

International



Protesters call for President Clinton's resignation outside Mechanics Hall in Worcester, USA, Thursday as Clinton took a break from his vacation to introduce a new guide to help prevent school violence. Clinton said the education guide "will help schools recognise a troubled and potentially violent young person." —AP/UNB photo

UNSC agrees to suspend sanctions against Libya

Lockerbie bombing: Tripoli accepts trial terms

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 28: Calling on Libya to honour its pledges, the Security Council has unanimously agreed to suspend sanctions against Tripoli once it turns over two suspects in the fatal bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, reports AP.

The council voted 15-0 Thursday night to approve a resolution that also threatens additional measures if the suspects fail to appear for trial before a three-judge panel in the Netherlands.

"This unanimous signal from the Security Council to the authorities of Libya could not have been stronger," said Britain's deputy ambassador, Stephen Gomersal. "This is now the moment of truth for Libya to come good on the commitments it has made."

The two suspects — Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamien Khalifa Fhimah — are accused of planting a bomb aboard the flight, which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec 21, 1988, killing 270 people.

Libya's UN ambassador, Abuzed Omar Dorda, harshly criticised the 6-year-old UN sanctions and the short amount of time Libya was given to re-

spond to a US-British proposal for a trial in the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, Libya "accepts that the two suspects be tried in a Scottish court in the Netherlands by Scottish judges according to Scottish law," Dorda said. "We reaffirm this position today."

"This is a serious position, an irreversible position," he added.

Earlier Thursday, Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi said in Tripoli he wouldn't surrender the suspects until he received guarantees that the United States and Britain wouldn't play "tricks."

He did not elaborate on what assurances he was seeking, but said he wanted sanctions lifted immediately after an agreement on the trial is reached.

UN sanctions were imposed in 1992 to force Libya to surrender the two suspects. The measures ban air travel to and from the country, prohibit arms sales, freeze some assets abroad and limit sales of oil equipment.

Under the proposal, the suspects could not be extradited from the Netherlands. If found guilty, they would serve their sentences in Britain.

Yeltsin to resign?

NEW YORK, Aug 28: Despite strong denials from the Kremlin, CBS Television reiterated its report Thursday that Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a letter announcing his intent to resign once Viktor Chernomyrdin is confirmed as prime minister, reports AFP.

Citing "sources within the Kremlin and close to the Yeltsin family" CBS added that the resignation letter was undated.

In Moscow, the Kremlin denied an earlier CBS report which cited only Kremlin sources.

"Any information referring to informed sources on whatever supposed impending resignation of President Boris Yeltsin is invented and false," the Kremlin said.

CBS said the alleged resignation was to take effect once Chernomyrdin is confirmed as prime minister. Chernomyrdin would then become interim president and new presidential elections would be held in three months.

Fernandes says Clashes in Siachen won't trigger Indo-Pak war

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes has said the stand-off with its arch-rival Pakistan in the Siachen Glacier would not trigger a "full-scale" war, a government statement said, reports Reuters.

But Fernandes did not foresee fewer clashes around the Kashmir glacier and accused Pakistan of not being keen on any serious discussion for settlement.

"The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, says that the clashes in Siachen will not trigger a full-scale war between India and Pakistan," the statement released late on Thursday said.

"However, he does not foresee de-escalation in the glacier in the near future as Pakistan is not keen on it," it said.

Fernandes visited the Himalayan Jammu and Kashmir state between August 24 and 26 and addressed troops and meetings.

The two South Asian neighbours are fighting for control of the Siachen Glacier, a high altitude no-man's land at 20,000 feet.

Army officials say at least 2,000 soldiers have lost their lives and more than 10,000 have been crippled in the fight to control the glacier which Indian troops captured in 1984.

Temperatures in the icy glacier region fall as low as 55 degrees Celsius below zero (minus 67 Fahrenheit) in winter, never rising above -15C on the warmest days.

