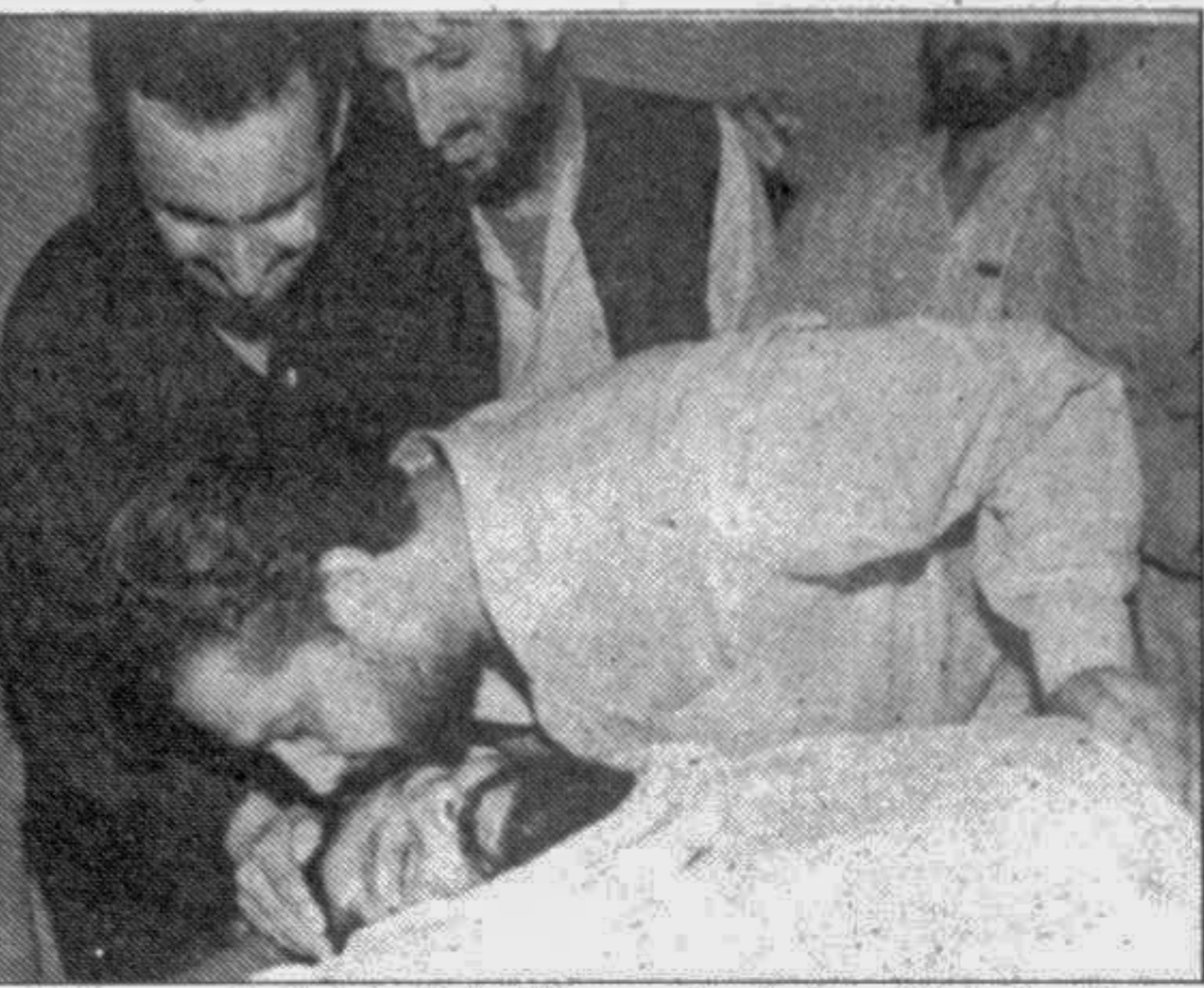


International



Mohammad Salah Aziz kisses the body of his brother Allama Shohaib Nadeem, the leader of the militant Sunni Muslim party Sipah-e-Sahaba, in Islamabad on Sunday. Unidentified gunmen opened fire on a car being used by Shohaib Nadeem with other three members of Sipah-e-Sahaba and killed all the four on a highway near Islamabad. — AP/UNB photo

Indonesian troops foil students' bid to march on military HQs

JAKARTA, Sept 14: Soldiers armed with automatic weapons blocked 150 students as they tried to march on military headquarters Monday demanding that Indonesia's powerful armed forces get out of politics, reports AP.

