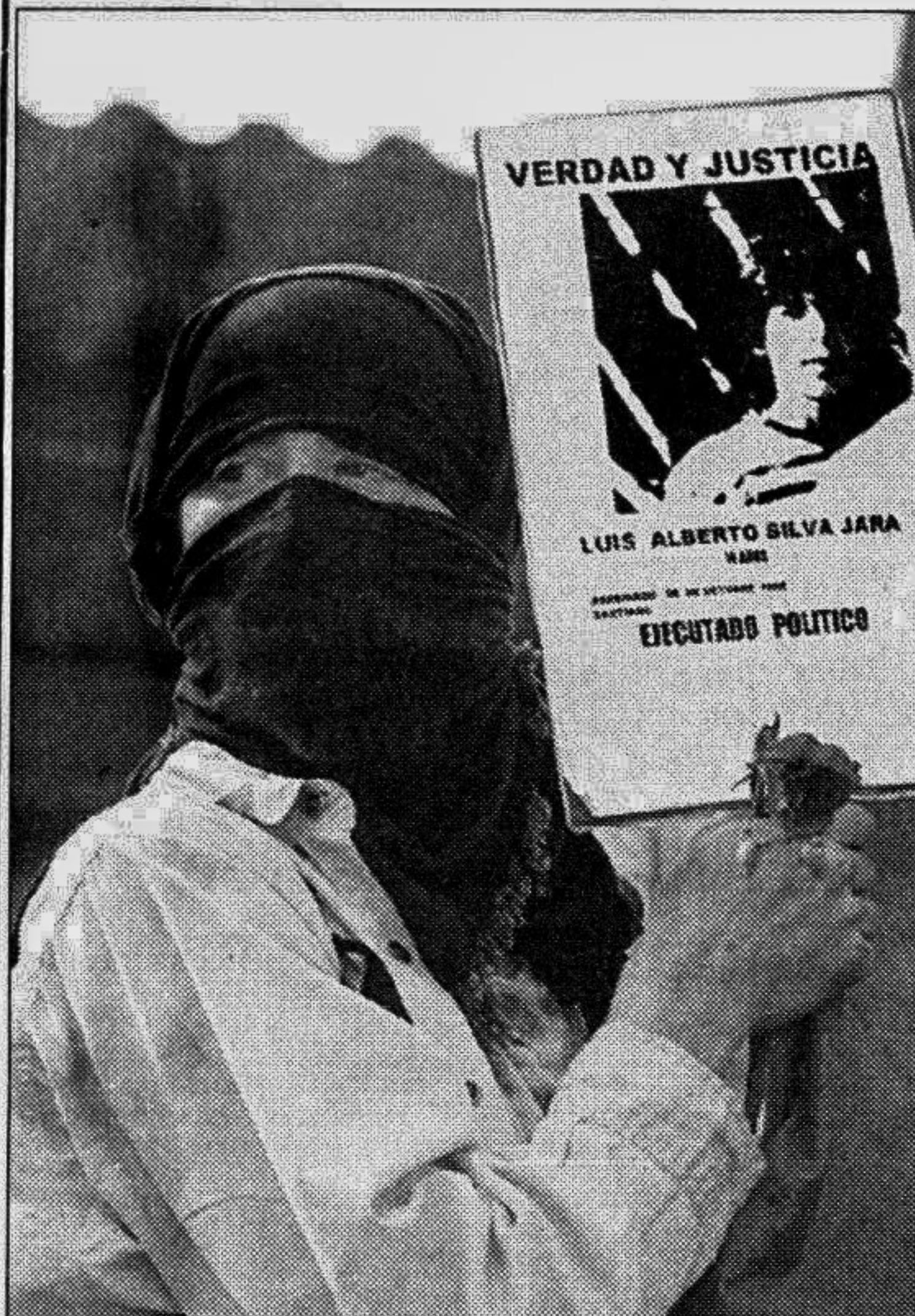


BRIEFLY



A masked woman holds a poster and a flower as thousands of Chileans take to the streets on Saturday in Santiago during a parade marking the 26th anniversary of the coup that brought Augusto Pinochet to power and to remember the thousands of Chileans who died during the dictatorship which lasted from 1973 to 1990.