"Fernandes recalled that talks held with Pakistan at various platforms for de-escalation in Siachen had made little progress," the statement said. "Pakistan is not keen on any serious discussion towards settlement, he said," it added.

Fernandes said India was in an advantageous position as it commanded most of the heights.

The defence minister has said he would call a meeting of officials on September 7 in New Delhi to explore ways of reducing hardships of the soldiers serving in the region.

Intermittent exchanges of fire between India and Pakistan troops are common along the 720 km ceasefire line, called the line of control (LOC). But such attacks have escalated since the two countries conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May.

Fernandes accused Pakistan of constant firing along the LOC to help militants enter the Jammu and Kashmir state.

BRIEFLY

Newsman found dead in Peshawar: A British journalist working for US television network CBS has been found dead in a hotel in the Pakistani city of Peshawar on the border with Afghanistan police said yesterday. AFP reports from Peshawar.

The cause of death of the journalist, Maveroleon Carlos, 40, was not immediately known.

Strong quake kills 3 in China: A strong earthquake that struck China's far-flung Xinjiang region killed at least three people, including two children, a local seismological official said yesterday. Reuters reports from Beijing.

The quake, which measured 6.6 on the Richter scale, hit near Jiashi county Thursday afternoon, injuring at least three others and destroying more than 3,600 houses, the official said.

Death toll from wine in Cambodia 28: The number of deaths blamed on poisoned rice wine climbed to 28 Friday, according to officials who reported 12 new deaths overnight. AP reports from Phnom Penh.

"We are very much concerned," said Kruoch Phan, Chief of Phnom Penh's Dangkao district, where many of the victims lived.

Hanoi grants amnesty to 5,166: Vietnam yesterday announced that 5,166 prisoners, including prominent dissident Doan Viet Hoat, had been granted amnesty by President Tran Duc Luong. AFP reports from Hanoi.

Pavarotti undergoes hip surgery: Pavarotti is reported to be in a hospital in his native Italy in a serious condition. His only public appearance to date has been taking to guard his privacy during recuperation. AP reports from Pesaro, Italy.

Spokeswoman Renata Meroni confirmed for Italy's ANSA news service that the 62-year-old tenor had undergone hip surgery and was now recovering at his villa at Pesaro.

Situation in Congo getting worse

KINSHASA, Aug 28: A young woman beams a wide smile as she leans forward to get a better look at the charred body of a suspected rebel, reports AP.

Amid her crowds laugh and jeer at the sight of the dead man, his clothes burnt off, his disfigured cadaver face down and played in the dirt.

Across town, three or four government soldiers grip a writhing captive by his arms and feet. He wails for mercy. They hurl him over the edge of a bridge into shallow water at least 45 feet below. Their maimed victim is killed with several sharp, cracking shots from a Kalashnikov rifle.

This is the state of war in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, which rebel forces say they are determined to capture. Government troops are bent on finishing them off by any means.

One day after insurgents seeking to oust President Laurent Kabila launched an assault on the eastern suburbs of Kinshasa, vengeful government forces turned their fury on the captives.

And the killing may just be starting.

In eastern Congo, the death toll from a weekend massacre rose to 207 people, the Vatican missionary service Fides reported Thursday.

It said the rebel attackers apparently suspected locals of supporting government forces. A priest and three nuns were among those slaughtered Sunday in a remote area near Uvira.

The rebels denied responsibility for the killings, blaming armed bandits for the massacre in the volatile region.

The insurgents insist they will continue to fight for the capital. As a backdrop to Kinshasa's gory melee, heavy fighting raged near the airport on the city's eastern outskirts. Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji said the rebels were trying to add more troops and arms.

Through it all, on state radio and television, Kabila has spurred the public to destroy the enemy "with spears or arrows, with bows and sticks."

In the eastern Kinshasa, government forces opened fire on suspected rebel gunmen — in a market, on the street and near the French Embassy.

