

## UN force won't be allowed to patrol Kabul: N Alliance

### Kandahar standoff ends

AFP, Kabul  
The UN-mandated security force to be deployed in the Afghan capital will not be allowed to patrol the city, top defence ministry spokesman Mohammad Habel said Monday.

The international peacekeepers "can only patrol places where the new government will meet. It was agreed that our own forces will keep security in Kabul," he told AFP.

His comments echoed an interview with AFP last week by Northern Alliance Defence Minister General Mohammad Qasim Fahim, who will keep his post in the new government.

Fahim insisted last week that any UN-mandated security force in Afghanistan should limit itself to guarding government offices.

The ministry spokesman said the multinational force should not be deployed until after December 22, when the interim administration takes power in Kabul.

The incoming prime minister, Hamid Karzai, would take the decision on the arrival of the peacekeepers, Habel said.

"It's not true they (the peacekeepers) will come before the establishment of the new administration. After that it will be clear whether British or other peacekeeping forces will come. This is a decision that will be made by Karzai, the head of the new authority, when he comes to Kabul," the spokesman said.

"If he finds it necessary (it will happen), but if Northern Alliance forces can keep security, it will not be necessary," the official said.

The UN's senior peacekeeping official said Friday in London he wanted

the multinational force to begin deploying in Afghanistan by December 22. Jean-Marie Guehenno said it was important that the force, which would act as a "stabilising" influence under UN authority, was put in place "as soon as possible."

British media reported on Monday that London is prepared to send 3,000 troops or more for an international peacekeeping force to coincide with the start of the new government on December 22.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's newly named leader-in-waiting used his negotiating skills Sunday, ending a standoff that threatened to return Kandahar to pre-Taliban chaos, as US forces continued their intense bombing of the Tora Bora region, where Osama bin Laden is believed to be hiding.

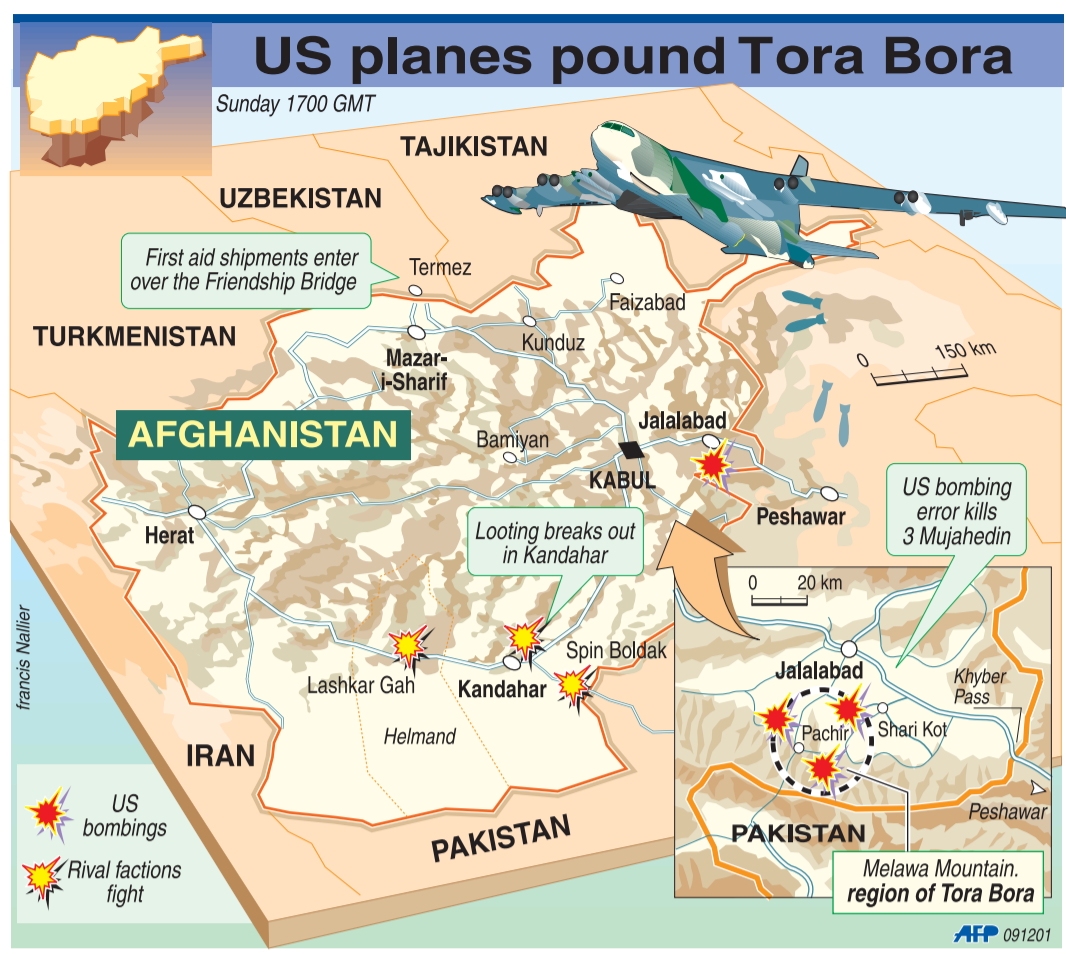
Afghanistan's incoming interim leader, Hamid Karzai, told AFP that he had successfully brokered a deal between Mullah Naqibullah, to whom the Taliban had surrendered the city, and Gul Agha, a former governor.