— AFP photo

Police kill 2 protestors in Chile:

Police shot dead two youths late Saturday during protests in Santiago marking the 26th anniversary of the bloody military coup that brought General Augusto Pinochet to power, local television reported, AFP reports from Santiago.

The fatal shootings, in a working class neighbourhood in eastern Santiago, came at the end of day-long demonstrations marking the anniversary of the September 11, 1973 military takeover. The youths were part of a crowd that had erected barricades and lit bonfires in the neighbourhood, according to reports.

US-NKorean missile talks end:

North Korea and the United States Sunday ended six days of talks here on sanctions and missile issues on a positive note, they said in a joint statement, AFP reports from Berlin.

"Each side came to a deeper understanding of the other's concerns and each acknowledged the need to continue taking steps that address these concerns," they said. North Korea and the United States said that they agreed "each would endeavour to preserve a positive atmosphere conducive to improved bilateral relations and to peace and security in northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region."

Japan's rocket launch delayed:

Japan put off the launch Sunday of an H-2 rocket due to a fuel sensor failure, the second delay in the project, officials said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

Disorder was found in a sensor at the first-stage liquid hydrogen tank and today's launch was put off due to repair work for this, an official at the National Space Development Agency (NASDA) said. The rocket, carrying a satellite, was to be launched at 4:41 p.m. (0741 GMT) from Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan. It was rescheduled to September 17 or later.

UN calls for intervention as troops attack E Timor refugees

DARWIN, Australia, Sept 12: The UN mission to East Timor called Sunday for international military intervention after hearing eye-witness accounts of an attack by Indonesian troops on thousands of starving East Timorese refugees, reports AFP.

The attack happened at what was previously regarded as a refugee safe-haven at Dare nine kilometres (six miles) south of the devastated capital of Dili, UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) spokesman David Wimhurst said.

Accounts differed about whether it happened on Saturday or Sunday.

Wimhurst told reporters the United Nations had received three separate reports from East Timor about the attack in which troops were said to have advanced up a mountain "killing as they went".

One of the witnesses, a man who phoned from high on a mountain above the refugee enclave had told of hearing the sound of shots being fired below him and people screaming in terror.

"He said there are thousands of refugees down there," Wimhurst told a news conference.

"He can hear the TNI (Indonesian armed forces) are advancing up the mountain killing everybody as they went."

Clearly angered by the latest developments, he said: "There is still no international peace keeping force in sight yet."

"They (the Indonesians) are still slaughtering people in East Timor and the international community has not acted."

"Obviously there is an urgent need for an armed intervention to prevent these atrocities from continuing."

Earlier, he told of growing alarm at the plight of the refugees, believed now to number more than 30,000, because they have no food left and international agencies are unable to get any into the people.

He said a Catholic nun, Sister Ann Forbes, had told the UN there was almost no food left for a growing number of refugees and what little was left was going to the women and children.

"There is an urgent need to get food in there by the most speedy means possible," he said. The UN had been negotiating with Indonesian authorities to try to secure guarantees for the safe transfer of up to 1,500 internal refugees to Dare, a major religious and cultural centre to the Catholic East Timorese.

But Wimhurst said none of the refugees had so far been sent to Dare where a major crisis was already developing before the attack which he described as another "major crime against the East Timorese people."

"There is an urgent need for armed intervention to prevent these attacks continuing."

However, an Indonesian military spokesman denied that refugees were under attack in Dare while another UN spokesman in Dili said the assault occurred on Saturday.

"It's a very safe haven for refugees," General Sudrajat said when asked if the Indonesian military could guarantee the security of the estimated 30,000 people sheltering in the mission town.

In an interview with Cable News Network (CNN), he said the situation was calm and under control.

UNAMET spokesman in Dili, Brian Kelly, said reports from the Indonesian military and its own sources in Dare indicated the mission town was calm Sunday and that the attack had occurred on Saturday.