State radio urged people to uncover suspected traitors — the result has been the start of what

appears to be a free-for-all witchhunt on city streets.

"All enemies must be denounced and arrested," said an announcer on Voice of the People radio. Officials said more than 1,000 rebels had been taken prisoner by Thursday afternoon.

A short burst of gunfire a few hundred yards (metres) from the Memling Hotel — where many foreigners are holed up in central Kinshasa — left one suspected rebel dead. The few pedestrians on the street scurried quickly past the body, its blood pooling in the gutter.

Between crowded stalls at the city's Central Market, government troops arrested three men, slapped them to the ground and gunned them down execution-style in front of at least a dozen people.

"They were holding them and hitting them," said Amina Nbututu, who was shopping at the time. "They shot them right there and we all ran."

A pre-dawn clash, with bullets zipping and ricocheting off buildings, left one man dead and another wounded just blocks from the French Embassy in the heart of Kinshasa.

New housing in E Jerusalem PA urges UNSC to take action against Israel

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 28: The Palestinian Authority Thursday requested "immediate action" by the UN Security Council to reverse Israel's decision to build new settlements in East Jerusalem, reports AFP.

The Palestinian Authority's Charge d'Affaires, Marwan Jilani, sent identical letters to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the president of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

The council has the responsibility to take immediate action in order to reverse the Israeli decision, he wrote.

Israel on Thursday gave final approval to the construction of a 132-apartment housing project for Jews in the heart of the Ras Al-Amud area, a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

The Israel-controlled municipality gave the green light for the project following initial approval several months ago from the interior ministry but kept it secret to safe guard talks about an Israeli military withdrawal from the West Bank.

"The Israeli government is continuing its campaign to change the situation in Jerusalem and create a new demographic composition in the city," wrote Jilani.

The diplomat reminded the Security Council that it had passed 16 resolutions on Jerusalem that have had no effect.

"Obviously, the drive by Israel to Judaize Jerusalem is intensifying amid the inability of the Security Council to stop the Israeli violation of international law and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions," he wrote.

Janata Party blames Vajpayee for bid to 'legitimise' LTTE

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: An ally of Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has accused him of trying to "legitimise" Sri Lankan Tamil rebels, blamed for the murder of former premier Rajiv Gandhi, a report said Thursday, reports AFP.

The Asian Age quoted Subramanian Swamy, president of the Janata (people's) Party, a partner in Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist-led coalition, as saying the prime minister was covertly supporting the guerrillas.

Swamy said the prime minister was due to attend a rally next month in Madras, the capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, which was organised by a "known sympathiser" of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebel group.

"A lot of LTTE people will be sharing the dais with the prime minister... and these pictures will be shown all over the world," he said.

Swamy accused Vajpayee and his outspoken Defence Minister George Fernandes, who is widely thought to be soft on the LTTE both in India and Sri Lanka, of working to "legitimise" the LTTE.

Swamy and his mentor, former actress-turned-politician Jyallalitha Jayaram, have repeatedly held Vajpayee's minority coalition to ransom, threatening to withdraw their crucial support over various contested issues.

If they pull out Vajpayee's six-month government is doomed to fall unless it can muster the support of opposition parties.

Jayaram and Swamy, both political leaders from Tamil Nadu, want the federal government to sack the provincial administration for misrule and for its alleged support to the LTTE.

The current Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Muthuvel Karunanidhi, ruled the province in 1991 when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a woman suicide bomber.

Karunanidhi was listed among suspects in an official probe, but Vajpayee's government this week deleted his name from the damning chapter entitled "role of suspects," saying it was an "inadvertent error."

In February this year, an Indian court sentenced 26 Indians and Sri Lankans — some of them LTTE members and others accomplices — to death for their involvement in the assassination.

The LTTE is leading a protracted campaign for independence in Sri Lanka's northeast where the minority Tamil community is concentrated. More than 55,000 people have been killed in fighting since 1972.

