

US embassy bombings

# Suspect detained in Karachi, returned to Kenya

NAIROBI, Aug 17: The entourage of FBI agents grows in Nairobi as more investigators try to learn whether the trail of evidence from the deadly Aug 7 embassy bombing leads to a suspect whom authorities have brought back from Pakistan, reports AP.

The Pakistan Foreign Ministry and another government source said Sunday that Mohammad Sadik Howaida was handed over to Kenyan authorities last week, bypassing US investigators in Pakistan.

A ministry spokesman said Sadik was arrested on his arrival at the Karachi airport from Nairobi on Aug 7, the day twin bombings at the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killed 257 people and wounded at least 5,500 more.

A government source in Pakistan, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Sadik was returned Friday to Nairobi, bypassing US investigators who had flown to Pakistan to question him.

Kenya's private KTN television reported that Howaida arrived Sunday in Nairobi. The discrepancy would not immediately be explained.

US officials in Islamabad and Nairobi refused to discuss

Sadik. "This is a matter in which we are working very closely and very hard with our Kenyan colleagues. I can't make any comment," said the FBI's assistant agent-in-charge of the Nairobi investigation, Hardrick Crawford. "This is an ongoing investigation."

The government source in Pakistan said the suspect told his interrogators that a few other conspirators, who left Nairobi earlier, had already passed through Pakistan into Afghanistan. He had planned to do the same, he said.

The source told The Associated Press that investigators suspected a link between Howaida and exiled Saudi multimillionaire Osama bin Laden, who has been living in neighbouring Afghanistan for the last two years.

US officials have said that bin Laden, who has been vocal in his hatred of the United States and is among the world's most militant sponsors of terrorism, was a possible suspect in the African bombings.

Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Tariq Altaf said immigration officials determined that Howaida's Yemeni passport was forged, and he was interrogated by Pakistani officials.

## Vajpayee begins four-nation tour August 28

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will begin a nine-day, four-nation tour on August 28, during which he will meet his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif, officials said today, reports AP.

Vajpayee will first visit Oman and Namibia before travelling to South Africa to attend the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) summit, which starts in Durban on August 31, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

He will then go to Mauritius before returning home on September 5.

In Durban, Vajpayee will hold talks with the Pakistani Prime Minister on the sidelines of the NAM summit. It will be the second meeting between the two leaders since their rival nuclear tests in May.

## 10 militants killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: An encounter between army soldiers and separatist guerrillas in Kashmir on Monday left 10 militants dead, an official said, reports AP.

The operation took place shortly after midnight in the dense forests of Kalarosa village in Kupwara district, 140 kilometres (85 miles) north of summer capital Srinagar, said an army spokesman who cannot be identified.

Army soldiers raided the forest following a tip and cordoned the area. Militants fired at the soldiers with automatic rifles and the soldiers fired back, he said.

There were no casualties among soldiers.

## Arms inspections UN Special Envoy continues talks in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Aug 17: UN Special Envoy Prakash Shah has continued talks with Iraqi authorities over weapons inspections in the sanctions-hit state, the United Nations said Sunday.

Shah has held other meetings with the Iraqi authorities since his arrival in Baghdad on Thursday and "a dialogue continues," a UN spokesman in Baghdad told AFP without elaborating.

Shah on Thursday gave a message from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz calling on Iraq to reverse its decision to end cooperation with weapons inspectors.

On Thursday, Shah said he had agreed to pursue a dialogue to end the crisis, but no meeting has since been announced.

## Libya asks Britain to probe MI 6 'plot' to kill Gaddafi

TRIPOLI, Aug 17: Libya demanded Sunday that Britain open an inquiry into allegations by former British spy David Shayler that Britain's foreign intelligence agency, MI 6, tried to assassinate Moamer Gaddafi, reports AP.

"Opening an inquest would prove London's good intentions to disprove the involvement of its intelligence services in this plot," the Libyan foreign ministry said in a statement.

Shayler, a former counter-espionage officer with Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI 5, has accused its sister service of having placed a bomb under the wrong car in Gaddafi's convoy in February 1996, killing several bystanders.

