

# Pak govt under fire over Kashmir pullout

ISLAMABAD, July 12: Pakistan reacted Monday with a mixture of rage and relief to the disengagement agreement with India in Kashmir while Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif came under fire for what some called a betrayal, reports AFP.

Many expressed shock at the sudden and anti-climatic end to the two-month conflict that gripped national attention amid a flood of reports of heroic battles waged in the Himalayan mountains.

"It is unbelievable," said shopkeeper Ifthikhar Ali, reflecting the general response to Sunday's sudden disengagement accord, announced by Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz.

Others described the deal as a shameful, disgraceful retreat.

But many felt relieved that the threat of war had been lifted, allowing Pakistan to tackle pressing problems of rampant poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment.

"In the first place we should not have led ourselves into this trap. I am happy the danger of war no longer haunts us," said university professor Rashid Khalil.

The announcement threw more than a dozen militant groups involved in the conflict into disarray, although they vowed to adapt and continue their jihad (holy war) for the "liberation" of Indian-held Kashmir.

Sayed Salahuddin, head of a 15-party umbrella body of 15 mujahideen organisations, said the Kargil operation had given a "clear message" to the Indians that "mujahideen can beat and dislodge them any time, anywhere."

The people of Indian-occupied

Kashmir should not feel disheartened," he said in a statement.

Former army chief general Mirza Aslam Beg said the Pakistani forces would be painted as a "rogue army" by Western and Indian media while ruling politicians will "emerge as a responsible government."

Hundreds of civilians, 100 soldiers and 40 young officers had been killed in the past two months along the border Line of Control and the Kargil front, he said.

"Who will be held responsible for their blood?" he asked.

Former cricket hero-turned-politician Imran Khan said Sharif had dealt an "irreparable" blow to the Kashmiri cause. Muslim militants have waged a 10-year revolt against India's rule over part of the territory.

Poet Munir Nazi said people were "extremely demoralised" as they had been led to believe that Kashmiri's freedom was "around the corner."

"It is futile to hope the US will play an effective role (in resolving the Kashmiri issue) as they cannot spare us for being an Islamic state," he said.

But he said Pakistan was helpless since it could not survive without Western economic aid.

The disengagement accord came a week after Sharif and US President Bill Clinton met in Washington. Sharif undertook to try to persuade Muslim fighters to withdraw from the heights they had occupied in the Indian sector.

Clinton promised to take a personal interest in Kashmir settlement, a statement which the Pakistani premier has in-

terpreted to show that he succeeded in internationalising the Kashmir issue.

But Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the chief of Pakistan's main fundamentalist party Jamaat-i-Islami, said in a statement that Sharif had "committed an unpardonable offence" and would have to face "punishment for betraying the blood of martyrs."

Abdul Rashid Turabi, Jamaat's head in Pakistani Kashmir, said: "The successes achieved by the Kashmiri mujahideen at the battlefield have been lost by Pakistan at the diplomatic front."

Former president Farooq Ahmed Leghari, a political foe of Sharif, said the premier "has sold Kashmir under pressure from United States." He demanded Sharif's immediate resignation in the "larger national interest."

Former foreign minister Sardar Asef Ahmed Ali said the Washington agreement led to a "complete diplomatic surrender by Pakistan."

The Jamaat and like-minded organisations are considering holding a series of protests against the "anti-jihad" withdrawal agreement, Turabi said.

The Al-Badr mujahideen group said it would hold rallies in Lahore and Islamabad to mobilise support.

Government leaders defended the move to defuse the crisis, saying it averted war with India.

"A dreadful war has been prevented and the nuclearised South Asia has been saved from a catastrophe," said Chaudhry Nisar Ali, minister for petroleum and a close Sharif ally.

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# International India asks Pakistan to pull out by July 16

NEW DELHI, July 12: India said Monday it had told Pakistan to withdraw all its fighters who have intruded into India's side of divided Kashmir by Friday, in order to restore peace in the Himalayan state, reports AFP.

"We have told them all Pakistani forces must withdraw well north of LoC (Line of Control border) in Kashmir by July 16," an external affairs ministry spokesman told reporters here.

He said the demand was conveyed by the Indian director general of military operations to his Pakistani counterpart on Sunday.

Any Pakistani intruders found (in Kashmir) after the deadline will be treated as hostile and dealt with accordingly," the spokesman said.

