

BRIEFLY



French UN soldiers wearing their distinctions having two minutes silence during a ceremony by French UN soldiers on remembrance day on Saturday commemorating the dead from World War I that started here in the Bosnian capital in August 1914. — AFP/UNB photo

Kohl arrives in China: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl arrived in Beijing at noon Sunday for a five-day official visit to China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Peng. Xinhua reports from Beijing.

This is Kohl's fourth visit to China as prime minister. He last visited China in November 1993. Li was scheduled to preside over a welcome ceremony for Kohl and hold talks with him Monday.

Newsman shot dead in Colombia: Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a freelance journalist in a small town in Colombia's northwest, police said on Saturday. Reuter reports from Bogota.

Police told Reuters two hooded gunmen killed Gabriel Cruz Diaz in front of his home in the town of Chinu on Friday. Police were searching for the suspects but did not have a motive for the shooting of Cruz Diaz who collaborated with the radio station of the town, located more than 250 miles (400 km) northwest of Bogota.

Moderate quake rocks Tokyo: Residents of Tokyo and its environs were waken yesterday by a moderate earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter Scale. AFP reports from Tokyo.

The quake was felt at 6:02 am (2102 gmt Saturday) but caused no injury or damage according to NHK television reports. The quake's epicentre was measured at 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of the Japanese capital.

'Yigal Amir wasn't crazy': The brother of the confessed killer of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said yesterday his brother was not crazy. Reuter reports from Tel Aviv.

As he was taken into a Tel Aviv courthouse to extend his remand as an accomplice in the assassination, Hagai Amir, 27, said of his brother Yigal, 25: "My brother did it. I have nothing to do with it. He is not crazy. He did what he did after a lot of thinking."

Romanian leader Coposu dies: Romanian opposition leader Corneliu Coposu died after being hospitalized 10 days ago for a lung infection, Romanian Radio said. AFP reports from Bucharest.

Coposu, 79, was considered by the opposition as the "moral president" of Romania. He had spent 17 years in prison under communism.

Blast kills 5 in Algeria: Five people were killed when a car bomb exploded in front of a town hall in a village, south of the Algerian capital, a newspaper reported yesterday. Reuter reports from Algiers.

The bomb exploded at about 11 a.m. on Saturday while people picked up their voter cards for Algeria's presidential election, which is being held on Thursday, at the building near Blida, 50 km (30 miles) south of Algiers, the Opinion newspaper said.

KSA hails Bosnian accord: Saudi Arabia yesterday hailed as an important step towards peace the accord signed between Bosnia's Croats and Muslims to strengthen their federation. AFP reports from Riyadh.

"This agreement is the best peace initiative to end the ethnic conflict in this republic," the official Saudi newspaper Al-Riyadh said.

British WWII hero Mann dead: Former Lebanon hostage and British World War Two hero Jack Mann died of heart and lung failure after a long illness, a doctor said at his home in Cyprus. Reuter reports from Nicosia.

Mann, 81, was kidnapped in 1989 by Muslim militants in Beirut and was the oldest of a group of western hostages. He was released in 1991 after more than two years of solitary confinement.

Japanese govt under pressure to fire Eto

TOKYO, Nov 12: Mounting calls were made today for state Minister Takami Eto to resign over remarks defending Japan's colonial rule of Korea, increasing pressure on the government ahead of this week's APEC Forum in Osaka, reports AFP.

The problem will be resolved if the person who made the remarks takes clear responsibility," said Wataru Kubo, secretary-general of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's Socialist Democratic Party.

Major announces immediate arms ban against Nigeria

AUCKLAND, Nov 12: Prime Minister John Major today announced an immediate arms embargo against Nigeria by Britain after the execution of nine leading anti-government activists, reports AFP.

Major said before leaving Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in New Zealand that he would also like the "widest possible embargo on defence sales to Nigeria."

"The policy we have in the United Kingdom is already highly restrictive, we shall bring in an immediate ban on a national basis and ask our partners to do the same," the prime minister said.

"What we will now consider urgently with our part-

ners in the most effective way of following up these immediate steps," he added.

The Commonwealth has suspended Nigeria over the killing of human rights campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other government opponents, on Sunday it set a two-year deadline for Nigeria's military regime to improve its human rights and political record or be expelled.

