

International

Gender discrimination can seriously affect relief programme: Ghali
Pakistan mediating between Taliban, Dostum to prevent military showdown

ISLAMABAD, Oct 8: Pakistan is mediating between Afghanistan's new Islamic Taliban rulers and northern Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum to prevent any military showdown, a Pakistani Foreign Ministry official said on Monday, reports Reuters.

The Taliban were saying they were now the central government and wanted to control the whole of Afghanistan, he said. The official said Pakistan's efforts to mediate between the Taliban and Dostum, whose forces face each other near the vital Salang tunnel 90 km (60 miles) north of Kabul, were running on similar lines to those of UN special envoy Norbert Hol.

Instead, it said northern warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum should join the Taliban government, while ex-government strongman Ahmad Shah Massoud should lay down his arms and end hostilities with the militia. The call by acting foreign minister Mullah Mohammed Ghous came as Taliban troops were locked in a stand-off with Dostum's men and were also attempting to push into Massoud's stronghold north of here.

and with the cooperation of the 51-nation Organization of Islamic Conference. His speech came as Taliban troops sought soldiers of former military chief Ahmad Shah Massoud in the northern valley where they have fled. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Monday told UN agencies to respect equal rights for women in Afghanistan and warned the country's radical Islamic militia, Taliban, that discrimination could seriously affect relief programmes.

"We have decided to restate our single, system wide policy on the question of gender equality," he said in a statement sent to the many UN agencies operating in Afghanistan. He said that the agencies had to respect any requirements from donors as well as recipients, providing they do not conflict with our stated principles.

159 more NLD men freed
Barricades from access to Suu Kyi's home removed

YANGON, Oct 8: Myanmar's military authorities have removed barricades blocking access to the home of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, eyewitnesses reported today, says AFP.

The lifting of the barricades followed an announcement on state-run Radio Yangon Monday that all 159 members of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) detained in the past 10 days had been freed.

The last 34 NLD members were sent back to their homes on Monday, the radio reported.

Military authorities put up the barricades and detained 573 NLD activists or supporters in the days surrounding a planned NLD congress on September 27 which the junta banned because of fears of street disturbances.

US threatens to reimpose sanctions against Serbs

WASHINGTON, Oct 8: The United States is "furious" with Bosnian Serb officials who skipped their own inauguration rather than swear allegiance to a unified Bosnia, a State Department spokesman said Monday, reports AP.

The Bosnian Serbs have been notified that sanctions could be reimposed against them if they continue boycotting joint Bosnian government institutions and "everything else that's got to be done to make this state a unified state," said spokesman Nicholas Burns.

The United Nations last month abolished economic sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs, following elections within Bosnia's two entities and a vote for a joint three-man presidency and national parliament.

Punitive sanctions against neighbouring Serbia, whose leader Slobodan Milosevic is blamed for igniting the Bosnian war, were also formally lifted. But Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb representative on the new Bosnian presidential troika, and 11 parliamentarians refused to travel to Sarajevo to attend Saturday's inauguration. The Muslim and Croat

members of the presidency and 31 deputies of the republic's House of Representatives took the oath of office without the Serbs. The boycott is seen as a serious blow to the uneasy peace process and to US-led efforts to re-establish a united Bosnia after 3 and half years of warfare among its three ethnic groups.

Mystery illness or God's grace?

HONG KONG, Oct 8: A mystery illness left a 91-year-old man in southwestern China looking years younger, it was reported today, says AFP. Lan Riren, a Yao from Bama county, Guangxi province, sprouted new teeth and found his white hair had turned black after the illness in July which left him unable to eat for nearly 20 days, the Hong Kong branch of the China News Service said.

BRIEFLY

Dengue fever death toll in India now 85

An epidemic of dengue fever raging in the Indian capital has killed seven more people, pushing the death toll to 85 in one month, officials said yesterday. The seven deaths and nearly 130 fresh cases of the mosquito-borne disease were reported Monday from various hospitals in the city of 10 million, with officials saying the epidemic was spreading to previously unaffected areas. A health official said more than 1,400 people, mostly young people, had been hospitalised with dengue fever, which can lead to fatal hemorrhaging and shock if not diagnosed and treated promptly. AFP reports from New Delhi.