Witnesses said two buses carrying the students were stopped by dozens of troops on the city's main road about 500 metres from the office of armed forces commander Gen. Wiranto, who is also defence minister.

They later staged a peaceful sit-down protest in defiance of demands by the military and police to disperse. There were no reports of arrests. The demonstration did, however, cause a traffic jam.

The demonstration is the latest in a series of protests to hit the capital and elsewhere as

the effects of the worst economic crisis in 30 years brings misery to millions of Indonesians.

Last week Wiranto warned that his troops would take stern action against the students and others who use protests to disrupt government efforts to revive the ailing economy, which is beset by recession, soaring inflation and mass unemployment.

Monday's protest was against the army's policy of "dual function" whereby it has a constitutional duty to engage in political life as well as being responsible for national security.

Under the policy, the military has 75 seats allocated to it in the national 500-member Parliament.

"We are against the dual function of the armed forces be-

cause they have repeatedly violated human rights and have destroyed democracy in our nation," said one student Agus Sahputra.

In past weeks Wiranto and other senior officers have said that the military is reviewing its role in society in the wake of a push for democratic reform following the May resignation of former autocratic leader President Suharto.

In a separate protest about 100 demonstrators assembled outside Parliament demanding that bank executives accused of corruption and misuse of funds be brought to trial.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people rioted and looted in Medan, Indonesia's third-largest city, after public transport drivers staged a strike Monday, witnesses said.



Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, left, and his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharrazi are addressing a joint press conference after they discussed Afghan situation on Sunday in Tehran. Cem arrived in Iran on Saturday for a three-day visit. — AP/UNB photo

10,000 militia sent to border with Iran Taliban continue its advance thru' opposition territory

KABUL, Sept 14: The Taliban religious army continued its advance through opposition territory on Monday, while reinforcing its western borders with Iran where 200,000 Iranian soldiers were conducting a massive military exercise, reports AP.

There also were reports of as many as 10,000 fresh Taliban soldiers being sent to Afghanistan's western Herat province which borders Iran. Earlier the Taliban-run Radio Shariat warned Iran against a military assault on its territory saying "we have enough soldiers to resist any attack."

Relations between Afghanistan's Taliban army and Tehran — which have never been smooth — nose dived last month following the killing of nine Iranian diplomats by Taliban soldiers.

The Taliban authorities have offered to let Iran collect the bodies of the slain diplomats, but have refused to apologise or hand over any suspects they may arrest in connection with the killings.

The diplomats were killed in August when Taliban soldiers overran the key opposition

stronghold of Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan.

The Taliban has blamed renegade soldiers for the killings.

Accused of widespread killing of Shiite Muslims in northern Afghanistan following the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif, the Taliban-run radio has been issuing almost nightly warnings to its soldiers to "protect" Shiite residents of newly conquered areas.

Since Friday the Taliban has swept through Shiite dominated Bamian province, the stronghold of Hezb-e-Wahadat, a party of Shiite Muslims, and part of a larger anti-Taliban alliance.

The latest advance being claimed by the Taliban army was in northern Samangan province, where the Taliban say they now control the strategic district of Garishuf.

This district is a critical supply route for opposition Shiite Muslims.

Most members of the anti-Taliban alliance represent minority ethnic groups.

Hezb-e-Wahadat has confirmed the loss of Bamian city in the heart of the province, but a spokesman contacted by

satellite telephone early Monday said the fighting was continuing.

He refused to give details and would not identify himself. He also claimed that advancing Taliban soldiers freed about 50 Taliban fighters who had been captured by the Shiite Muslim group.

Another 30 Taliban soldiers were killed, said Mullah Abdul Rahadar, the Taliban commander leading offensive in the area.

