

International

Imran to launch pressure group to challenge 'exploitative' system

ISLAMABAD, Apr 16: Former international cricket hero Imran Khan has announced he will launch a pressure group this month to challenge Pakistan's 'exploitative' system, reports said today.

Move to bring permanent peace to Korean peninsula Clinton, Kim agree to convene four-way talks immediately

CHEJU ISLAND, South Korea, Apr 16: US President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam today called upon North Korea and China to join in talks designed to bring a permanent peace to the Korean peninsula, reports Reuter.



US President Bill Clinton (L) takes a walk with his counterpart Kim Young-Sam in the garden of Hotel Shilla on Cheju Island on Tuesday before their summit meeting.

BRIEFLY

Blast kills 3 in Japan: Three people were killed and one suffered injuries when an explosion tore through an explosives factory in western Japan early Tuesday morning, AP reports from Tokyo.

Lankan PM Sirima turns 80: Sri Lanka's matriarch Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike turns 80 yesterday, boasting a record-setting career and a place in history as the world's first elected woman premier, AFP reports from Colombo.

Robbers kill 4 in China: Four people were shot dead by gunmen who raided a South China bank, a China-controlled newspaper said yesterday, Reuter reports from Hong Kong.

9 E Timorese enter German Embassy: Nine East Timorese entered the German Embassy compound early Tuesday in the latest of a number of recent similar break-ins into diplomatic missions, witnesses said, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

Wars claim 2m children in 10 yrs: Wars around the world have killed two million children and maimed another five million over the past 10 years, a UN campaigner for children's rights said on Monday, AFP reports from Geneva.

Benazir to visit Syria on Sat: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will pay an official visit to Syria on Saturday for talks on bilateral cooperation and regional developments, Syrian officials said on Monday, Reuter reports from Damascus.

Iran's Dy FM arrives in Damascus: Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Kazem Khonsari arrived in Damascus for talks with Syrian leaders on how to secure an end to Israel's bombardment of Lebanon, officials said, Reuter reports from Damascus.

Uzbek President backs Yeltsin: Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov on Monday threw his weight behind Russian President Boris Yeltsin who is seeking re-election in June, Reuter reports from Tashkent.

HR situation in Myanmar worsens: The human rights situation in Myanmar has worsened since last autumn following a slight improvement with the release of the dissident Aung San Suu Kyi last July, a UN official said Monday, AFP reports from Geneva.

US urges 'all parties' to 'restore calm' in Lebanon

CHEJU ISLAND, South Korea, Apr 16: The White House today urged 'all parties' to do everything possible to 'restore calm' in the Lebanon border region, reports AFP.

US announces delivery of \$368m arms to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Apr 16: After several weeks of uncertainty, the United States has announced the delivery of a frozen shipment of military material to Pakistan, spelling a diplomatic coup for Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who has long been courting Washington, reports AFP.



Lebanese army soldiers fire an anti-aircraft heavy machinegun at Israeli jets flying over Beirut on Monday. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah said it would stop firing rockets on northern Israel if the Jewish state halted its five-day offensive in Lebanon.