The statement came a day after India and Pakistan agreed to disengage in Kashmir, where New Delhi launched a military offensive in May to oust Islamic fighters and suspected Pakistani troops who had taken over key hills in the Indian

state. The winding LoC divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Both countries dispute the ownership of Kashmir and control parts of the picturesque Himalayan state.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied Indian claims that its regular troops were also involved in the occupation of Kashmir mountain peaks along with the Islamic guerrilla fighters.

The Indian spokesman said Islamic fighters had already pulled out of at least one of the key battle zones in Kashmir.

"We believe the withdrawal has already happened in Kargil," he said. "Our forces have gone to verify that."

"Our forces have not de-escalated their (military) action," he added.

In Kargil, Indian troops watched Islamic militants dismantle positions and withdraw from Kashmir Monday, as fighting began winding down after two months and more than 1,000 casualties.

Artillery shells crashed onto the Indian town of Kargil Sun-

day night and Monday morning, causing some damage.

But officers at the nearby army headquarters reported that the agreement Sunday on a disengagement had led to a near halt in firing between India and Pakistan.

Asked if a ceasefire was being observed, an operations officer at the front said, "For the time being, it holds." Indian forces were verify in the withdrawal, he said.

Top military commanders from the two countries agreed to the withdrawal of Islamic militants from Kashmir, leaders of both countries said, easing fears of a wider war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The plan, worked out over the weekend at an Indian border post in Atari in Punjab state, calls for Pakistan-based fighters to withdraw from the Indian-controlled region and for both sides to halt airstrikes, artillery fire and ground assaults.

Air Marshal Vinod Patney, responsible for air operations during the Kargil conflict, con-

firmed that airstrikes had been "suspended." He told a New Delhi news conference that air reconnaissance missions had also been halted for the moment. Before resuming such flights to monitor the withdrawal, he said the Indian air force would inform Pakistan, as usual.

India said soldiers held back fire on Sunday in all four sectors of Kashmir's Kargil region, where the fighting has raged and Indian troops have claimed major successes.

Pakistan on Sunday, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz said the militant withdrawal should be completed in a week or two.

Kashmir is split between India and Pakistan, and was divided by the line of control under an agreement signed in 1972. Of the three wars India and Pakistan have fought since gaining independence from Britain, two have been over Kashmir, in 1948 and 1965.

"Gradually the disengagement will be complete in the entire area," Aziz said.



Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee takes a look during a function at his residence yesterday.

— AFP photo

## US embassy bombings

### 2 accomplices of Laden arrested in London

London, July 12: Police arrested two men for allegedly conspiring with Osama bin Laden in fast summer's deadly bombings of two US embassies in Africa, Scotland Yard said Monday, reports AP.

The men were arrested Sunday in London on warrants following a request from the United States. They are charged with conspiring with bin Laden and his network to murder American citizens on or prior to August 8, 1998, police said.

Ibrahim Hussein Abdul Hadi Eidarus, 42, and Adel Mohamed Abdul Almagid Bary, 39, are scheduled to appear Monday at Bow Street Magistrates Court for the start of the extradition process.

A Scotland Yard spokeswoman refused to release any other information.

Bin Laden is suspected of masterminding and financing the August 7, 1998 bombings of the embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The blast in downtown Nairobi killed 213 people, 12 of them Americans, and injured

more than 5,400. The nearly simultaneous bomb in Tanzania killed 11 people.

Bin Laden, who is said to be in Afghanistan, is on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list and a \$10 million dollar reward has been offered for information leading to his arrest.