He said their deaths were in retaliation for the killing of the Iranian diplomats, a charge that was impossible to independently confirm.

Earlier AFP says, the Taliban struck another blow against Iran with the capture of a key Afghan opposition stronghold on Sunday, as Iranian leaders agreed on measures to deal with the escalating crisis with the headline militia.

Iran's official news agency IRNA confirmed that Taliban forces had captured Bamian City, the last stronghold of the Iranian-backed opposition faction in a mountainous land isolated region of central Afghanistan.

10 arrested in Phnom Penh Opposition continues anti-Hun Sen march

PHNOM PENH, Sept 14: Club-wielding riot police broke up opposition protesters trying to gather for a march and arrested about 10 people Monday as strongman Hun Sen's violent crackdown against calls for his ouster entered a second week, reports AP.

But about 200 marchers managed to gather outside the US Embassy and the home of opposition leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh, then set out on foot and motorcycles through the streets, waving US, Cambodian and Buddhist flags.

Their number quickly swelled to about 500. Supportive bystanders cheered and made donations in cans passed around.

The continuing unrest comes only 10 days before the National Assembly resulting from disputed elections July 26 meets for the first time. The opposition threatens to deny Hun Sen the two-third majority needed to form a government, meaning Cambodia would have no legal rulers.

Hun Sen initially launched riot police using guns, clubs and water cannon against the protesters, then shifted tactics and brought in some 8,000 sup-

porters of his ruling Cambodian People's Party, many from outside the capital, in hundreds of trucks.

Under the protection of riot police, they were permitted to carry clubs, iron bars, chains and some guns to skirmish over the weekend with outnumbered opposition supporters. But once the Hun Sen mobs went home Sunday, the opposition quickly staged a march of some 2,500 people.

Early Monday, the opposition tried again. About 50 people, one waving a US flag, were heading toward the meeting point when they were attacked by police near the main market and beaten, human-rights workers and participants said.

Ten were loaded onto trucks and taken to a police station.

Ranariddh is scheduled to meet his father, King Norodom Sihanouk, on Wednesday in the northern city of Siem Reap, signalling what may be a new attempt to negotiate an end to the crisis.

Chea Sim, president of Hun Sen's party, may meet Sihanouk later in the week. The Cambodia Daily newspaper reported that Ranariddh's ally, Sam Rainsy, may also meet King

Hillary keeps her feelings private about scandal Majority of Americans want Clinton to finish his term

WASHINGTON, Sept 14: A majority of Americans gave President Bill Clinton continued high marks for his job and want him to finish his term even after learning of the tawdry details about his affair with Monica Lewinsky, polls showed on Sunday, reports Reuters.

But five days after independent counsel Kenneth Starr delivered to Congress his report of an eight-month probe of Clinton, more than half of those interviewed believed he should be censured.

Fifty-six of those polled by CBS News on Saturday said the president should be censured by Congress compared to 32 per cent who said no.

In a CNN USA Today/Gallup Poll, 59 per cent said Congress should pass a formal resolution expressing disapproval of Clinton's action, while 35 per cent said not a censure.

As to Clinton's job performance, an ABC News poll also taken on Saturday placed Clinton's approval rating at 59 per cent, while 39 per cent of Americans disapproved on CBS News 61 per cent polled approved of his job performance and 34 per

cent did not.

An NBC News survey showed 67 per cent approved of Clinton's job performance, while 30 per cent disapproved, and CNN USA Today/Gallup Poll out the job approval rating at 63 per cent with 34 per cent disapproving.

The CBS survey showed two-thirds of those surveyed saying Clinton has strong qualities of leadership, while ABC's tally found "there is no sign in the poll that the initial damage from the release of the Starr report is growing."

Clinton's job approval rating remained high as Congress digested sordid details of a 445-page report of his sexual encounters with former White House intern Lewinsky.

Polls by both NBC and CBS said 66 per cent of the public think Clinton should finish his term while 31 per cent believed he should not serve out the remainder of his term.

ABC's poll said 55 per cent of Americans queried say he should remain in office, while 39 per cent said he should resign. CNN USA Today/Gallup

found 61 per cent of those questioned say he should not resign while 35 said he should and turn of the presidency over to Vice President Al Gore.