Major said the Commonwealth had "agreed on a permanent measure of increasing severity to encourage and persuade governments to return to acceptable behaviour."

"These measure can result in suspension or expulsion from the Commonwealth.

They are specially designed to tackle military regimes which have overthrown a democratically-elected government but will be applicable in other circumstances as well.

"We have also set up a standing body whose job will be to implement the Harare principles and make their recommendation for action whenever that might be necessary."

The Commonwealth passed a declaration on "good government" at a Harare summit in 1991 intended to push all member governments into embarrassing democracy and basic human rights.

Major described the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and the

eight others as "judicial murder-calling and brutal it was a direct challenge to the Commonwealth."

He condemned the way that the executions went ahead despite pleas made at the conference by him, New Zealand Prime Minister Jim Bolger, the Commonwealth summit chairman, and South African President Nelson Mandela.

Major said quiet diplomacy had been tried with the Nigeria but it had not worked.

Meanwhile, the European Union agreed Saturday to recall all its ambassadors from Nigeria after the Nigerian authorities executed nine minority rights activists, a Spanish diplomat said.

Cop, among 4 killed in Karachi

KARACHI, Nov 12: At least four people, including a policeman, were killed and three wounded in Pakistan's largest city on Saturday, police said, reports Reuter.

They said unidentified gunmen had shot dead a police assistant sub-inspector in Karachi's central buffer zone area.

In western Orangi area, two youths were killed in separate incidents and a 25-year-old man was shot dead while standing outside a shop in the Mominabad area. His killer escaped.

Ambulance workers said they had picked up three people wounded by gunfire in various parts of the southern city.

The government and the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) blame each other for the bloodshed in Karachi, where more than 1,680 people have been killed this year.

Impeachment move against Nepalese CJ withdrawn

KATHMANDU, Nov 12: Nepal's main opposition the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML) on Saturday withdrew an impeachment motion against Chief Justice Surendra Singh, reports Xinhua.

The decision to withdraw the impeachment was made at a Saturday meeting of the Communist Party's parliamentary group.

Chief Whip of CPN-UML Devi Prasad Ojha handed over a note of the decision to House Speaker Ram Chandra Poudel at Saturday's session of the lower house.

CPN-UML lawmakers had been requesting the speaker to fix a date for House debate on the impeachment motion which was registered by them two months ago.

They accused the chief justice of having exceeded age limit of 60 for his position and lacking work efficiency.

Indo-Pak private forum calls for talks on N-conflict

ISLAMABAD, Nov 12: A private forum made up of citizens from India and Pakistan has urged the two countries to start direct talks on eliminating the danger of nuclear conflict in the region, reports AFP.

The call came in a resolution adopted by Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy, which ended a two day meeting in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore late Saturday.

"The governments of Pakistan and India should immediately initiate direct dialogue aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating the chances of a nuclear war by intent or accident, irrespective of any international negotiations or agreements," the resolution said.

The forum resolved to appoint a committee on the explosive dispute over Kashmir.



Algerians living in the south of France storm the Algerian Consulate in Nice on Saturday to vote in their home country's 16 November presidential election. After breaking down the gates surrounding the consulate, voters clashed with riot police, which was overwhelmed by the electoral turnout. Some 62,000 registered Algerian electors are due to cast their ballots over the next three days at 94 polling stations set up in 22 centres. — AFP/UNB photo

BJP convention ends with call to help oust Cong in polls

BOMBAY, Nov 12: India's main opposition party ended a massive pre-campaign convention here today with a call to activists to give their time and money for the overthrow of the ruling Congress in general elections next year, reports Reuter.

"We have untethered the horse of victory, we must not relax now," Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) parliamentary leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee told the closing session of the three-day meeting under a huge tent at a central Bombay racecourse.

Organisers said more than 130,000 delegates from all over India attended the meeting, planned as a launching pad for the party's general election campaign.

Vajpayee promised the Hindu nationalist BJP would bring a new style of govern-

ment to India.

One term of government is not enough to change this country, but we will begin the process," he said.

He called on party workers each to give 100 rupees (about dollar 3) and 100 days of their time to help bring the party to power in general elections due by next June.

