinghe are totally false," a state-

potential trouble ahead for Wickre-

mesinghe in shaping his cabinet

with Kumaratunga seemingly intent

on playing a central role in the new

government, despite the rout of her PA party in Wednesday's election.

The statement underscored

ment from her office said.

"Reports that the president

atunga's office.

The Taliban had given all their tanks and heavy weapons to Mullah Naqibullah wher they relinquished their birthplace and last bastion on Friday, the commander said

#### Indo-US joint naval exercise begins Dec 15

PTI, New Delhi

Capping a series of high level visits by top US defence brass here, India and United States will commence a three-day joint naval exercise off the Arabian sea coast from December

The search and rescue exercise in which two Indian naval warships, a coast guard and an American Naval Aircraft will take part, will be the first such exercise after the post-Pokhran Indo-US freeze.

Highly placed naval sources said they were hopeful that with the surrender by Taliban of their last stronghold, Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan, more US naval warships currently engaged in strikes in the war torn country could veer round to take part in the exercises.

The sources said five other navies including observers from Maldives and Sri Lanka could participate in the exercise, the first such venture since 1997.

commandos, the crew, and the

family of Haii Haider Qul, a senior

Northern Alliance commander in

Qul was not on board the flight.

Hashim and Mirza Nasiri, who had

surrendered in Kunduz province,

the Taliban's last stronghold in the

heading from Talogan to Kabul,

nearly 400 kilometres (240 miles) to

Khan said the helicopter was

Meanwhile, three Afghan militia-

men were killed in error overnight in

a US air raid against a mountain

fortress in eastern Afghanistan

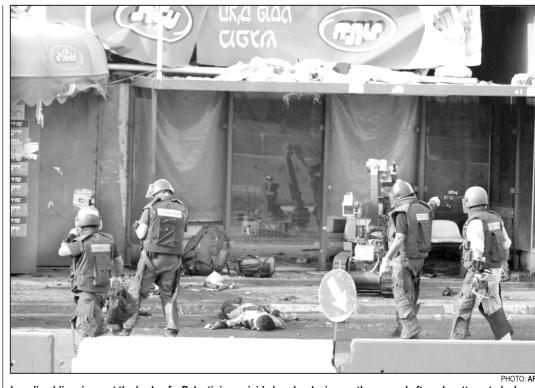
where Osama bin Laden and his al-

Qaeda supporters are believed

holed up, a local commander said

north, were also killed.

Two Taliban commanders. Arbab



Israeli soldiers inspect the body of a Palestinian suicide bomber laying on the ground after a he attempted a bomb attack at a bus station in Haifa on Sunday. Several people were injured. The Palestinian bomber, who survived the attempt to blow himself up, was shot dead by police, a police spokesman said.

### Israel occupies 2 areas of WB

#### 4 Palestinian cops killed, another suicide attack in Haifa

AFP. Ramallah

The Israeli army occupied overnight two Palestinian areas to the east of Tulkarem in the north of the West Bank, Palestinian witnesses said on

They said that tanks and infantry units had entered Anabta and Ramim, occupying the positions of forces charged with protecting Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. They had started arresting Palestinians, the witnesses said

giving no further details. The statements came as Israeli tanks destroyed two Palestinian police posts in the southern Gaza Strip late Saturday, following an overnight air strike on nearby security targets as Tel Aviv piled on pressure on Arafat to rein in mili-

A senior member of the joint

security liaison committee with Israel, Khalid Abu al-Ula, said several tanks rolled 500 metres (yards) into farmland east of the city of Rafah and blew apart the police posts with shells and machine guns. "Israeli tanks made another

incursion near Rafah, between Rafah and Khan Yunis, on the main road east of Morag settlement, and they destroyed two national security police posts," he said, adding local gunmen returned fire but no-one Moreover, four Palestinian police

officers have been killed by Israeli soldiers overnight during an operation in Anabta in the north of the West Bank, Palestinian security services said on Sunday.

