

Pindi implores France to sell N-power station

ISLAMABAD, June 19: Shehbaz Sharif, a parliamentarian and brother of Premier Nawaz Sharif, called on France Tuesday to go ahead with the sale of a nuclear power station to Pakistan.

Funds to pay for the station could be raised with the help of such countries as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Sharif told Agence France Presse (AFP) on the eve of talks in Paris between Pakistan Foreign Ministry Secretary General Akram Zaki and his French counterpart, Francois Secher.

Sharif, an unofficial advisor to the Prime Minister, expressed his frustration at the slowness of negotiations over the power station since French President Francois Mitterrand gave the go-ahead to the sale during his visit here in February last year.

Pakistan had made it's stance on nuclear non-proliferation very clear, Sharif said.

"We have no intention of producing the bomb... and are ready any day to submit our nuclear installations to IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) inspection on a simultaneous basis (with India)", he said.

2 BSF officials, 7 cops missing in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, June 19: Two intelligence officials of the Border Security Force and seven policemen were missing in the Kashmir valley since Sunday, official sources said here today, reports PTI.

The abducted policemen included two constable of the Jammu and Kashmir armed police, and the station house officer of Shopian Mohammad Raza Beg.

However, son of a former National Conference member of the legislative assembly, Abdul Gani Veri, who was abducted by militants on Sunday night was set free unarmed last night, the sources said.

Sharif said he regretted India's rejection of Pakistani proposals on disarmament, saying, "We cannot subordinate our independence to Indian hegemony."

He also minimised the difficulties Pakistan might have in paying for the power station.

"Two billion dollars, it's a colossal amount... (but) France should go ahead and we will be able to raise the finance," he said, adding that Pakistan would "explore the possibility of resources from friendly Muslim countries like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia."

Reuter adds: Most Pakistanis want their country to have nuclear weapons even if it means losing US aid, an opinion poll said on Tuesday.

A Gallup Pakistan report based on a survey taken last November, said the desire for nuclear weapons was the result of fear that India would get them.

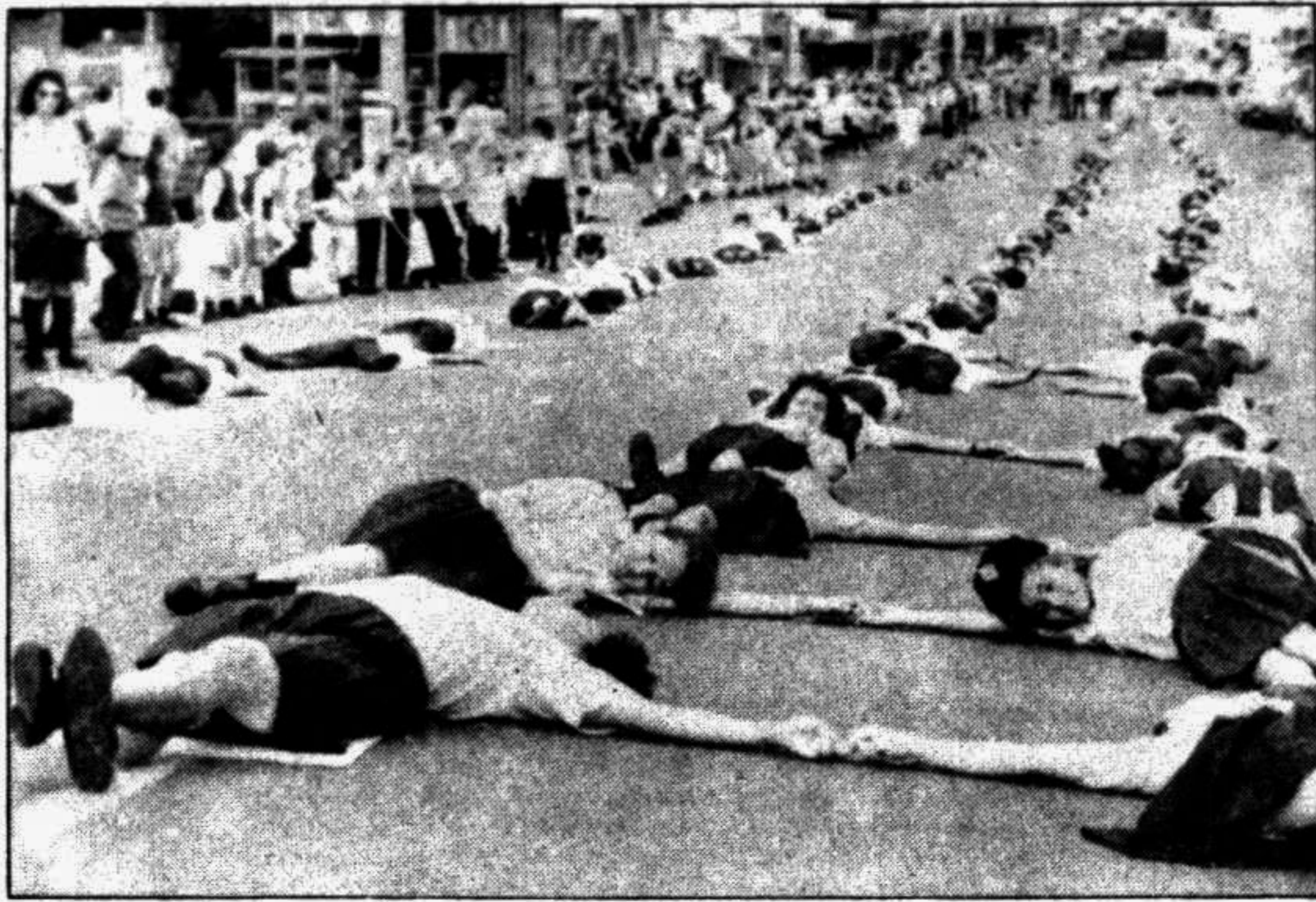
Another opinion poll in March showed a growing conviction that the United States was not a trustworthy ally, said the group.

