

Andhra Pradesh cops accused of killing, intimidating newsmen

WASHINGTON, Sept 20: The police in Andhra Pradesh have "killed and intimidated journalists and human rights monitors on the pretext of fighting the Naxalites," Asia Watch, an American Human Rights Organisation has charged in a report, says PTI.

The 49-page report, "Police killings and rural violence in Andhra Pradesh", released today said that while the Naxalite groups pose a serious security threat, "state police and federal forces collude with politically influential landowners to assault and murder peasants and tribal villagers in the name of fighting terrorism."

"A government policy of impunity ensures that the security forces and the landlords they protect are never punished for these crimes."

Asia Watch said that the responsibility for the violations rests not only with state officials but with the central government which has deployed federal paramilitary forces to assist in security operations in

the state.

For their part, the militants, "particularly the peoples war group have pursued a campaign of violence that has included grave violations, including assassinations and kidnappings of political figures and civil servants, and bombings and arson at bus depots, government offices and railway crossing," the report said.

"The militants have also summarily executed, and in some cases tortured to death, suspected police informers," said Asia Watch.

"While the state's remoteness has helped to insulate it from international scrutiny, the government has also used violence to silence its domestic critics. Human rights monitors have been assaulted and murdered because of their work in defending and obtaining bail for the detainees, investigating disappearances and deaths in custody and publicising abuses," the report said.

"Journalists are frequently threatened and attacked because of their reporting. Those working at the village level are particularly vulnerable to intimidation and attacks by police who suspect them of supporting Naxalite groups and of 'making heroes' of the Naxalites."

Ghulam Rasool, a journalist with the Hyderabad-based Telugu newspaper 'Udayam' was killed by police in December 1991, apparently because he had exposed police involvement in a land scandal, the report said.

Rao to visit Nepal Oct 19

KATHMANDU, Sept 20: The Prime Minister, P V Narasimha Rao will visit Nepal from October 19, reports PTI.

The visit is considered important as it comes within less than a year of the Nepalese Prime Minister, Girija Prasad Koirala's visit to India in December last year.

Flood causes colossal damage

UN, foreign govts pledge over \$ 1.6 m to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 20: Foreign governments and the United Nations have pledged more than 1.6 million US dollars in aid following floods that have swept through Pakistan, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Saturday, reports AFP.

Japan, which has promised 800,000 dollars, is the largest contributor while Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has ordered the immediate despatch of food, medicines, blankets and tents on Saudi Air Force planes, he said.

of Uzbekistan was sending a helicopter to assist the relief operations.

