

US marks low-key 9/11 anniversary

AFP, New York

Americans yesterday marked the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks in a somber, but more low-key mood as memory of the cataclysm gradually fades.

As every year, relatives of the nearly 3,000 people killed when hijacked airliners slammed into New York's World Trade Center gathered at Ground Zero to read the names of the dead.

This year, though, no politicians were joining in the reading and security was less intense, in contrast to the 10th anniversary last year when President Barack Obama headed a long list of VIPs at the ceremony.

The day's main event was the ritual reading of names -- 2,983 in all, including the 9/11 victims and those killed in the precursor to those attacks, the 1993 car bombing of the World Trade Center.

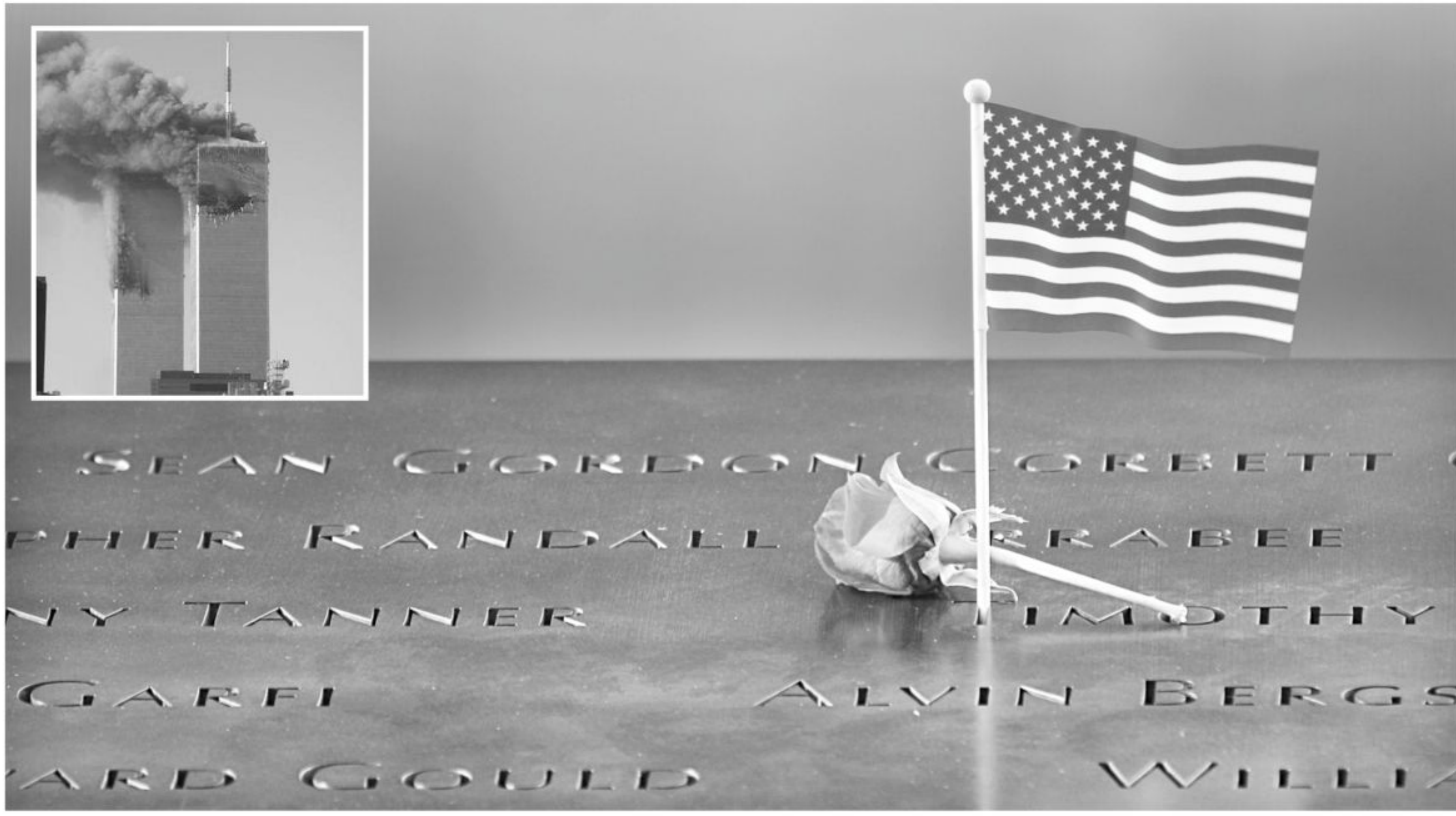
The reading paused for silence at the exact time each of the four planes hijacked by al-Qaeda turned into fireballs -- two smashing into the Twin Towers, one into the Pentagon and one into a Pennsylvania field.