"In fact it is quiet in Dare and there are no reports at the moment of any attacks on the displaced people there," he told CNN.

"What may be at issue is that there was an incident there yesterday, we believe, in which one person was killed and this may have been communicated to the expatriate East Timorese population in Darwin and picked up from there."

UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, who arrived here Sunday, was earlier forced to call off a planned trip to East Timor's devastated capital to try to gain some first hand knowledge of what its people have been suffering.

The former Irish president was due to give a news conference here at 2:30 p.m. (0500 GMT), but earlier called for a war crimes tribunal to probe rights violations by Indonesia and the army-backed militia.

The Dare seminary, which sits on the top ridge of the mountains surrounding Dili, was for generations East Timor's most important educational institution where almost every prominent indigenous leader was educated.

Dare was the only place where East Timorese could be educated beyond secondary school level and its alumni include a roll call of independence leaders up to and including Xanana Gusmao who was released from home detention by Indonesia last week.



An East Timorese father, wearing a headscarf in the colours of the Indonesian flag for protection, holds his child on Saturday in Dili following violence by pro-Indonesian militia.

— AFP photo

Quake rocks Turkish town

ISTANBUL, Sept 12: A moderate earthquake rocked the Turkish resort town of Bodrum on the Aegean coast Sunday but no damages were reported, says AFP.

The quake measured 3.2 on the open-ended Richter scale, the Kandilli seismological institute in Istanbul said.

It was the second tremor to hit Bodrum in two days; Friday's quake measured 3.5.

Sunday's tremor occurred at 9:09 a.m. local time (0609 GMT), eight minutes before a quake registering 4.2 struck the Greek capital of Athens on the other side of the Aegean Sea.

The entire Aegean region has been rocked by numerous tremors since a quake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale hit Athens on Tuesday, killing at least 115 people.

Seven aftershocks, meanwhile, hit northwestern Turkey, scene of the devastating quake that struck the region with a force of 7.4 on August 17, within 10 hours.

Sunday's aftershocks there registered between 2.7 and 4.4 on the Richter scale, with epicenters in Adapazari, Bolu and Kocaeli provinces.

The death toll of August's giant earthquake stood at 15,466 at 8:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Sunday, according to the government crisis center.

Indian scientist challenges

Big Bang theory

NEW DELHI, Sept 12: Challenging the so far most accepted theory of universe formation called Big Bang, a new Cosmology is taking shape in the hands of a leading Indian astronomer, reports PTI.

Called Quasi Steady State Cosmology (QSSC), the new concept can provide answers to some intriguing cosmological questions whose answers based on the big bang theory are not satisfactory.

Being developed by Jayant V. Narlikar, Director of Pune-based Inter University Centre for astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) along with British Astronomer Fred Hoyle and two other IUCAA scientists, the theory revolves around the idea of several minicreation events instead of one big bang.

Though the idea was first proposed by Narlikar and Hoyle about three decades back, they are now using the theory to understand the pattern of formation and growth of large structures like galaxies and voids using modern computer simulation techniques.

The universe is believed to have evolved from a huge explosion — the big bang. Unlike common explosions that start from a definite centre and spread out engulfing the surroundings, big bang occurred simultaneously everywhere. Before big bang there was no matter, energy and even time.

Venice Film Festival

Chinese film

wins Golden

Lion award

VENICE, Italy, Sept 12: "Not One Less" directed by China's Zhang Yimou won the 56th Venice Film Festival's top Golden Lion award Saturday, reports AFP.

It was the second time that Zhang Yimou has won the main Venice prize. He took it first in 1992 for "The Story of Qiu Ju."

Eighteen films from 11 countries were in the competition this year. An honorary Golden Lion was awarded to the American comic actor Jerry Lewis by the director Martin Scorsese.

