

# Mandela fires Winnie from cabinet again

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 15: Winnie Mandela was fired from her Cabinet post again on Friday, and President Nelson Mandela said he did it right this time, reports AP.

Mrs. Mandela had gone to court to contest her original dismissal, which came March 27 after she was linked to a string of controversies. Rather than respond directly, Mandela reinstated his estranged wife just long enough to shape his action in a way he said could not be challenged.

In a statement, Mandela said he replaced Mrs. Mandela as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology after due consultation and weighing up a myriad of factors which may or may not be related to the incumbent.

"The overriding consideration, as in this instance, is what the president believed is necessary in pursuit of good government and the interests of the country as a whole."

Mandela also confirmed his March 27 decision to put ANC



# Iran likely source of arms to Bosnian govt, says US

WASHINGTON, Apr 15: The United States acknowledged on Friday that Iran was the likely source of a new flood of arms to the Muslim-led Bosnian government but denied it tacitly welcomed the supply effort, reports Reuter.

Without discussing intelligence reports, I can say that there is certainly a lot of circumstantial evidence that the Bosnian government has had access to small arms and munitions... It would not be surprising if it had come from Iran," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said.

President Bill Clinton has often said he believes the Bosnian Muslims outgunned by Serbs in the three-year-old conflict in the former Yugoslavia, should have the right to defend themselves.

The Washington Post reported that Iran had sent hundreds of tonnes of small arms to Bosnian Muslims in the past six months. Administration officials said there have been other reports of Iranian arms shipments going back much longer. The weapons included Uzis, submachineguns acquired by Iran from Israel in the days of the Shah, the newspaper said.

Although the shipments violate a 1991 UN imposed arms ban for the region that the United States supports, the White House did not condemn Tehran - despite frequent changes by Washington that Iran exports terrorism.

"Bosnia is getting plenty of small stuff and anti-tank weapons but Uzis are not going to make much of a difference on the battlefield, said a western military analyst in Sarajevo.

"Everybody knows what the Bosnian army needs to level the playing field and it's not

Uzis. They need tanks and heavy artillery and they're not getting them. Nothing's changed."

Indeed McCurry volunteered in a news briefing that some experts believe that instead of making the search for peace more difficult, arming the Bosnian Muslim might make the prospects for a peace settlement brighter.

According to this view, a well-armed Bosnian government would be in a stronger position to negotiate the terms of a peace proposal as they face their adversaries, the Bosnian Serbs, he said.

The United States is barred from helping enforce the UN arms ban because of a law passed by Congress, but McCurry insisted Washington was not tacitly approving the shipments.

"It would be inaccurate to suggest that we look positively

# Off the Record

## Cruel way to quell crying baby

CHICAGO: A woman trying to stop her baby from crying threw him from an eighth-floor window, police said Thursday, reports AP.

Deborah Turner admitted kicking 16-month-old Tyler Marshall, then throwing him out the window after he began crying, said police Sgt Daniel Fitzgerald.

Turner, 35, was charged with first-degree murder. The baby, wearing only diapers, was found lying on a patch of dirt outside the housing project, where Turner reportedly was visiting friends Wednesday.

Police were investigating reports the woman was smoking crack cocaine and drinking before the baby was killed, Fitzgerald said.

## Presidential victim of AIDS or malicious rumours?

PARIS: A French doctor for Gabon's president on Friday denied the African leader has the AIDS virus, and an official Gabonese newspaper attacked a case linking the president to call girls selling him clothes, reports AP.

President Omar Bongo was the victim of "malicious rumours," said Dr Philippe Blot, who invited journalists to Gabon, "to see for themselves the perfect health of president Bongo."

Blot said in a statement that Bongo would be willing to take a blood test. Earlier in the day, French Cooperation Minister Bernard Debré, in charge of close relations with former French colonies like Gabon, said he believed Bongo was not infected.

Testimony about rumours that Bongo had the AIDS virus surfaced Tuesday during the pimping trial of fashion designer Francesco Smalto, charged with supplying Bongo with young women during personal showings of his collections.

Bongo is a major client of the Paris fashion house, and Smalto testified that he routinely sent young women to Libreville. Gabon's capital for private showings. He said, however, that he did not have "the certitude" that the women were obliged to sleep with Bongo and dismissed rumours that the president carried the deadly AIDS virus.

Bongo usually paid the women 10,000-40,000 francs (2,000-8,000 dollar) plus trip expenses, according to Smalto. Rumours that Bongo was a seropositive became a key aspect at the trial as Prosecutor Michele Vaubailion tried to establish whether Smalto, 67, was aware but chose to ignore the potential risks to the women.