In other findings a majority of the public believe Starr's report included the graphic sexual details to embarrass the president.

AFP adds: President Bill Clinton has not read independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr's report alleging he committed impeachable offenses. Deputy Chief of Staff John Podesta said Sunday.

"Actually, we talked about that yesterday (Saturday). He told me that he was not going to read it," Podesta said on CNN.

Meanwhile, friends of First Lady Hillary Clinton say she had kept private her feelings about the scandal engulfing her husband, resisting pressure to comment on it publicly Newsweek reports.

The first lady has not ruled out publicly forgiving her husband at some point in the future, however, according to her friends cited in the Newsweek story which is due on newsstands Monday.

Floods submerge newer areas in West Bengal

NEW DELHI, Sept 14: After devastating the northern areas of West Bengal state in eastern India, flood waters are now moving to the southern parts, according IANS.

The state government has already alerted the administrations of the Midnapore, South and North 24 Paraganas regions in the southern part of the state which are being lashed by torrential rains.

The reason for the showers, according to the Alipore Meteorological Office in the state capital Calcutta, is that the low pressure trough which had been persisting in the northern part of the state has now moved to the south.

Sea water from the Bay of Bengal has also entered through a canal, flooding a few villages in Midnapore district where the worst-affected Contai town is under three feet of water. The Telegraph newspaper has reported.

Incessant rains in Calcutta,

meanwhile, have not only disturbed normal life but also affected shopping and other preparations going on for the biggest festival — Durga Puja — that Bengal will celebrate at the end of this month.

Floods in the northern Malda and Murshidabad districts have already claimed 149 lives and marooned millions of people.

On a recent tour of the two districts, Defence Minister George Fernandes and the fiery leader of the state's Trinamool Congress party Mamata Banerjee got a feel of the desperation of those displaced when they were greeted by a hail of objects at the Malda airport.

"The situation is beyond control. The Army should take over full operations," Banerjee was quoted as saying by the paper.

She said she would ask the federal government to declare floods in the state a national calamity.

Four shot dead in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 14: Unidentified gunmen on Sunday shot dead four people including a top leader of an extremist Sunni Muslim group the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), police said, reports AFP.

The gunmen opened fire from a van when Shoaib Nadeem, deputy secretary general of the SSP, was driving towards the northern hill resort of Murree to attend a public meeting, police said.

Nadeem, his guard and two other SSP activists died in the attack, officials said. The "renowned religious scholar was killed in a terrorist attack."

Police said the attackers fled after the attack which took place near Islamabad airport.

No organisation has claimed responsibility for the killings. A senior official said police were investigating the motive which could be internal party feud or religious rivalry between radical groups.

The authorities have beefed up security, said the official, police were also on alert in sensitive places in the populous Punjab province, a senior official in the provincial capital Lahore said.

The murder of Nadeem is the first of a central SSP leader since the assassination of its patron-in-chief, Maulana Ziaur Rahman Farooqi, in a bomb last in Lahore in January 1997.

Police arrested several suspects and a key accused, Mehran Ali, was hanged on August 11 after an anti-terrorist court found him guilty of planting a powerful motorcycle bomb.

Search for missing jet called off due to bad weather in NZ

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Sept 14: The search for a plane missing over New Zealand's south island with three people, including two Japanese tourists, aboard was called off on Monday because of bad weather, authorities said, reports AP.

National Rescue Coordination Centre spokeswoman Emma Peel said two helicopters tracking an emergency beacon signal believed to be coming from the plane were forced to call off the search because of strong winds, severe turbulence and low cloud in the area.

The Cessna 171 Cardinal, with a pilot and two Japanese tourists aboard, was reported overdue shortly after midday Monday. The names of those aboard have not been released.

Peel said visibility in the search area, near Mount Cook in the Southern Alps was minimal and winds were blowing at around 60 mph (100 kmh).

The search area is rugged, snow-covered country about 9,000 ft (2,700 meters) above sea level, strewn with crevasses and icefalls, Peel said.

A ground search was ruled out because of the weather and the danger of the terrain.