DPRK urged to free US citizen

The United States called Monday on North Korea to immediately release a US citizen arrested there in late August and charged with spying for South Korea, AFP reports from Washington.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Sweden, which represents US interests in the reclusive communist country, had been allowed two visits with the detained US national in mid-September. The State Department has also taken up the issue directly with North Korea's mission to the United Nations and "will continue to do that," Burns said.

2.6 m children abandoned in Venezuela

More than 2.6 million Venezuelan children are living in a state of what the government called "abandonment" Monday, hard hit by poverty, drug abuse and often wandering the streets, AFP reports from Caracas. The troubling figure that came from the central statistics office amounts to 13.2 per cent of the South American country's population. Half of all Venezuelans are under the age of 19. "This abandonment is accepted with resignation," said psychologist Nancy Montero. "This is not a normal situation." A recent study of children who are not being cared for, written by educators Rhaiza Chacon and Ygnara Rojas, found that the government is equipped to handle the cases of only about 600,000 such youths at a time.

Clashes leave 17 killed in Myanmar

At least 17 people, including 12 Myanmar soldiers and five Karenni rebels, were killed in heavy clashes in Myanmar's northwestern Kayah state over the weekend, Thai army sources said yesterday, Reuters reports from Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

Russian minister to visit India

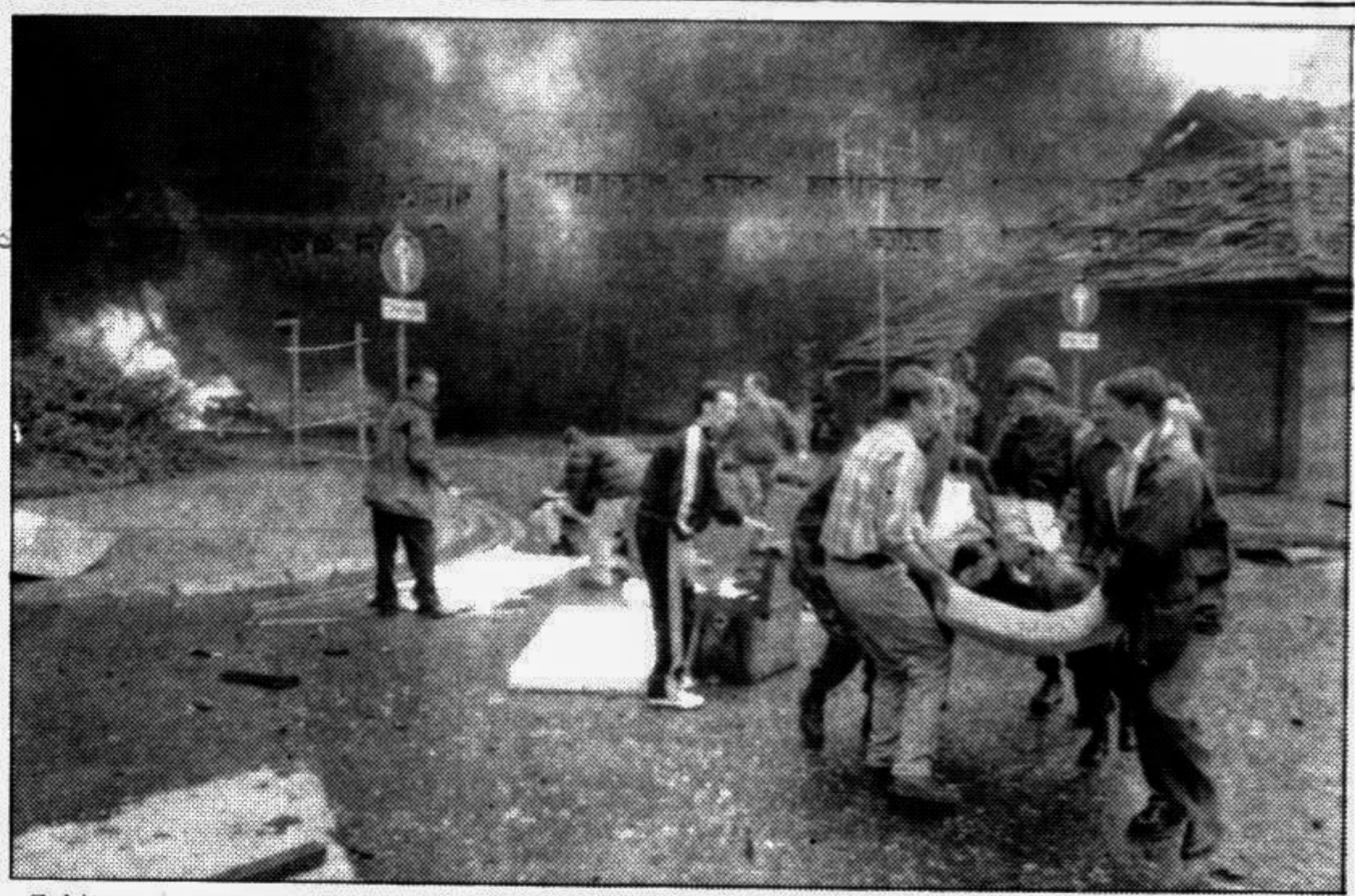
Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov will visit India at the end of October, Interfax News Agency reported Monday, AFP reports from Moscow. The agency said that Rodionov would discuss military-technical cooperation between the two countries during the visit, but did not say how long the trip would last. The report coincides with a visit to Russia by an Indian military delegation, led by the head of India joint chiefs of staff Rai Choudri, which arrived in Moscow for a five-day visit Monday.

