

Last Spanish combat units leave Iraq

AFP, Madrid

Spain removed its last combat troops from Iraq on yesterday and the only Spanish soldiers still there are those tasked with organising the withdrawal ordered by the new Socialist government, defence ministry officials said.

CLASHES IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

Blood-soaked bodies lie on streets

AFP, Pattani

Bodies lay on the road in pools of blood, armoured personnel carriers patrolled the streets and one of the country's most revered mosques was left bullet-scarred and smoking.

about 600 onlookers wandered in and around the battle-scarred mosque after police removed the last of the bodies, wrapped in blood-stained shrouds.

only a few weapons. By all accounts, they were mown down by well-prepared police backed up by army reinforcements.



TV grab shows Thai policemen and soldiers checking the bodies of attackers at the checkpoint in Pattani yesterday. The death toll from violence in Thailand's Muslim south has risen to over 100, including 93 attackers who mounted a series of dawn raids on police and army checkpoints, officials said.



South Korean Red Cross delegation leader Lee Jong-Kun prepares to board a ship loaded with relief goods for victims of last week's train explosion in North Korea sails out of port in Incheon yesterday. The freighter, Han Kwang, carrying instant noodles and other relief goods is due in North Korea's Nampo after 15 hours of voyage.

First S Korean relief ship leaves for N Korea

AFP, Seoul

A South Korean ship loaded with aid for victims of last week's train disaster in North Korea set sail yesterday as Seoul agreed to a costly request from the Stalinist state for much more.

western showcase port of Nampo Thursday through a direct sea route used for inter-Korean trade.

500,000 tonnes of cement, 10 bulldozers, 1,000 tonnes of fuel oil, 1,000 tonnes of iron bars, 50 television sets and 10,000 tonnes of food as well as school blackboards and desks.

Gaddafi urges world to follow his lead

AFP, Brussels

On his first visit to Europe in 15 years, Libyan leader Moamar Gaddafi trumpeted his "lead" in promoting world peace by renouncing weapons of mass destruction and called on others, including the US and China, to follow suit.

underlined the need for reconciliation. "We need peace, stability, development. Now we are facing different and new challenges, which are common enemies to all of us ... who fought each other at some time," he said.

Explosions, gunfire shake Syrian capital

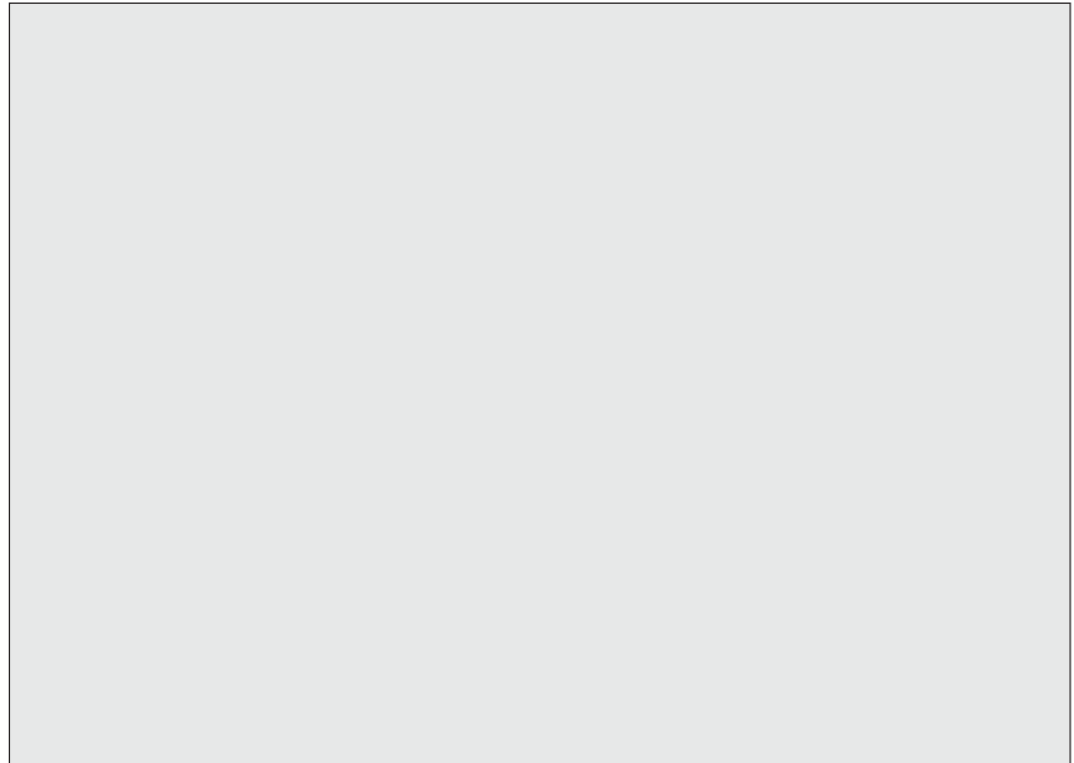
Damascus on security alert after four killed

AFP, Damascus

The Syrian capital went on high security alert yesterday after a series of explosions and a shootout in the diplomatic quarter where two "terrorists", a policeman and a woman passer-by were killed.

located nearby and Ottawa said its mission had sustained minor damage in the gunbattle between the attackers and police.

The Syrian interior ministry gave an account of the violence, identifying the assailants only as a "terrorist group".



Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga (R) greets the new minister for Agriculture, Livestock, Land and Irrigation, Anura Dissanayake (L) shortly after he was sworn in yesterday at her official residence in the capital Colombo in an expansion of the cabinet with the induction of four Marxist legislators. The Marxist JVP, or People's Liberation Front ended a stand off with Kumaratunga and accepted the portfolios allocated to them after their coalition narrowly won the April 2 parliamentary elections.

Bush, Cheney to face 9/11 commission in secret

REUTERS, Washington

The White House said on Tuesday it would not allow any recordings or transcripts of private testimony this week by President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney to the panel investigating the Sept. 11 attacks.

Both sides said they will have note-takers present. In preparation for Thursday's session, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Bush was reviewing documents and meeting with his top advisers.