# Israel to step up offensive

### Palestinians call for int'l intervention

Israel's Security Cabinet endorsed a plan to gradually reoccupy Palestinian land until attacks on Israelis stop, a major shift in its strategy after an especially bloody week in the 21-month-old conflict.

As the army readied for what Israel Radio said would be a wide-scale offensive, a military spokesman said a tank crew had erred Friday in shelling Palestinian curfew violators, killing three children and a teacher.

Palestinian suicide bombings, a shooting at a Jewish settlement and Israeli military strikes killed 33 Israelis and 12 Palestinians this week. The attacks delayed plans by President Bush to deliver a speech outlining U.S. recommendations for Middle East peacemaking.

As they returned from funerals for attack victims on Friday, Israeli settlers rampaged through the West Bank village of Hawara, killing a Palestinian man and torching a home and a car, villagers said.

Security Cabinet of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met Friday and upheld the harsher policy of permanently occupying Palestinian land. "We will act more intensively, more deeply ... because the terrorism is more intense, deeper and more rooted. No one else is stopping it," said

Israeli Defence Ministry spokesman Yarden Vatikai. He did not give details of the military's plans

The Israeli settlers allegedly went on the rampage in Hawara after burying a mother and three of her sons, killed when a Palestinian gunman infiltrated the nearby settlement of Itamar on Thursday night In line with Israel's new reoccupation policy, about 50 Israeli tanks entered Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, after the Itamar infiltration

ters and arrested or killed scores of wanted militiamen

Israeli forces had previously settled in to Jenin, after a suicide bombing in Jerusalem Tuesdav killed 19 Israelis. Meanwhile, the Palestinians called for swift US and international intervention in the escalating Middle East conflict Friday amid concern over Israel's vow to pursue its reoccupation of Palestinian self-rule towns on the

Israel Radio said that while a major operation was in the offing, officials

did not believe it would match the scale of the massive, six-week military

campaign launched in March which shattered Palestinian infrastructure

kept Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat imprisoned in his battered headquar-

The Palestinian leadership renewed its call for international observers in the occupied territories, an idea with support in the international community but which has been repeatedly rejected by Israel as an "internationalisation"



Arrested Palestinian policemen sit in an armoured personnel carrier (APC) after being taken from their police station in the southern West Bank town of Hebron on Friday. In a "temporary" series of incursions dubbed Operation Standstill launched following two suicide bombings in as many days in Jerusalem, the Israeli military entered differ-

### Putin calls up army as floods wreak havoc

AFP, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin called or Russian troops fighting in Chechnya to help the emergency effort Saturday after swirling floods wreaked havoc in the war-torn republic, killing 29 people across the

One person died in the Checher Leninsky district, cutting power supplies and turning already bombed-out streets into raging

killed, and three reported missing as floods swept through Russia's north Caucasus region, emergencies ministry officials said Saturday.

#### China braces for more floods. calls for int'l aid

China is bracing for more flooding next month while calling for international aid to help some 100 million people already affected by the floods, state media said Saturday.

July is the beginning of the country's major flood season when heavy rains are expected to inundate many regions, particularly in the areas between the Huaihe and Yangtze rivers, the China Daily said.

Estimates by China's anti-flood agency and state media indicate 66.38 million to 100 million people

missing are found after the flood-

### Al-Qaida leaving thru' Iran, Iraq

dors for al-Qaida fighters going home to Arab countries from

Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, briefing reporters Friday, accused Iran's government of

"Iran had served as a haven for some terrorists leaving Afghanistan," he said. ``It is also true it has permitted the transit of terrorists, through Iran.

### Only talks at high level can settle issues: Musharraf

#### US seeks permanent solution to Kashmir infiltration yielding a result. A draft declaration

President General Pervez Musharraf has emphasised that only serious dialogue at a high level can settle issues between India and

"Talks between India and Pakistan can yield result only when they are held at high level and with serious intention", he said in an interview to BBC Radio on Friday. Disapproving the talks at lower

level, he said "it would mean only to sideline the issues To a question, Musharraf said the Agra summit was very close to

was finalised with consensus by the Prime minister AB Vaipavee, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, himself and Pakistan's Foreign Minister. "It was at the last moments that

due to some difference among Indian establishment the matter got entangled," he added. He claimed that issue of Kashmir has been "internationalised". The

leadership across the entire world is talking about Kashmir and about the importance of its solution, he said. 'Such a large-scale projection to

the issue of Kashmir has never been

saying by the official APP newsagen-

Asked what the successive governments had done with regard to the Kashmir issue during the past years, he said it was due to "wise handling of the situation by his government in the given global onditions that the issue of Kashmir has become an international con-

Meanwhile, US is making "persistent" attempts to find a permanent solution to the cross border terrorism on India from the Pakistani side State Department spokesmar

# EU takes action plan to turn tide of illegal immigrants

European leaders were poised to agree Saturday measures to turn back a tide of illegal immigrants, without going so far as to slap sanctions on the poor countries from which they come

Wrapping up a two-day summit in Seville that was shaken by bomb attacks in other parts of Spain, the leaders were also to reaffirm that the European Union's planned 2004 enlargement into eastern Europe was firmly on track.