Shayler, 32, was arrested in Paris early this month on an extradition warrant pending prosecution in Britain under a law protecting official secrets.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has called Shayler's allegation "pure inventions" motivated by personal reasons.

Libya on Sunday also asked France to send Shayler to Tripoli or allow Libyan officials to question him.

# Kabila to arm people, defeat rebels fighting to oust him

KINSHASA, Aug 17: President Laurent Kabila returned to the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo after talks in Angola, saying he would arm the people and defeat Rwandan-backed rebels fighting to oust him, reports Reuter.

Kabila's return on Sunday coincided with rebel claims that their advance units had clashed with government forces just 120 km (80 miles) southwest of Kinshasa.

Hundreds of foreign nationals left over the weekend on flights organised by former colonial power Belgium and other nations and the United States temporarily closed its embassy.

But the exodus slowed on Sunday after Kinshasa declined to reopen a river Congo ferry terminal for passengers leaving for the neighbouring Congo republic capital Brazzaville.

"We are here to stay, whatever happens, the aggressors will fail," Kabila told state television in an airport interview.

"The people must be valiant, we will arm them," he said. "It must be understood that victory will be ours, that is the message I have for my people."

Soldiers from Congo's ethnic Tutsi minority launched the rebellion on August 2, the eastern town of Goma before opening a second front in the west in the strategic river Congo corridor linking the capital to the sea.

Kabila accuses former allies Rwanda and Uganda, who helped him topple veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997, of invading to support the rebels.

Both deny the charge but independent sources say that Rwandan forces are clearly involved in the latest revolt.

"Naturally little Rwanda and Uganda will not swallow Congo," Kabila said on Sunday, State Television said Kabila had spent several days in the southern city of Lubumbashi in his home province of Katanga.

Kinshasa was calm on Sunday. Diplomats say about 700 foreign nationals had requested passage out of the country after western governments advised their nationals to leave.

France has three military transport planes and 500 soldiers in Brazzaville. One ferry made the crossing late on Saturday. Diplomats said a fresh attempt to revive the ferry shuttle would be made today.

A Reuters Correspondent reported from the western port of Matabi and from the huge Inyanga dam further upstream that rebels were firmly in control there.

# Taliban block entry of refugees into Pakistan

KABUL, Aug 17: Taliban soldiers have blocked the entry of refugees into Pakistan from northern Afghanistan, independent sources and travellers coming from the bordering areas said Sunday, reports AP.

Hundreds of people including women and children fleeing the fighting in the opposition held towns in the north, have been stopped from crossing the border at the historic Khyber pass, people from the eastern Nangarhar province said.

"The Taliban guards have been checking vehicles" at Samarkheil checkpoint outside Jalalabad for people coming from the north, coach driver Mohammad Ali said.

Independent sources said at least 1,500 people, mostly ethnic Uzbeks and Hazaras, have been put in a school compound.

The refugees who fled northern Afghanistan before and after the Taliban advance in the opposition held region last week were however free to move

in Nangarhar or travel to Kabul, the sources said.

But they cannot go back to their home provinces because the main highway leading to the north has been closed.

Botha begins last day of trial

CAPE TOWN, Aug 17: Lawyers for PW Botha argued during closing arguments Monday that a contempt charge against the hard line apartheid-era president should be dismissed, reports AP.

Attorney Lappe Laubscher said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made technical errors in calling Botha to appear.

Botha, 82, ignored the summons, claiming that the panel probing atrocities committed under white rule wanted to humiliate him by forcing a public appearance after he had supplied more than 1,000 pages of written answers.

# Off the Record

## New detergent to clean even Levinsky's dress!

TEL AVIV: A TV commercial for a new Israeli laundry detergent claims that the product is so good it can get stains out of anything, including the most famous dress in Washington, reports AP.

In the ad for Blomet 2000, two secret agents in dark blue suits are seen breaking in to the home of "Monica Lewinsky," finding a stained white dress, and on orders from the highest authority, they pull out the laundry detergent and wash away the evidence.

Reporting the mission's success back to their boss, one agent whispers into a walkie-talkie: "It's whiter than white." But it seems the agents have bungled the operation.

"White? You were sent to take care of the blue dress!" an angry boss yells back.