The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press said that seven people were killed and many more injured in fierce fighting overnight between rival clans seeking control of Lashkar Gah, 150 kilometres west of Kandahar.

One commander, however, pledged Sunday not to resort to force despite his dissatisfaction with the makeup of the interim government.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum said the historic power-sharing deal "did not work out as I would have liked."

"But in any event, there will be no war," he said. "The dividing out of power will not now go on by means of force. We will hold negotiations in Kabul. The rule of law will return."



## Manila declares truce

AP, Manila

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a Christmas holiday ceasefire starting Monday with communist guerrillas to allow a break in an upsurge of fighting and rebel attacks.

Arroyo said she hoped the ceasefire, to last until Jan 6, would help restart stalled peace talks.

The guerrillas declared on Sunday that they were ready for a one-month truce starting on December 15.

Luis Jalandoni, a Netherlands-based leader of the Marxist umbrella, the National Democratic Front, said rebels throughout the Philippines have been ordered to shift to a "defensive mode" once the government agrees to a ceasefire.

## Sad demise of 3 teenagers on US rail track

AP, Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania

An Amtrak Acela Express train traveling 100 mph (160 kph) rounded a curve and killed three teenagers who were walking on the railroad tracks with their backs to the train, authorities said.

None of the roughly 300 passengers was hurt.

The three victims were among a group of five teenagers trespassing Sunday in the industrial area in suburban Philadelphia, police said. Access to the rail tracks had been blocked by a fence.

"We don't know if they heard the train or not," Falls Township acting Police Chief Neil Harkins said. "The train engineer saw them and he tried to stop and was unable to do so and they were struck."

## Manila ready to take back Misuari

AFP, Manila

Philippines authorities are ready to take custody of renegade Muslim leader Nur Misuari, expected to be deported from Malaysia next month, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said Monday.

Manila expects Kuala Lumpur to deport the former separatist guerrilla leader after the Malaysian police announced they did not have sufficient evidence to link him to kidnappings by Abu Sayyaf gunmen at Malaysian resorts last year.

The Abu Sayyaf is a Filipino Muslim gang based in the southern Philippines.

"By the time Misuari arrives, which is expected to be sometime in January -- that is if the Malaysian government will send him to us -- by that time we will be ready to face him and he will be ready to face the charges," Perez told reporters.

## Martin Creed lights up UK's Turner Prize

AFP, London

An English artist, Martin Creed, was Sunday awarded Britain's top recognition for contemporary art. The Turner Prize, for his work "The Lights Going On and Off" -- featuring an empty room with a light being repeatedly switched on and off.

