

No major change in Pak foreign policy likely

ISLAMABAD, Oct 21: Benazir Bhutto's rise to power has altered Pakistan's political landscape but few analysts expect a radical change of direction from the new premier, especially on foreign affairs, reports AP.

In her first televised speech Wednesday, Bhutto removed all shreds of doubt on her stance on the main difference with the United States: The nuclear programme which Islamabad has been developing without let up since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, her father, took power in 1973.

We will safeguard the nuclear programme of Pakistan and will not allow any damage to the national interests, said Bhutto, ending any confusion which may have arisen last month when interim prime minister Moeen Qureshi spoke of a capping on nuclear research.

The United States was the leading supplier to Pakistan until it suspended economic and

military assistance in 1990, accusing Islamabad of pursuing the development of a nuclear weapon.

On Kashmir, a foreign policy question which has kept Pakistan on a hostile footing with neighbour India since 1947, Bhutto has already said she will follow the example of her predecessors in exploiting every chance she gets to criticise India, while at the same time leaving the door open for talks.

Before leaving today for the Commonwealth Summit in Cyprus, Bhutto said she intended to condemn fellow Commonwealth member India's continued human rights violations in an address to heads of government.

The previous day Bhutto invited her Indian counterpart PV Narasimha Rao to serious talks to resolve the issue which has caused two of the three wars Pakistan and India have

fought since the independence and division of the subcontinent in 1947.

My government is prepared to engage in serious and purposeful discussion, she said.

Washington has said it would consider sponsoring talks on Kashmir between Islamabad and New Delhi should a request be made.

Most diplomats believe that Bhutto is not in a position to make key changes on issues on which a consensus has already been reached.

On crucial questions, such as the nuclear programme, it would be very dangerous for her to change the position adopted by her predecessors, even if she wished to, said a western diplomat.

On another foreign policy issue, he added: "We hope that Pakistan will continue to cooperate in international peace-keeping operations."



Greek Cypriot women demonstrate in front of official cars carrying delegations en route to Nicosia to attend the opening of the Commonwealth conference in Cyprus on Thursday. Women planned to form a 70 km human chain from Limassol to Nicosia to press for an end to the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus and the return of 1700 people who have been missing since the 1974 invasion. (Story on Page One) — AFP photo

Ukraine won't close Chernobyl N-plant

KIEV, Oct 21: The Ukrainian parliament voted today to reverse its decision to close the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station by the end of this year, reports Reuter.

Deputies voted 221 to 38 to continue operating the station site in 1996 of the world's worst nuclear accident, under strict control of government authorities and scientific experts.

The resolution passed by deputies also lifted a moratorium on construction of new nuclear plants. Three reactors are on the verge of completion in Ukraine.

The decision was taken after President Leonid Kravchuk appealed to deputies to reverse a 1990 decision to close Chernobyl, saying Ukraine had no alternative to developing nuclear power.

Ukraine has few natural resources and is largely dependent on neighbouring Russia for expensive gas and oil imports. Five nuclear power stations ac-

count for up to 40 per cent of energy supplies in winter.

The Chernobyl accident is held responsible by Ukrainian authorities for about 8,000 deaths and public opinion is generally hostile to nuclear power.

Accord to destroy Soviet N-warheads

PARIS, Oct 21: France and Russia have signed an agreement under which the French will help the Russians dismantle obsolete former Soviet nuclear warheads, reports Reuter.

Foreign Ministers Alain Juppe and Andrei Kozyrev signed the accord in a ceremony on Wednesday at the French Foreign Ministry.

Juppe said that France would give Russia aid worth 400 million French francs (70 million dollars) to help dismantle and destroy the weapons.

Sino-British talks end without progress

BEIJING, Oct 21: Another round of Chinese-British talks on Hong Kong elections ended Thursday without substantial progress amid expectations that the next round might be the last, reports AP.

There is still a significant gap, or course, between the two sides that we will see if we can bridge," Britain's negotiator and ambassador to China, Sir Robin McLaren, told reporters after returning to the British Embassy.

The half-day session ran unusually long, nearly five hours, but McLaren downplayed that as "no special significance".

He said the two sides were "inching our way" toward agreement, but gave no indication of whether he thought agreement could be reached in another round. They already have held 14 rounds of talks, each lasting two or three half-days.

The 15th round is scheduled October 27-28.

Hong Kong's British-appointed governor, Chris Patten, said in early October that only "weeks, not months" remained before Britain would have to begin making preparations on its own for Hong Kong's 1994 district board elections.

