

From shy teacher to elegant princes Diana gave royal family its 1st real glamour

LONDON, Sept 3: Princess Diana's style had little to do with fashion and everything to do with flair, reports AP.

She gave the royal family its first real glamour and perfected the kind of sleek polish the British expected from New York or Paris — but not from one of their own.

As a teen-age nursery school teacher, wearing the flower traditional uniform of her "Sloane Ranger" social set, she inspired imitation. Beauty parlors around the world turned out copies of her short, feathery hairdo before she married Prince Charles.

The childlike roundness the world saw in her engagement pictures had disappeared by the time she walked down the aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral with Prince Charles in 1981, at the tender age of 20.

Over the next several years, the thinness caused by an eat-

ing disorder, unknown to the public entirely changed her image.

As a brand new queen-in-waiting, she made a faltering start with ruffled collars and saucer hats. Soon, young women in New York and Tokyo were wearing ruffled collars and saucer hats.

Before her divorce, she wore low-heeled shoes so she wouldn't tower over her husband. Heel heights dropped around the world.

Trapped at first in girlish evening dresses, she didn't develop her own confident style right away — and made some notable mistakes. But even her mistakes looked better than other people's.

Tall and slender, Diana lent style to just about anything — including the camouflage fatigues she wore for a visit to an army regiment.

Dodi's father looks desolate

LONDON, Sept 3: For billionaire businessman Mohamed Al Fayed, the summer romance that blossomed between his son Dodi and Princess Diana was a father's dream and a personal coup against the British establishment that had refused him citizenship, reports AP.

Now, he has to face their tragic deaths knowing that a chauffeur he employed was legally drunk at the time of the accident and at least partly responsible.

Charming and tough-minded, the Egyptian-born owner of Harrods department store and the Ritz hotel in Paris has confronted many difficult situations, but none as gut-wrenching as this.

"He's utterly desolate,"

Michael Cole, the spokesman for Al Fayed, said Tuesday.

"This is cruelty laid upon cruelty. He condemns, and always has, drink driving in any circumstances."

Al Fayed has sent his director of security and lawyers to Paris to carry out their own inquiries to try to help French authorities "establish the full truth," Cole said.

"Al Fayed wants to know why this most appalling tragedy has happened, and he's not convinced that the whole story has yet emerged," he said.

It was on Al Fayed's yacht, Jonikal, that Diana and Dodi's romance began in July, and by some accounts, he played Cupid, although Cole insisted "he was not a matchmaker."

255 hospitalised Contaminated liquor kills 50 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept 3: Police in eastern Sri Lanka ordered people Wednesday not to drink alcohol after 50 people died after consuming contaminated arrack, officials said, reports AP.

Policemen and government officials went door to door, urging people in Batticaloa district to avoid alcohol, police said.

More than 225 have been hospitalised, the officials said on condition of anonymity. The area is 210 kilometres (130 miles) east of Colombo.

The death toll is expected to rise since many of those hospitalised were in critical condition.

Hospitals were deluged by thousands of panicking people who rushed to hospitals believing they had also drunk the poisoned liquor. Doctors have been urging people to stay calm.

Coroners in the area reported that the arrack had been contaminated with methyl alcohol, which police believe was done before it was distributed to pubs, eating houses and liquor stores.

US asks Cambodian factions to accept Sihanouks offer

WASHINGTON, Sept 3: The State Department on Tuesday urged Cambodia's warring factions to accept an offer by King Norodom Sihanouk to mediate in the country's political crisis, reports AFP.

"We welcome the King's offer of mediation and we encourage prince Ranariddh and Prime Minister Hun Sen to accept it," State Department spokesman James Foley said.

The spokesman said Washington supported King Sihanouk's efforts "just as we support ASEAN's mediation efforts," alluding to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

On Sunday, King Sihanouk appealed to the warring parties, now fighting over his son Prince Norodom Ranariddh's last bastion on the Thai border, to call a ceasefire and enter into peace talks with him as a "referee."

