

### Senior army official shot dead in Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo  
 Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas Tuesday shot dead the commanding officer of a Sri Lankan army intelligence unit as he drove to his office in Colombo, the military said.  
 A gunman shot dead Major Nizam Mutalif, 39, during the morning rush hour along a main highway in the capital, a military spokesman said adding that they suspected the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was responsible.  
 "It is obvious that this is the work of the LTTE," Brigadier Daya Ratnayake said. "We have begun a joint police and army investigation."  
 There was no immediate reaction from the guerrillas to the allegations.  
 Mutalif, the commanding officer of the First Military Intelligence Corps, is the most senior military officer to be killed since the government and Tamil Tiger rebels entered into a ceasefire in February 2002.



PHOTO: AFP  
 Pakistani women walk past a burnt out American fast food chain, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), outlet in Karachi yesterday. Six people were burnt alive when a mob protesting a suicide bombing at a Shiite Muslim mosque torched the restaurant on late 30 May, police said. The suicide bombing had killed five devotees.

### India to verify war plan sale claim

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi  
 India yesterday said that it would investigate the claim made by former Pakistani dictator Ayub Khan's son Gohar Ayub Khan that an Indian Brigadier had sold the 1965 war plan to his country for Rs 20,000.  
 Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters in the southern state of Karnataka that "I am afraid it is difficult to believe that an Indian Brigadier would divulge military secrets for money."  
 "The incident took place so many years ago. We don't even know whether the Brigadier is alive or dead. The matter will be looked into and will be investigated," he said.  
 Gohar Ayub, in an interview to a Pakistani newspaper "The News", claimed an Indian Brigadier had sold the detailed secret plan of the Indian army to attack Pakistan in 1965.

### Iraqi PM vows to beef up security

AFP, Baghdad  
 Iraq's Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari on Tuesday unveiled his new government's programme, telling parliament his priorities were to end violence, cut the time foreign forces were needed, and build a federal Iraq with human rights and public freedoms.  
 He also reiterated a call for a national truth and justice commission similar to one created in post-apartheid South Africa, to end once and for all recriminations over who had or had not committed crimes under former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Jaafari, a Shia, said a first priority was to draw up a permanent constitution before fresh general elections are held on December 15.  
 But with security a huge head-

ache and some 700 people killed in attacks since the cabinet was sworn in at the beginning of May, Jaafari pledged to beef up security.  
 "In order to accelerate a return to stability, the government will allocate sufficient funds to relaunch the intelligence and national defence services," he said.  
 Another way to stem the violence, he said, was to incorporate militias into the armed forces to "put an end to terrorism and reduce the time multi-national forces are here."  
 The prime minister also told lawmakers: "The political programme of the interim government set up following elections has the objective of building a federal, pluralist Iraq while respecting human rights and public freedoms."

### Sharon not happy with Abbas-Bush summit

AFP, Jerusalem  
 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is disappointed with US President George W. Bush's refusal to put pressure on Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas to crush armed groups, aides said Tuesday.  
 "The Palestinians came out feeling no pressure to fight terror and that they don't have to take immediate action," Sharon told US congressmen in Jerusalem on Monday, in comments relayed to AFP by a member of his office.  
 "Mr Bush wants to be conciliatory towards Mr Abbas in public to show that he has turned over a new leaf after Arafat's death and the Palestinians are taking advantage by putting off dismantling terrorist organisations," an aide to Sharon told AFP.

## Chirac names loyalist Villepin as PM

REUTERS, Paris  
 French President Jacques Chirac named loyalist Dominique de Villepin as his new prime minister on Tuesday in a shake-up of the government following his crushing defeat over the European Union constitution.  
 Villepin replaces the unpopular Jean-Pierre Raffarin who quit earlier on Tuesday. He is a former interior and foreign minister who angered the United States but won French hearts with his fierce opposition to the US-led war in Iraq.  
 He now has the task of reshaping government policy after voters showed their distaste for Raffarin's economic policies and high unemployment in Sunday's vote on the EU charter.  
 Chirac and Villepin, 51, did not immediately unveil the new govern-

ment, which is expected to be announced on Wednesday. Some political commentators predict a slimmed-down cabinet.  
 The president was due to address the nation later on Tuesday and lay out policy for the new team, which will hope to govern France until presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007.  
 Villepin saw off a challenge from Nicolas Sarkozy, a Chirac rival for the presidency who leads the governing Union for a Popular Majority (UMP) party, who had all but demanded the prime minister's job for himself on Sunday.  
 French political commentators said there was persistent speculation that Sarkozy, 50, could return to the government as interior minister and Villepin's number two -- as well as remaining the leader of the UMP.  
 In a short statement, Raffarin

defended his record over the past three years and said Sunday's defeat had not triggered his decision.  
 "I took this decision independently of the outcome of the referendum on the European constitution," he said.  
 Promotion of the loyal Villepin could be a sign Chirac intends to fight back after the referendum humiliation and keep open his options for seeking a third term in 2007.  
 A career diplomat, aristocrat and sometime poet, Villepin won applause at the United Nations and plaudits at home on the right and the left for opposing the US-led war in Iraq, but angered and frustrated Washington.  
 Washington and Paris have since been rebuilding ties.  
 Villepin's appointment is likely to go down well with European allies.

