

## More prisoners sent to US base in Cuba

AFP, Kabul  
A second group of prisoners captured in the Afghan war was en route to Cuba Monday, as US forces pursued fugitive Taliban and al-Qaida militants by pounding a former base in eastern Afghanistan. Meanwhile, police in Pakistan have arrested more than 1,000 Islamic radicals as part of President Pervez Musharraf's promised crackdown on extremism, which was cautiously welcomed by nuclear rival India. The "unlawful combatants" captured by the US-led coalition against terror fighting in Afghanistan were aboard a US military C-17 cargo plane that departed for Cuba at 1730 GMT Sunday, said a spokesman for the US Central Command, which coordinates the US campaign in central Asia. "The preparations were exactly the same as for the first flight," Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Martin Compton said in a telephone interview, with the prisoners shackled, hooded and each escorted by two members of the US military. Compton said there would be no regular pattern for the transport of the detainees to Cuba, noting that "weather, air availability and the ability of Guantanamo to accept" prisoners would affect future transports. The first batch of 20 detainees -- suspected members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network and Afghanistan's former ruling Taliban militia -- spent their second day in prison at a US naval base in Cuba Sunday.

## 'No military de-escalation until Pak terrorism ends'

AFP, New Delhi  
India ruled out Monday any immediate military de-escalation on its border with Pakistan and warned President Pervez Musharraf that he would have to move "fast" in implementing a pledged crack-down on extremist groups. "The mobilisation is complete and any effort at de-escalation can come only, I repeat only, if and when the cross-border terrorism is effectively stopped," Defence Minister George Fernandes told reporters on the eve of his official visit to the United States. The defence minister said the military build-up on the border had been triggered by "terrorist" activities emanating from Pakistan, especially the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament. "The moment these incidents end on the border and within our territory it is the time to think of de-escalation," he said. The neighbours have amassed hundreds of thousands of troops on their shared border and exchanged tit-for-tat sanctions since the parliament attack, to which India had threatened to respond with the same force the United States used against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. Fernandes welcomed Saturday's national address by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who pledged to crack down on extremist

groups operating in Pakistan, but said the president's words would have to be matched by deeds. "The promises made by the Pakistani president have to be translated into action," he said. Fernandes gave no time frame for Musharraf to implement his crack-down, but said the Pakistani president should be "aware that he has to do it fast" given the tense military stand-off on the border. US President George W. Bush had telephoned the leaders of both India and Pakistan on Sunday, following Musharraf's address. Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee "agreed to reduce tensions," White House spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters in Washington, adding he was unaware whether specific steps to do so were discussed. "We are keen to resolve issues peacefully, but if that does not work, we may be left with no option," Fernandes said, adding that India's armed forces were ready for "any eventuality." "Commitments that are not implemented cannot take us anywhere," he said. Pakistani officials said Monday that police had rounded up more than 1,200 religious extremists with hundreds more arrests overnight in a sweeping crack-down on five groups banned by Musharraf.



PHOTO: AFP  
Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji (L) offers a hand to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee as Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh (C) looks on during an official welcoming ceremony at the presidential palace in New Delhi on Monday. Premier Zhu is on a six-day official visit to India, thought to be crucial in the context of heightened tension between arch rivals India and Pakistan.

## Indo-Pak leaders agree in phone calls with Bush to reduce tensions

AFP, New Delhi  
Nuclear armed rivals India and Pakistan have agreed in telephone calls with US President George W. Bush to reduce building tensions that have seen troops mass on their shared border, the White House said. Bush telephoned the leaders of the rival neighbours Sunday after Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's pledge to crack down on extremists -- a move cautiously welcomed by India. Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee "agreed to reduce tensions," White House spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters in Washington, adding he was unaware whether specific steps to do so were discussed. Musharraf announced the crackdown in a widely welcomed and keenly anticipated address Saturday in which he banned five militant groups, including two New Delhi has blamed for the December 13 attack on its parliament. The attack, in which 14 people including five attackers were killed, escalated the tensions between the countries, already feuding over the Himalayan region of Kashmir. The neighbours have amassed an estimated 800,000 troops on their shared border and exchanged tit-for-tat sanctions since the attack. India had threatened to respond to the attack with the same force the United States used against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh cautiously welcomed Musharraf's announcement, but said New Delhi would judge Musharraf's commitment by "concrete action taken" against "cross-border terrorism". "The lessening of tension on the border is entirely dependent on the steps taken by Pakistan on operationalising Musharraf's measures announced in his speech," Singh said. He added that though India "cannot expect immediate action" and was willing to play its part in defusing a month-long stand-off. Hours after Musharraf's address, Pakistan police began sealing offices of the banned religious extremist and militant groups and arresting their members.



PHOTO: AFP  
Star Kate Winslett (L) talks with Cherie Booth, wife of British Premier Tony Blair, during a press reception at the Washington Hotel in central London on Sunday for the premiere of 'Iris' at the Curzon Mayfair. Winslett and Judi Dench interpret the story of Booker Prize-winning novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch who died in 1999.