MQM calls strike in Sindh Thursday

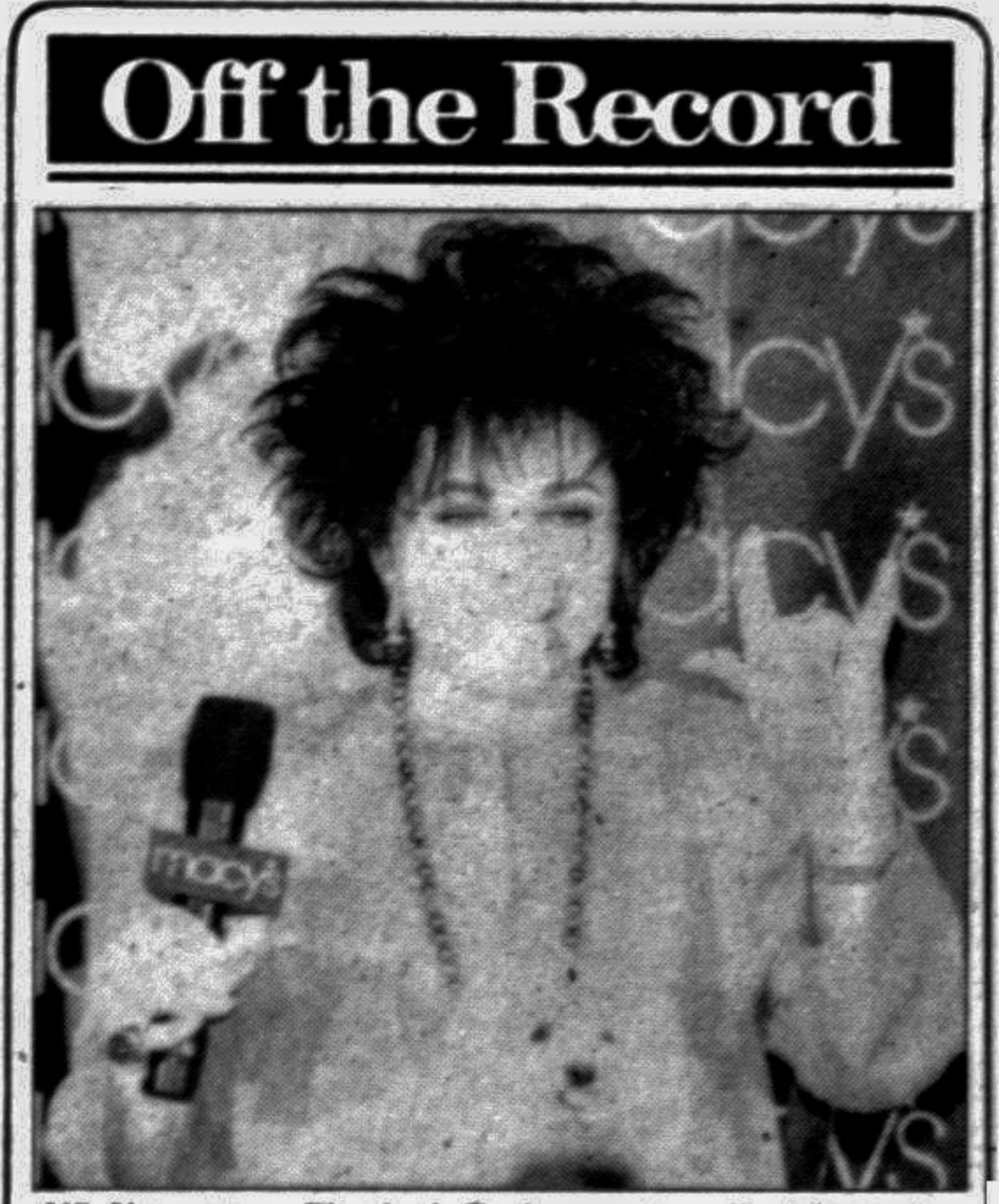
KARACHI, Pakistan, Apr 16: Pakistan's ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) has called for a strike on Thursday in Sindh province to protest against a provincial assembly bill that curtails powers of local bodies, reports Reuter.

Queen bars Di, Fergie from royal party

LONDON, Apr 16: Queen Elizabeth II has barred both her daughters-in-law Princess Diana and the Duchess of York - Sarah Ferguson - from her 70th birthday party, the Daily Mirror reported today, reports AFP.

BJP within striking distance of power for first time

NEW DELHI, Apr 16: India's main right-wing Hindu party is within striking distance of power in the world's largest democracy for the first time, a possibility that could have far-reaching implications, reports AFP.



US film actress Elizabeth Taylor greets well wishers at a New York department store Monday. Taylor was in New York to promote her new Black Pearl fragrance line.

Madonna on her way to become a complete woman

BUDAPEST: American pop star and actress Madonna is pregnant with her first child and is 'deliriously happy,' her publicist said on Tuesday.

Tale of Fergie's platonic affair

LISBON, Portugal: Austrian tennis star Thomas Muster denies he is having an affair with the Duchess of York and says he hopes Fergie gets back with her estranged husband, Prince Andrew, reports AP.

Magic power of love makes the difference

MILAN, Italy: The other woman in tenor Luciano Pavarotti's life says she prefers rock music to opera, reports AP.

Ban on growing hemp goes

BONN, Germany: Germany has lifted a 14-year-old legal ban on growing hemp, but only for plant types that can't easily be used to make marijuana and hashish, the Health Ministry said Monday, reports AP.

Warm feelings for Clinton expressed Gaddafi may allow chemical weapons site inspection

NEW YORK, Apr 16: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said on Monday he would conditionally accept an international team to inspect a suspected chemical weapons site outside Tripoli and also expressed warm feelings for US President Bill Clinton, reports Reuter.

OIC blasts Israeli 'aggression' in Lebanon

GENEVA, Apr 16: The head of the 51-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) condemned Israel on Monday its 'aggression' in Lebanon and for 'terrorist measures' against Palestinians in the occupied territories, reports Reuter.