

US to train Pak airport staff

AFP, Karachi
The United States has invited Pakistani airport staff to attend a crisis management training programme to help them cope with hijack situations, a senior aviation official said Saturday.



Activists from opposition parties of Pakistan make final preparations for a public meeting against the President General Pervez Musharraf's referendum in Lahore on Saturday. A group of opposition party Alliance of Restoration of Democracy (ARD) is holding a public meeting to mobilise people against the forthcoming presidential referendum.

Pak SC gives green light to Musharraf referendum

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistan's Supreme Court on Saturday gave military ruler Pervez Musharraf the green light to hold a referendum on extending his presidency for five years.

conferred upon him by this court," it said. Farooq Hassan, lawyer for one of the main petitioners, the fundamentalist Jamaat-Islami party, condemned the verdict.

Explosions rock Kabul airport

AFP, Kabul
Kabul's international airport has been hit by three explosions in what was believed to be a series of rocket attacks, military officials said Saturday.

US steps up pressure for Israeli withdrawal

AFP, Hebron
Palestinian gunman Saturday killed five Israelis at a Jewish settlement on the West Bank as Israel came under increased pressure from an impatient United States to wind up its military offensive.

Palestinian negotiator headed for Ramallah to brief Yasser Arafat. Five Israelis were killed and at least six others wounded Saturday as Palestinian gunmen went house to house in a killing spree in the Jewish settlement of Adora, the Israeli army and witnesses said.

Rumsfeld assures US troops of victory in Afghanistan

AFP, Bagram Air Base
US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld assured US troops of victory in the war against terrorism during a visit Saturday to this air base north of the Afghan capital Kabul.

stationed at this former Soviet base. "When this war is won, and it will be won, you will be able to say that 'I fought with the coalition in Afghanistan against terrorism' and you will be remembered for it."



US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (L) pats an unidentified member of the allied force at the air base in Bagram on Saturday. Rumsfeld is on a day-long visit to Afghanistan to meet senior Afghan leaders and US troops.

1 more killed in Gujarat

AFP, Ahmedabad
One person was killed and five others injured overnight as sectarian violence that has already claimed at least 900 lives continued to rage in India's western state of Gujarat, police said Saturday.

US, Pak troops raid tribal border belt: 5 al-Qaida men detained

AFP, Islamabad
US troops have been involved in joint operations in Pakistan's frontier tribal belt in which at least five suspected al-Qaida and Taliban extremists have been detained, official sources said Saturday.

Small groups of al-Qaida and Taliban fighters are believed to be active in the mountains of the eastern Afghan provinces of Paktia and Khost, bordering Pakistan's semi-autonomous tribal area of South Waziristan.

Troops on alert in Tripura after 10 CPI-M men killed

AFP, Agartala
Federal troops were on high alert in India's northeastern state of Tripura Saturday after tribal separatists killed at least 10 members of the ruling party over the past week, officials said.

the police chief said. The CPM, however, blamed its main political rival in the state, the Congress party.

Failure to sack Modi UK Muslims to sue Vajpayee, Advani

PTI, London
Indian Muslims in the UK are planning to file cases against Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Home Minister LK Advani for their 'failure' to sack Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi in the wake of communal violence in the state.

He said they were exploring all avenues including filing of cases in India, the Belgian court, the International Court of Justice in the Hague and the US.

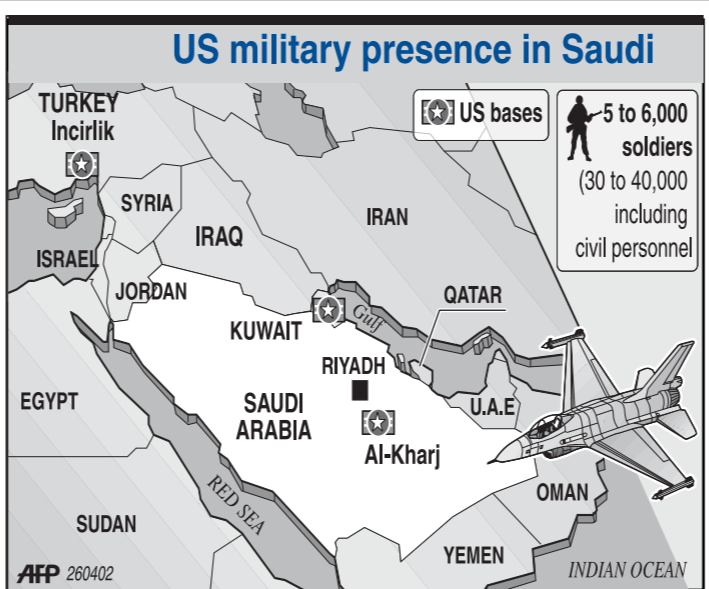
Gunmen kill 2 ethnic leaders in S Pakistan

AFP, Karachi
Two powerful ethnic party leaders were killed here Saturday in an attack by two unknown gunmen a day ahead of a visit by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, police said.

Thousands mourn Pak blast victims

AFP, Multan
Thousands of Shiite Muslims gathered under tight security in central Pakistan Saturday to mourn the deaths of 12 women and children in a bomb attack at a religious meeting.

Most shops and markets were closed as Sunni and Shiite traders pulled down their shutters as a mark of respect for the victims, who were buried at a local cemetery late Friday.



2 westerners sentenced to death in KSA

AFP, London
A Briton and a Canadian have been sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia for allegedly being involved in a bombing campaign, while four other British men have been given sentences of up to 18 years in jail, British newspapers reported Saturday.

Kashmir militants accept hardliner as APHC boss

AFP, Srinagar
Muslim rebels fighting Indian rule in Kashmir have accepted a headline separatist politician as the "leader of the freedom struggle," the region's most wanted militant said Saturday.

conglomerate of over a dozen militant groups, defended Geelani's recent remarks that jihad (holy war) was the "only way to achieve freedom."

Thailand emerging as new healthcare hub

In a gala ceremony on Thursday presided over by Thai Deputy Pitak Intrawitayanut and attended by senior governmental officials business leaders and members of the diplomatic community, Thailand celebrated its emergence as Asia's new healthcare hub.

Greek court finds British, Dutch plane-spotters guilty of spying

AFP, Kalamata
A Greek court found a group of British and Dutch "plane-spotters" guilty of espionage Friday, handing them sentences of between one and three years for snooping on Greek military bases.



Australian popstar Kylie Minogue performs at her European tour opening concert in Cardiff on Friday.