Protesters tear gassed in Lahore
Marchers demand ouster of Benazir as PM

LAHORE, Pakistan, Oct 8: Pakistani police fired tear gas and shots in the air on Monday to break up a big opposition march in Lahore after protesters hurled stones at the Punjab provincial assembly building, witnesses said, reports Reuters. Up to 40,000 people joined the march staged by 14 opposition parties, campaigning to force Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to step down to make way for mid-term elections.

After stoning the assembly building, demonstrators ransacked the office of the assembly's security officer, witnesses said. They said police first fired tear gas canisters and then

shots in the air to disperse the crowd. There was no immediate report of any injuries. "Today it is the verdict of the people of Lahore that Benazir should quit," opposition Leader Nawaz Sharif earlier said in a speech to the marchers. "Nothing is left for Benazir; she has completed her days," he said. "I warn her that she should herself give up power or this nation will make her go." The march was the biggest anti-Benazir demonstration since Sharif's mainstream Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and 13 other groups formed the Pakistan bachao (save Pakistan) movement in August to campaign against Benazir's three-year-old government, which



Soldiers evacuate a casualty from the scene of the blast at the British Army's main base and headquarters on the outskirts of Lisburn Monday. Two huge bombs exploded injuring 20 civilians.

Blasts raise fears of clash between IRA, British troops

LISBURN, Ireland, Oct 8: The explosion of two car bombs inside the British army's heavily defended headquarters in Northern Ireland has raised fears the province could again become a battleground between the IRA and pro-British paramilitaries, reports AP. There was no claim of responsibility for the attack on Monday, which wounded 31 people. Whether it was carried out by the Irish Republican Army or by another anti-British group might determine whether the province's pro-British paramilitaries call off their own ceasefire — and send Northern Ireland back into retaliatory violence.

The first bomb went off without warning in a parking lot inside Thiepval Barracks, the main camp for the 18,000 army troops in the British-ruled province. A second detonated 20 minutes later near the base's hospital, apparently to ambush passing soldiers, medical staff and people wounded by the first bomb. As flames and black smoke billowed from the blast site, soldiers and paramedics hauled off the wounded on foam mattresses. Some of the people injured in the second blast included medical staff attending to the victims of the first.