Gallup Pakistan's head, Ejaz Gilani, is a member of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's think tank on Islamic laws.

Washington suspended all military and economic aid to Islamabad last October after President George Bush refused to certify to Congress that Pakistan had no nuclear device.

Last week, the US House of representatives voted to reaffirm the ban under the so-called Pressler amendment. It also voted to deny aid to India unless Bush could assure Congress that New Delhi was not developing additional nuclear devices.

Some 87 per cent of 1,000 urban households interviewed in all four of Pakistan's provinces supported developing nuclear weapons, the poll report said. Only seven per cent opposed this view while six per cent did not answer.



SAN JOSE, Costa Rica: Hundreds of high school students lie down in the streets of the Costa Rican capital June 18 to protest against traffic accidents. Costa Rica has one of the highest automobile fatality rate in Central America. — Photo AFP/UNB

We are concerned, it's a conspiracy: Benazir

23 suspects in Pak judge's killing held: swoop on PPP

KARACHI, June 19: Police rounded up 23 suspects here and an unspecified number of people elsewhere in southern Sindh province in connection with Tuesday's assassination of an anti-terrorist court Judge, press reports said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Police did not reveal the names of the people detained for interrogation. Sources here believe the suspects detained in Karachi could be the associates of seven people the slain judge Nabi Sher Junejo had recently sentenced to death.

Junejo, 47, was gunned down along with his bodyguard and driver while on his way to the court by up to five assassins who escaped after the shooting. His funeral was expected Wednesday in his hometown Shahdadpur, in Sindh.

The car, a black Suzuki, used by the killers was later recovered by police in a western district of Karachi, officials said.

Junejo was mainly dealing with political cases including several leaders of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by former Premier Benazir Bhutto, and her husband Asif Ali Zardari. A local daily Jang quoted Ms Bhutto as saying "We are concerned" over the murder. Citing some previous accusations she feared it could be "part of a conspiracy" to malign her party.

Newspapers said those nabbed in other parts of Sindh belonged to either PPP or the Nationalist Jyte Sindh Group.

Bandits attack train: 5 killed

Reuter from Karachi adds: Forty bandits armed with rocket launchers and automatic weapons attacked a train killing five people and kidnapping 25 in Pakistan's worst

case of banditry, railway officials said Wednesday.