This common aim can be real-

adopts a realistic and constructive approach" in the final stages of accession talks, a draft version of the summit conclusions said.

Discussions were delayed Saturday by more than an hour as the leaders took in the World Cup quarter-final match between South Korea and Spain.

Illegal immigration was the dominant issue for the EU leaders who met beneath the mosque-like dome of the Seville convention centre -- an architectural reminder of the eight centuries, until 1492,

posal to create "without delay" a body that would bring together the chiefs of the 15 EU member states'

the embryo of a single European border police, but not for many

Diplomats say it could serve as

border police services.

The leaders were also to agree in

-- To review by year-end the list of countries whose citizens need visas to enter the European Union. -- To launch a "common identifi-

cation system for visa data" based

on a feasibility study to be presented

Space is

-- To speed up the conclusion of agreements with third countries or

of a program to send Afghan refugees back home, now that peace has returned to their nation.

-- Formal adoption at the next EU nterior ministers' meeting of legislation that would tighten penalties for persons involved in

smuggling foreigners into Eur-ope.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad (3rd,L) breaks down after announcing his resignation as party president of United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad shocked delegates to his party assembly on Saturday by announcing he was stepping down as leader of his party and the ruling coalition.

### Mahathir resigns as party leader, then retracts

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Veteran Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad sparked pandemonium at ruling party conference Saturday by resigning as party leader but then agreeing to stay on. Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah

Badawi told delegates at the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) assembly that Mahathir had agreed to retract his resigna-

The veteran leader shocked delegates earlier Saturday by announcing he was stepping down as leader of the party and the ruling coalition, which suggested he would not stand for prime minister in the

There was uproar in the hall after

some 2,000 delegates began weeping and shouting "long live Mahathir, who has been in power

for nearly 21 years, was in tears as delegates mobbed him, begging him to say it was not true. Abdullah told Mahathir "we hope

you will change your mind." replied: "I decided a long time ago".

Earlier, the veteran leader had ven a rousing two hour speech at the close of the annual assembly, giving no indication that his resignation was in the offing.

Abdullah, after talking with Mahathir and top UNMO leaders told the stunned delegates: "Mahathir is still the prime minister. He is still president of UMNO and

They responded with a thunderous applause. The anointed successor to

members and its coalition partners to remain calm. Abdullah said Mahathir was

Mahathir urged UMNO's 2.8 million

convinced that the nation and the party still needed his leadership. "But he was still determined to

resign but we finally managed to persuade him to retract his announcement." he said

"Mahathir agreed to hold on to all his positions.' A relieved Abdul Kadir Sheikh

Fadzir, culture, arts and tourism minister, told reporters that many cabinet ministers threatened to resign along with Mahathir if the premier did not change his mind.

#### colour of latte AP, Baltimore

Good news for coffee lovers: Space, the final frontier, is the colour of a latte. So say astronomers Karl Glazebrook and Ivar Baldry at Johns Hopkins University.

In January, the two determined pale turquoise, then after discovering a glitch in their software in March, they realised that the average colour was actually a milky

Not knowing what to call it besides beige, they solicited suggestions, prompting nearly 300 emails with ideas including Big Bang Beige, Cappuccino Cosmico. Galactic Gold and Infinite Sand.

The winner? Cosmic Latte

### EU urges Pakistan to beef | VHP demands land near up anti-terror action

### EU to make anti-terrorism part of its foreign policy

European leaders called on Pakistan to boost its campaign against terrorist groups, while urging India to demonstrate its willingness to ease tension in the region, at a two-day summit ending Saturday.

European Union leaders, according to a draft declaration obtained by AFP, welcomed steps by Pakistan "to begin clamping down on cross-border terror ism" and "the de-escalatory measures announced by India in response."

Noting however that the situation remained precarious, the draft statement said the EU "called on Pakistan to take further concrete actions", including closing training camps, stopping infiltration across the so-called Line of Control and preventing terrorist groups from operating from territory in its control.