Helen Hunt accepts her Emmy for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series for "Mad About You," at the 50th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on Sunday. — AP/UNB photo

Helen Hunt, 'Frasier' big winners at Emmy Awards

LOS ANGELES, Sept 14: NBC's "Frasier" won a record fifth consecutive award as best comedy series and stars Kelsey Grammer and David Hyde Pierce took home acting trophies at the 50th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards, reports AP.

And life got even better for Helen Hunt, who won best actress honors for her role as Jamie Buchman on NBC's "Mad About You" six months after winning an Oscar for "As Good As It Gets."

"Frasier," which spun its title character off the series "Cheers," now has 19 Emmys to its credit.

"I'm very pleased we won five in a row. I'm very sort of gloat-ing and silly about it," said Grammer, who won his third Emmy as best lead actor in a comedy series for his portrayal of a smooth-talking radio therapist with a rocky personal life.

Hunt added her third consecutive Emmy to add to her crowded trophy case. In March, she won best actress at the Academy Awards for her film role opposite Jack Nicholson.

NBC was the top winner with 18 Emmys, followed by ABC with 16 and HBO with 14. The totals include trophies awarded previously in the creative arts categories.

This year the Emmy ceremony swapped its home of two decades, the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, for the roomier Shrine this year. Audience capacity was doubled to about 6,000, making more tickets available to industry members and, for the first time, to the public.

Sunday's show had audiences in 92 foreign countries. Last year, the academy estimated a half-billion viewers in 90 countries.

Draft accord to redistribute power between president, Duma should be signed

MOSCOW, Sept 14: Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov on Sunday said an agreement drafted last month to redistribute powers between President Boris Yeltsin and parliament should now be formally signed, reports Reuters.

"I am in favour of this agreement" Primakov told Russia's NTV television in his first major interview since being approved by the State Duma (lower chamber of parliament) on Friday.

The agreement would pave the way for altering the 1993 constitution which gave broad powers to Yeltsin, formally give the prime minister a free hand to appoint his ministers and give parliament greater rights to oversee certain appointments.

Kohl's reelection chances boosted as his allies win Bavaria polls

MUNICH, Germany, Sept 14: Chancellor Helmut Kohl said his reelection chances had been boosted on Sunday by his Conservative allies' victory in a state poll in Bavaria, reports Reuters.

Computer projections of the vote in the rich southern state showed that the Christian Social Union faring better than opinion polls had predicted, had held on to the absolute majority they have scored for three decades.

"It's not just possible but probable that we shall be ahead of the Social-Democrats (SPD) on the evening of the federal election," Kohl told reporters in Bonn two weeks before voters decide whether to return him for a record fifth term.

"There is an undeniable wave of support for me which has grown daily over the past weeks."

Gerhard Schoeder, leading Kohl in voter surveys, said the

Bavarian election was not a litmus test for boon and that his opposition Social Democrats would fare better on September 27.

The latest projections gave the CSU, under its highly popular leader Edmund Stoiber, 52.8 per cent of the vote exactly the same as they won four years ago.

The SPD in Bavaria were predicted to win 29 per cent, one percentage point less than in 1994.

The Environmentalist Greens hoping to form a national coalition with the SPD — were expected to be returned to the state assembly with 5.7 per cent but the far-right Republicans failed to clear the minimum five per cent of the vote needed.

Kohl said the results showed an SPD tactic to discourage Bavarians from voting for the CSU by playing on his relative unpopularity in the state had failed.

The loss of an absolute majority for the CSU, which has been in power so long that it sees itself as the natural party of government in Bavaria, would have been a setback for Kohl.

The chancellor trailing Schroeder by up to five points in national opinion polls said the CSU's better than forecast victory showed such polls were not gospel.

This result has shown it is voters and the election campaign that decide, not opinion polls and commentaries, he said.

Kohl has been in power for 16 years as the head of centre right coalition.

AFP adds: Germany's far-right parties are bidding to cash in on despair over record unemployment, fears over immigration and crime, in national elections later this month.