Otherwise, the international jury chaired by the Yugoslav Emir Kusturica made the following awards to other entries:

The Jury's Grand Prize: "The Wind Will Take Us" by Abbas Kiarostami of Iran;

Special Prize for directing: "Guo Nian Hui Jia" by Zhan Yuan, China;

Volpi Cup for the Best Male Role: Jim Broadbent in Mike Leigh's "Topsy Turvy," Britain;

Volpi Cup for the Best Female Role: Nathalie Baye in Frederic Fonteyne's "Une Liaison Pornographique," France;

The Marcello Mastroianni prize for the Best Male or Female Hopeful: Nina Proll in Barbara Albert's "Nordrand," Austria;

Gold Medal of the Presidency of the Senate: "Rien a faire" by Marion Vernoux, France.

'All nines' baby

BELOIT, Wisconsin, Sept 12: Nicholas Stephen Wadle was born at 9:09 a.m. on the ninth day of the ninth month of 1999, reports AP.

His weight? Nine pounds, 9 ounces.

"This is probably one of the more fun and interesting things that can happen," Sarah Starmer, a spokeswoman for Beloit Memorial Hospital, said Friday.

Some fate helped line up all the nines.

The baby was due September 15, but complications the mother, Mary Wadle, had previously had in giving birth led her doctor to schedule a caesarean section for Thursday.

Starmer said the delivery had been set for 8 a.m. but another emergency pushed it back to 9:09 a.m.

Trying to push the number convergence a bit further, hospital officials tried to get the room number with a nine in it. As fate would have it, none was available, and mother and son ended up in room 2115.

No problem. Two plus one plus one plus five equals nine.

US, Japan, S Korea unite against N Korean missile

AUCKLAND, Sept 12: US President Bill Clinton agreed in a critical summit Sunday with Japan and South Korea to unite against a widely-feared North Korean ballistic missile test, Japan's premier said, reports AFP.

"We agreed to work closely to prevent another North Korean missile launch and to contribute to Asian stability," Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi told reporters after the meeting here.

Clinton met with Obuchi and South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung -- leaders of the two key US allies in Asia -- to discuss measures to curb North Korea's missile program.

In a joint statement after the summit, the leaders "confirmed that they are prepared to undertake measures to improve their respective relations" with North Korea but only as Pyongyang addressed their concerns and took steps "to reduce tensions and establish lasting

peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond."

The three-way encounter was held on the sidelines of a major Asia-Pacific summit here.

It coincided with deepening concerns in North Asia about the unpredictable Stalinist state's ballistic missile program and as key US-North Korea negotiations in Berlin were extended.

North Korean delegation chief Kim Gye-Gwan said in the German capital he was satisfied after "some progress" was achieved in nearly eight hours of talks with the US side.

Pyeongyang stunned the world on August 31 last year when it test-fired a medium-range Taepodong I ballistic missile that flew over Japan. North Korea insisted it was the start of a satellite launch program.

A long-awaited review of US policy toward North Korea by former US defence secretary

William Perry is nearing completion.

Earlier, Clinton told business leaders that "the people of North Korea need food and opportunities, they need engagement with the South and the chance of a brighter future."

"They do not need new weaponry that threatens the security of the region and the world."

But China urged restraint over the missile fears.

"All the relevant parties should do more things that are conducive to peace and stability in the Korean peninsula," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said here.

Intelligence reports from the three allies have stoked fears that starving North Korea could be preparing to test-launch a longer-range Taepodong II capable of reaching Alaska.

Japan hosts 47,000 US troops and South Korea 37,000.

Sonia vows to remain in Indian politics

NEW DELHI, Sept 12: Opposition leader Sonia Gandhi Sunday pledged to remain in Indian politics despite mounting personal attacks on her by the ruling Hindu nationalists, reports AFP.

Gandhi told a public rally in the central Indian town of Korba that she was not bothered by a campaign of slander focusing on her Italian origins.

"The personal charges hurled against me by political rivals will never succeed in cowering me down," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted her as saying.

"I am prepared to face any danger for the service of the people of this country," Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist BJP party and its allies have made virulent personal attacks against the 52-year-old Gandhi, president of the main opposition Congress party.

One minister said she had done nothing for India except bearing two children, Gandhi, who married into the Nehru-

Gandhi family in 1968, became an Indian citizen in 1983 and took to politics only last year.

