

Heartstopper

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Sports/1E



THURSDAY

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U.S. shuns cave search

Military offering Afghans incentives

By MICHAEL R. GORDON
NEW YORK TIMES

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — The U.S. military has revised a risky plan for American troops to search the caves of Tora Bora for traces of Osama bin Laden and other fighters of al-Qaida and is offering incentives to get Afghan forces to take the lead, American officials said Wednesday.

Just last Friday, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said he was ordering hundreds more troops to join Afghan militia in the hunt for bin Laden and other al-Qaida leaders, in the hope of uncovering intelligence on terror attacks in the works.

Officials said at the time the plan was to send in about 500 Marines and possibly Army troops, and the units began to prepare for the mission.

The Tora Bora region is a wild and remote area that contains mines, unexploded bombs and pockets of al-Qaida fighters.

Besides that risk, the mission would require the building and maintenance of a substantial base to house the Marines and other troops in an area where anti-American sentiment lingers.

This Marine and Army troop deployment, which had been expected to begin as early as this week, is on hold.

Instead, American officials are pressing Afghan commanders in the Jalalabad region to probe the rugged area. Washington is offering incentives such as weapons, money and winter clothing, American officials say.

"It is a matter of finding the right mix of incentives to get them to play a more active role," a senior military official in Washington said.

But if the Afghan militia balk at committing the number of troops American commanders believe are necessary to comb the area, additional

See U.S./14A



An anti-Taliban fighter looks over a former al-Qaida cave Wednesday in the Tora Bora valley of Afghanistan as the search continues for terror suspect Osama bin Laden. The cave was damaged by American bombs.

CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES

Shoe-bomb suspect tied to figure in 9-11 plot

Both men attended mosque in southern London neighborhood.

By T.R. REID
WASHINGTON POST

LONDON — The man accused of trying to set off a bomb in a shoe on an American Airlines flight Saturday was a small-time London thief who converted to Islam in prison and was persuaded by extremists to take up violence, the head of his mosque said.

Richard Colvin Reid, 28, a Briton being held on federal charges in Boston, worshipped regularly at Brixton Mosque, in a predominantly black south London neighborhood.

Another occasional worshipper at that mosque was Zacarias Moussaoui, who has been charged with conspiracy in the Sept. 11 attacks.

It's not known whether Reid and Moussaoui knew each other.

But the mosque's chairman, Abdul Haqq Baker, who did know Reid at the mosque, said Wednesday he believes Reid must have been working with professional terrorists Saturday when he boarded the American Airlines flight to Miami at Paris' Charles de Gaulle International Airport.

"He's not capable of carrying this out on his own," Baker said outside the mosque, a converted row house. "From what we know of him, there's definitely somebody behind him. He was not the one who was, sort of, the orchestrator of this kind of thing."

While the jet was in the air, a flight attendant found Reid trying to light what appeared to be a fuse on his shoe. Other passengers subdued and bound the man. The plane was diverted to Boston, where FBI agents arrested him.

Investigators have said both of Reid's shoes contained material consistent with the explosive known as C-4.

French officials originally said Reid was a Sri Lankan named Tariq Raja who also sometimes went by Abdel Rahim.

The government of Sri Lanka denied he was from there.

But the British government says Reid's British passport was legitimate and Reid

See MEN/15A



REID



MOUSSAOUI

Bin Laden tape adds to mystery

TV image is sparking more questions than answers.

By MAAMOUN YOUSSEF
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt — A Qatar-based television station aired excerpts of a video of Osama bin Laden on Wednesday, adding a new twist to rumors about the terror leader's whereabouts and whether he's still alive.

His words indicated he could have been speaking in the first half of December.

If that's true, bin Laden was videotaped just as a U.S.-led coalition was making its final push in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan in mid-December. At that time, bin Laden and some of his top al-Qaida lieutenants were believed to be holed up in the mountains nearby.

A senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition he not be identified, said Wednesday there's been no confirmed sighting of bin Laden for



AL JAZEERA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a video broadcast, Osama bin Laden speaks from an unknown location. His statements indicate he was speaking in the first half of December.

more than three weeks. But he also said suggestions from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and others that bin Laden may have been killed by U.S. airstrikes are "totally unsubstantiated."

The Pentagon had no information about the videotape.

"I don't know how old it is or anything about it," senior Pentagon

See VIDEOTAPE/14A

Diabetics receive some sweet news

Group says occasional treats are OK

By JANE E. BRODY
NEW YORK TIMES

The American Diabetes Association issued new dietary guidelines Wednesday saying people with the disease can eat sweets occasionally as long as they keep their blood sugar levels under control.

The new guidelines are designed to improve the treatment and prevention of diabetes and to simplify the lives of Americans who have it, an estimated 16 million people.