The commercial was previewed on a news magazine show Sunday. The detergent campaign is scheduled to air in Israel on Monday, when President Bill Clinton goes before a grand jury to answer questions regarding a relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

## A hot way to chase pests

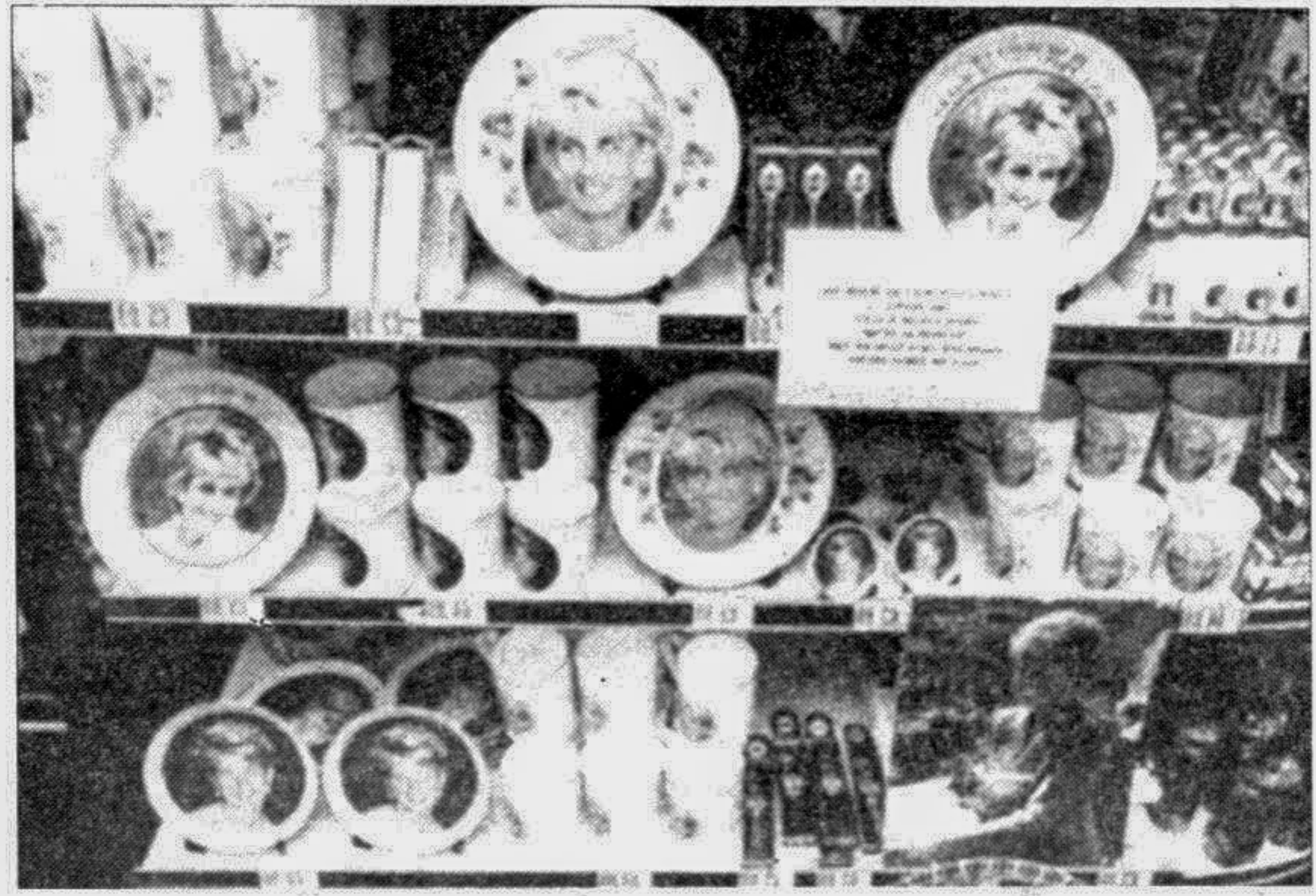
SOCORRO, New Mexico: Instead of poison or traps, researchers are using the world's hottest chili pepper as a new weapon to get rid of pesky pests, reports AP.