The killings came after the Israeli army occupied Palestinian controlled Anabta and nearby Ramim, occupying a building belonging to

the personal guard of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and arresting Palestinians there, the source said. The security officials said the

police officers were travelling in a jeep when the Israeli soldiers opened fired on them without warning. They were all hit in the head. Two other police officers at the scene were also injured. An Israeli army spokesman

confirmed that an operation had been carried out in the two places to "stop Palestinians involved in terrorist activities." Meanwhile, several people were

injured early on Sunday in an attempted suicide bomb attack at a bus station in Haifa, Israel's military radio said.

The Palestinian bomber, who survived the attempt to blow himself up, was shot dead by police, a police

#### Nepal's army keeps up pressure on Maoists

21 killed in N Alliance

Takhar.

the south

helicopter crash

Twenty-one people including cap-

tured Taliban fighters and the family

of a senior Northern Alliance com-

mander have been killed in helicop-

ter crash, an alliance commander

The Northern Alliance helicopter

went down on Saturday in bad

weather about five kilometres (three

miles) southwest of Talogan, the

capital of northeastern Takhar

province, said commander Daud

helicopters crashed yesterday at

11:30 am and 21 people were mar-

tyred," Khan told AFP.

"Due to bad weather one of our

The dead included Haji Mustafa,

a former body guard of the slain

Northern Alliance commander

Ahmad Shah Masood, Alliance

said Sunday

AFP, Kathmandu

with at least five killed in clashes with troops in the past 48 hours, according to media reports and a defence ministry statement.

A ministry press release said Sunday that one rebel had been killed by troops in the country's southwest late Friday after he refused to surrender to

(56 miles) northwest of Kathmandu. "At least four Maoist terrorists were killed and dozen others arrested in a

of Nuwakot," the newspaper said. "The arrested have been taken to the district headquarters," it said,

Gorkha and Chitwan district, to the west of southwest respectively. The government deployed military personnel across the country last month after a state of emergency was declared following Maoist attacks in

#### Karzai begins his quest to resolve Kandahar dispute

revive talks. The previous round of

discussions stalled after senior

visas by the Indian government to

Hurriyat leaders were not given

visit Pakistan, where they wanted to

consult with other Kashmiri leaders

been killed in Indian-administered

Kashmir since the start of a Muslim

separatist insurgency in 1989.

At least 35.000 people have

and groups.

Nepal's army was continuing its campaign against Maoist rebels Sunday,

The Kathmandu Post English language daily meanwhile reported Sunday that four more rebels were killed in Nuwakot district, 90 kilometres

adding Chogate is a Maoist stronghold. The ministry also said security forces arrested more Maoist activists in

different parts of Nepal which claimed scores of lives, mainly army and

#### India forms group to talk to APHC

India's federal government has set up a special group to hold peace talks with Kashmir's main separatist alliance, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Sunday.

The group will be headed by K.C. Pant, deputy chairman of India's economic and social policy thinktank Planning Commission and India's previous pointman in Kashmir. He will be joined by top-

PTI said the Hurriyat, which intermediaries with a request to Afghanistan's leader-in-waiting men seen on the streets Sunday. As Agha and Naqibullah squared

Hamid Karzai was in Kandahar Sunday in a bid to resolve a dispute between rival factions threatening to return the province to pre-Taliban chaos, a family source said. Karzai had gone to the Islamic

militia's former bastion to bring ormer Kandahar governor Gul Agha and the man handed control of the province after the Taliban surrender, Mullah Naqibullah, to the negotiating table and set up a power-sharing Shura (council) to administer the province, the source said Karzai brokered a deal late last

week to ensure a handover of the Taliban's headquarters to former Mujahedin commander Naqibullah, but the agreement has angered Agha who has since occupied his former official residence in the city.

"Hamid arrived this morning. He is hoping to form a Shura for the province after the warring groups agree to settle their differences," the Karzai family source said.