The army said 21 of the injured were soldiers and 10 were civilians — including the three most seriously hurt. One man was critically wounded and four received serious head, chest and leg wounds. The less seriously wounded included an 8-year-old girl who was treated for shock and released. Army forensic scientists estimated that the two bombs contained a total of 250 to 500 kilograms (500 to 1,000 pounds) of homemade explosive. Each left a deep crater in the pavement. The attack inside what, until now, had been Northern Ireland's most untouchable army installation deals an embarrassing blow to the British forces. Thiepval lies in Lisburn, a predominantly Protestant suburb southwest of Belfast, and is home to the army's senior commanders, key officers families and its elite bomb squad.

US presidential debate: Dole pushes trust, Clinton woos business

TOMS RIVER, New Jersey, Oct 8: Bob Dole pressed his election effort Monday by insisting he's the candidate voters can trust, while President Clinton pursued business support in states that normally vote Republican, reports AP. Both candidates were trying to build on momentum they claimed from Sunday's debate in Hartford, Connecticut, although early polls suggested the debate had produced little movement in the race. Traveling across New Jersey in a bus caravan, an energized Dole underscored a line of attack he had sounded in the debate. "When people think of Bob Dole, I want them to think of the word trust. Trust. Trust. And when they think of the word Bill Clinton, I want them to think of the word fear." Dole told supporters gathered on a high school football field, "I

trust you, you trust me." Dole pressed his plan for a 15 per cent tax cut by campaigning with Republican Gov. Christie Whitman, who upset Democratic incumbent James Florio in 1993 largely on the promise of a big tax cut. Clinton, for his part, all but ignored the debate in remarks to a business audience in Hartford, where he accepted the endorsement of 2,500 corporate leaders, many of whom already were known as Clinton supporters. "I have wondered for years why the Democratic Party shouldn't have at least as much support in the business community as the other party," Clinton said. If the president was publicly ignoring the debate, not all his supporters were. A sign hanging from the balcony read, "One Down. Congratulations, Mr President!"

Meanwhile, Reform Party candidate Ross Perot, who participated in the 1992 debates but was excluded from this year's show-downs, derided Sunday night's debate as a "theatrical event." "If you listened last night, it was confusing because they were both playing pingpong, and denying what the other said, and not getting to the facts and the numbers," Perot told a business audience in San Francisco. Both campaigns unleashed new ads to complement the candidates' messages. Dole's casting Clinton as "a real spend-and-tax liberal," and Clinton's promoting his presidency as "moving people from welfare to work. Meeting our challenges." The President, with the luxury of a big lead, was also campaigning in normally Republican Maine and New Hampshire.

Hamas calls new uprising against Israeli forces

BEIRUT, Oct 8: The Islamic fundamentalist group called on Monday for a new intifada (uprising) against Israeli forces in the Palestinian territories after the "failure" of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, reports AP. "We consider that the failure of the Washington summit and the negotiations at Beit Hanoun (Erez), which did not satisfy the just demands of our people, constitutes a green light for our masses and Mujahedeen brigades to resume resistance with all available means against the crime of the tunnel and the other crimes of the evil occupier," Hamas said in a statement in Beirut. "I criticised Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA) for 'holding to the peace accords, repressing the intifada of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, quelling the anger of our heroic people against the tunnel and

puruing the sterile talks taking place under conditions imposed by the Zionists." Israel's decision to open a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel near the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest site, sparked bloody Israeli-Palestinian clashes late last month in which more than 80 people died. An emergency peace summit was held in Washington last week after which Israel and the PA opened non-stop peace negotiations at the Erez Crossing on the Israeli-Gaza border on Sunday. The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said the ongoing talks represented a "failure" because they were taking place under Israeli-imposed conditions and were aimed at "distracting our people with more false premises."