US pop singer Madonna, who resides in London, handed the 33-year-old minimalist artist the award and its 20,000 pound (32,000, 29,000 dollar) prize money in a ceremony in the capital.

Creed has gained a reputation as an artistic prankster for previous works that have included a lump of Blu-Tack and a screwed up ball of paper.

A spokesperson for the Tate Britain gallery, which is exposing the works of Creed and the other Turner contestants, said the winning piece was "emblematic of mortality".

## Troops kill 5 militants in Kashmir

AFP, Jammu

Indian troops on Monday killed five Muslim militants in Indian-controlled Kashmir as they were trying to cross over the border into Pakistan, a defence ministry spokesman said.

Troops guarding the Line of Control -- the de facto border separating India- and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir -- shot the militants after they had ignored a warning and opened fire on the security forces, the spokesman said.

They were attempting to cross over the border at Mandi in Kashmir's Poonch district, 225 kilometres (140 miles) northwest of the state's winter capital Jammu.

## Lankan opposition rejects power-sharing with UNP

AFP, Colombo

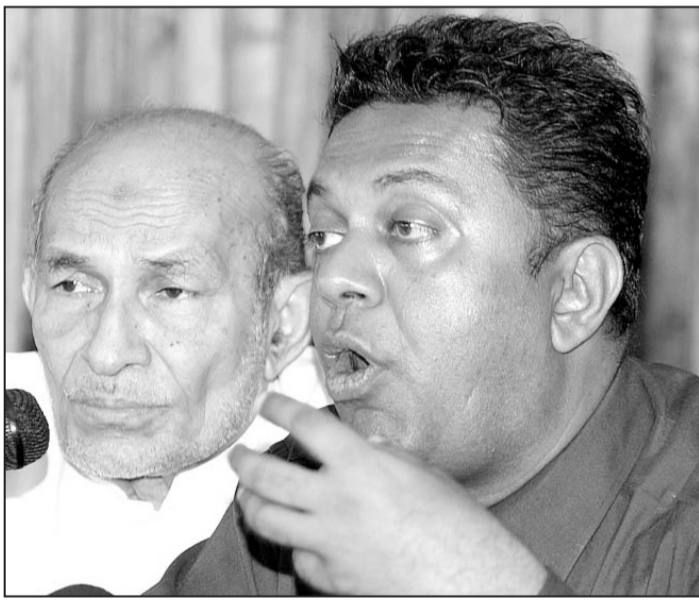
Sri Lanka's main opposition rejected a power-sharing offer Monday, the first day in office of Prime Minister Ranil Wickre-mesinghe, underscoring an uneasy cohabitation government ahead.

Wickremesinghe, 52, was sworn in Sunday by his arch political rival, President Chandrika Kumaratunga, and was set to open talks with smaller political parties to form a government of national reconciliation.

But Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA), which was relegated to the opposition after it lost Wednesday's parliamentary election, announced it would not accept Wickremesinghe offer of ministerial jobs.

"We will not oppose for the sake of opposing. We will support the good things that they have promised to do, but we will not accept any portfolios," PA spokesman Mangala Samaraweera told reporters here.

The prime minister hopes to name the cabinet either Tuesday or Wednesday.



Former government minister Mangala Samaraweera speaks to reporters in Colombo on Monday rejecting an offer of power sharing by new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe whose United National Party won the December 5 elections. Samaraweera, who is now an opposition member, accused Wickremesinghe's party of attacking defeated candidates and their supporters. At left is former media minister, Alavi Moulana.

## KL detains 500 migrants

AP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian police with dogs and backed by helicopters arrested more than 400 people suspected of working illegally during a raid on an open air market near Kuala Lumpur at the weekend, authorities said.

The raid comes amid a government crackdown on illegal foreign workers -- including plans to whip people who enter Malaysia without valid papers -- and moves to reduce the number of legal foreign workers to stop an outflow of money during the current economic downturn.