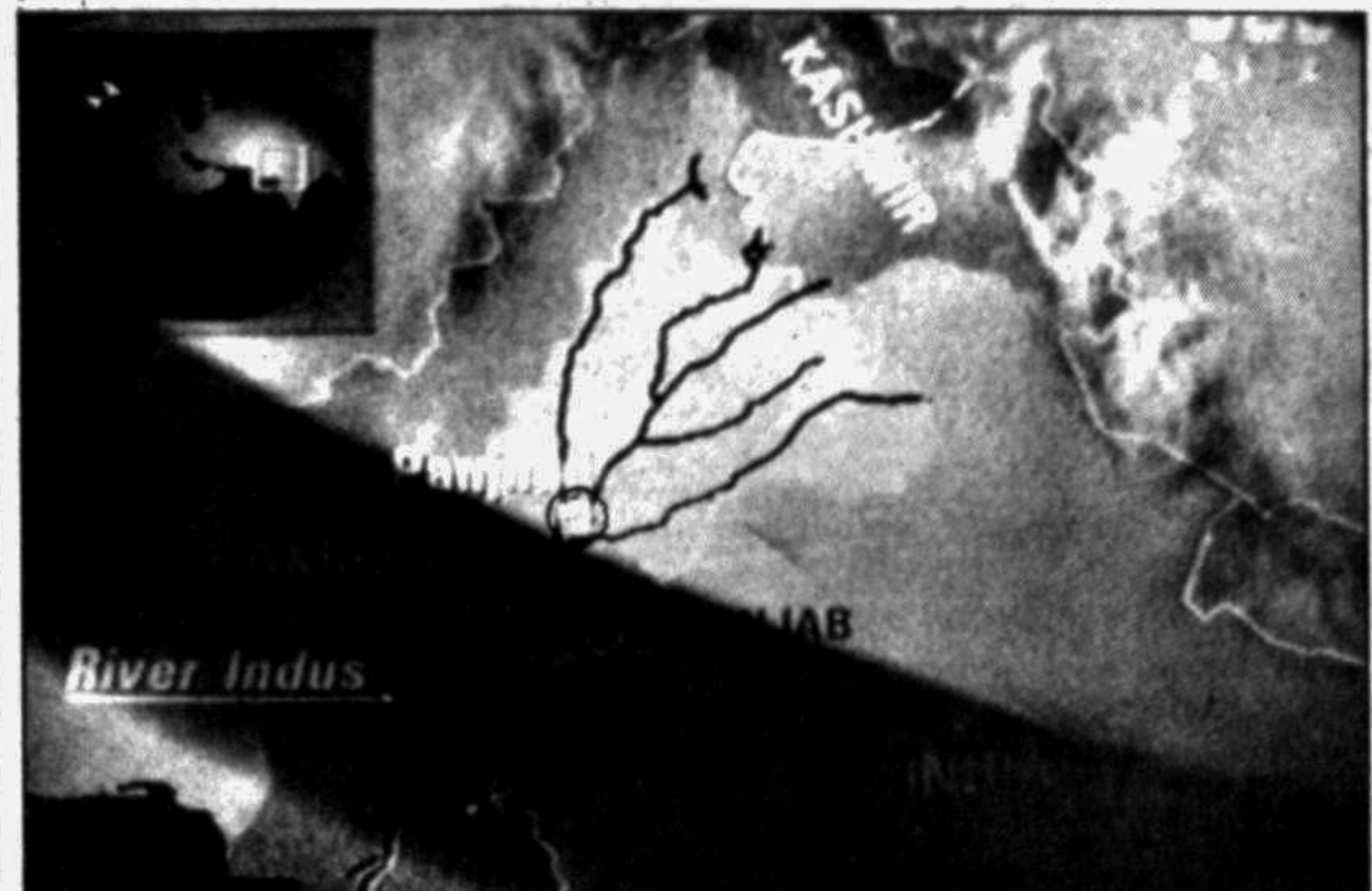
The floods, which are not yet over after eleven days of widespread devastation and human losses, have already caused economic damages estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Foreign Ministry has said public sector losses in the first five days alone after the disaster struck September 8 run into 400 million dollars and that the private sector

the flood waters, was said to be improving.

Engineers saved the huge Panjnad barrage in southern Punjab from being washed away after breaches were made Friday in protective embankments to reduce the combined thrust of the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej rivers.

Sindh government officials in Karachi said the Sukkur barrage was expected to face a peak discharge of 1.1 million cubic feet per second late Saturday night.



The Pakistan army engineers had blown off a part of Panjnad dam in Punjab to minimise pressure of on rushing flood waters which might have caused greater damage to the dam and adjoining areas. — Star TV photo

The European Community has offered 360,000 dollars, the United Kingdom 200,000 dollars and France 100,000 dollars. The United Nations Development Programme and the UN disaster relief organization have together donated 100,000 dollars.

China and South Korea have pledged 30,000 dollars and 20,000 dollars respectively and New Zealand had made a contribution of around 25,000 dollars.

The spokesman said France had also expressed its readiness to send at short notice an aircraft with relief materials and the Central Asian republic

losses are expected to be even higher.

Pakistan has not launched a formal appeal for international assistance despite the devastation and the deaths of more than 2,000 people.

In a statement, the official spokesman said Islamabad "deeply" appreciated the relief contributions by foreign governments.