The outfit is banned in both India and Sri Lanka.

Bombing in Nairobi Key suspect sent to US

NAIROBI, Aug 28: A key suspect in the bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi has been sent to the United States from Kenya, a US official said on Thursday, reports Reuters.

"I can confirm that Khaalid Salim was flown to the United States last night with FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) agents. I do not know if he has arrived yet or not," said the official, who asked not be identified.

He told Reuters the suspect was being taken to New York.

"He is not the suspect who was extradited from Pakistan. He was arrested at the scene shortly afterward," the official said. Mohammed Sadiq Odeh, a Jordanian national, was arrested in Karachi on the day of the blast, having arrived from the Kenyan capital travelling under a false passport.

The official added that Salim was suspected of having thrown grenades at the embassy just before the huge August 7 blast, which killed 253 people and injured more than 5,000.

Sharif to meet Vajpayee in Durban

ISLAMABAD, Aug 28: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will meet Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vajpayee in Durban to call for resuming talks on the Kashmir dispute, officials said Thursday, reports AFP.

Sharif leaves here early next week for South Africa to attend the 12th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit conference.

He will meet Vajpayee on the sidelines of the conference the officials told the domestic news agency AFP.

Sharif will urge early resumption of talks on Kashmir, they said.

A dialogue was suspended last year after several rounds failed to break the deadlock.

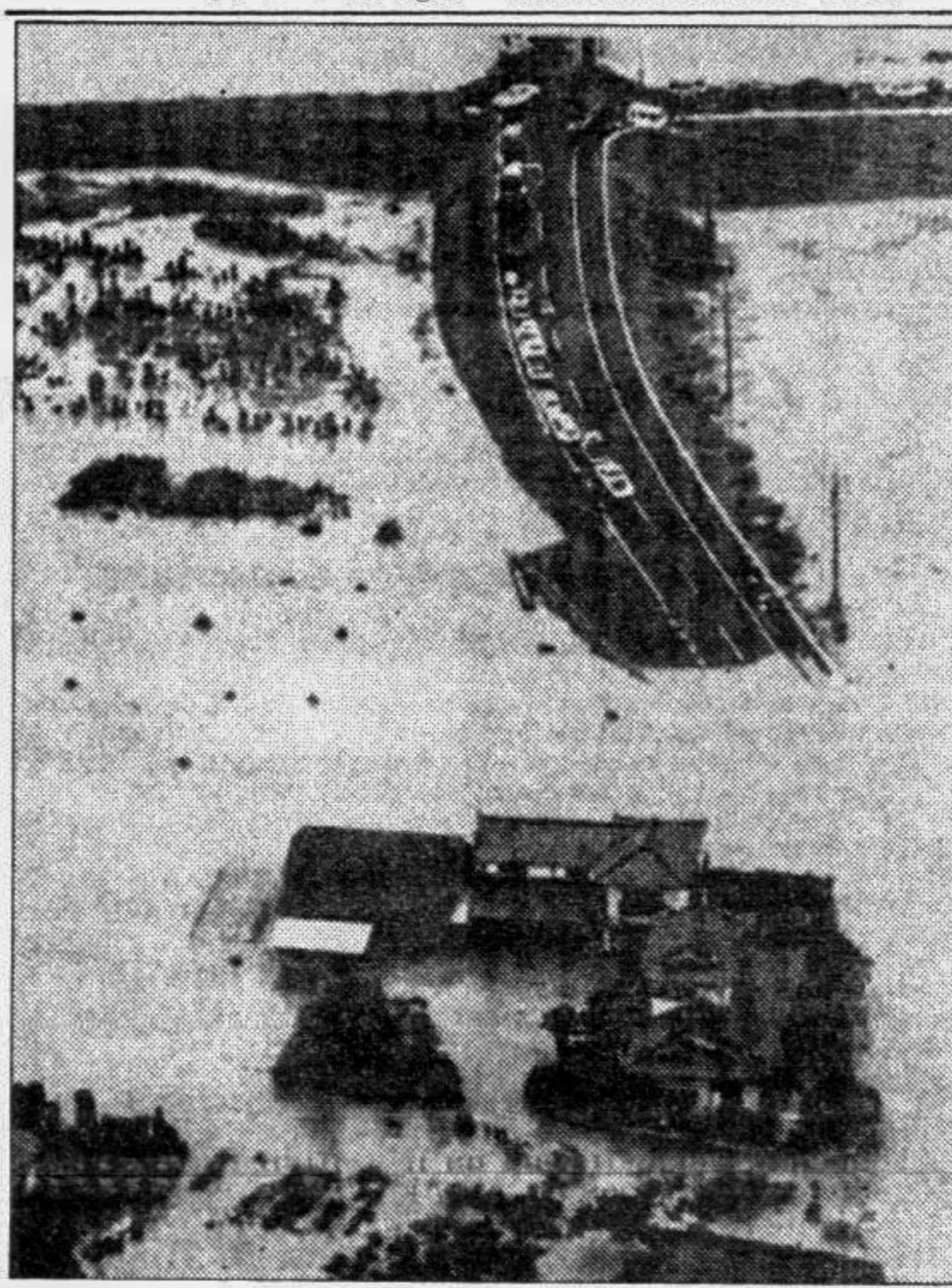
Islamabad says a settlement of the dispute holds the key to durable peace between the two countries, which conducted nuclear tests in May.