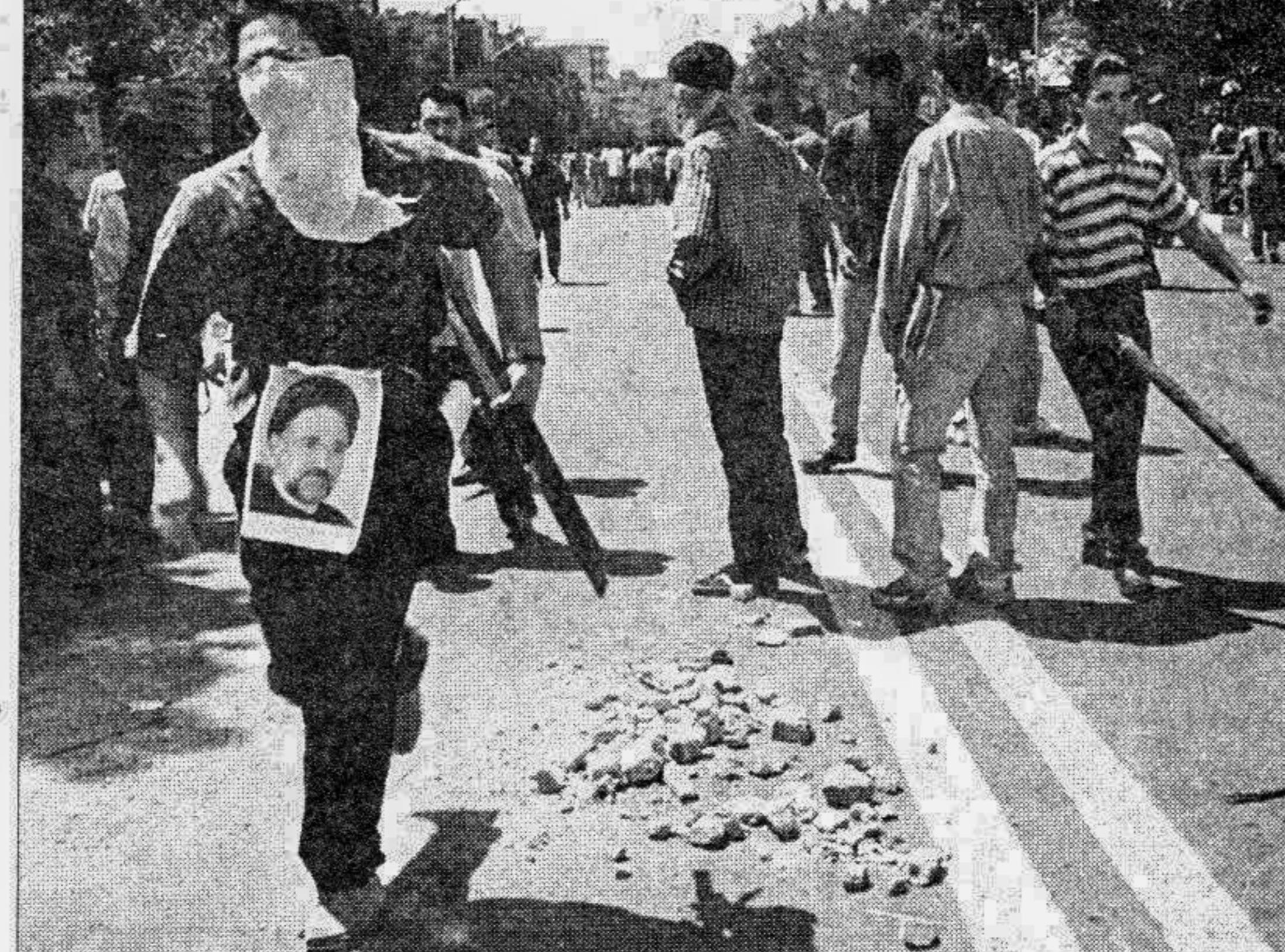
The United States is also seeking the extradition of Khaled Al Fawwaz, a Saudi national, from Britain in connection with the attack.

Al Fawwaz, who was arrested September 28, is charged in the United States with conspiracy to murder in connection with the embassy bombings.

But for extradition purposes, he is accused of having an agreement with bin Laden and others calling for the killing of Americans throughout the world, especially soldiers and diplomats.

His extradition hearing is scheduled to resume in September.

Five other defendants are being held in New York on conspiracy charges stemming from the bombings.



An Iranian student wears a picture of reformist President Mohammad Khatami around his waist, during a 20,000 strong demonstration on Sunday in Tehran. Students took to the streets of the Iranian capital for the fourth straight day to demand the sacking of Iran's hardline police chief after a bloody police crackdown on students on July 9 who were protesting recent press curbs.

## S Korea warns North over missile test

SEOUL, July 12: South Korea's foreign minister unveiled a tough new line towards North Korea on Monday, warning it could lose all foreign aid and see its economy destroyed if it launches a second missile, reported AP.

The severance of aid and cash donations from abroad would endanger North Korea's "struggle for existence," he said, in comments confirmed by his office.

"We have not officially declared our position, but it is clear we are getting tough with North Korea," he said, adding Seoul had entered a "cooling off" period with the North.

Hong Soon-Young said a fresh North Korean missile launch would prompt Seoul, Tokyo and Washington to consider severing food aid to the famine-stricken communist nation.

"If North Korea fires a mis-

site, it will have a serious impact on aid from various sides as well as ongoing business deals," he said in an interview with the Munhwa Ilbo newspaper in Seoul.