Meanwhile, the Sukkur barrage in Sindh province was under pressure Saturday as the flood waters of the Indus river, joined by its four tributaries, roared toward the Arabian Sea.

The situation in Punjab, which earlier bore the brunt of

They said that the flood waters had affected only the marshy land adjacent to the river, from where 350,000 people had already been evacuated along with a million head of cattle.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are expected to tour the affected areas of Guddu and Sukkur in Sindh today, the official said.

Sharif, who has been travelling from place to place to meet flood victims, said at Jhelum in Punjab Saturday that the government was formulating a comprehensive rehabilitation plan.

Plot to kill Premadasa

COLOMBO, Sept 20: Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa has said unidentified adversaries are planning to assassinate him, a state-run newspaper reported Sunday, reports AFP.

"There is a conspiracy to kill me," Premadasa was quoted as saying by the Sunday Observer.

The President, who did not elaborate or specify who the assassins may be, said he was prepared to face "whatever consequence that may befall me."

There had been earlier reports about purported plans to assassinate Premadasa who is constantly guarded by a ring of elite commandos of the police special task force.

"The radical economic changes that have been implemented by my government have adversely affected certain parties who are involved in acts of corruption and exploitation," Premadasa said.

China developing medium range missile

NEW YORK, Sept 20: China is developing a modern medium-range missile that carries a two-tonne (2032-kilogram) high-explosive warhead, a magazine reported this week, reports AFP.

The new missile is planned as one element in a three-part programme to modernize the Chinese military and extend its firepower to territory claimed by China in the strategic South China Sea. Aviation Week reported in its September 21 edition.

The two-stage East Wind missile, which has a range of 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometres), is a cousin of the nuclear-tipped J-1 and J-2 submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

The East Wind is expected to be far more powerful than the Chinese scuds used by Iraq during the Gulf War, which carried some 500 pounds (227 kilograms) of explosives.

A senior US defence official confirmed that China is working on a new missile, but would not confirm details, the magazine said.

11 die in Colombia plane crash

SANTAFE DE BOGOTA, Sept 20: A cargo plane crashed five minutes after takeoff Saturday in eastern Colombia, killing 11 people and injuring eight others, police said, reports AFP.

The victims included both pilots of the HK-3468, owned by the Colombian company Avesca, which crashed outside the provincial capital of Villavicencio, 135 kilometers (85 miles) east of Bogota, police said.

The aircraft had been headed for Mitu, in the south-eastern province of Vaupes near the Brazilian border.

Kohl condemns attack on foreigners

BONN, Sept 20: Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Saturday condemned continuing attack on foreigners in Germany, and the government said it would increase police presence in the eastern states, reports AP.

Attacks on refugee centres continued overnight, including the fifth straight night of violence in Wismar, in northeastern Germany. No injuries were reported.

Meanwhile, the head of the country's anti-terrorism office, Eckart Werthebach, said there was no evidence that the approximately 3,000 neo-Nazis in eastern Germany had a central organization, but there were "connections" with the estimated 1,200 right-wing extremists in west Germany.

Speaking at a meeting of his Christian Democratic Union in Suhl, Kohl said the neo-Nazi attacks were a "disgrace for our country."

He promised that anyone forced to flee their homeland because of racial, religious or political persecution would always find refuge in Germany.

Off the Record

Miss Florida now Miss America

ATLANTIC CITY: Miss Florida Leanza Cornett, a 21-year-old singer who has pushed AIDS awareness, was crowned the 66th Miss America early Sunday, reports AP.

Miss Cornett was chosen by a panel of celebrity judges from among 10 semifinalists, nine of whom were from the South or Midwest.

"I'm a very, very blessed girl. Someone that God is smiling on real big," said Cornett, the first Floridian to win the contest.

The semifinalists were announced after two weeks of primping and posing and a parade of the 50 candidates — one from each state — before a national television audience Saturday night.

Miss Iowa Catherine Ann Lemkau was the first runner-up; Miss Indiana Shelli Renee Yoder was second runner-up; third runner-up was Miss Kansas Pam McKelvey and fourth runner-up was Du Sharme Carter, Miss Oklahoma.