## Mystery shrouds killing of Dutch 'militants' in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar  
Confusion Monday shrouded the killing of two Dutch nationals in Indian-administered Kashmir, with local media saying the two were tourists and not militants as claimed by India's Border Security Force (BSF). BSF personnel shot dead the two Dutch nationals in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital, on Sunday, saying they had attacked one of their patrols with knives. But local newspapers in Kashmir were running a different version of events on Monday. "The two took umbrage at the molestation of a local woman by the patrolling party and in the ensuing scuffle were brutally killed by the BSF," the region's largest circulation English daily, Greater Kashmir, quoted unidentified sources as saying. A spokesman for the Dutch embassy in New Delhi confirmed the men had Dutch passports but said no other details about them or the nature of their visit were immediately known.

## Crackdown on militants continues in Pakistan

1,400 alleged extremists detained so far  
AFP, Islamabad  
Pakistani police have rounded up almost 1,400 alleged religious extremists in a sweeping crack-down against five groups banned by President Pervez Musharraf, officials said Monday. But Indian officials warned that the detentions were not enough to defuse the military stand-off on the border, where the nuclear neighbours have been ready for war following the December 13 attack on India's parliament. The arrests, which began hours before Musharraf announced the crack-down on extremism in his landmark address to the nation Saturday, continued Monday with police moving against Islamic militants in all four provinces. Interior ministry officials said that in addition to the arrests, some 470 offices belonging to the outlawed groups had been closed. The groups include the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, the two Kashmir rebel outfits which India accuses of carrying out the December 13 attack on parliament. "We expect India to move back to peacetime positions to reduce tensions," military spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi said. Officials said the banned groups would not be allowed to operate under new names, as threatened by some militant leaders engaged in the Muslim rebellion in Indian-controlled Kashmir. "The moment they try to do that we will go after them and smoke them out," an interior ministry official said. Earlier Interior Secretary Tasneem Noorani told AFP the activists had been arrested "on suspicion that they could indulge in activities threatening public peace and obstructing implementation of the orders." Authorities estimate less than a million people across the country support the five banned groups -- Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan, Tehreek-i-Fiqh Jafria Pakistan and Tehreek-i-Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammadi. "Collectively their hardcore strength is in thousands," the interior ministry official said.



PHOTO: AFP  
A Tibetan woman and a boy hold a placard during a demonstration on Sunday by the Tibetan refugees of the capital against the visit by Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji to India. Zhu is in India for a six-day visit, the first by a Chinese prime minister in 11 years.

## Palestinian militant chief killed in blast

AFP, Nablus  
A leader of the militant Palestinian movement linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah was killed in a blast in the West Bank town of Tulkerem Monday, Palestinian security officials said, blaming Israel. Hospital sources in Tulkerem confirmed the death of Raed Al Karmi, 30, the leader of the town's branch of the Al Aqsa Brigades, a radical offshoot of Fatah. They said he was killed while walking to work in the east of the town, while Israeli security sources, quoted by army radio, said he was in a vehicle. Palestinian security officials in Gaza City said Israel was behind the explosion.

## APHC urges Delhi to resume dialogue with Pakistan

AFP, Srinagar  
Kashmir's main separatist alliance on Monday urged India to respond to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's fresh offer of talks, made during a weekend national address. "Now is the time to rise above ordinary considerations, respond to the call of the times, seize the opportunity and take practical and productive measures towards a better world and a brighter future," said Abdul Gani Bhat, the chairman of the All Party Hurriyat Conference. In his speech on Saturday, Musharraf pledged a crackdown on extremist groups and called for a fresh dialogue with India, while adding that Pakistan would never drop its moral and diplomatic support for the separatist cause in Kashmir. "Musharraf's historic address will hopefully be followed by a purposeful and substantive dialogue involving India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir," said Bhat. "The dialogue should be held with a view to find an honourable and a durable solution to the dispute over Kashmir." Pakistan and India have fought three wars since their independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir. More than 35,000 people have died since the start of the Muslim separatist insurgency in Kashmir in 1989. Omer Farooq, another senior leader of the Hurriyat which groups some two dozen separatist parties and organisations, said Musharraf's address and offer of dialogue had put the ball firmly in India's court. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee "should come forward and reciprocate the Pakistan president's sincere gesture," Farooq said. Asked whether a crackdown on militant groups in Pakistan would affect the separatist movement in Kashmir, Farooq said the Kashmiri struggle had begun decades before the recent intervention of foreign-based outfits.