Human Resource Minister Fong Chan Onn was quoted Monday as saying that an estimated one million foreign workers in Malaysia were sending about five billion ringgit (dlsr 1.3 billion) in foreign exchange out of the country each year.

Immigrants from neighbouring Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as other poor countries in Southeast and Central Asia, are commonly employed in Malaysia, mostly in low-paying jobs such as plantation labourers and housemaids.

Among harsher measures announced since an immigration detention center was destroyed by rioters last week, the government has said that from next year foreigners who enter the country illegally would face whipping, followed by deportation within two weeks.

## US issues ultimatum to Israel, PA to halt violence in 48 hrs

### Palestinian militant groups suspend suicide attacks for a week

AFP, Jerusalem

US special envoy Anthony Zinni said Sunday if Israel and the Palestinians do not make substantial progress in stopping escalating violence within 48 hours he will quit his task to find a lasting ceasefire, an Israeli official close to security talks told AFP.

The retired Marine Corps general said "if there isn't substantial progress in the next 48 hours" he would go back to Washington, according to the Israeli official.

Zinni delivered his stern warning at a US-mediated joint security meeting held to seek a way out of 14 months of violence that has hit new peaks in the past week, with a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings being met with Israeli air and tank strikes on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A Palestinian security official stressed that the warning to halt the violence applied to "both sides."

The situation will be reviewed at a fresh security meeting in two days, the Israeli official said.

"The Palestinian Authority is ready to deploy all efforts and to cooperate so that Zinni's mission succeeds," Palestinian presidential secretary Tayeb Abdelrahim told AFP Sunday night.

"It is necessary that this mission succeeds because the alternative is more spilling of blood for both sides," he said.

"The Palestinian Authority will deploy all possible efforts to fulfill its commitments and the Israeli side must cooperate with Zinni in halting its aggression and lifting the blockade," he said, alluding to the devastating closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Zinni was sent by Washington on November 26 to find ways of defusing the Middle East crisis that has left more than 1,060 people dead.

Seventy-one people have died since he arrived, with Palestinian Islamists launching a wave of suicide bombings which have been met with Israeli air raids to punish Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his police for failing to stop them.

Meanwhile, four Palestinian militant groups, including the armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have decided to suspend suicide attacks in Israel until the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, according to a statement received

## Delhi moves to revive talks with Kashmir rebels

AP, New Delhi

India is making fresh efforts to revive political dialogue with Islamic separatists in troubled Kashmir state, a senior official said Monday.

A group of intelligence and security officials is being set up to persuade at least moderate separatist groups to join mainstream politics and contest next year's election to the state legislature, the official said.

He spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman K. C. Pant, who is also New Delhi's chief negotiator in Kashmir, would head the group, the official said. The group also

includes A. S. Dulhat, adviser on Kashmir affairs in the prime minister's office.

The talks, however, would resume only after an expected green light is given from Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee when he returns Tuesday from a state-visit to Japan, the official said.

The move to revive the political dialogue with the separatists comes ahead of the Jan. 4-6 summit of South Asian countries in Nepal, where Vajpayee is expected to discuss Kashmir with Pakistani president Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Dozens of Islamic separatist groups have been fighting since 1989 for Kashmir's independence from India or its merger with mostly Muslim Pakistan.

## DPRK ready to join 5 more anti-terrorism treaties

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has told a visiting Swedish delegation that the Stalinist country is ready to join five more anti-terrorism treaties, a report said Monday.

Under pressure following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the North signed two treaties in November against funding terrorism and hostage taking.

It is also willing to sign five other conventions related mainly to fighting terrorist bombings and protecting nuclear materials.

Yonhap news agency said. The North's intention was expressed by Foreign Minister Paek Nam-Sun in talks with a Swedish delegation led by Ambassador Borje Luunggren, it said.

Luunggren stopped in Seoul last week to brief South Korean officials on his trip to Pyongyang December 1-4.

Government officials declined to confirm the report. But the South's ruling Millennium Democratic Party issued a statement welcoming the North's reported move.