India denies Pak report on killing of 111 Indian troops

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: India on Thursday denied a Pakistani report that 111 Indian soldiers were killed in border firing this month in the disputed state of Kashmir, saying the toll was roughly one-tenth the number, reports AFP.

"The report is absolutely false," army spokesman Colonel Shrut Kant told AFP. "Up to the 21st of August, 13 soldiers were killed in the Kashmir border. Two to them were officers."

Pakistani parliamentary secretary for defence, Khurshid Zaman, on Wednesday said 11 Indian officers and around 100 soldiers had died following what he termed an "unprovoked" Indian attack which sparked more than a week of intermittent artillery duels.



Houses in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, submerged in flood waters yesterday following torrential rains, triggered by a typhoon in the Pacific, over eastern and northeastern Japan. Mito Municipal government officials told 40,000 residents to evacuate their homes. —AP/UNB photo

Dalai Lama advocates closer ties with China

CHANDIGARH, Aug 28: The Dalai Lama Thursday told a gathering of Tibetans that his representatives had resumed dialogue with Chinese authorities on the issue of autonomy for Tibet, reports AP.

The Tibetan spiritual leader was talking to more than 350 delegates at the inauguration of a two-day convention on how to win autonomy for Tibet. The meeting was held in Dharamasala, the seat of the Dalai Lama's government in exile in northern India.

"The most important thing is that we keep alive our aim and determination based on firm conviction, trust and truth," he told members of the Tibetan Youth Congress who had organised the meeting.