# BRIEFLY

## Dissident Cong leader expelled:

A dissident Congress (I) leader and Convenor of the Congress Satyagrah Abhiyan, Gopi Nath Dixit on Friday expelled from the primary membership of the party for six years, PTI reports from Lucknow.

A decision to this effect was taken at the meeting of the state executive of the party here.

## Ancient altar found in WB:

Israeli archaeologists have discovered a sacrificial altar and coins on the site of an ancient Samaritan temple at Nablus on the occupied West Bank dating back to the second century BC. Yitzhak Magen, head of Israeli archaeology on the West Bank told AFP the altar was surrounded by animal bones, the agency reports from Jerusalem.

Excavations at the site which have already been going on for 12 years, have already revealed a podium 200 metres long and 150 metres wide, several porticoes and numerous inscriptions in ancient Hebrew and Aramaean.

## 19 PKK rebels killed in N Iraq:

Turkish troops Friday killed 19 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels in northern Iraq and at least nine in eastern Turkey, military officials reported, Reuter reports from Ankara.

Anatolian news agency quoted the army's general staff as saying 19 PKK rebels were killed in northern Iraq and that over the past 24 hours two soldiers had been killed and two wounded.

## Drugs seized in Manila, 1 killed:

Police seized a suspected drug courier and seized about 91 kilos (200 pounds) of illegal drugs - the biggest haul this year - following a shootout at a checkpoint in the northern Philippines, police said Saturday, AP reports from Manila.

Police Superintendent Rolando Sacramento said the raid took place late Friday in the coastal town of Bauang in a La Union Province, about 216 kilometers (135 miles) north of Manila.

## Sniper kills French peacekeeper:

A sniper killed a French UN peacekeeper in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja Friday, UN spokeswoman Miriam Suchaki said, Reuter reports from Sarajevo.

The man, the commander of an armoured vehicle, was hit in the neck as it drove between the airport and the city and died shortly after reaching the UN hospital.

## 4 die in US plane collision:

Two small planes collided and burst into flames while attempting to land side by side. Four people were killed, AP reports from Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Sheriff Michael Brooks said there was no immediate explanation from Wittman Field air traffic controllers why the two-seater Cessna 150 and the four-seat Beechcraft Bonanza approached the runway together Friday.

## UN, OAS, officials meet Monday:

Top officials of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the United Nations will meet in New York next Monday and Tuesday to discuss their cooperation in a wide field, Xinhua reports from Washington.

OAS Secretary-General Cesar Gaviria and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will stress the importance of the cooperation at the two-day meetings which will be held at UN headquarters.

## Road mishaps claim 16 in India:

At least 16 persons were killed and over a dozen others injured in three separate road accidents in Banaskantha, Surendranagar, and Ahmedabad districts during the last 24 hours, PTI reports from Ahmedabad.

In the first mishap, five persons were killed on the spot and ten others injured when a luxury bus collided with an auto-rickshaw in Deesa town of Banaskantha district. In another mishap, five persons travelling in a car were killed and three others injured when the vehicle was rammed by a luxury bus on the highway near Memka village in Surendranagar district.

## Turkish Cypriots go to polls:

Turkish Cypriots went to the polls Saturday to elect a president of the breakaway state of northern Cyprus amid growing Western pressure to reunify the tiny Mediterranean island, AP reports from Nicosia.

President Rauf Denktaş, 71, the only leader the state has known, is favoured to finish ahead of the six other candidates. But political analysts predict he may fall short of the 50 per cent needed to avoid a run-off next week.

## Maharashtra gov't won't interfere in release of 'Bombay'

BOMBAY, Apr 15: The Maharashtra Chief Minister Manohar Joshi yesterday reiterated that the state government would not interfere in the release or removing any part in the controversial film "Bombay" produced by Manirathan, reports PTI.

It would be better to approach the Central Board of Certification of Film (Censor Board) or Manirathan himself, Joshi told the members of the Bombay Aman Committee, at a meeting held at Mantralaya yesterday.

Joshi also clarified that the film would be released in the city today and the state government would take all necessary precautions.

# Russia will sell anti-missile system to US

MOSCOW, Apr 15: Russia has agreed a deal with the United States to sell it a sophisticated air defence anti-missile system, a Russian government spokesman, quoted by the Interfax news agency, said Friday, reports AFP.

Valery Pogrebenkov, Press Service chief of the state Arms Sales Committee said the terms of the sale of S-300 system still had to be finalised and the outcome of negotiations would be made public next week.

