

Former ruler Ratsiraka leaves Madagascar

AFP, Toamasina
Madagascar's former longtime ruler Didier Ratsiraka, who has been locked in a power struggle with President Marc Ravalomanana for seven months, left the country for the Seychelles early Friday, diplomats said.

Croatian PM steps down

AFP, Zagreb
Croatia's Prime Minister Ivica Racan stepped down Friday following a rift with the second largest partner in his five-party coalition, bringing to an end the first government since nationalists left power two and a half years ago, a government spokeswoman said.

3 buried in rubble after arms dump blast in ROK

AFP, Seoul
An explosion at an arms plant in the South Korean city of Busan on Friday left three people buried in the rubble, police and company officials said.

Israel, US have 'secret' plan for ME peace: Sharon

Solana urges Tel Aviv to lift blockade of Palestinian territories

AFP, Jerusalem
Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says he has worked out a secret peace plan with the Bush administration to end the Middle East conflict, a report said Friday.

ideas in Bush's speech.
In his speech on June 24, Bush called on the Palestinians to change their leaders as a precondition for a Palestinian state in three years.

Israelis feel insecure after LA attack

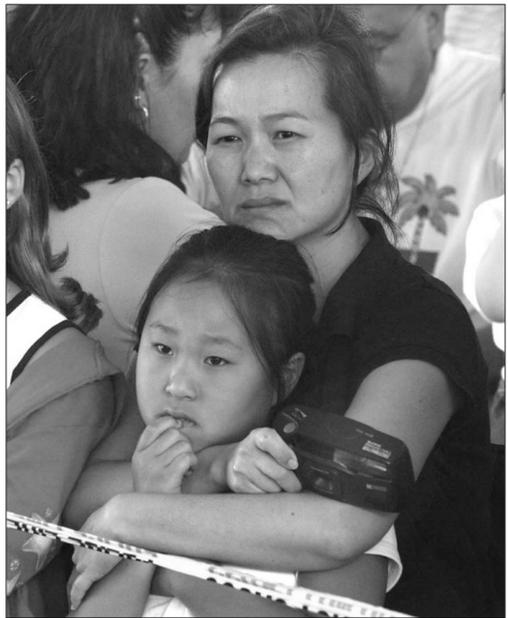


PHOTO: AFP
Esther Shin and her eight-year-old daughter Stephanie wait for a relative to come out of the sealed-off terminal at Los Angeles International Airport, California on Thursday after a gunman opened fire at an El Al Airlines ticket counter.

Tel Aviv terms attack an act of terror

AFP, Jerusalem
Israelis awoke Friday to the spectre they were once again the target of international "terrorism" with a deadly attack in Los Angeles, despite a lull in violence at home which appeared bolstered by a shake-up in the Palestinian security forces.

Pakistan to strike back if India carries out Kashmir 'action'

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistan on Friday dismissed India's allegations of infiltration across disputed Kashmir's Line of Control and warned it would strike back if New Delhi launched any military action.

Bomb attack on Nepali PM's new party office

AFP, Kathmandu
At least 10 people were injured, two seriously, when a bomb exploded Friday at the office of Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's new party, witnesses said.

Twin typhoons ravage Asia

AFP, Auckland
Civil Defence officials said 1,600 people were hustled into storm shelters as the deadly storm passed overhead, charting a course north-west towards Japan's southern island chain of Okinawa.

Politician escapes death in militant attack in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar
Suspected militants tried to shoot dead a pro-India politician in disputed Kashmir on Friday, injuring him and killing one of his associates, police said.

LA shooting mars post-Sept 11 US Independence Day



PHOTO: AFP
US President George W. Bush holds his hand over his heart as he says the pledge of allegiance on Thursday before speaking at the Saluting Our Veterans Fourth of July Celebration in the Courthouse Square in Ripley, West Virginia. Bush used the Independence Day celebration in this remote hamlet to deliver a passionate defence of the pledge of allegiance to the US flag.

AFP, Washington
A shooting at a Los Angeles airport on Thursday marred but failed to interrupt festivities marking the first US Independence Day since the September 11 attacks.



PHOTO: AFP
Children and other relatives of Palestinian Jihad al-Omarayn mourn during his funeral in Gaza City on Friday. Omarayn, the local head of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, and his nephew were killed late Thursday when a blast ripped apart their car as they drove through Gaza City, said Fatah members, who blamed the deaths on Israel.

Prevention can stop 29m new HIV infections by 2010: UN

AFP, Geneva
An immediate and massive global response based on 12 key treatment and prevention measures could stop 29 million new adult HIV infections by 2010, WHO and UN experts said.



PHOTO: AFP
An officer (C) talks to journalists next to the site of a blast while army security stand by at the new party office of caretaker Premier Sher Bahadur Deuba at Baneshwor in Kathmandu on Friday. A powerful bomb injured at least 10 people.