Excavators remove corpses from large Bosnian mass grave

HRGAR, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sept 3: Recovery workers descended into a cave Tuesday to carry out corpses — some with socks and shoes dangling off decaying limbs — from one of the largest mass graves yet discovered in Bosnia or neighboring Croatia.

Up to 300 bodies, mostly Muslim war victims, were believed buried in a labyrinthine cave near the northwestern Bosnian village of Hrgar. Bosnian officials began exhuming bodies Monday, and by Tuesday had removed 10 corpses. Some remains still had

Tents and wooden table have been set up around the shaft, in a patch of forest cleared of trees, for examining the bodies.

"We won't have a real idea of what we are dealing with until all the material is removed," said Joseph Cruz, a human rights field worker who is among UN officials monitoring the excavation. "There is no real idea of how far the hole goes down there."

The exhumation will take at least a month, said Adem Jakupovic, a local judge in the

Muslim-Croat federation.

The UN war crimes tribunal has been using evidence gathered from exhumations to build cases against suspects accused of committing atrocities during the Bosnian war and the six-month war in Croatia.

The cave near Hrgar is a moss-filled, 120-foot (40-meter) shaft that splits into several tunnels. Excavators enter the shaft in a large metal basket that slides down a wire connected to an above-ground generator.

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Another report says: The Clinton administration gave cautious approval Tuesday to an agreement that would return control of a radio transmitter in northeastern Bosnia to backer of wartime rebel Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in exchange for a promise to tone down anti-NATO and anti-UN broadcasts.

New US official begins South Asia tour

NEW DELHI, Sept 3: The United States newly-nominated Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia has arrived here on a familiarisation tour of the world's most populous region, a spokesman said today, reports AFP.

Indefurth's trip is expected to be followed by a visit by the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Thomas Pickering, in return paving the way for a visit by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, meanwhile, is due to meet Clinton this month during a visit which will also see him address the United Nations in New York.

Gujral had said he would meet with Clinton only if the thorny issue of Indo-Pakistani ties were kept off the agenda.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since their independence in 1947. Their relations continue to be blighted by a territorial dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

India updating Hajj law

NEW DELHI, Sept 2: The Indian government is drafting a new law to replace the outdated provisions regulating the annual Hajj pilgrimage from the country, according to India Abroad News Service.

The Ministry of External Affairs has set up an advisory panel of sitting and former Muslim members of Parliament to suggest changes in the Hajj Committee Act of 1959.

An estimated 75,000 Indians make the Hajj pilgrimage every year of whom, 56,000 are sent by the government-appointed Hajj Committee of India. But unlike in earlier days when the pilgrims travelled by road and embarked from Mumbai, all now fly to Jeddah from Mumbai and eight other cities.

The government is acting to meet the long-standing demand from Indian Muslims to update the 1959 law which is no longer suited to the changed nature of the pilgrimage, says Salamat Ullah, chairman of the Haj Committee of India.

Ministry officials say the government may issue an ordinance to give effect to the provisions if the legislation is ready before the next session of Parliament. Minister of State for External Affairs Salim Sherwan has scheduled a meeting with Muslim MPs on September 17 to consider the panel's recommendations.

The 1959 Act talks only of sea travel, while Hajj pilgrims, known as Hajis, stopped using this mode of transport. Saudi Arabia two years ago, says a senior Ministry official. "Even Saudi authorities now encourage air travel," he said.

The Hajis for Jeddah from Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Srinagar, Bangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, Calicut, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad. Immigration and customs formalities are done at all these cities although they finally fly off only from the few cities which have international airports.

The government offers the Hajis a substantial concessionary passage on the national carrier Air India between Delhi and Jeddah and back. For the last three years, the Hajis sent by each paid Rs 12,000 for the passage, irrespective of the city of embarkation, which is about Rs 7,000 less than the normal fare. Only pilgrims sent by the Haj committees are eligible for the concession.

However, the parliamentary

'Photographers swarmed Di's Mercedes wreckage like shark after raw meat'

HEAWELL HARBOR, New York, Sept 3: Photographers swarmed the wreckage of the Princess Diana crash and snapped pictures like "sharks after raw meat" as Paris police stood by, said a man who happened by the scene in a taxi, reports AP.