Experts say that the S-300 system, a mobile anti-missile system, is the latest model in the series. They say it is among the most sophisticated of its type, capable of destroying targets such as spy-planes or cruise missiles.

It can detect 200 targets simultaneously and fire 48 missiles at them in a single salvo at a height ranging from 25 metres (80 feet) to 30 kilometres (18 miles) with a range of between 40 and 100 kilometres (25 to 60 miles).

## LDP likely to win Japan's next polls

TOKYO, Apr 15: The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the biggest partner in Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's coalition, is likely to win the next general elections, a newspaper said today, reports AFP.

The LDP would take 70 per cent of the 500 seats in the lower house of parliament, against 100 seats for the main opposition New Frontier Party (NFP), the Mainichi Shinbun said.

The Mainichi estimate was based on an analysis of last Sunday's elections for 13 governors and 2,607 assembly members in 43 of Japan's 47 prefectures.

Currently the LDP holds 209 seats in the lower house, against 173 for the NFP.

## Philippine rebels still holding 13 hostages

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Apr 15: Raiders who killed 53 people while they pillaged a southern town last week are still holding at least 13 hostages, stalling government pursuers from going all-out against them, the military said Saturday, reports AP.

However, Maj Gen Edgardo Batanga, chief of the military Southern Command, said the effort to stop the extremists will continue until they are wiped out.

"For as long as they are there we will sustain operations," Batanga said.

The government said the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf Group was responsible for the April 4 raid, in which the market district of Ipi, a town of about 50,000 northeast of Zamboanga, was burned down.



A Sarajevo girl uses the binoculars of a Ukrainian UN soldier on Friday to look at the Serb-held part of the town, from the capital's so called 'Sniper-Avenue'. A German native and a member of the French Foreign Legion serving as a UN soldier in Sarajevo was killed early Friday by a Serb sniper in the frontline suburb of Dobrinja. — AFP/UNB photo

# Iraq still a threat to int'l community, UN report says

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 15: The UN Special Commission overseeing the destruction of Iraqi weapons (UNSCOM) says that its long term monitoring and verification system is in place, but it cannot yet assure the Security Council that Baghdad is no longer a threat to the international community, UN officials and diplomats say, reports USIS.

It will be some time, they note, before all of Iraq's facilities, equipment and imports are being watched closely enough to make such assurances.

UNSCOM Chairman Ambassador Rolf Ekeus submitted a written report to the council April 10 and then met with council members on April 12 and 13, responding to questions about how and why UNSCOM can be confident that Iraq's future capabilities in each of the banned areas — chemical, biological, nuclear, and ballistic weapons — can be watched without lapses by the United Nations.

US Ambassador Madeleine Albright said April 12, following a meeting with Ekeus, that the United States has "the highest confidence" in UNSCOM's work.

She pointed out, however, that the problem is with Iraq's lack of compliance and not the Special Commission. "Ambassador Ekeus noted that the monitoring regime cannot be substantively effective because Iraq has not cooperated yet in major areas.... The most disturbing fact is that Iraq may well have produced biological weapons which remain unaccounted for," she said.

UNSCOM's problem with the long-term monitoring, Albright said, is that "it does not have some of the baseline material (from Iraq) to make it effective."



British Ambassador to the United Nations, Sir David Hannary (L) and US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright vote during a Security Council meeting on Friday in New York to allow Iraq to export a limited amount of oil to cover the cost of humanitarian supplies for its population. The resolution was adopted by all 15 members. — AFP/UNB photo

## Thief's choice

SAN DIEGO: A thief who stole 146 dollar videocassette recorder chose to kill himself rather than face the prospect of life in prison under a California law aimed at repeat criminals, report AP.

"With him being HIV-positive, it was a death sentence," said Peter Liss, the attorney for Steven White. "He didn't deserve a death sentence for stealing a VCR."

When police found White in a Las Vegas hotel room April 6, he had shot himself in the chest and left three suicide notes: one to his family, another apologising to police and a third blaming the state law.

One note, quoted in Friday's editions of The San Diego Union-Tribune, said, "this all happened," because of the repeat offender law, which increased punishment for repeat criminals with records of violent or "serious" felonies. Liss said White had never been charged with a violent crime.

White, 32, was convicted twice in 1983 for burglary, but served time in prison only for violating parole.

He had fled San Diego March 22, just before his trial was to begin.

## Farmer jailed for buying, raping young woman

SHANGHAI: A farmer in central China's Henan province was sentenced to 15 years in jail for buying a kidnapped undergraduate and keeping her for seven months during which he raped her, a newspaper reported yesterday, says AFP.