Gandhi critics say she is a "foreigner" and is unfit to become India's prime minister.

It was her first campaign rally after the second round of parliamentary elections on Saturday. The month-long staggered polls began on September 5 and will conclude on October 3.

Gandhi also accused Vajpayee of failing to prevent the recent infiltration of hundreds of Islamic guerrillas into Kashmir, which almost sparked a war with Pakistan. Her 114-year-old Congress party is widely expected to lose to Hindu nationalists in the elections, which followed the collapse in April of Vajpayee's 13-month Hindu nationalist-led coalition.

Opinion polls say no single party will win an overall majority in the 545-seat parliament, but predict a good showing for the Vajpayee-led alliance.

Russia, US to team up in fight against Laden

MOSCOW, Sept 12: Moscow and Washington will join forces against alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden, accused by Russia of bankrolling Muslim insurgents in Dagestan and US public enemy number one, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Sunday, reports AFP.

"We have information that bin Laden's people are involved in the events taking place in Dagestan and Chechnya," said Putin on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Auckland.

"We know that his people are active on the ground. Our American partners are also worried by this," the Russian prime minister said in comments broadcast on RTR television here.

"In this respect we have a common enemy -- international terrorism," said the premier, adding that Russian enjoyed "very good contacts between the security services and law enforcement agencies" in the United States.

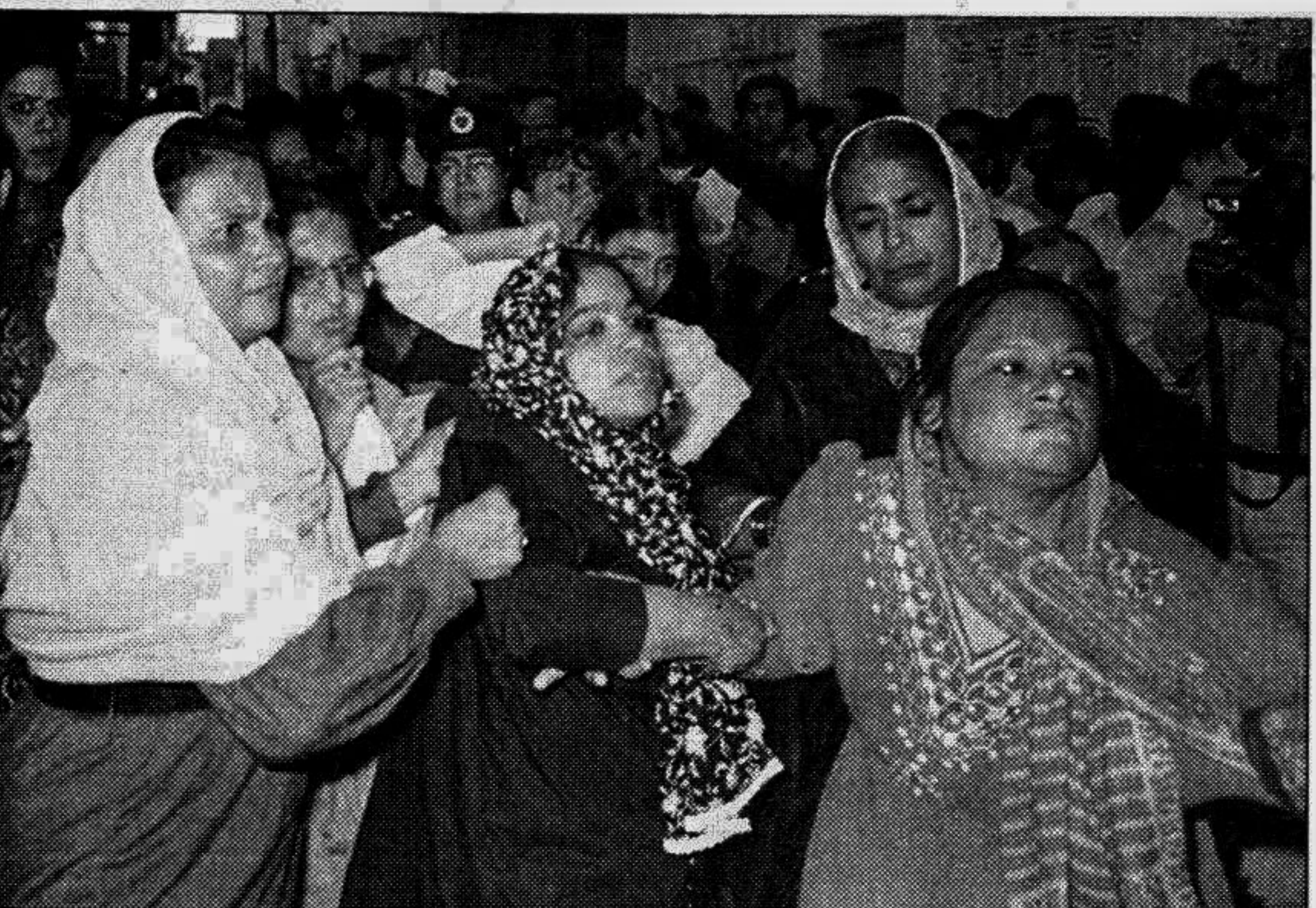
Bin Laden is accused of masterminding the twin bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania of 13 months ago and the US government has offered five million dollars for information leading to his arrest.