The child seeks to divorce parents

ORLANDO, Fla: A 12-year-old boy is due in court this week for a trial on his unprecedented lawsuit seeking to "divorce" his parents so he can be adopted, reports AP.

Known only as Gregory K in court documents, the boy appeared on ABC's "20-20" on Friday and reiterated his resolve. "I just want a place where I feel safe and that I'm happy, and that I know people will always be there for me," he told Barbara Walters.

Circuit Judge Thomas S Kirk ruled in July that the boy can sue his parents and seek his freedom. The child wants the judge to authorize his adoption by a family in central Florida (that he has been living with since October 1991).

Gregory said he lived with his mother, Rachel K for only seven months in the past eight years and didn't remember what she looked like during a recent reunion.

He was only in his socks

LOS ANGELES: A man forced at knife-point to give up his car and remove his clothes was left at an intersection Saturday wearing only his socks, police said, reports AP.

The man walked to a gasoline station, where he was given a plastic garbage bag to wear as he waited for police, said Sgt Mike Sonntag.

Sonntag said the man was forced from his car as he waited at a stop light along a boulevard in the San Fernando Valley north of the city.

Two men approached the car and one put a knife to the man's neck, ordered him from the car and forced him to remove his clothing. The robbers then took the clothing and drove away in the car.

The man was driven home by police.

'Non' to too much prying in taste

BELLEVUE, France: May bureaucrats in Brussels tell the French how their cheese should taste, or the Germans their beer, the English their tea?

"Non, non, et non" was the consensus at a conference of French food specialists held here last week.

The subject of debate was "Should Europe Regulate Taste?" Bellevue, in the Savoy region of southeast France, is the birthplace of Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, the 19th-century judge celebrated for his food aphorisms in "La Physiologie du Gout." (The Physiology of Taste).

If, as he wrote, "the fate of nations depends on the way they eat," then considerations at this conference focusing on cheese and chocolate were not trivial. Especially because the conference, sponsored by the Brillat-Savarin Foundation, took place on the eve of Sunday's French referendum on the treaty on European union.

Most of the conference professionals said they planned to vote "oui" to the treaty. But they were definitely for "non" to too much prying in matters concerning taste.



BEIJING: Boys dressed in traditional Chinese costume wait their turn to dance during a wedding culture festival September 19. The ethnic wedding celebration included ten Chinese minorities. About 6.7 per cent of China's population, more than 66 million people, are members of national minorities. The rest of the population is Han Chinese. — AFP/UNB photo

BRIEFLY

Iran sheltering 9,000 Arabs:

Iran is sheltering 9,000 Arab fighters who could be used to destabilise Gulf Emirates, the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Cairo alleged Saturday, reports AFP.

Saeed Kamal, speaking at the opening session in Cairo of the 25th meeting of Arab Information Ministers, said he feared that Iran would "use these fighters to interfere in the internal affairs of Arab countries, notably those in the Gulf."

He said the fighters, from different Arab countries, fought alongside Afghan rebels who worked to topple the former President Najibullah.

Priest shot dead in Lanka:

A Roman Catholic Priest was shot dead at a police check point in northeast Sri Lanka as he stepped out of his vehicle to be identified, a military spokesman said Sunday, reports AFP from Colombo.

Father Peter De Lima was hit "accidentally" when a policeman's gun went off just outside the port town of Trincomalee Friday, the military spokesman said quoting a delayed report from the area.

In another development, security forces shot dead two Tamil tiger guerrillas in eastern Batticaloa district and recovered a solar power generating unit and medicines Saturday, the spokesman said, adding that one soldier was wounded.

Troops also destroyed the jungle base of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the area after the surprise attack carried out Saturday, the spokesman said.

20 kidnappers held in Italy:

Police arrested more than 20 people accused of taking part in a powerful kidnap network centered in a remote region of southern Italy, news agencies said, reports AP from Italy.