The Wen Hui daily said Zhou Jianqi, 27, bought the student identified only as Zhang for 1,200 yuan (142 dollars) from a trader named Yang Jin who brought the woman from Huangling, in neighbouring Shanxi province, to Yucheng in Henan.

Yang had befriended Zhang, who is from a poor family, at a market in May last year where she was selling clothes to support her college education and tricked her into going with him to Henan for a business deal.

During the seven months, Zhou kept Zhang as his slave and beat and raped her until in December when she was rescued by police who had received reports from the public.

The Wen Hui daily said police were looking for Yang.

## Pope recalls victims of violence worldover

ROME, Apr 15: Pope John Paul II in Good Friday prayers here recalled the victims of violence in Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Burundi, the Middle East and Somalia, reports AFP.

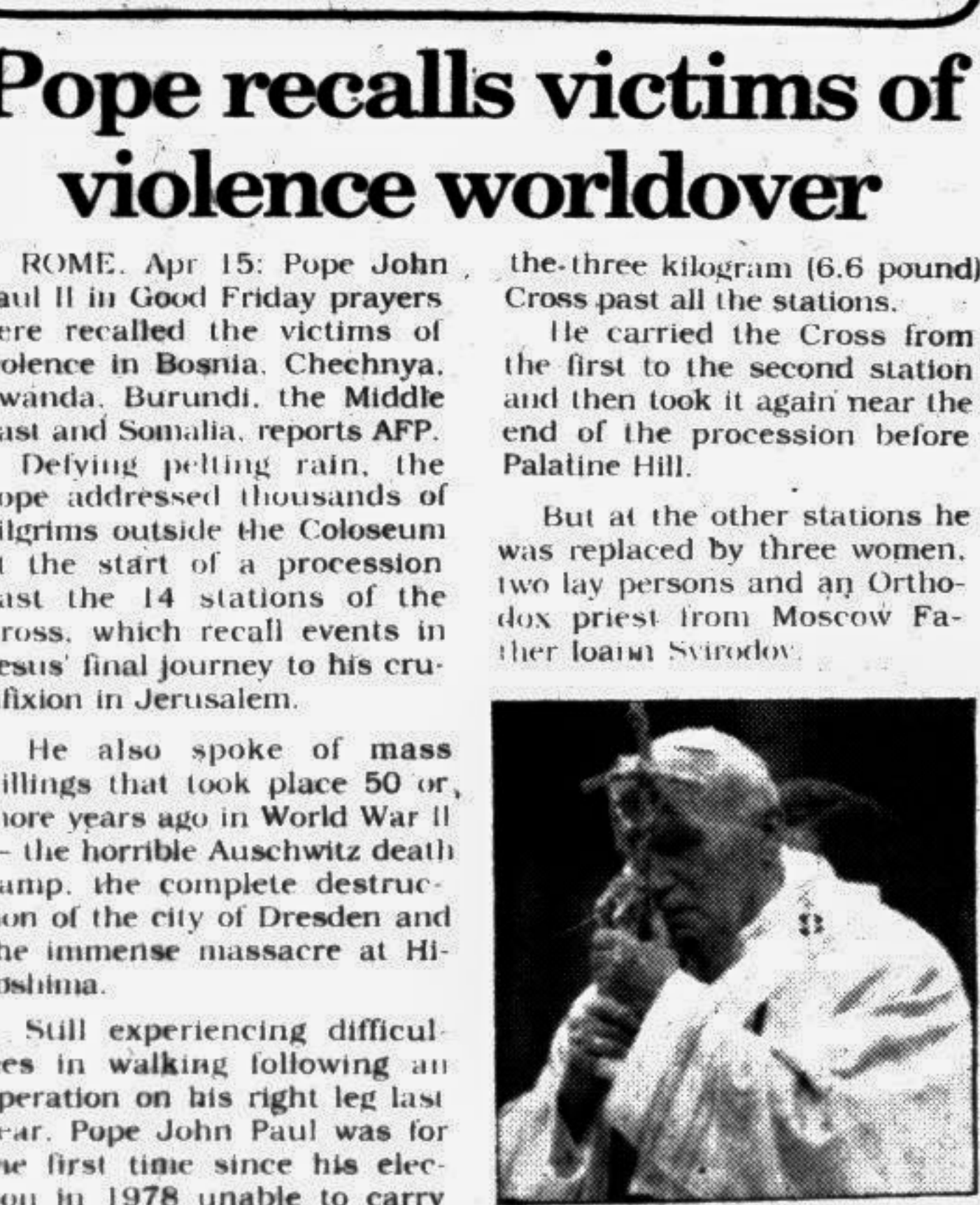
Defying pelting rain, the Pope addressed thousands of pilgrims outside the Colosseum at the start of a procession past the 14 stations of the Cross, which recall events in Jesus' final journey to his crucifixion in Jerusalem.