More than 220 people were killed and thousands wounded in the bombings on August 7, 1998 in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, prompting the United States to launch missile strikes on Afghanistan 11 days later.

According to US intelligence, Bin Laden has been running training camps for radical Islamists in Afghanistan in an operation they termed as a "terrorism university."

Russian officials maintain that the Saudi millionaire has been financing Islamist rebels who have seized villages in Dagestan as part of a drive to set up an Islamic state in the northern Caucasus.

International terrorism has featured in a string of telephone contacts between top US and Russian officials.



Police arrest female workers of ethnic-based party Muttahida Qaumi Movement to foil their attempt to hold an anti-government rally in Pakistani southern port city Karachi on Saturday. Hundreds of opposition parties workers being arrested by police after heavy tear gas and baton charge.

— AFP photo

Fresh offensive against Tamil Tigers

COLOMBO, Sept 12: Heavy fighting raged in Sri Lanka Sunday as government troops launched an air and ground offensive against Tamil Tiger rebels, official sources said as both sides reportedly suffered losses, reports AFP.

Ground troops backed by air cover mounted the pre-dawn drive in the district of Mannar in a bid to capture territory held by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), officials said.

They said initial reports suggested that the air force had destroyed several bunkers of the LTTE and about 80 guerrillas were believed to have been either killed or wounded.

Unconfirmed reports placed the military losses at about five soldiers killed and over 50 wounded. Defence ministry officials here were not immediately available for comment.

Military sources said the latest army action was aimed at

expanding the area held by the security forces and straightening a defence line in the district of Mannar.

The latest fighting ended a nine-week lull in the area. In the last week of June, government forces faced stiff rebel resistance while trying to capture the rebel-held town of Viddattiluvu.

In that battle, the LTTE admitted losing 84 of their fighters and claimed killing over 100 government troops.

However, the military placed its own losses at 16 killed and claimed that over 250 guerrillas perished at the hands of the security forces. The army said it captured the bodies of 97 rebels who were killed in the fighting.

Tiger guerrillas are leading a drawn out campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions. More than 55,000 people have been killed in fighting in the past 27 years.

Russia extends air raid into Chechnya for 2nd week

GROZNY, Russia, Sept 12: Russian warplanes blitzed Chechnya border villages overnight, the presidency said here today, as Moscow extended into a second week its campaign of airstrikes against suspected rear bases of rebels fighting in neighbouring Dagestan, reports AFP.

Two people died and 50 homes were destroyed in raids on the village of Nohai-Yurt near the border with war-torn Dagestan, the presidency said. The nearby village of Zami-Yurt was also struck.

In the Gudermes region, the village of Azamat-Yurt was targeted, Russian bombs setting fire to a major gas pipeline running through the area, while the settlements of Nizhny-Gerzel and Gerzel also suffered bomb damage.