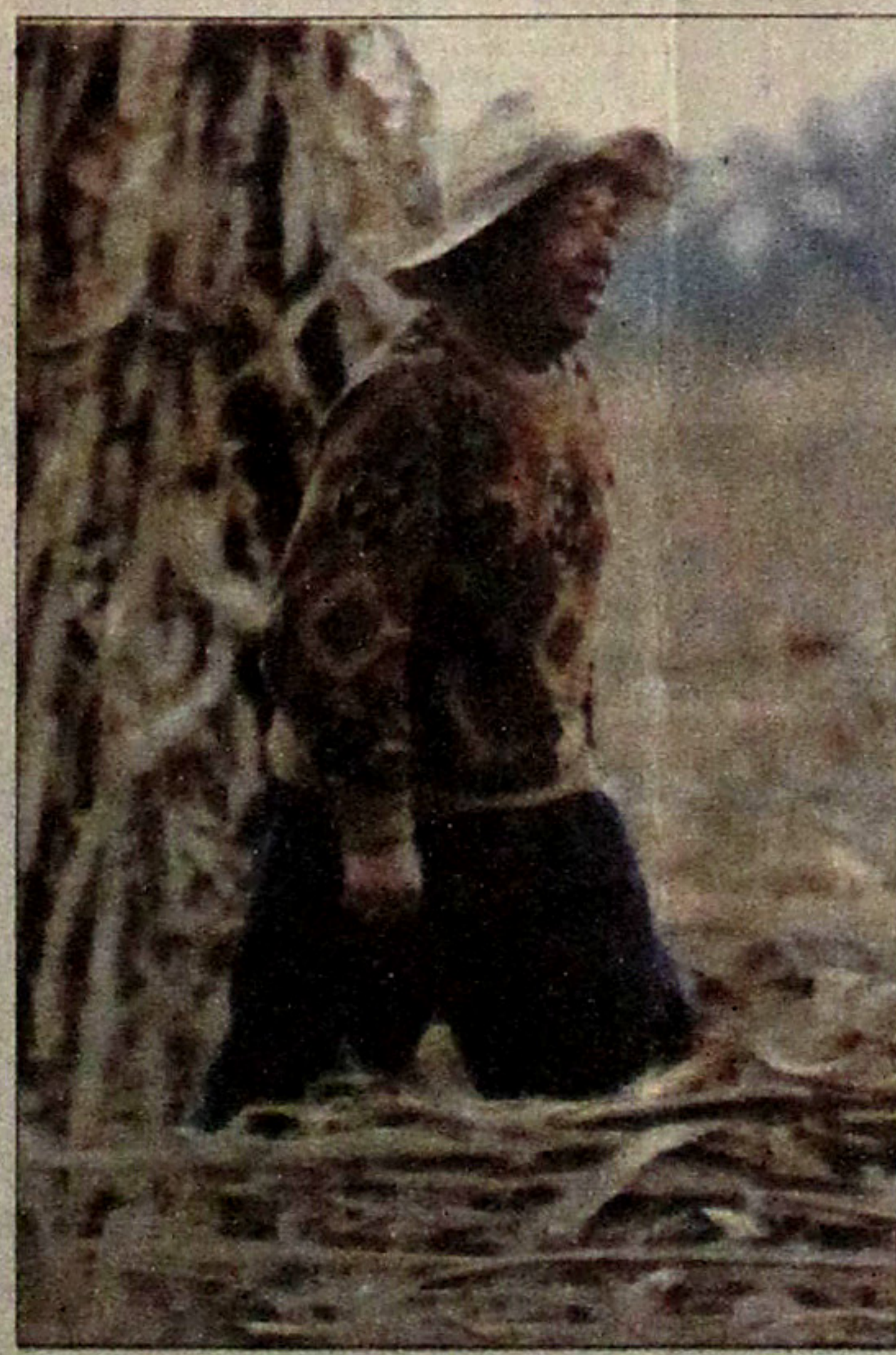
Although many diabetes specialists have advised patients for years that they can consume sugar-laden foods if they control their blood sugar levels,

there's still widespread belief that a person with diabetes should never eat concentrated carbohydrates, like sweets.

All carbohydrates — be they from pasta, potatoes, cake or cookies — are treated alike under the new guidelines, although they emphasize that people should eat more nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables.

Occasional sweet treats are permissible under the guidelines, as long as the total intake of starches and sugars is kept in balance with insulin or other medications and exercise and doesn't exceed caloric

See AMERICAN/8A



JANET SCHWARTZ/SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

Francisco Sánchez Islas works in his cornfield in San Salvador Atenco, the proposed site for the new Mexico City airport.

Mexico airport plan is running into flak

Agricultural families oppose locale of what many say is much-needed update.

By SUSANA HAYWARD
EXPRESS-NEWS MEXICO CITY BUREAU

SAN SALVADOR ATENCO, Mexico — Francisco Sánchez Islas stands knee-high in harvested corn piled up like teepees. Donning a worn sweater, a hat and a smirk, he blends with the golden husks and coming dusk.

It is more than nature's miracle of light and shadows — Sánchez, 73, has tilled this parcel of land most of his life. Before him, it belonged to his parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. But who's counting, he shrugs. In Aztec history, man was created from the sacred corn plant. Even wearing

shabby modern clothes, Sánchez looks like the myth.

"I belong here. Farming, the way my ancestors taught me, is the only thing I know," said Sánchez, one of hundreds of agriculture families in this breath-taking 2,600-acre agricultural land east of the capital. "But the gringos and the government want to take it away."

This solitary landscape teeming with migratory birds and exotic flora and fauna adjoins the town of Texcoco, 20 miles east of Mexico City. Once the bed of a salt lake and a ceremonial center for the Aztec king Netzahualcōyotl, Atenco is a vision of the past.

But 11,000 acres in Texcoco, Atenco and Chimalhuacán have been designated as the site of a new \$2.3 billion airport to replace the decades-old Benito Juárez International Airport.

The existing airport, in the heart of the

See MEXICO/8A

Today's Weather

Partly cloudy, a little warmer
High 63, Low 32
Full weather report, Page 10E

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INDEX

Business	1B	Deaths	6C	Movies	3F	Sports	1E
Classifieds	1D	Editorials	8C	Puzzles	10F	Stocks	4B
Comics	8F	Metro/State	1C	S.A. Life	1F	TV listings	7F



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