The talks began as evidence emerged that the situation in the city heard during the night and armed

up to each other, residents said there had been looting of private property.

"The offices of international aid groups and governmental premises were looted on the very first day (Friday) by armed and local people. ian houses." a Kandahar resident told AFP by telephone in Kabul.

The resident said that armed men were making up any excuse as a pretext to justify their crime spree.

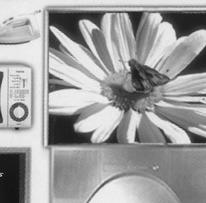
"They have been stealing private cars. They just want to find a pretext, for example having links with the Taliban, then your house and car will be looted," the resident said. Some shops were open Sunday

gunfire could be heard during the day but the bombing of the city by US jets seemed to have been halted overnight although warplanes could still be heard flying at night.

The resident also reported seeing Westerners entering the governor's residence on Saturday afternoon after six cars arrived at the building.

"There were Americans armed men of Gul Agha. They might have talked with Gul Agha himself and after a few hours they left towards the airport.







pendent tribal homeland in **MRANGS GROUP** "We sincerely hope the meeting

between the prime minister and the two NSCN leaders in Osaka could pave the way for a permanent solution to the vexed insurgency problem in the state," said G Gainam, leader of the Naga Hoho, the apex tribal council in Nagaland. "Any move that could bring peace

PM raises Nagaland peace hopes

to our state is welcome," Gainam told

During the meeting, the two sides stressed on the need for a "negotiated, peaceful, political settlement" of the insurgency problem in Nagaland. besides agreeing to hold further

The NSCN had entered into a ceasefire with the federal government in August 1997 following which

Jessore -72743

Comilla - 017 100127

Chandpur- 5848 Pabna - 64387 Natore- 62174 Bogra - 72188 Rajshahi - 775236







Khulna - 731134 Satkhira - 2113 Chittagong (Sole Distributor) Sholoshahar-651021 Mirpur - 9005151 Mymensing - 54481 Dhaka Kakrail - 405673 Jamalkhan Road-612072 Ibrahimpur-9871231 Kishoreganj - 55070 Kawranbazar-9132125 Head Off.-8123825 Agrabad - 715081 Dinaipur Tejgaon-8814180 Moulavibazar-53198 latrabari-7412522 Cox'sbazar - 64676 Barisal - 55296 Kalabagan-9127278 Gulshan- 8827773 Sylhet - 715793 Hatkhola-9666308 Faridpur-64958 Malibagh-8322886 Shamoly- 9131349 Uttara - 8920377 017 100120

# Female supporters greet India's main opposition Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi (C) during birthday celebrations at her residence in New Delhi on Sunday. A large contingent of party workers and admirers greeted

Sonia to mark her 56th birthday.

**US** ponders next terror target And, they stress that an overt

network and the Taliban winds down only possibility under consideration. in Afghanistan, debate among US Rogue regimes and extremist officials is growing over who, what, groups in dozens of countries in the where and how the United States Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa should strike next in its war on and Latin America have been identified by the US government as Although speculation in terrorists or terrorism sponsors and Washington and other world capisanctioned but neither Bush nor any tals is running high that Iraq is the of his senior advisors will say where most likely candidate to be targeted,

they will focus next. "I am going to work with our friends and allies to rout terror

military operation against a particu-

lar nation or organisation is not the

do is signal to the enemy where we might strike next. I will not tip our hand in any way, shape or form.'

"But I will tell you this," he said. they will be hunted down. And those nations, which harbour a terrorist or feed a terrorist or hide a terrorist or clothe a terrorist better be aware of the United States and our friends.

several rounds of peace talks were

held abroad between the militant

leadership and government emissar-

ceasefire accord has been frequently

violated by NSCN leaders as they

have carried out violent attacks

But state officials have alleged the

wherever it exists," Bush said last

"Those who want to commit terror against the United States or our friends and allies must beware that because they will be brought to

level government officials. comprises nearly two dozen separate Kashmiri political groups, had contacted Indian government