Most of the suspects belonged to two families and lived in the area of Locri, a town on the coast of Calabria. Authorities accused them variously of kidnapping for extortion, arms violations, money-laundering and drug-related offences.

Police investigated 17 kidnappings in the case, the Italian news agency ANSA said.

Kidnapping has been a money-making business for centuries in the area, where bandits can easily hide their victims in the rugged and sparsely populated Aspromonte range. Aspromonte comes from the Italian for "bitter mountain."

CARE move to save 10m dlrs:

CARE, the world's largest private relief organisation, is relocating from New York to Atlanta in a move to save the agency \$10 million over the next decade, reports AP from Atlanta.

"Care must find every means possible of producing more help for these beleaguered people," said Dr Philip Johnston, CARE president. "We believe moving to Atlanta will help us do that." The agency expects to complete the move within a year, she said.

CARE also is cutting its headquarters staff from 220 to 200. The agency expects about 70 per cent of its New York workers to relocate to Atlanta; about 50 employees will be hired in Atlanta, said Judith Webb of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to its headquarters staff, CARE also employs more than 7,500 relief and development workers around the world. Its annual programmes are valued at more than \$1.5 billion.

German newsman killed in Bosnia:

A German free-lance journalist was killed Saturday when shelling slammed the town of Mostar in southern Bosnia-Herzegovina in an attack that left several other people dead and injured, Croatian television said, reports AFP from Zagreb.

The journalist, George Phil, was rushed to hospital but died from his wounds, the report said.

His death brought to 28 the number of journalists killed since the start of the Yugoslav conflict.

Bilateral talks with Arabs

Israel opposes US intervention

JERUSALEM, Sept 20: A senior Israeli delegate to the Washington peace talks said Saturday his country was opposed to US intervention in the bilateral Arab-Israeli negotiations, reports AFP.

"We want the Americans to continue to keep the role they have had so far," Itamar Rabinovich told Israeli radio from the US capital. "If the Arabs threaten to interrupt the talks at any moment, we will not get far."

The Syrian delegation in Washington called Thursday for US intervention to keep the negotiations moving forward, complaining of an impasse because Israel refused to discuss Arab demands for its withdrawal from occupied

territories.

Muaffaq Allaf, Head of the Syrian team, said Friday his country would need time for a reconciliation with Israel, even if the two sides signed a peace agreement.

"After peace ... only time can guarantee the establishment of cordial and friendly relations," he said in an interview with Radio Monte Carlo. "It can not be imposed on people."

In Tunis, PLO spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo warned that the current round of peace negotiations could fail unless the United States intervened before the talks wind up on September 24.

Washington and Moscow are the sponsors of the peace

drive launched last October in Madrid.

The initiative has since moved to the US capital for bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and between the Jewish state and Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Two members of the Palestinian peace team, Saeb Erekat and Ghassan Khatib were due in Tunis later Saturday for coordination talks with PLO leader Yasser Arafat during a weekend recess in Washington, Palestinian sources said.

"Concerning the legislative prerogatives of the (Palestinian) elected council, we could show flexibility," (he said in a separate interview with radio Monte Carlo).

UNHCR for resumption of aid to Sarajevo

GENEVA, Sept 20: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata recommended resumption of the international airlift of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo on Saturday after Serbian, Croatian and Muslim Slav leaders from Bosnia-Herzegovina pledged to guarantee the protection of the relief flights, reports AFP.

But, as she spoke, the parliament in Sarajevo was burning with five or six floors of the 20-storey building aflame after taking hits from Bosnian tanks.

Perot threatens to rejoin US poll race

WASHINGTON, Sept 20: Six weeks from the US Presidential election, Texas billionaire Ross Perot has said he might re-enter the race to force the candidates to discuss the country's budget deficit, reports AFP.

Perot's name has been placed on the ballots in all 50 states and a recent New York Times/CBS news poll showed last week that 14 per cent of Americans would still vote for him if he ran.

Although this would not be enough to send the Texan to the White House, a Perot can-

didacy would put a fire under President George Bush and Democratic candidate Bill Clinton, especially in the key electoral states.