5000 Khmers defect to Phnom Penh govt

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia, Oct 8: Five Khmer Rouge divisions with nearly 5,000 soldiers and civilians under their control have defected to the Phnom Penh government, military officials and defectors announced today, reports AP. The defections were from divisions in the area around the former hardline Khmer Rouge base of Samlot which fell last week. The move is a severe blow to the guerilla movement which is now left with virtually no troops south of Cambodia's northernmost frontier. "All the work in that area has been finished completely said general Keo Heng Pong, the former commander of Khmer Rouge division 18 who defected this year and is now the deputy commander of Phnom Penh's military region three. "What we are going to do next is to push forward the integration of the forces with the army," he told reporters. Military officials identified

the defecting units as divisions 36, 91, 695, 919 and 918. The strength of divisions 919 were not immediately clear but the other three have 700 guerillas and 2,828 civilians they said. The divisions have fully defected to the government and have not joined a renegade faction led by former Khmer Rouge Deputy Premier Ieng Sary which split from the hardline leadership in August, the officials said. Another unit from 250 is believed to have joined the renegade faction, they said. "The reason we decided to defect is to end the war as soon as possible," the 26-year-old Khmer Rouge veteran said in this northwest town where he and representatives of the other divisions were flown to meet reporters. Kim Po, commander of division 91, said efforts were still underway to convince others still loyal to the hardliners to stop the war.

Lankan war: Censorship on media reporting goes

COLOMBO, Oct 8: The government on Tuesday lifted military censorship on Sri Lanka's media reporting the war against Tamil rebels in the north, reports AP. The restrictions were withdrawn after the army captured Killinochchi, a Tamil stronghold, last week, Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte said in Parliament. The censorship was criticised by editors and human rights activists as an attempt by the military to hide its defeats and human rights abuses. The international media was spared from censorship. Reporters are still barred by the government from entering the north. Censorship, which has been periodically imposed during the 13-year war, was renewed last April. Government had imposed restrictions on the media before, especially during major offensives in the 13-year-old war. Local reporters submit their stories for vetting by military officials who delete whatever they considered to be sensitive information. Newspapers often left blank spaces on their pages as a form of protest. Government forces captured Killinochchi, 280 kilometres (170 miles) north of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, September 29, killing 900 combatants were killed in the 8-day offensive, by official count. Surviving guerillas withdrew deeper into the northern jungles. The rebels are battling for a separate homeland for minority Tamils.