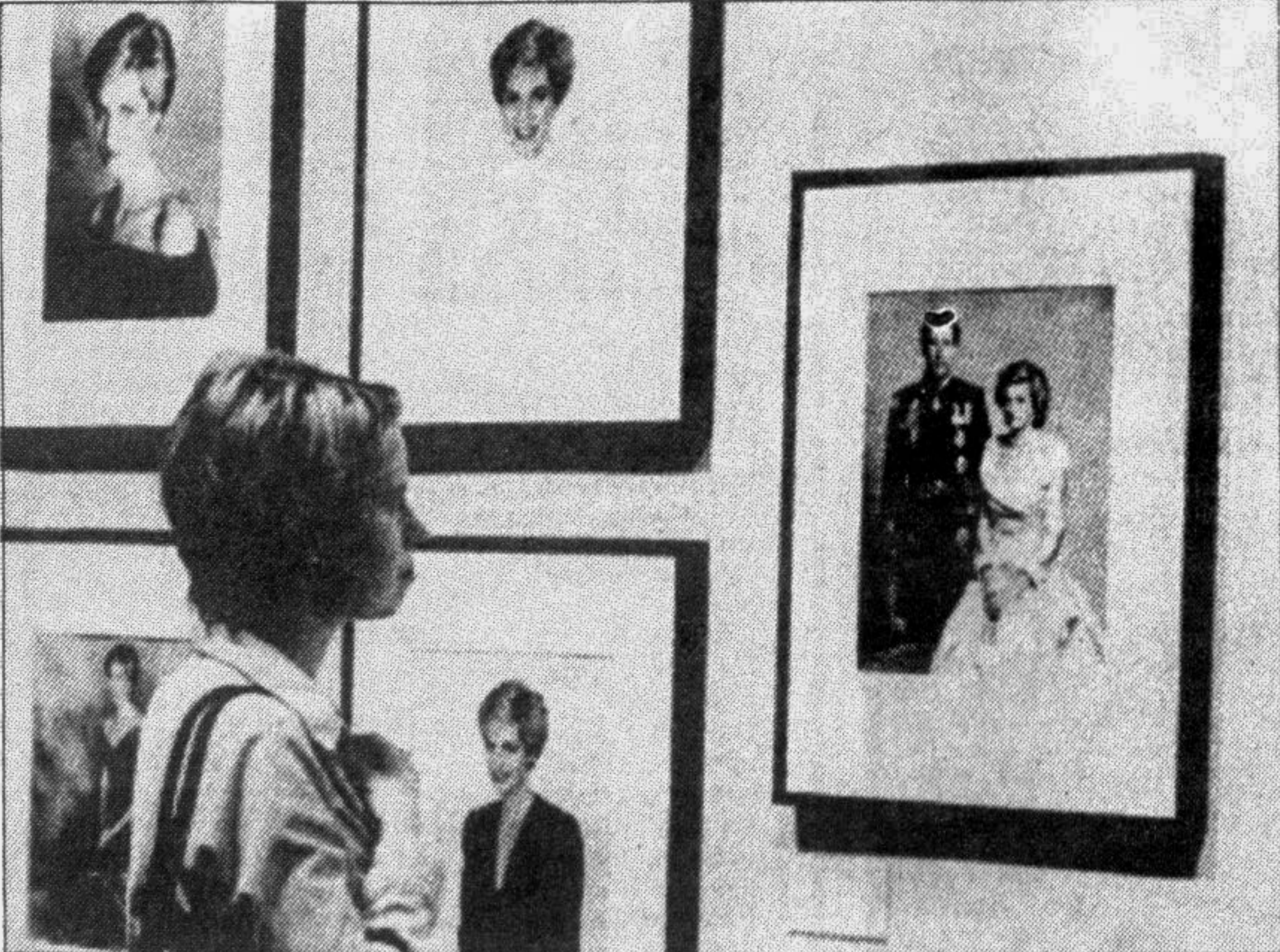
The Dalai Lama urged his followers, many of whom have become frustrated by his peaceful tactics, not to resort to violence. Closer ties with China would help improve conditions in Tibet, he said.

"It is a better alternative to keep the Tibetans happy and Tibetan culture preserved under the present circumstances," he said.

More than a 100,000 Tibetans were forced to flee their homeland after a Chinese crackdown in 1959. China has ruled Tibet with military force since 1950.

Earlier Thursday, dozens of riot police blocked roads leading to the convention they feared could turn violent over religious differences.

Police would not allow more than 120 monks belonging to the Dorje Shugden group of Tibetans to attend the convention opened by the Dalai Lama. Members of this group worship a 17th century Tibetan monk which the Dalai Lama has derecognized.