## Indian film sparks violence

AFP, Jodhpur

A new Indian film "Bawandar" (Storm), based on the true story of a woman activist who was allegedly gang raped in 1992, has sparked violence in her native desert state of Rajasthan, police said Monday.

Police spokesman B.L. Soni told AFP from the state capital Jaipur that the administration had posted riot police in front of theatres screening the movie.

"The film has roused strong emotions, including anger. We have stationed riot police in front of cinema halls screening Bawandar after several cases of arson, stone-throwing and violence," said Soni.

## Director Jagmohan Mundra's film tells the story of 47-year-old Bhanwri Devi, a social activist who was allegedly gang raped on September 22, 1992 by men in her village for trying to stop a child marriage.

Devi had called the police to stop the marriage of a three-year-old girl belonging to the low-caste Hindu Gujjar community. She was later "taught a lesson" by five Gujjar men in her village.

Among those protesting outside cinemas, many were members of the Gujjar community who say the film has portrayed them in an unfair light.

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## Sudan extends emergency for one more year

AFP, Khartoum

The Sudanese parliament passed Sunday President Omar el-Beshir's request to renew Sudan's state of emergency for another year, state radio announced.

Beshir argued that the state of emergency, first imposed in 1999, needed to be extended due to the country's war with Christians and animists in the south, armed robbery in western Sudan and the tense state of global affairs since the September 11 attacks on the United States, the radio said.

Beshir said he hoped that the state of emergency could be lifted after next year.



Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (L) invites US Secretary of State Colin Powell (R) to start talks during their meeting in Moscow on Monday. Powell is making his first visit to Russia as head of US foreign policy for talks with Russian President Putin that will focus on bilateral ties, with particular reference to differences over strategic weapons, and on rebuilding post-war Afghanistan.

## Powell, Ivanov hail ties

AFP, Moscow

US Secretary of State Colin Powell hailed the post-September 11 acceleration in closer relations between Washington and Moscow Monday as he prepared to meet Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov and President Vladimir Putin.

"I really believe that our relationship has accelerated since the tragic events of September 11. We have come together to combat this terrible scourge of terrorism," he told reporters as he went into talks with Ivanov.

Ivanov noted that Russian-American relations had achieved an "extraordinarily intensive dialogue" in recent weeks but stressed that progress on the diplomatic front should be converted into treaties.

Powell is making his first visit to Russia as head of US foreign policy for talks that will focus on bilateral ties, with particular reference to differences over strategic weapons, and on rebuilding post-war Afghanistan.

He arrived in Moscow following a whirlwind tour of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, former Soviet republics in central Asia which are cooperating with the United States in the war in Afghanistan.

Powell is due to meet Putin mid-afternoon before flying on to Germany. He said the agenda for his talks would also include the Middle East and the situation in the Balkans.

Greeting "my friend Igor," whom he noted he had met six times already this year, Powell remarked that he had visited Moscow several times previously during his career as a professional soldier in the framework of the Cold War.

## Terror fund originated from Kolkata?

SAKYASEN MITRA, Kolkata

The date of the e-mail is August 18, 2001. The name of the sender is Omar while the name of the receiver is Aftab Ansari.

The mail is in Hindi but it is written in Roman form and it states, "Atta ko rupiya bheja gaya hai." Translated into English it means, "The money that you sent has been given to Atta."

Detectives in Kolkata investigating into the kidnapping of Partha Roy Burman, one of the directors of Khadim are now sure that the mail was sent to none other than Mohammed Atta, one of the masterminds of the attack on the World Trade Centre.

They are also sure that the ransom that was paid by Khadim to

secure the release of Partha Roy Burman has been used to plan and execute the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

The authorities at Khadim have never confirmed whether they paid a ransom amount for the release of their director. However, detectives are quite sure that an amount of 3.75 crore rupees (approximately 750,000 US dollars) was paid for his release.

Aftab Ansari, who controlled everything over the cell phone from Dubai, conducted the entire operation. He had connections with the Al Qaida and he supplied them with the necessary funds to plan the horrific attacks. Partha Roy Burman was abducted on July 25 this year.