Another two moments of silence were to be observed at the times the two main towers of the World Trade Center collapsed, accounting for the vast majority of 9/11's dead.

The ceremony took place on the grounds of the 9/11 Memorial between the two huge black fountains that mark the footprints of the old Twin Towers.

Obama and his wife Michelle were observing the anniversary with a moment of silence outside the White House, then a visit to the Pentagon memorial.

The passage of time appears to have cooled public attention to September 11, particularly in contrast to the huge media coverage of the 10th anniversary, which many saw as a suitable moment for allowing commemorations to peak.



A flower and an American flag are placed next to the names inscribed on the edge of the memorial pool during the observances held on the eleventh anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York yesterday. Inset, the horrifying image of World Trade Center immediately after two planes crashed into them.

PHOTO: AFP

Bush was warned several times before attack

THE DAILYMAIL ONLINE

Former President George Bush was given a series of direct warnings throughout 2001 about the possibility of a terrorist attack by al-Qaeda - but failed to take them seriously, it The New York Times revealed yesterday.



George Bush

On the eleventh anniversary of the atrocity, the paper reported that the White House received multiple briefings between May and August that year about an attack with explosives and numerous casualties.

But the president continually failed to take any significant action and questioned the thoroughness of the briefings - leading to huge frustrations within the CIA.

These repeated warnings came before the famous top secret briefing - which has previously been reported - given to Bush on August 6 with the heading 'Bin Laden Determined to Strike in the US'.

Just a few weeks later on September 11, terrorists smashed planes into the World Trade Center in New York City - killing nearly 3,000 people and horrifying the world.

Details of the other briefings given to Bush and his administration - which have never been made public - have now been revealed. And they paint a startling picture of negligence at the heart of the US government before 9/11.

The White House was made aware of potential attacks in the spring and, by May 1, was told by the CIA that 'a group presently in the United States' was planning a terrorist attack, the Times reported.

However, the new neoconservative leaders at the Pentagon told the White House that the CIA had been fooled.

They believed that Bin Laden was pretending to plan an attack to distract the US from Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Netanyahu ramps up Iran attack threat

Says world can't ask Israel to wait if no red line set

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday ramped up threats to attack Iran, saying if world powers refused to set a red line for Tehran's nuclear programme, they could not demand that Israel hold its fire.

"The world tells Israel 'wait, there's still time'. And I say, 'Wait for what? Wait until when?' Those in the international community who refuse to put red lines before Iran don't have a moral right to place a red light before Israel," Netanyahu, speaking in English, told reporters.

"Now if Iran knows that there is no red line. If Iran knows that there is no deadline, what will it do? Exactly what it's doing. It's continuing, without any interference, towards obtaining nuclear weapons capability and from there, nuclear bombs," he said.

Netanyahu's use of the word "deadline",



at a news conference with visiting Bulgarian government leaders, appeared to be a swipe at US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Hillary said earlier this week that the United States would not set deadlines in any further diplomacy with Iran, drawing an angry response from a senior Israeli government official on Monday.