A visitor views a collection of 15 portrait photographs of Diana, Princess of Wales, by photographer Terence Donovan which were unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery in London Thursday. The photographs, hand-picked by Donovan's widow Diana, were taken at four official sittings between 1986 and 1990. The exhibition will run until November 15. —AP/UNB photo

First death anniversary Britons suffering from 'Diana fatigue'?

LONDON, Aug 28: Only 6 per cent of Britons are planning to observe Monday's anniversary of Princess Diana's death, according to new opinion poll published Friday, reports AP.

The findings appear to confirm suggestions that many people are suffering from "Diana fatigue," according to the Daily Telegraph, which commissioned the poll.

In the telephone poll of 1,009 people, conducted by the Gallup research group between Aug 19 and Aug 25, 93 per cent of respondents said they were planning to do nothing to commemorate the event and more than two-thirds said they believe that marking the Aug 31 anniversary of Diana's death should be an individual choice, not a national occasion.

But a year after the princess died in a Paris car crash, 92 per cent of them can still remember where they were when they heard she had died.

In a separate analysis of the poll results, the Telegraph declared that the findings suggest the intense period of national mourning is now over and that the grief has become quiet reflection.

The Telegraph quoted an unnamed Buckingham Palace spokesman as saying the royal family hoped the anniversary would be a "low-key" affair and that it was understandable if the public shared this view.

There was marked opposition to naming the public holiday that occurs during the last weekend in August as "Diana Day," with 72 per cent of respondents opposed to that idea.

Diana's teenage sons, William and Harry, will remember their mother in private prayer on the first anniversary of her death. They will have their father and other senior members of the royal family for support when they attend church on the queen's Scottish estate at Balmoral on Monday.

Meanwhile, at Althorp, the princess's ancestral home the Spencers will hold a family service overlooking the island where Diana was laid to rest.

At Harrods department store in London, Mohamed Al Fayed will unveil a statue in memory of Diana and his son Dodi, who died with the princess.

7 from Kosovo to be tried for 'terrorism'

BELGRADE, Aug 28: Seven Albanians from Serbia's rebel Kosovo province will be tried on "terrorism" charges next month in Nis, southern Serbia, the daily Politika reported today, says AFP.

Gazmend Tahiraj and Ibrer Metaj, both from Erec near Decani in southwest Kosovo, will go on trial on September 15 for "enemy activities against the Yugoslav army and the constitutional order of Yugoslavia," the report said.

The two men, arrested in April on the Albanian border, are accused on belonging to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) which is fighting for the independence of Kosovo where 90 per cent of the population is of Albanian origin.

Gazmend Imeri, Nexhet Zumberaj, Argon Sulaj, Avni Ahmeti and Sadri Sulejmani, all from Ponozevac near Djakovica, will stand trial on September 16, charged with "terrorist activities and attacks on Yugoslav army soldiers."

The five were arrested on May 24 while trying to smuggle arms into Kosovo, Politika said.

Off the Record

Clinton-Lewinsky affair on silver screen?

LOS ANGELES: Hollywood is planning to make a movie next year on its version of President Bill Clinton's relationship with ex-White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The Los Angeles Times reported, reports AFP.

"Intern in Washington," to be directed by Clyde Ware, would be a story about a White House intern who "has an adventure with a powerful political figure," the daily said.

Unknown actress Kathryn Jenkins-Smith, apparently a dead ringer for Lewinsky, will play the leading role. An actor to play the "political figure" has yet to be selected, said the daily.

Elephant in court as witness!

MUMBAI: The long arm of the Indian law has flexed its muscle by summoning a 32-year-old male elephant as the star witness in an ownership dispute, reports said yesterday, reports AFP.

Unable to fit into the courtroom in the southern state of Kerala, the giant tusker — his two front legs in chains — appeared before the bench Thursday in an outside courtyard, The Hindu newspaper said.

The elephant, named Narayanankutty, was called to help settle a row between his owner and the man who leased the animal.

Amid charges of maltreatment, Narayanankutty was given a medical examination in front of the court.