### Hariri sweeps first round of election in Lebanon

AFP, Beirut  
 The son of murdered former premier Rafiq Hariri scored a clean sweep in the Beirut round of Lebanon's elections, the first in three decades held free of the grip of neighbouring Syria, officials said Monday.  
 Saad Hariri's lists won in all three constituencies in the capital, where a total of 19 parliamentary seats were up for grabs, Interior Minister Hassan Sabaa told a news conference.  
 But fewer than one-in-three voters cast ballots in Sunday's vote, leaving the anti-Syrian opposition without the massive popular endorsement it had hoped for given the sea-change in Lebanon's political scene since the last Syrian soldier left a month ago.  
 Officials put the turnout at just 27 percent.

### Khodorkovsky found guilty of fraud

AFP, Moscow  
 Yukos oil founder Mikhail Khodorkovsky was found guilty Tuesday of fraud and tax evasion and sentenced to nine years in prison after a politically charged trial seen by critics as a Kremlin-driven vendetta against Russia's once-richest man.  
 Co-defendant Platon Lebedev, one of Khodorkovsky's former business associates, was also found guilty and sentenced to nine years in prison. The sentences were one year short of the maximum 10-year penalty sought by the state prosecutor.  
 Chief Justice Irina Kolesnikova said the decision by a three-judge panel could be appealed to a higher judicial authority within 10 days.  
 Defense lawyers had said they would appeal in the event of a verdict and sentence like that

handed down Tuesday.  
 "I understand the sentence," Khodorkovsky said after it was pronounced. "It is a monument to Basmanyni justice," he said, using a term adopted by his supporters to signify dispensation of justice on political orders.  
 The Russian state prosecutor's office however described the verdict and sentencing as "fair and objective."  
 "It corresponds to the real circumstances of the affair and to the seriousness of the crimes committed by the accused," Natalya Vishnyakova, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor general's office, said in a statement reported by Interfax news agency.  
 Khodorkovsky and Lebedev were to serve their sentences in a standard Russian penitentiary, the court ruled.



PHOTO: AFP  
 A policeman stands guard as supporters of the imprisoned former head of the Yukos oil company, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, protest outside of the courthouse in Moscow yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP  
 Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz (R) gestures whilst speaking with the visiting Indian opposition leader, Lal Krishna Advani prior to a meeting in Islamabad yesterday.

### Pak not to press case against Advani

AFP, Karachi  
 Pakistani police will not press a 57-year-old case against Leader of the Opposition LK Advani over an alleged plot to kill the country's first President, officials said.  
 Advani arrived in Pakistan on Monday in a week long visit. However, a criminal case is still pending against Advani and 17 others for allegedly conspiring to kill Pakistan's first President Mohammad Ali Jinnah and other leaders, police said.  
 The case was lodged at Karachi's Jamshed Quarters police station, on September 10, 1947, a few weeks after partition.  
 "We still have the first information report of this case in our records," an official at the police station said on condition of anonymity.

The Pakistani government last week said it was not aware of any criminal case against Advani.  
 "He is our guest and visiting Pakistan on our invitation so we cannot open the case against him at this juncture," a senior official said also on condition of anonymity.  
 Meanwhile Advani met Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad on Tuesday, a foreign ministry statement said.  
 He told Aziz that his visit was "part of the process of normalization initiated by his party through sincere and sustained dialogues process," the statement said.  
 It also quoted Advani as saying "there was a broad consensus on the peace process in India" and that "the (Indian) government has full support of his party."

### 'Zarqawi' claims wounds 'minor'

BBC NEWS ONLINE  
 A man claiming to be Iraq's most wanted militant, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said he had been wounded - but only lightly - in an audio message on the internet.  
 "After the information according to which I was seriously wounded, I want to reassure you that all this is pure rumour and totally unfounded," it said.  
 It was not possible to verify whether the voice was Zarqawi's.  
 Reports that Zarqawi had been wounded in fighting were posted on a militant website last week.  
 Several internet postings in recent days have given conflicting updates on Zarqawi's health - some saying he was wounded and had passed command to a deputy, others that he was unhurt and was leading the resistance in Iraq.

### India tells Pak to curb militants

AFP, New Delhi  
 India called on Pakistan to live up to its pledge to dismantle militant camps in Pakistan-held Kashmir following a spate of attacks, warning that guerrilla violence could badly hurt the peace drive by the two rivals.  
 Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said a deadly guerrilla raid such as the one launched on India's parliament in December 2001 that brought the nuclear-armed neighbours close to war could "greatly upset the (peace) process".  
 "We believe not enough has been done to dismantle the struc-

tures of terrorism," Singh told reporters in the Indian capital Monday night.  
 There has been an upsurge of violence in Indian-held Kashmir since the launch in April of a trans-Kashmir bus service across the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border dividing the territory, aimed at reuniting families separated for decades.  
 India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Islamic rebels to fight its rule in the Indian zone of Jammu and Kashmir, a charge Islamabad denies.  
 Singh said he expected Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to live

up to the promise he gave former Indian premier Atal Behari Vajpayee to stop areas under Islamabad's control from being used for attacks on Indian targets.  
 His warning came just six weeks after he and Musharraf described the nearly 17-month-old peace process as "irreversible" at the end of talks in New Delhi.  
 Singh said he had made it clear to Pakistan that reining in "terrorist elements" was a precondition to carrying forward the peace process.  
 "I sincerely hope the government of Pakistan will do all it can to control these (militant) elements," he said.



PHOTO: AFP  
 Nepalese students shout anti-monarch slogans whilst holding a burning effigy of Nepalese King Gyanendra in a protest rally defying the government's ban on demonstrations outside Tri Chandra college near the Royal Palace in Kathmandu yesterday. The demonstrators are protesting against King Gyanendra's power grab and are demanding the restoration of democracy in the country. The King dissolved the four-party coalition government, taking over direct power and imposed a state emergency in the country on February 1, 2005.