Vajpayee promised that a BJP government would make social welfare programmes more effective and would work for improving the status of women in Indian society.

The main thrust of the party plenary was to attack Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's Congress Party, which has ruled India for all but four years since independence from Britain in 1947.

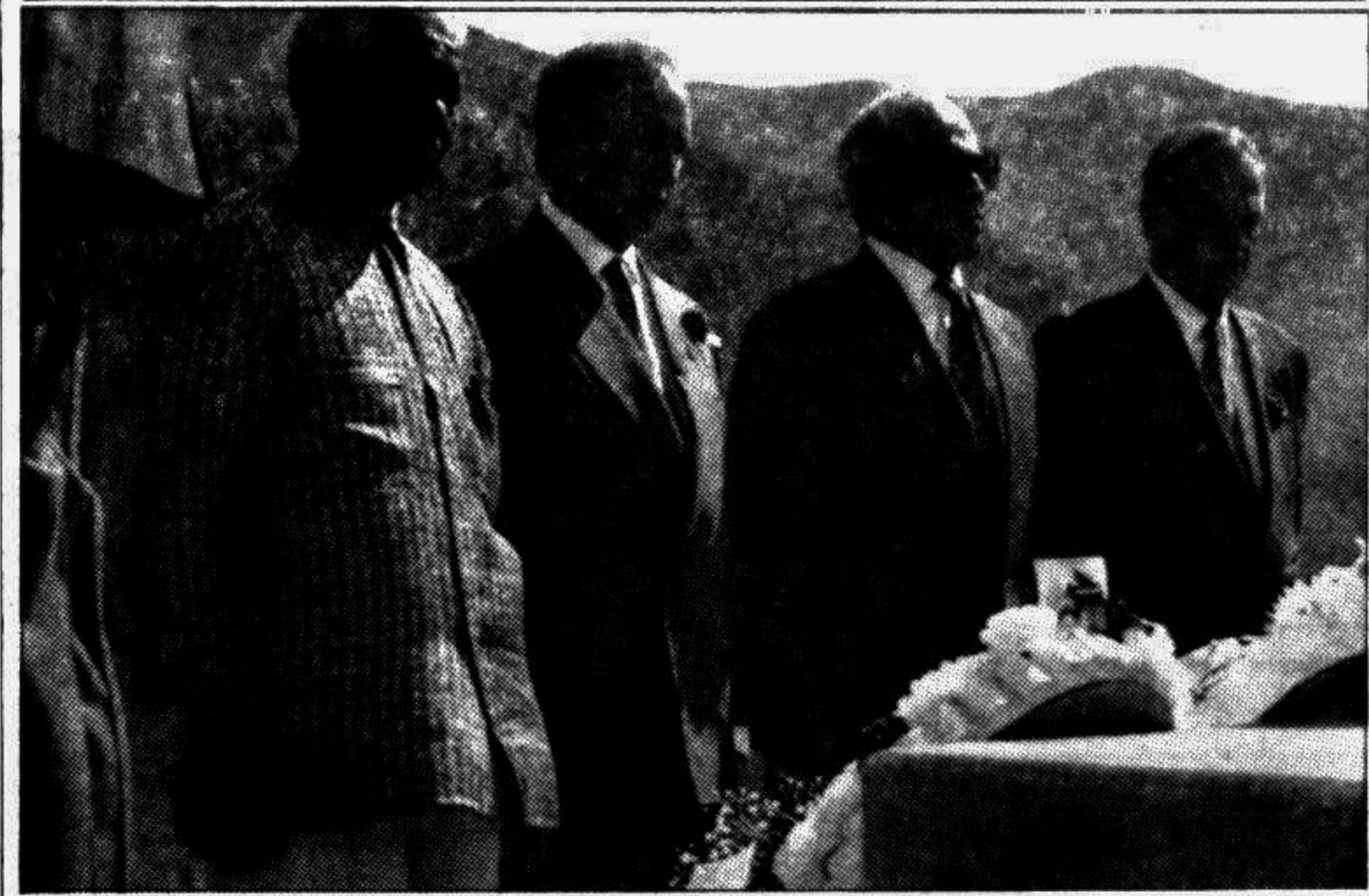
A political resolution put to the convention on Satur-

day said India's security and sovereignty had taken a battering during the past five years of Congress rule.