Russia to halt N-waste dumping

TOKYO, Oct 21: Russia gave up and announced that it will halt dumping of nuclear waste at sea after protests from Japan and South Korea, its two major donors, government officials said Thursday, reports AP.

The Russian government notified Japan early Thursday that Russia will halt the next dumping of nuclear waste at sea, expected sometime soon, a Foreign Ministry official said.

Chief government spokesman Masayoshi Takemura told reporters that Japan welcomed Russia's "quiet political decision accepting our protest."

Takemura also said Japan will accept Russian request to reschedule working-level talks

on nuclear waste on October 27-28 in Moscow, originally scheduled for November 10-11.

But this may not be the end of the problem because Russia's latest announcement is seen as a temporary measure to delay the process. Unless Russia builds nuclear waste processing facilities, dumping will remain as the ultimate solution for Russia to get rid of the waste.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev has called the problem a difficult one.

A Russian military vessel on Sunday dumped 237,000 gallons (900 metric tons) of liquid nuclear waste into the Sea of Japan, 550 kilometers (330 miles) west of Japan's north-

ernmost main island of Hokkaido.

Russia had said it planned a second dumping by November 15.

The dumping came just days after Russia President Boris Yeltsin agreed with Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa that such dumping, believed to have gone on since 1966, was harmful.

The dispute also threatens to undermine any improvement in historically chilly relations that may have resulted from Yeltsin's visit to Tokyo last week.

Members of the Liberal Democratic Party, which was the governing party until Aug-

ust, reportedly urged the government freeze its financial aid to Russia.

Japanese Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata telephoned his Russian counterpart Wednesday demanding that the practice be ended.

Local prefectures, or states facing the Sea of Japan and anti-nuclear civic groups also have protested the Russian dumping.

Japan's protest against the Russian dumping will in return force the Japanese government to agree on the total ban of dumping at sea of the low-level nuclear waste, urged by the UN's London Dumping Convention.

China greets Benazir: China has welcomed Benazir Bhutto's election as Prime Minister of Pakistan, saying friendly bilateral relations would continue to develop during her tenure, it was reported Thursday, AFP says from Beijing.

"We warmly congratulate Benazir Bhutto on her appointment as Pakistan's Prime Minister," the China Daily quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying Wednesday.

"China and Pakistan are friendly neighbours. It is our belief that during her tenure of office, the friendly relationship that already exists between our two countries will see further development," the spokesman said.

Arafat to visit Netherlands: PLO leader Yasser Arafat has accepted an invitation to visit the Netherlands in November, Dutch television reported Wednesday, AP says from Amsterdam.

Foreign Minister Pieter Koofmans made the invitation Tuesday during a two-day visit to Tunis.

During the visit, Arafat requested Dutch help for the process of building an independent Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and the city of Jericho.

Protest against govt-run lottery in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Oct 21: About 7,000 students demanding abolition of a government-run lottery clashed with troops in Bandung, leaving three protesters and one soldier injured, a newspaper reported Thursday, reports AP.

The protest Wednesday was the fourth and the biggest against the lottery this month in Bandung, about 180 kilometers (108 miles) south of Jakarta.

Many religious organizations contend that the lottery harms the poor people who are the main buyers of tickets, and the Indonesian council of Muslim religious scholars maintains that the lottery is forbidden under Islamic teachings.

Earlier this month, students destroyed several kiosks selling tickets for the SDSB state lottery.

In Wednesday's protests, troops blocked students from marching to government offices, the Muslim-based newspaper *Republika* reported.

The students carried banners saying: "SDSB destroys Islamic concepts" and "Stop SDSB".

NATO okays US proposal for limited partnership

TRAVEMUENDE, Germany, Oct 21: NATO ministers resumed talks Thursday after endorsing a US proposal for limited partnerships with former foes and thus backing away from membership for young eastern European democracies, reports AP.

Defence Secretary Les Aspin presented the proposal for "partnership agreements" at a two-day brainstorming session that began Wednesday. The plan is to be taken up in detail on January 10 at a NATO summit.

"We have reached a great consensus to fundamentally open the gates of NATO," Manfred Woerner, NATO's secretary-general, said in an interview Thursday morning with Germany's *ARD* television.

The American plan falls short of the membership that countries including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic want, but will offer military cooperation ranging from joint exercises to coordinated peace-keeping.

It will involve much detailed and potentially difficult work,

however, especially in deciding criteria for acceptance.

The proposal envisions eventual "full corporate membership" for some nations and lesser partnership for others. Tim Downes, a British defence ministry spokesman, said Thursday.

"You've got different strands to different countries and you'll be hauling them in at different rates," he said.