The bandits, known as dacoits, stole cash and jewellery from passengers on the Karachi to Quetta Bolan Express train at Madheji near Sukkur in lawless southern Sindh Province on Monday night, an official said.

"It is the worst incident in Pakistan's 44-year history," he said.

The 90-minute hold-up has been reported to the Sind government and railway officials have demanded more armed guards on trains, a railways spokesman in Karachi said.

The dacoits would have looted the whole train if paramilitary rangers had not arrived, another official said.

The bandits stormed the small station at Madheji on Monday night and locked up all railway staff except Assistant Station Master Abdul Akrim Bhutto, he said.

'I've not come to beg' Russia to follow western road to democracy: Yeltsin

WASHINGTON, June 19: Russian President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Washington on Tuesday and said Russia had suffered through a Marxist experiment but was now determined to follow the western road to democracy, free markets and profit, reports Reuter.

"We believe we will travel the road you travelled some time ago. We will not deviate from this road," Yeltsin told a crowd that included many prominent Americans at a crowded reception in his honour at the Soviet embassy.

"We have come to show you that we are working now for a better future, but not one that had been made for us by somebody else. We will build it with

our own hands and we believe that we will build a future of Democracy and free enterprise," he said.

Yeltsin, riding a democratic triumph as the newly elected Russian President, arrived earlier on Tuesday afternoon for a four-day high-profile US visit during which he will meet President George Bush and Congressional leaders.

Just one week ago the radical reformer was elected President of the Russian Federation, the largest and most populous of the Soviet Republics, in the first such popular ballot in Russia's 1,000-year history.

Many people had doubted Russia was ready for democracy and a transition to a market economy, but the fact that they elected him as President proved otherwise, Yeltsin said.

"Today Russia for the first time ever has voted for democracy," he told the crowd, which included Robert Gates, Bush's nominee to head the Central Intelligence Agency.

"We believe that we have left behind the experiment that we had to go through, the experiment we called Marxism."

Now Russia wanted foreign investment and the Russian parliament was considering legislation to make this possible, he said.

"We want to make profit and we do believe the people of Russia will benefit from that," he said to applause. But he stressed he had not come to the United States begging

for aid.

"We have not come here hat in hand... we have come to tell you the truth about Russia. Earlier Yeltsin told reporters on his arrival at Andrews Air Force base that he wanted to tell Americans about the emerging Russia, which like other Soviet republics is seeing to gain more control over its own resources and policies from the Kremlin.

But he said he would be respectful of overall US-Soviet relations — making clear he was not seeking to compete head-to-head with Kremlin Chief Mikhail Gorbachev for US attention.

On Tuesday evening he also went out of his way to praise Gorbachev, who was once his mentor, then his rival and is now his partner.

"The fact that the people of Russia have had an opportunity to elect directly and confirm by popular vote their own president is due first of all to the initiative and the pro-democracy movement by President Gorbachev which he launched in 1985," Yeltsin told the reception.

Yeltsin, who was invited to the United States by Congressional leaders before he was elected President, arrived at a critical time as the Bush administration ponders what US policy should be towards a Soviet Union in political and economic upheaval.

Gorbachev has asked the West for aid to smooth Soviet economic dislocations.

Off the Record

A ghastly legacy of Thatcher: Heath

LONDON: Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath on Tuesday bitterly attacked Margaret Thatcher, his successor as Conservative

Party leader and later as Premier, saying she had left a "ghastly legacy", reports Reuter.

Heath, in a television interview, blasted Thatcher for two recent speeches in the United States.

In Chicago on Monday she warned against "little Europeans" — EC bureaucrats — with what she called imperial aspirations.

In New York on Tuesday, she spoke of an Atlantic Community of North America, the European Community (EC), and East Europe states, "imbued with the philosophy of free trade" and said she intended to speak out more on the European issue.

Her opposition to British participation in a more United Europe reflects deep divisions within her Conservative Party, now led by new Prime Minister, John Major.

Heath told channel four news: "having read yesterday's (Monday's) speech and most of tonight's speech, it is full of falsehoods, in ordinary English — lies".