Netanyahu has said Israel and the United States were in talks on setting a "clear red line" for Iran's nuclear programme. But the two allies remain at odds over whether to spell out a clear threshold for military action.

Israel and the West believe Iran is working toward nuclear weapon development capability.

Israel, widely thought to be the Middle East's only atomic power, says a nuclear-armed Iran would be a threat to its existence. Israel says its nuclear work is for peaceful energy purposes only.

JAPAN ISLANDS PURCHASE ROW China sends ships, Taiwan recalls envoy

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan yesterday brushed off stern warnings by China and bought a group of islands that both sides claim in a growing dispute that threatens to deepen strains between Asia's two biggest economies.

China rained warnings on Japan in the wake of the island purchase announcement and official media said Beijing had sent two patrol ships to reassert its claim.

And Taiwan yesterday said it had recalled its envoy to Japan in protest at the Japanese government's purchase of disputed islands also claimed by Taipei and Beijing.

"We sternly condemn Japan's nationalising the Diaoyu islands, which is an illegal action that violates the territorial sovereignty" of Taiwan, said foreign minister Timothy Yang in a statement.

The Chinese military's top newspaper accused Japan of "playing with fire", and the Ministry of Defence warned that more, unspecified steps could follow.

"The Chinese military expresses its staunch opposition and strong protest over this," Defence Ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng said in remarks posted on the ministry's website (www.mod.gov.cn).

"The Chinese government and military are unwavering in their determination and will to defend national territorial sovereignty. We are closely following developments, and reserve the power to adopt corresponding measures."

Tokyo insisted it had only peaceful intentions in making the 2.05 billion yen (16.3 million pounds) purchase of three uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, until now leased by the government from a Japanese family that has owned them since early 1970s.



Britain's Prince William (L) and his wife Catherine (R), the Duchess of Cambridge, at the National Orchid Garden at the Singapore Botanical Gardens in Singapore yesterday. The couple arrived in Singapore to kick off a nine-day Southeast Asian and Pacific tour marking Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. The tour includes Malaysia, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

PHOTO: AFP

US 'hushed up' WWII era Soviet massacre

BBC ONLINE

New evidence appears to back the idea that the Roosevelt administration helped cover up Soviet guilt for the 1940 Katyn massacre of Polish soldiers.

Historians said documents, released by the US National Archives, supported the suspicion that the US did not want to anger its wartime ally, Joseph Stalin.

They showed the US was sent coded messages suggesting the Soviets, not the Nazis, carried out the massacre.

More than 22,000 Poles were killed by the Soviets on Stalin's orders. Members of the Polish elite, including officers, politicians and artists, were shot in the back of the head and their bodies dumped in mass graves.

The April 1940 killings were carried out at Katyn and other sites by the NKVD secret police on Stalin's orders.

Soviet Russia only admitted to the atrocity in 1990 after blaming the Nazis for five decades.

It has long been believed that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt did not want to question the version of events put out by Stalin, an ally whom the Americans were counting on to defeat Germany and Japan.

According to the report by the Associated Press, information about the massacre was suppressed at the highest levels in Washington.

Katyn expert Allen Paul told AP some of the material did not appear in the record of Congressional hearings in 1951-52 held to investigate the massacre, suggesting it had been deliberately kept hidden.

Among the new evidence is a report sent to President Roosevelt by the then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill - who did not challenge Stalin's claim either - which also pointed to Soviet guilt.

Fire at Pak shoe factory kills 23

REUTERS, Multan

At least 23 workers burned to death when a fire broke out in a Pakistani shoe factory in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday, health officials said. The death toll is expected to rise.

Eighteen bodies and five workers with severe burns were brought to Meo hospital, the superintendent told local television channels.

Five more bodies and 13 more workers with severe burns were brought to Mian Munshi hospital, a doctor there said.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the fire. Many Pakistani buildings have faulty wiring, and there's almost no enforcement of building codes.

