

Modi, Pranab condole Bush senior's death

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Former US President George HW Bush, who led America during the collapse of the Soviet Union and engineered the defeat of an audacious Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, died in Houston Friday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled his death, saying Bush had been a leading statesman at a critical juncture of world history.

Modi, in Buenos Aires to attend the G-20 summit, wrote in a Twitter post: "Condolences to the Bush family and the people of USA on the passing away of former President George HW Bush. He was a leading statesman at a critical period of world history," Modi tweeted.

"Former President George H W Bush was passionate about strong relations between India and USA. His presence will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace," the prime minister said.

Former president Pranab Mukherjee too expressed his condolences over the death of Bush,



■ George HW Bush, who was then the vice president of the US, with former PM Indira Gandhi during a visit to India in 1984. HT ARCHIVES

who died at the age of 94.

"President Bush had come to India after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated (in October 1984). He represented the President of the US (Ronald Reagan) at the funeral of Indira ji. But that time, I could not meet him. My first meeting with him took place when he had demitted office (in 1993). He came to India in November 1995 when I was a minister. He called on me and

although I can't reveal the finer details of our discussions, I can say that we extensively discussed issues of mutual interest," Mukherjee told HT. "He also presented me a book. My interactions with his son, President George W Bush, was much more substantive... I am saddened by Bush's demise. May his soul rest in peace," he added.

In his later life, George HW Bush saw no reason to slow down.

A former Indian deputy national security advisor remembers his son and then US president, George W Bush, telling him how his mother rang up to tell him his father, then about to turn 80 years old, had decided to take up sky jumping.

"She told me to stop him. But how could I tell him to do that? So I ensured 10 men were around him when he made the jump," the younger Bush told the Indian official, who didn't want to be named.

Bush's primary foreign policy challenge was to handle fallout from the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and oversee the creation of a new world order. His primary foreign policy advisor throughout this effort was his national security advisor Brent Scowcroft.

The two co-wrote a book about their efforts, *A World Transformed*, which was notable for its lack of any mention of India. The single reference is a quote from former Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, about the rising "dynamism" of India.