The "Partnership for Peace" will be open to all former Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet states, including the nuclear power Ukraine, and four European neutral nations — Sweden, Austria, Finland and Switzerland, Aspin told reporters Wednesday.

It acknowledges the instability in Russia, whose military leaders' influence was enhanced by their crushing of an armed revolt of hard-line lawmakers this month. Russia's military leadership has made it clear to President Boris Yeltsin that it opposes any eastward expansion of NATO.

"This is a necessary step to get to NATO," Aspin said of the

proposal. It is not, however, a guarantee of eventual acceptance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Potential partners would be required to share information about their defence budgets and defence forces, show that civilians control their militaries and standardize weapons, communications and tactics with NATO.

Partners also would be expected to participate in peace-keeping missions, disaster relief operations, search and rescue missions and crisis management operations, Aspin said.

Aspin also proposed Thursday that the alliance rethink its strategies for dealing with the threat from renegade, nuclear states or terrorists who might get a hold of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

European nations have expressed concerns about the potential for the spread of weapons of mass destruction, in particular from the former Soviet Union and the influx of such technology into the Middle East.

30 killed in Peru road mishap

At least 30 people died Wednesday when a truck plunged nearly 500 feet (150 metres) down an abyss in the southern Peruvian Andes, authorities said, Reuter reports from Lima.

Police Colonel Roberto Rosado said a two-year-old girl was the only survivor of the early morning crash some 800 miles (1,285 km) south of Lima. She was taken to a hospital in the nearby mining town of Cuzajone, he said.

E German guard jailed: A former East German border guard who shot a man approaching with the hands up in 1965 was sentenced Wednesday to 10 years in prison, the stiffest penalty yet for a border killing, AP reports from Berlin.

Rolf-Dieter Heinrich, 49, had been convicted December nine of manslaughter and sentenced to six years by a district court in Potsdam. Responding to an appeal from prosecutors, Germany's appeals court changed the crime to murder and raised the sentence.

Empress Michiko still unable to speak

TOKYO, Oct 21: Empress Michiko, who collapsed while preparing to celebrate her 59th birthday, remained unable to speak coherently but was otherwise in good spirits Thursday, palace officials said, reports AP.

Michiko collapsed Wednesday morning while chatting with her husband, Emperor Akihito, and daughter, Princess Sayako. Palace officials say she soon recovered consciousness and by evening was able to walk, write and eat a light meal with her family.

She was admitted to the palace hospital Thursday evening for a thorough examination, but the palace had no immediate comment on the outcome.

Palace officials said Michiko would stay at the hospital only for the tests and then would return to her residence at the Akasaka Palace.



Japanese Empress Michiko heads to the Imperial Household Hospital in Tokyo for medical examination on Thursday. At right is her daughter Princess Nori. — AFP photo

Off the Record

Because she was unaware

BRISBANE: An Australian woman who gave birth to a baby girl in a toilet and then dumped the child in a garbage bin was ordered on Thursday to stand trial, reports Reuter.

Dominique Crane, 30, pleaded not guilty to a charge of attempting to kill her newborn daughter.

Crane's lawyer said she was unaware she was pregnant before giving birth in August in the toilet of her home in a Brisbane suburb. She then cut the umbilical cord, put the baby in a plastic bag, placed it in a garbage bin on the street and went to work.

The lawyer said Crane had been in shock at giving birth and believed the baby was dead.

The court was told the baby was found alive by garbage collectors and is now in government care.

Giant umbrella

HONG KONG: A group of artisans from China's oldest paper umbrella maker is seeking recognition from the Guinness Book of World Records for making the world's largest umbrella, according to a report Wednesday, says AFP.

The giant umbrella, with a diameter of 12 meters (29.6 feet) and a height of eight meters (21 feet), was made by workers from a 400-year-old umbrella factory in Luzhou, Sichuan province, the Hong Kong China news service was quoted as saying.

The report said the artisans took four months to make the umbrella.

Halloween brings horror

NEW YORK: The visitor at an apartment was looking for a Halloween costume, but found true horror, a body stuffed in a suitcase, reports AP.

The discovery was made Tuesday at an apartment in upper Manhattan, said Officer Scott Block, a police spokesman.

The visitor, who was not identified, went to the apartment hoping to find something to wear for Halloween, Block said.

Told by the tenants to go ahead and look around, the visitor came across the suitcase and opened it, Block said. Inside was a badly decomposed body in a fetal position, wrapped in plastic, he said.

Telephone to deter suicide

SAN FRANCISCO: Mayor Frank Jordan hopes installing telephone hot lines on the Golden Gate Bridge will deter people from committing suicide by jumping, reports AP.