BRIEFLY

3 die in Dagestan violence: One policeman was killed when unknown assailants attacked a regional police station overnight in Dagestan, Itar-Tass reported yesterday morning citing sources in the republic's police department. AFP says from Moscow.

A gun battle broke out when police caught up with the attackers near the village of Bachi, as a result of which two of the attackers were killed and a third was wounded and taken prisoner.

Irish PM arrives in China: Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern flew to Beijing on Sunday for the first official visit to China by a Dublin premier, AP says from Dublin.

During the five-day trip, Ahern will see Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji, and spend a day in Hong Kong, before returning to Dublin at the end of the week.

Man beaten to death in Mexico: Three women beat to death a 27-year-old man whom they captured as he attempted a sexual assault on a girl in Tijuana, police said on Sunday, AFP reports from Mexico.

The man, who police did not identify, bled to death after the three women beat him with their fists and various other objects, including broomsticks, police said.

11 die in Colombia bus crash: A bus plunged off a highway in southern Colombia at dawn Sunday killing at least 11 people and injuring 26, police said Sunday, AFP reports from Bogota.

The driver lost control of the vehicle on a highway near the border with Ecuador after the aging bus suffered an unspecified mechanical failure, police said.

Ambulance crash claims 7 in China: An ambulance flipped over on a highway in eastern China after one of its tires exploded, killing seven of the eight people aboard, an official newspaper said yesterday, AP says from Shanghai.

The ambulance was carrying employees of No 4 People's Hospital in the city of Zhenjiang to a training session in the city of Hefei in Anhui province at the time of the accident, the Yangtze Evening Post said. There were no patients aboard.

Journalists attacked in Georgia: The editor-in-chief and a prominent correspondent for a major Georgian newspaper were attacked by an armed group in downtown Tbilisi, police said Saturday. Both were hurt, one seriously, AP reports from Georgia.

There was no indication why the group attacked the two men, who work for the daily newspaper Asavali-Dasavali. The paper is considered politically independent and influential.

Off the Record

Medieval-style chastity belted the solution?

SINGAPORE: A firm which has started selling medieval-style chastity belts in Singapore has incensed women's groups in the modern city state, reports AFP.

Creatif marketing is selling chastity belts to husbands who suspect their wives of being unfaithful, parents worried that their teenage daughters will have casual sex and single women fearing they may be raped.

The gadgets, which have their origins in medieval times, were designed to prevent men and women from having sexual intercourse.

"I wanted to be the first to introduce them to Singapore," Eudora Ong, the sole proprietor of Creatif Marketing, was quoted as saying by the Sunday Times newspaper.

The belts — made of rust-proof surgical steel cushioned with a rubbery material — cost 1,350 Singapore dollars (785 US dollars) each.

An Indonesian businessman struck rich when sales of his chastity belts soared during the riots in Jakarta in May, when some ethnic Chinese women were reportedly raped.

Saudi septuplets finally go home

DUBAI: Eight-month old Saudi septuplets finally left the hospital after their parents' fears that they couldn't care for the babies were eased, hospital officials in southern Saudi Arabia said Sunday, reports AP.

A goodbye party for the four boys and three girls was held Saturday at the Abha Maternity Hospital, where they were born.

The babies were ready to leave the hospital six months ago, but their parents feared they couldn't afford to care for them. Their mother, Hasna Mohammed Humair, said she wanted help before bringing them home.

The couple, who already have five children at home, then received dir 213,000 in gifts from Saudi royalty and hired two Indonesian nannies. The father, Abdullah al-Summan, a retired civil defence employee, receives a dir 1,066 monthly pension and drives a cab to earn extra money.

He had considered leaving the babies at the hospital until they turned a year old, but Humair, 41, said she was finding it hard to go twice a day to the hospital to visit the babies and help feed them. Now that they're home, she's not getting a lot of rest.

"By the time we put three of them to sleep, change and feed the other four, the first three get up and need to be fed and changed," she said from her home in Abha.

Vice President Al Gore, left and Camari Ferguson, 34, of Everett, Washington right start the fifth annual 5K Race for the Cure, at Husky Stadium in Seattle on Sunday. Ferguson is a survivor of breast cancer surgery and the event was organized by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. — AP/UNB photo