Inherent power of AIDS victims

FLORENCE, Italy: The power of positive thinking plays an important role in helping AIDS victims survive longer, says a US researcher who has lived with the fatal disease for five years, reports Reuter.

"They are not depressed. They refuse to give up," Lewis Katoff said of the 53 homosexual men he included in the first study of the psychological attitudes of AIDS sufferers who have survived for three years or longer.

In a moving presentation on Tuesday to the seventh international AIDS conference, the 37-year-old psychologist from New York said that many in the group believed their positive attitude was the main thing helping them to stay alive.

"None of them said they would beat this disease," Katoff said. Their goal instead is to live life to the fullest as long as they can.

Most patients die within 18 months of developing the first symptoms of the fatal Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Medical experts estimate that only some 10 per cent of AIDS victims become so-called long survivors.

US-Soviet amity in the sky

LOS ANGELES: A Soviet and an American pilot will take off from California in a 1937 biplane on Saturday to try to fly round the world in 45 to 60 days, a flight spokeswoman said on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Part of the 23,000-mile (31,000 km) flight will be through Soviet air space, closed until recently to western planes other than airliners, and the purpose is to promote goodwill between the United States and the Soviet Union, the spokeswoman said.

Carl Hays, the 48-year-old American, will pilot his own Boeing Stearman plane, northern light, which has an open cockpit. "It is in its original condition and does not even have a heater," the spokeswoman said.

Hays, who has been a pilot for 20 years and comes from San Diego, California, restores old aircraft. His Soviet colleague, Victor Smolin, a 42-year-old musician and father of two daughters, is an aerobatic champion and train Soviet pilots.

BRIEFLY

Seven killed in Thai road mishap:

Seven Singaporean tourists were killed and seven injured when their bus turned over in a rainstorm in northern Thailand Tuesday, police said.

Highway police told Reuter that a bus bound for the golden triangle turned over at a sharp curve 600 km (375 miles) north of Bangkok.

Police took the injured passengers to a nearby hospital. One was in serious condition.

Police said the accident occurred during a heavy rainstorm that made the road slippery.

Female battalion in UAE army:

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has established a female battalion in the armed forces, the first such contingent in a Gulf Arab state, the official news agency WAM reported Tuesday, AFP from Abu Dhabi says.

The agency said 59 of the women who had undergone six months of military training, graduated on Monday.

"The first women's battalion in the UAE's history is an illustration of the courage of our women," it quoted Ibtissam Abu Hleika, Head of the UAE Women's Association, as saying in a graduation address.

The training included all types of light weapons, physical exercises, intelligence, chemical warfare and other military techniques, WAM said.

515 gold bars in diplomatic bag:

Sri Lankan customs seized a diplomatic bag at Colombo Airport in which 515 small gold bars worth 33 million rupees (\$25,000 dollars) were hidden, a senior customs official said on Wednesday, Reuter reports from Colombo.

The bag addressed to a diplomat at a Foreign Mission was opened on Tuesday in the presence of Foreign Ministry and mission officials, Customs Director-General Lalith Heengama said.

"We have had information that this kind of smuggling was going on for a long time and decided to search this bag," he said.

Documents accompanying the bag listed its contents as electrical items, Heengama said. The bag has been confiscated.

Fighting near Cambodian town:

Fighting near the Cambodian town of Pailin is intensifying as more Phnom Penh government troops move in to try to wrest control of the region's ruby mines from Khmer Rouge guerrillas. Thai military and mining sources said Tuesday, Reuter reports from Thailand.

Major-General Thitipong Jenuwat, commander of Thailand's Eastern Border Task Force, told a news conference at the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet that Phnom Penh had sent more troops to the area after peace talks failed in Jakarta. The Heng Samrin regime (Phnom Penh) has put more pressure on the Khmer Rouge, especially in the areas of Pailin after the talks failed in Jakarta, he said.

Kuwaiti daily resumes publication:

The newspaper Al-Qabas resumed publication Monday, becoming the first major independent daily from before the Gulf War to start printing again since Iraq's ouster. AP from Kuwait city reports.

A gaping hole in the front of the Qabas building showed where the Iraqis ran off with its printing press on Jan. 16, hours before the allied bombing campaign began.