Speaking on a television talk show — his favourite soapbox — Perot threatened to rejoin the race if Bush and Clinton do not come up with satisfactory economic recovery programmes for the country.

Before withdrawing in Mid-July, Perot's outsider campaign had gathered the support of some 30 per cent of voters.

As usual, Perot would not completely reveal his cards.

lars, or 15 million dollars less than anticipated. "We are afraid there could be a (further) drop in the near future if the campaign continues," said TS Chandra, Secretary of the Export Promotion Council.

The committee for eradication of child labour in the carpet industry is determined to pursue the campaign and wants a "free of child labour" label on every carpet sent out of India after careful monitoring.

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Japanese troops arrive in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, Sept 20: The first Japanese soldiers to set foot in an Asian country since World War II arrived here today to join the international effort to bringing peace to Cambodia, reports AP.

We are very proud to be here, said Lieutenant Colonel Yusuke Fukui, the leader of eight officers who were assigned to take up posts as military observers throughout Cambodia.

Subsequent peacekeeping groups from Japan will include engineers.

Indians step up crusade against child slavery

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: Indian activists have stepped up a crusade against child slavery in carpet looms, worrying exporters who see buyers and profits slipping away, reports AFP.

"Definitely our exports will be affected," said Sung Khedup, a member of the non-governmental Carpet Export Promotion Council. "This campaign is giving us all a bad name. We can't deny that our earnings will be affected."

The council had expected exports to bring in 300 million dollars in the fiscal year

to March 31, a 20-per cent jump over 1991-92, making carpets one of India's largest net foreign exchange earners.

But the campaign against factories where thousands of children live in virtual slavery has begun to bite, and the threat of a boycott of Indian carpets looms large.

Germans, who accounted for 35 per cent of India's 1991 carpet export earnings, are turning away from Indian carpets under pressure from Human Rights groups demanding certification that child labour has not

been used.

Last month, meanwhile, legislation was introduced in the US Congress to ban the import of products using child labour.

The bill cited India's carpet industry as an economic exploiter of children, some 300,000 of whom serve in conditions of virtual slavery according to documented accounts in a country where 55 million children are forced by poverty to work.

In the first quarter of the current fiscal year, Indian carpet sales to overseas markets earned 60 billion dol-

lars, or 15 million dollars less than anticipated.

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The committee for eradication of child labour in the carpet industry is determined to pursue the campaign and wants a "free of child labour" label on every carpet sent out of India after careful monitoring.

"We appeal to consumers throughout the world that they should not become a

party in a crime by buying a carpet woven by children," said Kailash Satyarthi, who heads the organisation.

Satyarthi also chairs the South Asian Coalition of Child Servitude, which on Friday organised a Carpet Children's Day here, in the Pakistani cities of Peshawar and Lahore, the Nepal capital Kathmandu, and London and New York.

About 150 boys and girls dressed in tattered clothes, some as young as six years, demonstrated in front of the Labour Ministry in New Delhi demanding

"childhood, not wages." They were mortgaged by their poor parents to carpet looms in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh for a few hundred rupees (few dollars), and rescued by activists who raided the looms with police assistance in August and September.

Some complained of night blindness after weaving fine silk and cotton for 16 hours a day. Others had asthma or tuberculosis from inhaling wool fluff or suffered deformed fingers and chronic backache.

Militants entered a house at Higham-Kupwara and gunned down three members of a family. The victims were identified as Afzal Sofi, his father Khalil Sofi and wife, Hanemara.

9 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Sept 20: Nine persons including three members of a family and two militants were killed in continued violence in Kashmir valley during the past 24 hours.

Police arrested five militants from Dalina-Sopore area and seized five rifles from them including a light machine gun, two pistols and some ammunition during the same period, official sources told PTI today.

Militants entered a house at Higham-Kupwara and gunned down three members of a family. The victims were identified as Afzal Sofi, his father Khalil Sofi and wife, Hanemara.