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"We have not officially declared our position, but it is clear we are getting tough with North Korea," he said, adding Seoul had entered a "cooling off" period with the North.

"Firing a missile is not a technical matter for North Korea but a question of political judgement on the part of its regime," he warned.

"If North Korea fires a mis-

## Demonstrators clash with police in Tehran

TEHRAN, July 12: Riot police and Revolutionary Guards used clubs and tear gas to disperse protesters in a downtown square Monday on the fifth day of the worst unrest here since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, expected to be held later this year, reports AFP.

Baton-wielding riot police men blocking off access to the central Val-e-Asr square arrested around a dozen demonstrators and sent others scattering into nearby streets, they said.

Protestors shouted "Allahu Akbar" and threw stones at helmeted riot policemen, who clubbed dozens of demonstrators as they moved in to break up the gathering.

The official IRNA news agency estimated the number of protesters at 1,000. It said some were armed with clubs and had set fire to a police vehicle.

Meanwhile, Iran's reformist President Mohammad Khatami appealed for calm on Monday as the country's worst unrest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution entered a fifth straight day.

He warned the thousands of university students demonstrating on the streets of the capital to be wary of "provocations" from opponents of reform.

"There are those who want to create provocations and clashes," the official IRNA news agency quoted Khatami as telling Higher Education Minister Mostafa Moin, a close ally whose resignation in protest at a police clampdown on the protests he rejected Sunday.

Khatami appealed to students "not to fall into this dangerous trap." "We must be the first to oppose tensions and violence," he said.

The reformist president urged the students not to think that behaving with self-restraint meant giving in to their opponents.

"A calm atmosphere does not mean that the students have nothing to say or are not allowed to speak out," he said.

## Mahathir wants to retire after general elections

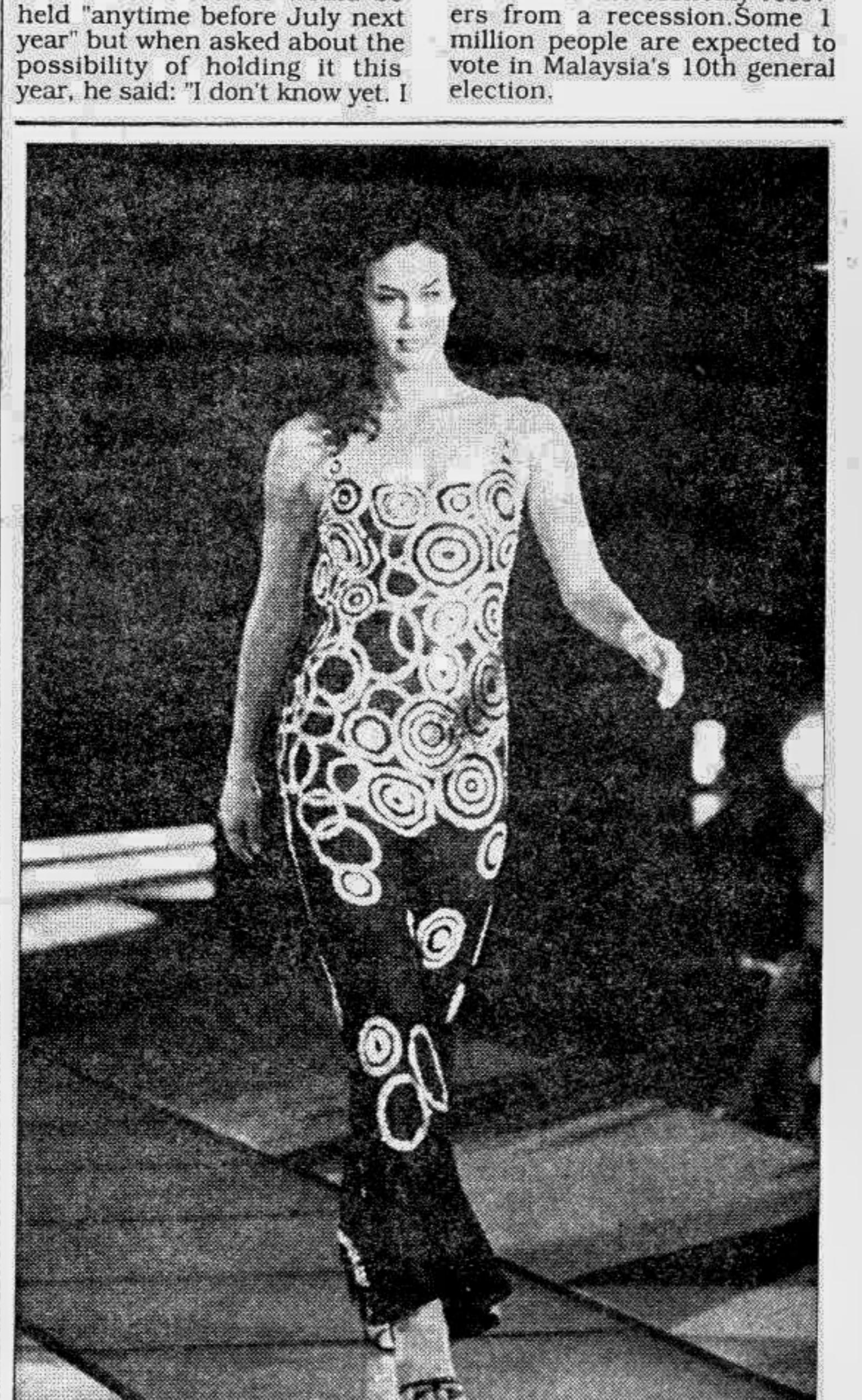
KUALA LUMPUR, July 12: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced Monday that he would retire after general elections widely expected to be held later this year, reports AFP.

