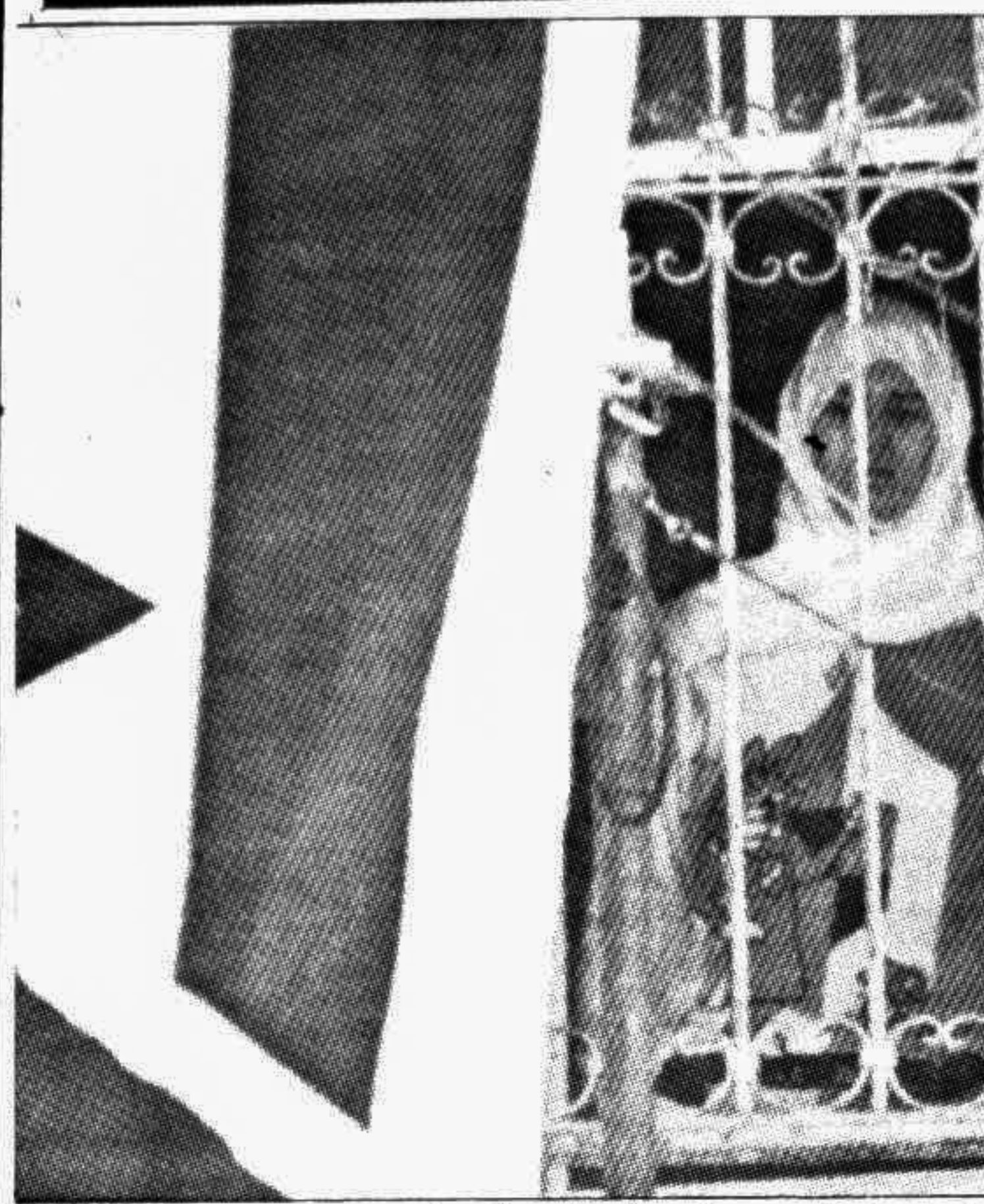


International

BRIEFLY



A Palestinian woman, standing in her home, looks out from a barred window as a large Israeli flag flutters Tuesday above a District Coordinating Office, set up recently where the Israeli controlled section of Hebron meets the Palestinian controlled sector of the city.

**China's envoy to UK summoned:** The British government Tuesday summoned China's ambassador in London to deliver a protest against China's plans to crack down on democracy and civil liberties when it takes control of Hong Kong in July, AFP reports from London.

**Opposition jets bomb Kabul:** Opposition warplanes launched air raids on Kabul overnight and this morning, hitting the airport, but causing no casualties witnesses said. Reuter reports from Kabul.

**Troops shelling MILF rebels in Philippines:** Philippine government troops continued to shell the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in southern Philippines, sending hundreds of residents to flee, the local press reported yesterday. Xinhua reports from Manila.