A repellent developed by the New Mexico Tech Research Foundation in Socorro has tapped the power of the ripe, red habanero pepper, which is 60 times hotter than its fiery cousin the jalapeno, and 10 times hotter than cayenne.

The spicy ingredient is being mixed into caulks, paints, glues and rubber-coating materials, and any creature unfortunate enough to take a nibble will get a sizzling surprise.

Tests show rats have shunned cables coated in the substance and roadrunners have already avoided pecking fence posts treated with the peppery material.

"That would be really great if it works," said Lt. Chris Boes at the Coast Guard headquarters in Washington DC.



Unofficial memorabilia and souvenirs depicting the image of Diana on sale in London shops yesterday as the anniversary of her death approaches on Aug 31st. —AP/UNB photo

# Stolen car used in bomb attack British, Irish PMs firm to hunt down bombers

STORMONT, Northern Ireland, Aug 17: British and Irish Prime Minister Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern on Sunday were firm in their determination to "hunt down" bombers who killed 28 people and wounded 220 others in northern Ireland, reports AP.

After talks, the pair said they would do "whatever we have to do" to find those responsible for a car bomb that devastated Omagh town centre on an annual carnival day on Saturday.

Police chiefs and ministers will meet Monday to agree a set of proposals on new powers and cooperation between their forces and governments, they said.

They did not elaborate on these new anti-terrorist powers, but the commitment to security cooperation from the top was unprecedented in a conflict which is rooted in claims of Irish and British sovereignty over Northern Ireland.

"We have agreed that the two governments will work together

and will do everything that is possible within their power to hunt down those that have been responsible for this outrage," said Blair at Stormont outside Belfast.

He continues: "We will obviously consider very carefully and seriously any measures they then propose to us," adding that under consideration were "all measures necessary and possible."

"The purpose of that bomb was to destroy the work, and hopes and agreements we built up... our determination has got to be that these people will never win and democracy will triumph over evil."

Ahern, who had earlier vowed to "crush" the bombers, added: "We have no hesitation in the Irish government of doing whatever we have to do to deal with those people who have created this terrible mayhem."

Another report from Omagh adds: The car that exploded in Omagh killing 28 people had been stolen in the Republic of Ireland last week, the head of

the Royal Ulster Constabulary said late Sunday.

Ronnie Flanagan said the Vauxhall Cavalier had disappeared on Thursday. Two days before the deadly blast, from the little town of Carrickmacross near the border. It was carrying false number plates, the police chief said.

This tended to back the police thesis that the bombing was carried out by the renegade 'Real IRA'.

Flanagan said earlier the "main focus" of the investigation was the splinter group opposed to the 13-month-old Irish Republican Army ceasefire and headed by a former IRA quartermaster who lives in Ireland. It is said to be especially strong in the border areas.

Police would not reveal the identity of the suspected terrorist leader. But one police source said the man was an "out-of-control Republican fanatic who is prepared to kill again and again to try to end the Northern Ireland peace process."

# Northeastern China battles with rising floodwaters

BEIJING, Aug 17: The northeastern oil city of Daging is fighting a "life and death" battle as rising floodwaters on the Nenjiang river threaten to swamp the city, local media reported today, reports AP.

Floodwaters have already inundated 1,217 oil wells in marshland outside the city forcing the closure of 527 wells in a city which accounts for half of the country's oil production.

"The third dike is a life and death defence," a People's Liberation Army (PLA) captain told Chinese television, as soldiers and civilian volunteers raced to build up a third dike, 15 kilometres from an abandoned second dike.

Television pictures showed thousands of soldiers rushing to pile sandbags on top of dikes in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, as strong winds whipped up waves which lashed the dikes.