Anwar was sentenced to six years' jail in April for abuse of power and is now on trial again on a charge of sodomy. His wife Azizah has started a new political party and said she was considering contesting in Mahathir's constituency in northern Kedah state.

Asked if he was ready to face a challenge from Azizah, Mahathir laughed and said: "She can contest anywhere. If she wants to contest in my constituency, I will have no choice but to face her."

On complaints that the campaign period this time might be limited to nine days, Mahathir said: "We have had nine days campaigning period in the last three elections, so what is new?"

The premier has kept Malaysians guessing about the election date but is widely expected to call a ballot within months as the economy recovers from a recession. Some 1 million people are expected to vote in Malaysia's 10th general election.



Australian actress Megan Gale presents a dress created by Italian stylist Gai Mattioli on Sunday as part of the High Fashion Week at the Piazza Farnese in Rome.

## Orange Order march

### Massive security operation in Belfast

BELFAST, July 12: Thousands of Protestants paraded on the streets of Belfast on Monday as the Orange Order marching season and political attempts to broker peace in Northern Ireland reached a peak, reports AFP.

Rescue teams and local officials were searching for survivors among a group of workers on the dam in the Hunedoara region. The victims, construction employees working on the dam, were caught by surprise by the landslide, Serban Micu, a spokesman for the regional authorities, told AFP. Heavy rains which had pounded western Romania since Sunday.

Quake jolts southern Philippines

An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.8 on the Richter scale rocked the southern Philippines on Monday but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, government seismologists said, AFP reports from Manila. The quake occurred at 1:58 p.m. (0558 GMT) and was felt in the immediate areas of the cities of Davao and General Santos. Its epicenter was plotted in the Philippine Sea southeast of the main southern island of Mindanao.

Japan, a country poor in natural resources, relies on nuclear power for about one-third of its electricity needs, according to government figures.

## 75-yr-old art teacher hurls bombs at parliament

CANBERRA, July 12: A 75-year-old man threw two Molotov cocktails at Australia's federal parliament early Monday in his second attack on the building since 1992. No one was injured, reports AFP.

The former art teacher, Clifford Courtney Moss, drove a white van to an entrance of Parliament House about midnight and a few minutes later threw two petrol bombs at the front doors, police said.

During a court hearing later Monday, Moss admitted throwing the bombs to protest an Australian dollars 55,000 (35,000 US dollar) damaged bill he had been forced to pay for his earlier attack on the building seven years ago, police detective Mark Lefebvre said.

Moss said he made Monday's attack early in the morning so that few people would be in the area.

Moss faces a maximum of 15 years' jail when he is sentenced next month in the Australian Capital Territory Supreme Court for his earlier attack on the building. In August 1992, Moss drove his four-wheel-drive vehicle through the same doors, scattering groups of schoolchildren in the entrance hall, before stopping in the Great Hall, which is used for ceremonial events.

In Monday's attack, Moss was about to get a third petrol bomb when a security officer seized him and forced him to the ground. "I was surprised to get one of — two was a bonus," Moss told the guard, Lefebvre said.

Lefebvre