The EU also called on India and Pakistan "to establish an effective moni toring system, in a form acceptable to both, so as to stop infiltration." Meanwhile, the European Union on Saturday proposed new antiterrorism measures to be incorporated in all its dealings with non-member

They included adding anti-terrorism clauses to all new accords with third

countries, and re-evaluating existing accords with third countries "in light of

countries, according to draft conclusions at an EU summit here.

their attitude towards terrorism and taking appropriate measures."

community not to interfere.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), or the World Hindu Council, demanded the federal government enact legislation giving them the land, as the group began a two-day meeting in the northern Indian holy

that they may have to flee their homes for displacement camps as in the riot-torn western state of

The VHP and other hardliners

their god Ram.

the construction of the temple After intense lobbying by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his ministers, the hardliners agreed to a scaled-down ceremony on March 15. India's supreme court had barred the activists from dedicating stones on the site of the razed

### Indo-Pak tensions ease somewhat: Rumsfeld

Pakistan has significantly reduced infiltrations of Muslim militants into Indian-controlled Kashmir and tensions between the two nuclear-armed South Asian countries have eased somewhat, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said Friday.

"The military situation on the ground and the respective levels of alert in India and Pakistan are improving modestly," Rumsfeld said. "Both nations have taken some initial steps, which while not definitive and not fully tested as yet, are indeed having a positive effect."

Rumsfeld, who returned last week from a visit to India and Pakistan, said both countries had indicated their desire for continued US involvement in the conflict and he said Washington would try to help them find ways to further reduce tensions

The two countries had raised fears of a nuclear confrontation earlier this vear over Kashmir.

A series of terrorist attacks prompted India to threaten war with Pakistan

as the two countries massed forces on their borders Responding to international pressure, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf earlier this month pledged to permanently end infiltrations of militants across the line of control separating Pakistani and Indian forces in

India responded by reopening its airspace, pulling warships back from waters off Pakistan and taking steps to restore diplomatic contacts with Islamabad that had been suspended since a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in December.



former chief minister Jyoti Basu at a silver jubilee celebration for the Left Front government in Kolkata on Friday. The ruling communist led Left Front marked its 25 years in power on Friday. Basu himself was chief minister for more than 23 years.

### Nepal mourns late king

Nepal's royal leadership held prayers Saturday to mourn late crown prince Dipendra, who reigned as king for two days last year from his hospital bed after shooting his father, himself and eight other

members of the family.

Hundreds of Brahmin priests gathered at the royal palace, the site of the grisly June 1, 2001 massacre, and received alms in a traditional Hindu ritual to mourn a deceased king, state radio said. King Gyanendra, who ascended

to the throne after Dipendra's death, took part in the ceremony, along with Queen Koral and Crown Prince Paras, who were both at the palace but survived the bloodbath. Dipendra, 29, opened fire on the

royal family at dinner after a night of whisky and hashish. An official investigation said the crown prince had been infuriated by his parents' objections to his desired fiancee, Devyani Rana.

# razed Babri Mosque

**AFP,** New Delhi

A radical Hindu group demanded Saturday the government hand over land near a razed mosque to build a controversial temple and issued a stern warning to the minority Muslim

town of Haridwar. VHP leader Ashok Singhal set the tone by warning India's Muslims

Gujarat.
"If they continue to take the country towards partition, they will have to stay in camps across the

country," said Singhal, quoted by

want to build a temple on the ruins of the 16th-century Babri Mosque in the northern town of Avodhya which was demolished by Hindu zealots in December 1992, sparking communal riots in which more than 2,000

people were killed. Hindus claim the Babri Mosque had been built over the birthplace of

Hindu groups had set a March 12 deadline for the federal government, which controls the land around the razed mosque, to clear obstacles for

## FBI warns of tanker attacks on Jewish targets

US scouring Internet for al-Qaida terrors

AFP, Washington

US authorities warned Friday that terrorists could launch a fuel tanker attack on US interests at home and abroad, notably Jewish targets, and may also be planning an Independence Day attack on Las

Federal Bureau of Investigation agents have "received uncorroborated information that terrorists may be interested in using fuel tanker trucks for attacks against US interests in the United States or overseas, notably against Jewish schools and synagogues," said FBI spokesman Paul Bresson.

day, after a man said he intercepted Another spokesman, Bill Carter, a cell phone conversation in Arabic said the bureau continues "to last week in which such an attack

and other sources about possible terrorist activities "

receive information from detainees

Most of the information is uncorroborated or unconfirmed. Carter warned. "but out of an abundance of caution, we provide this information to law enforcement agencies." A fuel truck was used April 11, to

carry out an attack outside a Tunisian synagogue, killing 19 people, including 14 German tourists, on the resort island of Dierba. The FBI is also taking seriously warnings that terrorists are planning

an attack on Las Vegas, Nevada for

the July 4 Independence Day holi-

More than half the US public also believe an attack could occur on Independence Day, according to a Time magazine/CNN poll released Meanwhile, US officials are scouring the Internet for any reap-

pearance of an Arabic website they believe was used by al-Qaeda to send messages to followers including possible instructions for its next attacks, the daily USA Today reported Saturday. The website, known as

alneda.com, is a "mouthpiece for al-

Qaeda in exile" US law enforcement officials and independent terrorism experts told the newspaper, adding that the site is one of al-Qaeda's main instruments in its effort to regroup.

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya (L) speaks with the