**Indonesia, Malaysia set for new talks:** Indonesia and Malaysia are preparing for new talks on transferring their ownership dispute over two islands to the world court, Indonesia's official Antara News Agency said yesterday. Reuter reports from Jakarta.

**Road mishap kills 15 in China:** A bus plunged over a cliff in eastern China killing 15 people and injuring another 13, the China Daily reported yesterday. AFP reports from Beijing.

**Serbs refuse to extradite leaders indicted for war crimes**

PALE. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jan 22: Bosnian Serbs said Tuesday they would not extradite their former leaders to an international tribunal to face war crimes charges, reports AP. Meeting with Louise Arbour, the chief prosecutor of the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, a top Bosnian Serb official accused the court of anti-Serb bias. It was the first visit by Arbour, a Canadian judge, to Bosnia since she replaced Richard Goldstone in October.

**Annan's bid to convince US Congress for payment of arrears**

June 25 bombing Saudi govt to execute 30 Shiite Muslims

CAIRO, Jan 22: A Saudi opposition group claimed Tuesday that Saudi Arabia will execute 30 Shiite Muslims for their role in last year's bombing that killed 19 US servicemen, reports AP.

But the group, the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia, did not name its sources, and Saudi Arabia has insisted the investigation into the June 25 bombing is not yet complete.

Gunmen kill 24 Rwandans

KIGALI, Jan 22: Unidentified gunmen killed at least 24 Rwandans in an attack in northern Rwanda while they were on an unarmed civilian night patrol, state-run radio said Wednesday, reports AP.

**400 Indians fall ill breathing ammonia gas**

NEW DELHI, Jan 22: Nearly 400 people were taken ill after breathing ammonia gas leaked from a road tanker which crashed into a ditch in central India, newspapers reported today, says AFP.

22,000 Burundian refugees flee to Tanzania

GENEVA, Jan 22: Nearly 22,000 Burundian refugees have fled their violence-hit country for neighbouring Tanzania so far this month and the peace of their exodus is picking up, the United Nations Refugee Agency UNHCR said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Peru's hostage crisis unlikely to end soon

LIMA, Jan 22: Gunshots broke the early morning quiet Wednesday outside the Japanese ambassador's residence, where 73 hostages are being held by guerrillas asking for comrades to be freed from jail, reports AP.

Man behind Elvis's stardom...

LAS VEGAS, Col. Tom Parker, the onetime carnival barker who helped guide Elvis Presley to stardom, died Tuesday of complications from a stroke. He was 87, reports AP.

US expresses concern over fighting Qatar pledges support for Sudanese govt

DOHA, Jan 22: Qatar's Emir on Tuesday expressed support for Sudan's government, faced with fierce fighting in the east of the country, after meeting here with Sudanese Vice President General Al-Zubair Mohammed Saleh, reports AFP.

Another report adds: The United States expressed concern Tuesday over fighting in southern and eastern Sudan and called for talks between the government and rebels "and anyone else involved in this fighting."



Participants in the meeting of SAARC Federation of University Women, held in Colombo recently.

Peru's hostage crisis unlikely to end soon

LIMA, Jan 22: Gunshots broke the early morning quiet Wednesday outside the Japanese ambassador's residence, where 73 hostages are being held by guerrillas asking for comrades to be freed from jail, reports AP.

The rebels say no talks unless they include discussion on freeing imprisoned comrades. President Alberto Fujimori counters that he's not trading prisoners for hostages.

Tories suffer defeat in Upper House of Lords

LONDON, Jan 22: Britain's ruling Conservatives suffered a defeat in a vote in the Upper House of Lords for the second successive day on Tuesday, adding to Prime Minister John Major's problems in pushing legislation through parliament, reports Reuter.

On Tuesday, the lords voted by 158 to 135 for compensation for gun clubs affected by the clampdown on handguns.

Major, with his party lagging the Labour opposition by 20 percentage points in opinion polls, is struggling to keep his government afloat until May when he must call a general election.

But with feeling among its own supporters running high on both issues, it may be reluctant to risk humiliating defeats in the elected chamber.

Netanyahu denies report to free Hamas leader as part of Hebron deal

JERUSALEM, Jan 22: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied Tuesday that Israel had agreed to free Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of the militant Islamic movement Hamas, as part of the deal which led to last week's extension of Palestinian rule to Hebron, reports AP.

Netanyahu did however confirm that Israel had committed itself to carrying out the overdue release of 37 female Palestinian prisoners who should have been freed immediately after the September 1995 signing of the Oslo peace accord.

Gingrich gets public flogging

WASHINGTON, Jan 22: For this old House, it was painful business, quickly dispatched. In an hour and a half, his peers administered a public caning to Newt Gingrich, who had devoted a lifetime to becoming speaker, reports AP.