Up to 25 homes were destroyed in airstrikes in the village of Ichkoi-Yurt, the presidency added.

Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov said Saturday that

Moscow's air campaign had killed 150 people and in the breakaway Russian republic and triggered a refugee crisis, with frightened villagers fleeing into central Chechnya.

Maskhadov extended a state of emergency and announced a general mobilisation of the Chechen armed forces on Saturday in response to the Russian air raids which have heightened tensions with Moscow.

Russia launched the strikes last Sunday after some 2,000 Islamic guerrillas invaded Dagestan from Chechnya. Moscow has denounced Grozny for allowing its territory to be used to launch the insurgency.

Maskhadov insisted Chechen forces were playing no part in what he branded a "large-scale adventure" in which Moscow also played a role, and said only direct talks between himself and President Boris Yeltsin could halt the spiralling violence.

4 sentenced to death over unrest in Iran

TEHRAN, Sept 12: Iran's courts have sentenced four people to death in connection with the bloody violence that rocked Iranian cities in July, the head of Tehran's revolutionary tribunal revealed in an interview with a headline daily Sunday, reports AFP.

It was the first news of the outcome of legal proceedings against hundreds of people arrested following the worst unrest here since the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, which erupted after a student demonstration was attacked by security forces and Islamic hardliners.

The four main instigators of the protests have been sentenced to death and two have already had their sentences confirmed by Iran's supreme court, Tehran revolutionary tribunal president Gholamhossein Rahbarpur announced in an exclusive interview with Jomhuri Eslami.

The dossier on the other two

is being studied by the Supreme Court," he said.

Rahbarpur did not say when or how the four had been tried or on what charges, nor did he indicate when the verdicts and sentences had been passed down.

He said only that the four, whom he did not name, "had organised links with certain political groupings, which is why the verdict concerning them was not announced."

But among the most high profile arrests were a student organiser whose videotaped confession was broadcast on state television shortly after the riots, and four leaders of a banned but previously tolerated nationalist opposition group here.

In late July state television broadcast the confession of student leader Manushehr Mohammadi, whom it singled out as being responsible for inciting the clashes, which pitted student protesters against secu-

lity forces and Islamic hardliners.

A puffy-faced and weary-looking Mohammadi admitted he had been in contact with outlawed political parties as well as other unnamed groups and people, including some in the United States.

The well-known dissident said he had left Iran late last year and gone on to Turkey and then the United States, as had been previously claimed by the intelligence ministry.

The television said he had confessed to coordinating his activities with a "counter-revolutionary agent" in Turkey. Counter-revolutionary activities carry the death penalty here under the strict penal code instituted after the 1979 Islamic revolution. The television named two other student leaders as leading associates of Mohammadi -- Gholamreza Mohajeri-Nezhad, and a young woman, Malous Radnia, alias Mariam Shamsi.

Clinton proposes sharing anti-missile technology with Russia

AUCKLAND, Sept 12: US President Bill Clinton on Sunday proposed sharing new anti-missile technology with Russia in order to encourage it to accept modifications to the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty, a senior US official said here, reports AFP.

Clinton made the offer to newly named Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, whom he met during a summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Clinton raised the possibility of "rogue states and terrorist groups" acquiring missile technology and cited the need to develop new anti-missile defence systems, said US National Security Advisor Samuel Berger.

"He wants to work together with the Russians on this and he believes that the benefits of a missile defence system could be shared with the Russians,"

Berger added.

The United States plans to deploy a new anti-missile system. But to do so it must negotiate modifications to the existing anti-ballistic missile treaty, which Russia had opposed until last June.

US and Russian experts have since then opened talks on the issue but have yet to report tangible progress.

Clinton and Putin also discussed Russia's efforts to stamp out corruption and money-laundering.

Moscow in the next few days will send a team of investigators to the United States to work with FBI counterparts in an inquiry into allegations that billions of dollars -- some of it provided by the International Monetary Fund -- had been diverted through New York bank accounts.