"The failure of this last Congress regime are truly breathtaking. Its record of crime and corruption, its neglect of national interest and its subservience to foreign interest constitute a new low in political immorality," it said.

Party president Lal Krishna Advani has said the election campaign should be a stocktaking on what he calls nearly 50 years of Congress misrule.

In a clear bid to widen the appeal of the Hindu nationalist BJP, speakers today appealed to activists to reach out to people from the lower end of India's rigid caste system.



(L to R) South African President Nelson Mandela, Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, Pakistani President Farooq Leghari and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien stand before wreaths during a memorial service at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) retreat near Queenstown on Sunday. Nigeria's Foreign Minister Chief Ikemi Ayegba boycotted the service after the leaders suspended his nation's membership of the Commonwealth. — AFP/UNB photo

Pro-Rabbani troops force Taliban to retreat

KABUL, Nov 12: Afghan government troops today pushed back the Islamic Taliban militia besieging Kabul by 10 kilometers (six miles) on a front-line west of the capital, Defence Ministry officials said, reports AFP.

The fresh offensive came a day after 36 civilians were killed and 52 injured according to the government, in the deadliest shelling of the capital since the rebels arrived on the outskirts of the city last month.

Journalists counted 21 bodies in different parts of the capital.

Taliban fighters launched the massive rocket and artillery barrage on the city after forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani repulsed attempts by the rebels to take the city on Friday, the officials said.

Officials earlier said only three people had been killed and 25 wounded in the salvos which hit the capital intermittently throughout the day.

Among the dead were a young girl and eight other people including a movie director and his actors — who were killed when a rocket slammed into Afghanistan's only private movie studio as they filmed a scene witnesses said.

Six more people died later Saturday when a rocket hit a crowded scientific training center in a residential area, while another rocket claimed three lives when it struck a nearby house.

More than 60 people have been killed and over 100 injured since Taliban militiamen began targeting the city of nearly one million people.

Off the Record

Golden snake on display

BEIJING: A rare golden coloured snake has been found in east China's Zhejiang province and it is now on display in a park in Haining city attracting large crowd, reports PTI.

The snake 1.77m long and 455 gram in weight is said to have reddish grey eyes and the entire body is golden colour.

The official Xinhua news agency quoted a research scholar as saying on Saturday that such golden snakes were rare and found one in 5,00,000 snakes.

It is said to be a variant of common snakes but it seldom occurs.

Snakes are a big delicacy in China and the report did not indicate if this particular snake was edible.

It only said the snake was caught by a farmer in a suburban area and was sold to the park for 2,100 yuan (about 250 US dollars).

Excavated relics may open doors of prehistoric period

ATHENS: A team of archaeologists working under Greek Professor Thanassis Kogolios of the University of Salonika have unearthed a number of prehistoric relics following lengthy excavations in the area of Nipsa, Evros in northern Greece, it was reported on Saturday says Xinhua.

The finds include outdoor places of worship with temples dating back to the 10th and 8th century BC, chiselled structures, wash-basing, altars and chiselled depictions on rocks.

The archaeological team has also discovered pieces of ancient earthenware and Roman pottery, a stone pillar from a temple of the early Christian period, a bronze Byzantine coin bearing the head of Justinian (537-565 AD) and a copper coin depicting a galloping horseman.

The prehistoric monuments, mainly monolithic temples and grave structures, found in the area of Nipsa belong to the early Iron age which spans the period from 1050-650 BC.

Footprints bearing the memories of mammoths

BEIJING: China has found 20 footprints made by dinosaurs as they waddled or galloped across the plains of north China about 130 million years ago, Xinhua news agency said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

About 100 of the footprints have now been found in the area, it said. The largest measures 60 cm (23 in) by 50 cm (20 in), while the smallest is 20 cm (8 in) by 14 cm (5.5 in).

The footprints show some of the dinosaurs were waddling and some were galloping with only their toes touching the ground, Xinhua quoted Chinese experts as saying.

Arafat in Cairo to prepare for talks with Hamas

CAIRO, Nov 12: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Cairo today to head a meeting of the group's executive committee and to prepare for a dialogue with its main rival, the Muslim militant Hamas group, reports Reuter.