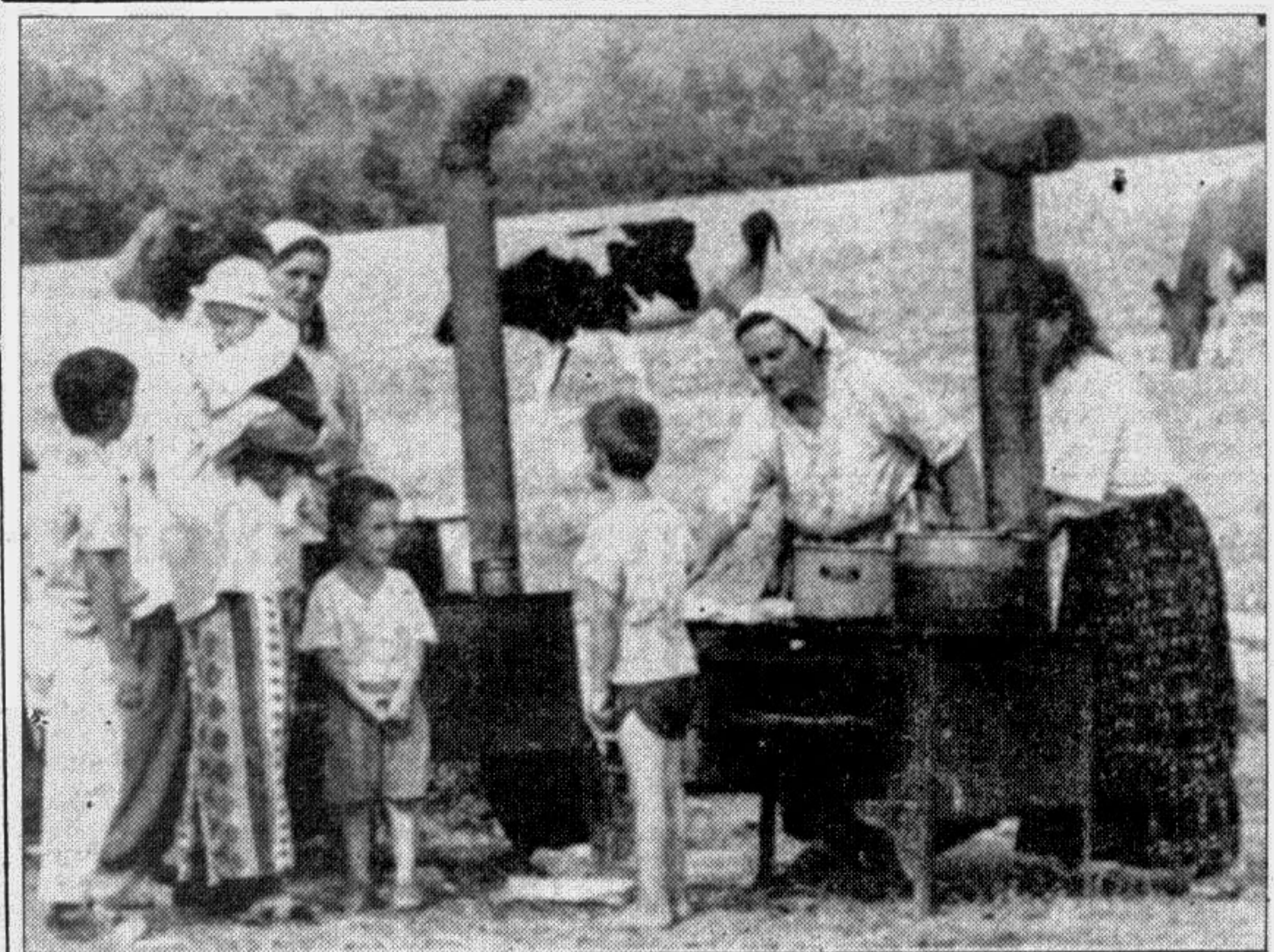
With more than 25,000 oil wells, Daging produced 60.9 million tonnes of oil in 1997, but production had slowed to just 6,821 tonnes during the past week, local media reported.

## Fourth attempt to circle globe in balloon fails

SYDNEY, Aug 17: A French military airplane from New Caledonia has dropped a life raft to US balloonist Steve Fossett ABC Radio reported today, says AP.

Fossett was seen getting into the life raft, ABC Radio said, after presumably being forced down on Sunday, ending his fourth attempt to circle the globe in a balloon nonstop.

An Australian Air Force C-130 transport plane was on its way to the site.



Albanian refugees wait for food to be cooked in the village of Likosan yesterday. Refugees from all over the Kosovo province were driven to this area still under KLA control after continuing attacks on villagers by Serb government forces. —AP/UNB photo