He also spoke of mass killings that took place 50 or more years ago in World War II — the horrible Auschwitz death camp, the complete destruction of the city of Dresden and the immense massacre at Hiroshima.

Still experiencing difficulties in walking following an operation on his right leg last year, Pope John Paul was for the first time since his election in 1978 unable to carry the three kilogram (6.6 pound) Cross past all the stations.

He carried the Cross from the first to the second station and then took it again near the end of the procession before Palatine Hill.

But at the other stations he was replaced by three women, two lay persons and an Orthodox priest from Moscow Father Ioann Stavrodov.



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# Supreme Truth's prophecy of calamity cripples Tokyo

TOKYO, Apr 15: Helicopters patrolled Tokyo's skies and columns of police, some in bulletproof vests and riot gear, guarded shopping areas and train stations Saturday because of a prophecy of a calamity by the cult suspected in the city's nerve gas attack, reports AP.

Two department stores were closed and classes were suspended at several schools. Streets and trains in Tokyo's central Shinjuku district were unusually empty.

Police also guarded movie theatres, airports and baseball stadiums, and the military's largest chemical warfare unit was placed on nearby alert, reports said.

In a book published last

month, cult leader Shoko Asahara predicted that disaster would strike Tokyo on Saturday, sparking fears of an attack by his group, Aum Shinri Kyo, or Supreme Truth.

Chief government spokesman Kozo Igarashi said the fears may be baseless, "but we must be cautious about everything so that the people can be free of worry."

Cult members warned relatives and friends that a "horrible" event might happen in Shinjuku, one of Tokyo's most popular entertainment districts.

The cult is the leading suspect in the March 20 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system, which killed 11 and sickened thousands.

"My family told me not to come to Shinjuku today, said Kyoko Yoshida, a recent college graduate. "But I have a job interview."

Grim-faced policemen patrolled the station, normally the world's busiest, as protective riot shields were propped against several walls.

"We have had a variety of calls warning something would happen, said one officer. "We're taking them seriously."

Tokyo hospitals were urged to stock up on nerve gas antidotes as a precaution against an attack, newspaper said.

Even railway maintenance workers were pressed into security duty, and patrolled the large station wearing their

bright yellow work clothes.

"It's scary," said Yuki Sasaki, on a visit to Tokyo from the countryside. "It seems like Aum members could be hiding anywhere."

The cult has denied involvement in the subway attack and denounced violence.

But evidence linking it to sarin, the kind of nerve gas released in the attack, has made the cult's target of Japan's largest police investigation ever.

Early Saturday, police announced the arrest of cult member Masanobu Iwao, 35, on suspicion of breaking into a laser research centre, Kyodo News Service said.

In a highly unusual move, Prime Minister Tomiichi Mu-

rayama directed officials to tighten security in the capital, Kyoto said.

Daily searches at several cult facilities since the attack have turned up tons of chemicals and equipment that police say could have been used to make nerve gas.

Police also claim to have found materials that indicate the cult was experimenting with biological weapons, trying to manufacture its own guns, and researching laser-based nuclear enrichment technologies.

Police found a kidnapping manual used to train cult members in ways to recapture followers who tried to leave the group, the Asahi newspaper reported.

The cult says at least 107 of its members have been arrested on a variety of charges, none directly related to the subway attack, and claims the actions are religious oppression.

Though Asahara's whereabouts remain unknown, three of his top disciples have been taken into custody.

Police on Friday also took 53 cult children into protective custody. Eight were hospitalised because of malnutrition and pneumonia, news reports said.

Asahara predicts a war between Christians and Buddhists will set off World War III in 1997, and says sect followers must prepare to survive.

# Reza Pahlavi seeks Israeli help to topple Iranian govt

JERUSALEM, Apr 15: The late Shah of Iran's eldest son, Reza Pahlavi, has called for Israeli help to topple the Islamic government in his country, Yediot Aharonot reported Friday, says AFP.

Israel can convince Arab countries with which it has made peace and other countries to support our action against the Ayatollahs regime, the exiled prince told the paper in an interview.

Persian broadcasts on Israeli radio could play an important role because many Iranians listen to Israeli news programmes, he said.