Arafat told reporters upon his arrival that the PLO's decision making body "has a long list of subjects to discuss."

He said member of the committee will discuss arrangements for the first Palestinian elections following the redeployment of Israeli troops outside the occupied West Bank.

Arafat added that a meeting will be held "within the next few days" in Cairo between the PLO's main faction Fatah and Hamas to discuss the possibility of reaching a deal between the two sides.

Arafat insists Hamas should halt all violent attacks

against Israeli targets in order not to give the Jewish state any reasons to delay its redeployment in the West Bank.

Hamas opposed the 1993 PLO-Israeli deal and several suicide bombs attacks carried out by its militants was a main factor in delaying a deal on expanding PLO rule to the West Bank for a year.

Arafat was also to meet President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, PLO sources said.

PLO chief Yasser Arafat is to head a delegation for planned reconciliation talks with Hamas in Cairo and has already held preliminary contacts in Amman, Palestinian officials said Saturday.

Arafat gave his self-rule cabinet a report of talks he held with Hamas officials in the Jordanian capital while he was there for the economic summit at the end of October.

Mother Teresa using social work to preach Christianity?

BOMBAY, Nov 12: A fire-brand Hindu militant leader and a self-proclaimed admirer of Hitler has accused Nobel laureate Mother Teresa of using social work to convert poor Hindus to Christianity, reports AFP.

"There is nothing laudable or missionary about Mother Teresa's work. She is doing something different, very cleverly," Bal Thackeray, leader of the Hindu militant Shiv Sena (Shivaji's army) Party said in an interview published Saturday.

"Mother Teresa is being portrayed as if she is some

sort of an angel incarnate, come down from above or going up from down below. She is nothing of that sort," he told the Hindi-language evening paper Saamna (encounter).

"She is very cleverly converting Hindus. But nobody should be taken by this. Hindus can never become Christians," he said.

There was no immediate reaction from Mother Teresa's headquarters of the missionaries of charity order in the eastern city of Calcutta. She is revered there as the "saint of the gutters" for here selfless work among the

poor, the desolate and the dying.

Thackeray's party runs the government in alliance with another Hindu party in this western Indian state of Maharashtra, whose capital is Bombay, and wields enormous power in the state.

In the interview, he also urged Hindus to have more children to keep pace with the rising Muslim population.

"After that we should bring in a law limiting the number of children a couple can have. Anybody crossing the limit should be barred from state and private jobs," he said.

Reuter adds: Some 1,000 Christians staged a silent protest march on Saturday in the central Indian city of Bhopal demanding a judicial probe into the death of a Christian in religious violence last month.

They were protesting against the death on October 26 of John Kerkatta, who was attacked by a Hindu mob which accused Christians of desecrating a Hindu shrine, said Father Amrit a Christian leader.

Father Pascal Topno, Bhopal's archbishop, led the march from the city's century-old St Francis Cathedral.

The march culminated in a public meeting.

The state of Madhya Pradesh, of which Bhopal is the capital has recently seen rising tensions between mainstream Hindus and Christians over the conversion to Christianity of indigenous tribes people, who make up some 40 per cent of the state's population.

The murder took place at Lathobora, a village in Raigarh district in the eastern part of the state, India's largest, some 650 km (400 miles) from Bhopal.

The protesters carried placards that said "hang the

miscreants," and "order a judicial probe into the Lathobora incident."

The protesters accused Dilip Singhjudeo, a lawmaker of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India's upper house, Rajya Sabha, of engineering unrest against Christians.

Judeo accuses the state's Congress Party Chief Minister, Digvijay Singh, of praising Christian missionaries.

Judeo says thousands of tribals in the state are being converted to Christianity with the help of foreign aid worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Benazir, Karimov discuss Afghan situation

MOSCOW, Nov 12: Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto yesterday discussed the situation in Afghanistan and bilateral cooperation with Uzbek President Islam Karimov during her one day trip to that country, reports Xinhua.

Both leaders believed that the recent turmoil in Afghanistan is likely to escalate into a regional conflict, urging the United Nations to prevent foreign weapons from sneaking into that turbulent country.