Now, two years later, he's a speaker humbled. The white-haired conservative professor-politician, whose rhetorical and tactical skills had made him the highest-ranking Republican in America, was not required to be present to receive his punishment, and he chose absence and silence.

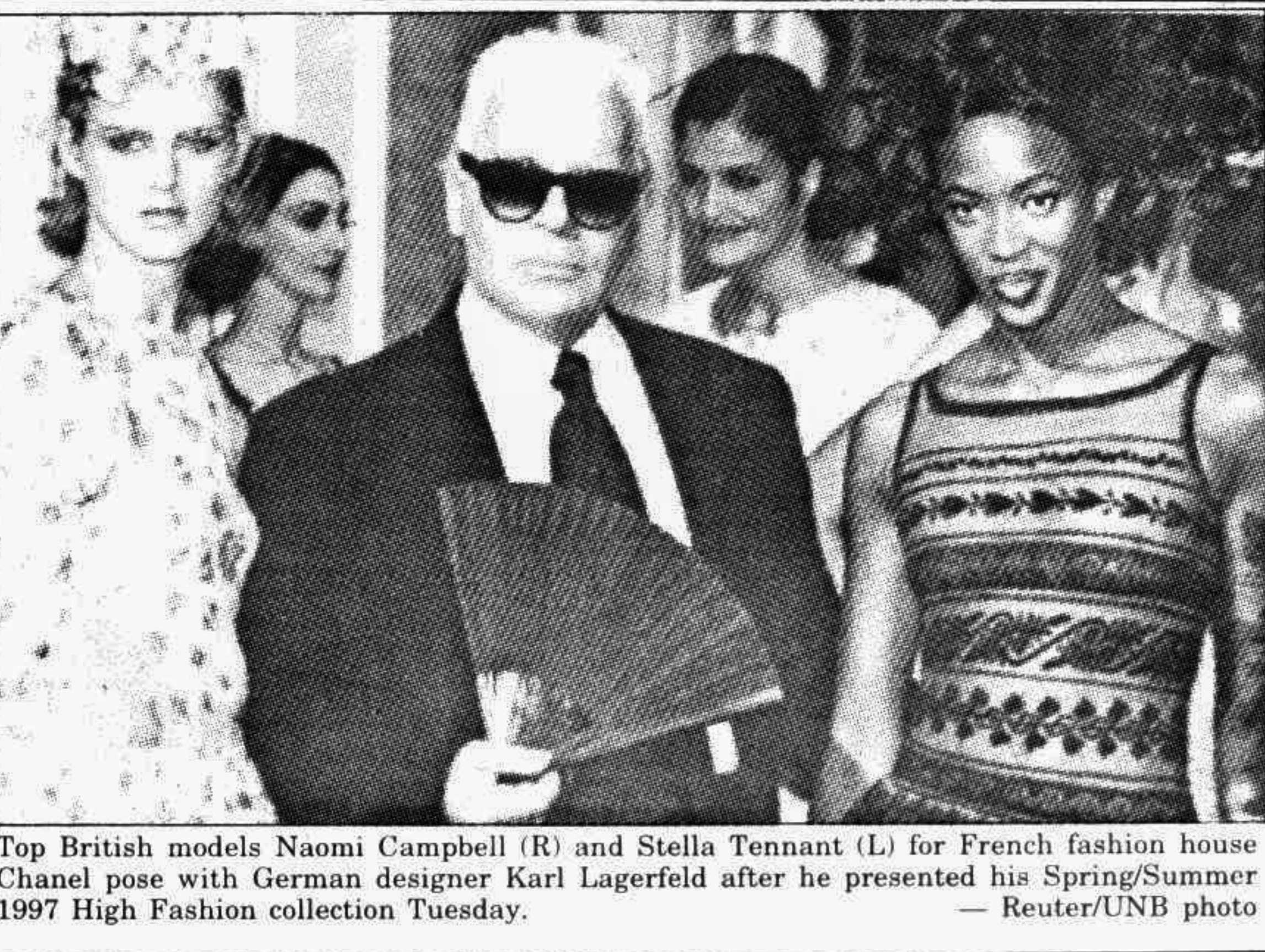
Off the Record

**3m abortions in a year!**

MOSCOW: Up to three million abortions a year are performed in Russia, ITAR-Tass news agency reported Tuesday quoting a senior health official, reports AP.

**Man behind Elvis's stardom...**

LAS VEGAS, Col. Tom Parker, the onetime carnival barker who helped guide Elvis Presley to stardom, died Tuesday of complications from a stroke. He was 87, reports AP.



Top British models Naomi Campbell (R) and Stella Tennant (L) for French fashion house Chanel pose with German designer Karl Lagerfeld after he presented his Spring/Summer 1997 High Fashion collection Tuesday.

who has been appointed US ambassador to the United Nations.

plan to Congress.