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Off the Record

Mystery snooper filmed Di's secret love

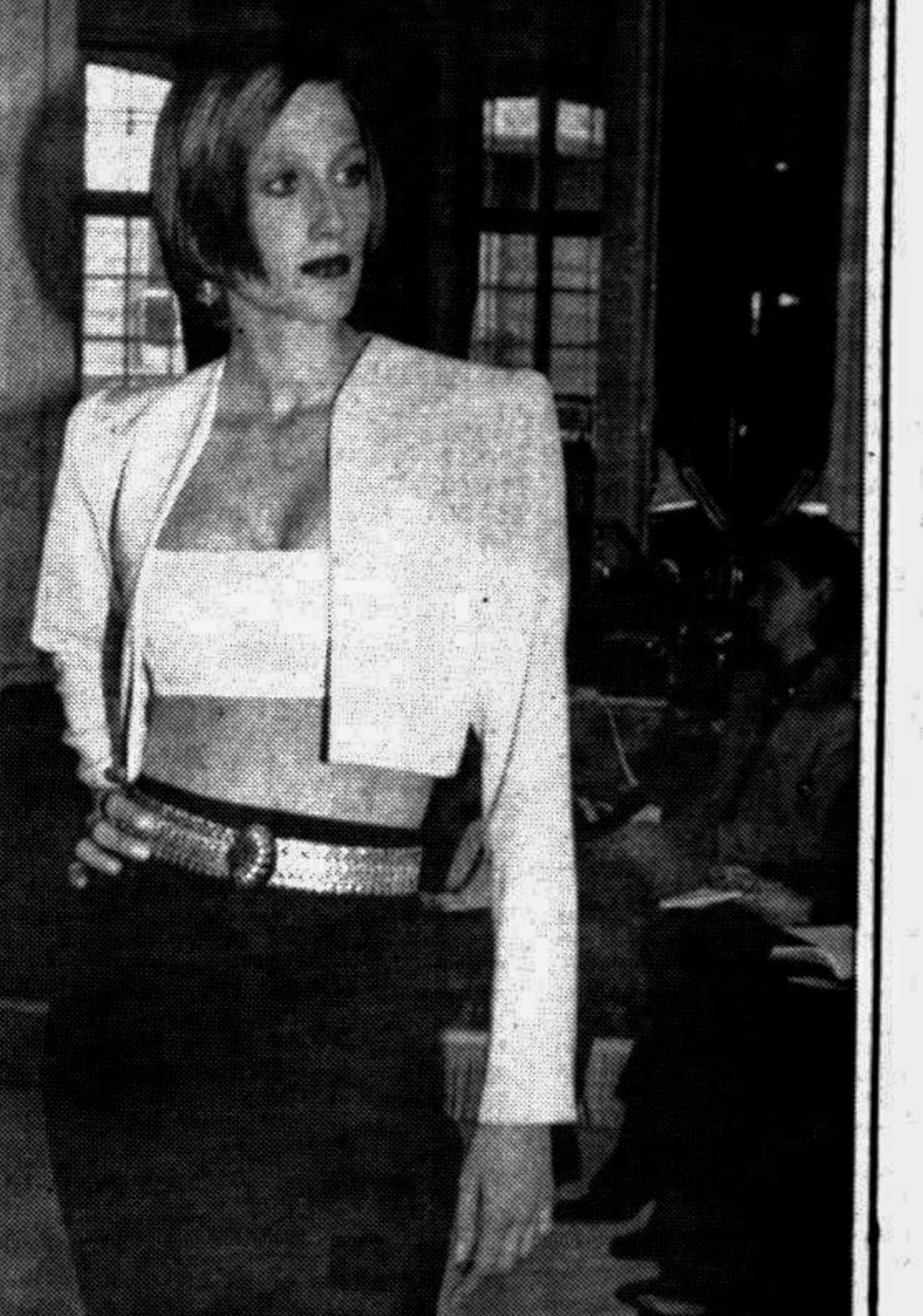


he crawls around the floor on all fours, the paper added. It said the video is shot through what appear to be the French windows of a white-walled, ivy clad house. It said that in the video, Diana does a tantalising semi-striptease, lifting her sweatshirt over her head to reveal a dark sports bra.

LONDON: A mystery snooper filmed Princess Diana frolicking with her former riding instructor James Hewitt during their five-year affair, according to a news report Tuesday reports AP. The London tabloid The Sun said the 80-second tape shows Diana stripping down to her sports briefs and bra, passionately kissing Hewitt, riding on his back and playfully fighting with cushions. It said that during the silent, black-and-white video recording, the lens zooms in on them embracing and kissing on a sofa. It does so again as Diana clambers onto Hewitt's back and

The Sun, which printed pictures if said were from the video, said the quality of the heavily-edited tape is poor. It said it is clear neither Diana nor Hewitt knew they were being filmed. The Sun said an investigation by the paper pointed to the film being made on security cameras at Highgrove, Prince Charles' country mansion 100 miles (160 kilometres) west of London.

But it said the recording also appears wobbly in parts, suggesting the camera was hand-held at a considerable distance. Hewitt, 38, has admitted spending weekends at Highgrove while Charles was away, helping Charles and Diana's two sons, Prince William, 14, and Prince Harry, 12, improve their riding skills.



A model displays an evening gown, cinched with a golden belt as part of the Spring-Summer 1997 Ready-to-Wear fashion collections from French Couturier Yves Saint Laurent shown in Paris on Monday. — AFP/UNB photo

Corazon Aquino to get Fulbright Prize

UNDATED, Oct 8: The 1996 J. William Fulbright Prize of International Understanding will be awarded to Corazon Aquino, former President of the Republic of the Philippines, the Fulbright Association announced recently. President Aquino, the first woman to receive the prize, will be presented with the award on October 11 in a ceremony at the State Department. President Aquino has emboldened others in her region and around the world to believe that honesty, determination and adherence to constitutionalism are the means to achieve social and political tranquility," said Dr. Stanley N. Katz, president of the American Council of Learned Societies and chairman of the international prize selection committee convened by the Fulbright Association.