In an opening editorial, Editor-in-Chief Mohammed al-Saqr catalogued what had happened to the publication during occupation and said it was time for a new beginning in Kuwait.

Al-Saqr said he could not hold back his tears when he saw the empty, ransacked building on April 6.

"I wanted to control myself in front of my colleagues but I couldn't. I started crying," he said in an interview.

Anti-Israeli fighters killed:

Two anti-Israeli fighters were killed and two captured Tuesday in a clash with Israeli-backed militiamen near the border in South Lebanon, military sources here said, AFP from Tel Aviv reports.

They said the guerrillas were wearing diving gear and had been about to mount a raid from the sea on northern Israel.

One of the fighters killed was from the Shi'ite fundamentalist group Hezbollah and the other a deserter from the pro-Israeli South Lebanon army militia, the sources said.

A Hezbollah member was captured along with a Shi'ite resident of the Israeli-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon where the clash took place.

Iranians hold rally in Makkah, chant 'death to America'

NICOSIA, June 19: Iranian pilgrims shouting "death to America" and "death to Israel" held a peaceful rally in the holy city of Makkah on Tuesday, Tehran Radio reported, reports Reuter.

Reporting live from the city in Saudi Arabia, the radio said lines of demonstrators including non-Iranian Muslims extended three km (two miles) in front of the Iranian Haj (pilgrimage) headquarters.

The rally was the first since 1987, when a similar "disavowal of infidels" rally turned into a bloody riot and more than 400 people, mostly Iranians, were killed in clashes with Saudi Security Forces.

The radio reported no unexpected incidents at the rally, seen as a key test of Iran's new attitude of compromise after years of confrontation with conservative Gulf Arab states.

But it said final agreement on the site was reached at a meeting between the Iranian and Saudi Foreign Ministers on Tuesday morning, only hours before the rally started.

At a meeting on Monday night Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati told King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, "We very much hope that this year the Haj ritual will be carried out in a complete, correct and fully peaceful manner."

Tehran radio said the demonstrators carried portraits of the late supreme Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and his successor, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini.

"Souts of Allahu-Akbar" (God is Greatest), "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" are once again echoing in Makkah engulfing its heavenly atmosphere," it said.

Saudi Arabia bans political rallies during the worship season. A crackdown on demonstrations during the 1987 Haj left 402 people mostly Iranians, dead.

The following year, the Saudis introduced a quota system that allowed each Muslim country to send only 1,000 pilgrims per 1 million head of population to the Haj. The Iranians protested their quota

of 50,000 and boycotted the Haj.

In April 1988, Saudi Arabia severed relations with Iran after accusing its leaders of terrorism and subversion.

These relations were restored two months ago and the Saudis agreed to increase Iran's quota to 115,000 pilgrims. The Saudis also allowed the Iranians to hold their rallies, provided they were confined to their compound.

The Haj climaxes Friday, when pilgrims gather on Mount Arafat for the symbolic stoning of the devil. The next day, they slaughter sheep and donate the meat to the poor, marking Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice.

Shrewd Pawar in race for pedestal of power

BOMBAY, India, June 19: Sharad Pawar, a shrewd Congress (I) stalwart known better to the powerful business world here than to Delhi politicians, is making a surprise bid for the post of India's next Prime Minister, reports AFP.

Pawar 51, who fell out with both slain Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and before that with

his autocratic mother Indira, is known to be respected by the party except by the powerful Gandhi family coterie.

And despite his regional credentials — his name is identified with the politics of his western home state of Maharashtra, the cradle of India's business community — party insiders say he has emerged as one of the best bets for the or-

phaned party.

A party man to the core from the early age of 20 when he headed the Congress (I) youth wing in the western city of Pune, from where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, he is a big man with a rough regional accent.

In Delhi he is seen as a shrewd, a regional strongman and as a man of action rather



NEW DELHI: Congress (I) President P. V. Narasimha Rao (R) points to party strongman and Chief Minister of Maharashtra State Sharad Pawar June 18 at Rao's residence. Both are in the race for Prime Minister — designate as the Congress Party appeared ready to regain power from India's 10th general elections interrupted by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. — Photo AFP/UNB