Jack Firestone, his wife, Robin, and their 12-year-old son were returning to their hotel early Sunday after a day of sightseeing when their taxi stopped briefly by the demolished Mercedes.

Firestone, 42, said Tuesday after arriving home here in Long Island that photographers swarmed the wreckage "as if they were mosquitoes... taking photos from every conceivable angle."

They were "clicking away like mad, running around the car, snapping from every position they could. The police were 10 feet (3 meters) away, just standing there," Firestone said.

Georges Kiezman, a well-known lawyer who represents Fayed and once represented the family of the late President Francois Mitterrand, made it clear he aims to establish the fault of the photographers.

"There is a causality between the pursuit (by paparazzi) and the accident," he said.

Also joining the case as a civil party were Paul's parents. They want access to documents to determine how their son was judged to be legally drunk at the time of the crash.

The photographers who went before the judge all were arrested at the bloody crash scene, and had been in custody since then. They were freed — two on bail.

Along with "involuntary homicide and injuries," they were also placed under investigation for failing to aid people in danger. France has a "Good Samaritan" law requiring people to come to the aid of victims of road accidents.

The step means the photographers will be further investigated. It does not, however, mean that they will necessarily be charged with any crimes.

If convicted, the photographers could be sentenced to five years in prison and fined 500,000 francs (dls 83,000).

There was no movement of one human being trying to help

another human being in a tragedy. It was a surreal setting: lights from the police cars, the police standing there, and a half dozen more photographers climbing all over the car with about 12 motorcycles parked nearby," Firestone said.