'I have become an antique piece'

PTI, New Delhi

I have become an antique piece" President Pranab Mukherjee on Monday joked about his transition from an active political life to the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"...of course, it (being the President) has the other side of the picture that perhaps I have become an antique piece in the theatre of the Indian economic activities..." Mukherjee, who was elected president in July after he resigned as the country's finance minister, said at a felicitation programme organised in his honour.

Observers wondered whether Mukherjee was alluding to the government move to review his controversial retrospective tax proposals.

"I am addressing in a different capacity where I have one advantage and one great disadvantage. Advantage is that I can speak freely in the form of advice but disadvantage is I cannot implement what I speak and what I believe should be done," Mukherjee said.

Mukherjee also maintained that it is time for the younger generation to take over in politics. "The older generation (in politics) - those who we are - still occupying the space... perhaps some of us should vacate the space for the younger people..." he said.



Pranab Mukherjee

MIT world's best university

THE DAILYMAIL ONLINE

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US is now ranked as the world's best university, pushing Britain's historic academic centre Cambridge into second place.

MIT was third on the list last year. Oxford maintained its position at number five in the table compiled by QS World University Rankings.

Imperial College London is ranked sixth, meaning that for the first time four of the top six universities in the world are British. Britain has a total of 18 universities in the top 100 - one fewer than in 2011.

The rest of the top ten are all in the US.

The QS World University Rankings are compiled using six indicators: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ration and international student ratio. The results are based on surveys of over 46,000 academics and 28,000 employers.

TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES

1. MIT (3)
2. Cambridge (1)
3. Harvard (2)
4. University College London (7)
5. Oxford (5)
6. Imperial College London (6)
7. Yale (4)
8. University of Chicago (8)
9. Princeton (13)
10. California Institute of Technology (12)

NEWS IN brief

Obama ahead of Romney in poll

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama received a significant popularity bounce from his party convention last week and now leads the White House race by a small but clear margin, polls indicated Monday.

One polling expert working for Republican challenger Mitt Romney dismissed the convention bump as a "sugar-high" that would dissolve once the harsh realities of the president's failed economic policies have sunk back in.

But a CNN/ORC survey of likely voters gave Obama 52 percent of the vote compared to 46 percent for Romney, who also fell behind in August in terms of fundraising, the first time he has trailed in

French ex-PM arrested for graft

REUTERS, Paris

French former Prime Minister and one-time presidential hopeful Dominique de Villepin was taken into police custody yesterday for questioning by magistrates investigating a suspected financial scam involving a luxury hotel network.

Villepin, who served under former President Jacques Chirac, as his chief-of-staff, foreign minister and ultimately prime minister from 2005 and 2007, was questioned about his links with a man sus-



No extradition of Iraqi VP: Turkey

REUTERS, Istanbul

Turkey will not hand over Iraq's fugitive Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, who faces a death sentence against him in Baghdad, and he can remain in Turkey as long as he needs to, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday.

"I'll say it very clearly. We will be willing to host Mr. Hashemi as long as he wants, and we will not hand him over," Erdogan told a news conference in

Somalia MPs elect new president

AFP, Mogadishu

Lawmakers on Monday chose Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as Somalia's new president after the 56-year-old lecturer got the majority of votes in a second round run-off, beating outgoing president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.

Sharif had earlier in the day sounded confident of victory in the vote, which UN brokers have billed as a major milestone in stabilising the war-torn nation.

Many sceptical observers had voiced fears that the vote would simply return the same corruption-tainted leadership but dark horse Mohamud, an academic and activist, won 190 votes against 79 for the outgoing president, who had been seen as the likely winner until late in the day.

Yemen minister survives car bomb

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's Defence Minister Mohammed Nasser Ahmed yesterday survived a car bomb attack that hit his convoy near the government headquarters, but 10 people were killed, including seven guards, a security official said.

The attack came a day after defence ministry news website 26sep.net said that second in command of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Saeed al-Shehri was killed in an army operation in the country's east.