## Philippines jet ploughs into houses: 5 killed

AFP, Manila  
A military plane fell into a row of houses in the northern Philippines Monday, killing five people and leaving at least five others injured, officials said. The S-211 air force trainer crashed into a residential area in Cabanatuan city, 100 kilometers (62 miles) north of Manila around 2:00 pm (0600 GMT), setting both the plane and at least 15 houses on fire, provincial governor Tomas Joson said. Chief of staff General Diomedio Villanueva told reporters that both pilots and at least three people on the ground were killed and that an undetermined number of people were injured.

## Powell to hold talks with Musharraf tomorrow

AFP, Islamabad  
US Secretary of State Colin Powell will hold talks with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday as part of his peace-making mission to the region, officials said. "He will be arriving in Islamabad on January 16 on a one day visit and will hold talks with President Musharraf," a foreign ministry official told AFP Monday. Officials would not comment on other details of Powell's itinerary which has not been disclosed by Washington for security reasons. Powell, who will also visit India, Afghanistan and Japan on his second trip to South Asia since taking office, will attempt to defuse the lingering military tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi. Traditionally strained relations between the two nuclear rivals took a nose dive after the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament, which New Delhi alleges was carried out by two Pakistan-based militant groups.

## Furious debate in Israel over demolition of Gaza homes

AFP, Jerusalem  
A furious debate raged Monday in Israel over the army's destruction of what it said were empty houses in the Gaza Strip being used for arms smuggling from Egypt, but which international aid groups said were home to hundreds of Palestinians who are now destitute. Even as accusations and denials multiplied, Israeli police destroyed more homes in an Arab district of annexed east Jerusalem, which they said were built illegally. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said 452 people had their homes destroyed in last Thursday's army operation, while another 59 people saw tanks and bulldozers inflict serious damage on their homes in the border town of Rafah. The army initially said it had levelled a dozen abandoned buildings used as firing platforms against border guards or for smuggling weapons, an issue that came to the fore this month when Israel seized 50 tonnes of weapons it said were being shipped across the Red Sea from Iran to the Palestinian Authority. The daily Haaretz quoted the commander of Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip, Brigadier General Yisrael Ziv, as saying that the whole story of hundreds of refugees was a "well-prepared manipulation" by the Palestinian Authority. But Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Ariel Sharon appeared to admit late Sunday that some of the houses were inhabited, when he told army radio: "Most of the houses were empty."

## Britain to call up reservists for first time since Suez crisis

AFP, London  
The British government will announce Monday the mobilisation of military reservists for the first time since the 1956 Suez crisis, The Guardian daily reported. More than a hundred members of the part-time Territorial Army (TA) will be called up to seek information on Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, suspected of being behind the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US, the paper said. British Defence Minister Geoff Hoon was to make the announcement to the lower chamber of parliament, the House of Commons, on Monday, the report added.

## Mega projects underway to modernise Makkah

AFP, Makkah  
A residential and shopping center being built on the site of an Ottoman fort, the demolition of which sparked a diplomatic spat with Turkey, is just one of several mega schemes underway to modernise Makkah. Saudi government planners have approved the multi-billion dollar construction to more than double the number of pilgrims who can be accommodated around the immediate area of the Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest shrine. "Most of the buildings in the vicinity of the Grand Mosque are old and their capacity is limited in the face of fast-growing demand from Muslim visitors," says a study prepared by the Makkah-based think tank, Faqih Research and Development Center. "The only solution is to develop the area surrounding the Mosque by building high-rise modern towers to increase capacity and solve the menacing traffic problem," according to the study, a copy of which was made available to AFP. The Makkah development plan, to be completed over several years, will enable the area to accommodate more than 1.2 million people, compared with under half a million today. The residential area will be increased three-fold to 5.1 million square meters (46 million square feet).

### Colombia: end of the peace process

**Demilitarised Zone controlled by FARC**  
42,000 km<sup>2</sup>  
100,000 inhabitants

**Aug. 7, 1998**  
President Pastrana concedes a demilitarised zone to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

**November 7**  
FARC moves into the zone

**January 7, 1999**  
Start of peace process

**January, 2002**  
Talks break down

**Ultimatum**  
FARC told to quit the zone before 2130, Jan. 14 (local time)

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## Kim seeks change in US policy toward N Korea

AFP, Seoul  
South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung on Monday urged the United States to change its policy toward communist North Korea in a bid to save his peace initiative with the North. Kim told a news conference the United States must help North Korea "save face" and end a freeze on dialogue with the isolated Pyongyang regime. The South Korean leader said he would discuss "specific measures" when he meets US President George Bush in Seoul next month. The US leader is to visit Seoul on February 19-20 as part of a three-nation Asian tour which will also take him to Japan and China. North Korea broke off official contacts with the rival South after Bush took office last year and ordered a tougher line with the communist state. The Bush administration has since offered renewed contacts but Pyongyang has insisted the United States must first end its "hostile" attitude. North Korean media has recently started highlighting "rumours" that Pyongyang could be the next target of the US-led anti-terrorism war. "I think the United States, since it has decided to talk with North Korea, is required to save North Korea's face," Kim said.