Fergie dumps on
paparazzi

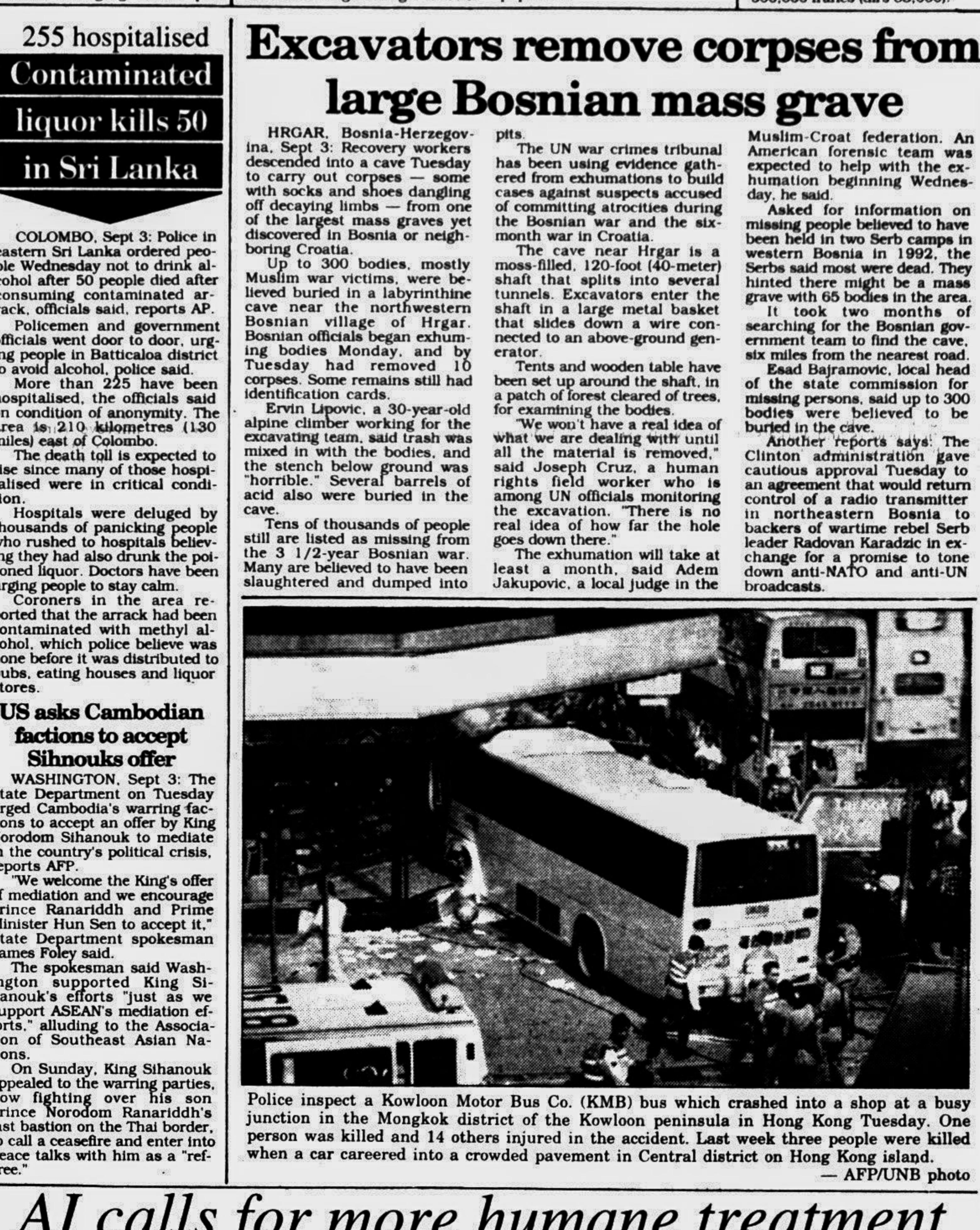


NEW YORK, Sept 3: On the cover of the brochure promoting a new Weight Watchers regimen, the Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, sits cross-legged, smiling at the camera.

"It's harder than outrunning the paparazzi," the opening line says about losing weight.

The Weight Watchers campaign featuring Fergie, as she is popularly known, was scheduled to begin Tuesday in New York but was pulled indefinitely after the duchess' former sister-in-law, Princess Diana, was killed in a car crash in Paris early Sunday.

Police say motorcycle-riding paparazzi photographers may have contributed to the accident.



AI calls for more humane treatment of refugees in Middle East

CAIRO, Sept 3: Amnesty International called Wednesday for more humane treatment of the estimated 5.6 million refugees in the Middle East, reports AP.

The London-headquartered human rights group was especially critical of Iraq and Bahrain for their ill-treatment of political dissidents, who are sometimes forced into exile.

And it said that Palestinians — the largest refugee group in the world — should be assured "the right to return or compensation" for the losses they suffered when they fled or were driven from their homes with the 1948 creation of the state of Israel.

Amnesty also accused Iran of torturing and murdering political opponents, including dissidents who have taken refuge abroad. But it noted that Iran has taken in some two million refugees — 1.4 million from Afghanistan and 600,000 from Iraq — and is struggling with

little outside help to support them.

"The international community should not leave Iran alone to shoulder that responsibility, simply because it is the nearest point of safety for refugees," Amnesty said.

The 26 page report titled "Refugees in the Middle East: Fear, flight and forcible exile" is part of Amnesty's campaign to draw attention to the plight of the displaced and to urge governments to be more responsive to asylum requests.

Due to the nighttime release of the report, there were no immediate responses from Middle East officials.

Amnesty defines a refugee as anyone seeking asylum who is fleeing persecution or human rights violations.

The Amnesty report noted that Western countries increasingly are arguing that many asylum-seekers are not genuine refugees but "economic migrants" and are denying them

residence.

"These policies have meant that many people have been sent back home to face torture and execution," the report said.

Amnesty said that Middle East countries, too, were putting some legitimate refugees at risk by forcibly returning them to their homelands under so-called "anti-terrorism" laws.

Yemen has turned Saudi Arabian dissidents over to the Riyadh government, the United Arab Emirates have sent Bahrainis seeking asylum back home to face prosecution and Tunisian asylum-seekers have been expelled from Libya and Algeria, the report said.

Yemen has adopted a policy that excludes non-European asylum-seekers, Amnesty said.

"As a result, the (Turkish) government does not formally recognise as refugees individuals from the two largest refugee groups in the country — Iraqis and Iranians," it said.

Amnesty called on Middle

East governments to reject forced repatriation. "No one should be sent back to a country where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations, such as torture, extra-judicial execution or disappearance," it said.

On Iraq, the report noted that thousands of Iraqi Kurds and Shi'ite Muslims were forced to flee repression after their leader Saddam Hussein following the 1991 Gulf War.

Most are in Iran, the report said, but others have ended up in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The report warned against sending them back home under announced Iraqi "amnesties" saying that "hundreds of refugees who returned 'disappeared' were tortured or executed."

Bahrain, fighting a Shi'ite

Muslim insurgency, has stripped some of its citizens of their passports and expelled them.

Amnesty called on Middle

Castro jokes
about rumours
of his death

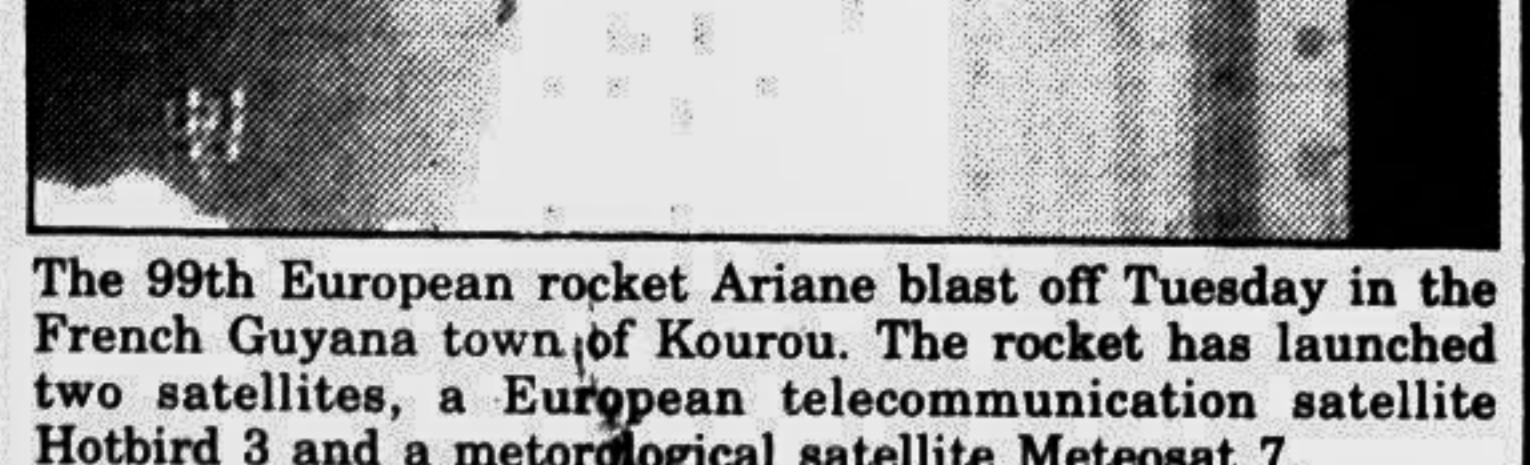
MEXICO CITY, Sept 3: In his first public appearance since reports of his death swept the Cuban exile community, Fidel Castro joked about the rumours, according to reports Tuesday from Havana, reports AP.

Last week, a Miami television station reported on talk that Castro had fallen ill or died. The rumours spilled into other Spanish-language radio and television reports and cafes in Miami's Little Havana.

But reporters reached by telephone in Havana said the Cuban leader elated laughs several times during a Monday night ceremony commemorating the start of the school year. He looked tan and relaxed, they said, as if he had been away for a few days of vacation.

"If we don't bother to respond, they will create a problem," said Castro about the rumours. "We all have to die someday. If it happens, how do we convince people that it is true?"

Castro, 71, wore an olive-green military uniform and spoke energetically to a crowd of schoolchildren, teachers and officials.



The 99th European rocket Ariane blast off Tuesday in the French Guyana town of Kourou. The rocket has launched two satellites, a European telecommunication satellite Hotbird 3 and a meteorological satellite Meteosat 7.

— AFP/UNB photo