"It is high time we took some action to prevent this ongoing tragedy," the mayor told the bridge board of directors Tuesday.

We need to reach out to the countless lost souls, the desperate, hopeless and despairing who believe they have no other option in life, Jordan said.

He requested the hot lines just hours before a woman became the latest known bridge suicide. On Monday, highway officers talked two women planning on suicide into climbing to safety.

At least 938 people have jumped to their deaths from the span.

Noah Griffin, Jordan's spokesman, said funding for five telephones was being sought. The phones would cost 1,000 dollar to install and 60 dollar a month to maintain along the bridges eastern pedestrian sidewalk.

UK to release secret wartime files

LONDON, Oct 21: Britain is Thursday to release 340 secret files on the wartime work of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the organisation set up by Britain to sabotage "enemy" occupations in Asia, reports AP.

The records of the SOE, created in July 1940 on the orders of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, are often "confused and incomplete," the Foreign Office said, 85 per cent of the SOE's London archives being either "weeded out" or destroyed by a fire in the organisation's headquarters in 1945.

But the remaining papers will, nevertheless, be a fascinating resource for historians of the period.

The papers are shed new light on US hostility to French

activity in Indo-China and the distrust inspired in the United States and in Britain by the free French leader General Charles de Gaulle.

The documents also reveal details of a secret British operation in China, to "manipulate the black market to ensure the best currency exchange for several organisations" including the British embassy, the Red Cross and Reuters press agency.

Among the thousands of documents being released, many show conflict between the SOE and the foreign office which feared the effect of the SOE's cooperation with local "resistance movements in Myanmar and in Thailand, often made up of 'anti-colonial elements'."

Arafat arrives in Paris

PARIS, Oct 21: PLO chief Yasser Arafat arrived in Paris Thursday on a two-day official visit that is his first in Europe since signing the peace agreement with Israel last month, reports AP.

His arrival coincided with news of the killing of a senior PLO figure and leading moderate, Assad Saftawi, on a street in Gaza. There was no immediate reaction by Arafat to the assassination of his longtime friend.

Arafat, accompanied by his wife Soha, is not being accorded the full honours of a visiting head of state.

Farmers around world reject pesticide to avoid health hazards

WASHINGTON, Oct 21: Farmers around the world are using bugs to kill bugs, rejecting pesticides that often cause more damage than they are worth, reports AP.

The movement is encouraged by international research, including a new study in the Philippines that weighs the health damage to humans against pesticides' value to crops.

It concludes that, based solely on the cost of health care, use of some pesticides loses money for farmers.

The International Rice Research Institute in Manila organised a group of scientists with different specialties to study the use of pesticides on Philippine rice and rice growers.

"The benefits to farmers from treating crops with pesticides are invariably outweighed by the costs of treating pesticide-related health problems," the institute concluded.

Ken Fischer, the institute's Australian deputy director for research, reported the study to the

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The agricultural group brings together 41 governments and international organizations, coordinated by the World Bank. Their representatives are holding annual meetings at the bank's headquarters through October 29.

Scientists in the group are trying to reduce the use of pesticides, which they estimate to cost 20 billion dollar a year. Instead, they promote beneficial bugs that eat harmful bugs, and other natural methods to get rid of pests.

For example, international researchers have a powerful weapon against the tiny diamondback moth — an even tinier wasp.

Larvae of the diamondback moth, Japan's most destructive insect, devour broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, radishes and Brussels sprouts. The diamondback is learning to resist chemical insecticides.

The wasp, so small it is hard to see without a

magnifying glass, lays its eggs inside the moth larvae. When the eggs hatch, the baby wasps eat the larvae. A common natural pesticide that does not harm the environment is used along with this method.

The wasp already is being used in Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Fiji.

"We have finally made headway against one of the world's most destructive killers of these important vegetable crops, said N S Talekar, an Indian entomologist who works at the Asian Vegetable and Research and Development Center in Taipei, Taiwan.

Mites can do a similar job to the wasp. In some industrial countries, cassava is known largely as the source of tapioca pudding. In Latin America, Africa and Asia the starchy root that produces tapioca feeds 500 million people. Scientists in Benin, Colombia and Brazil have found mites called phytosectids which attack an important destroyer of cassava. That enemy is

another mite called the green spider mite.

Anthony C Bellotti, an American entomologist, described the mites and the Polistes wasp that paralyses the hornworm — another enemy of the cassava — cuts it into strips and carries them home to feed its young. Bellotti works at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture in Cali, Colombia.

Scientists also find natural funguses — tiny mushrooms and molds — to destroy pests. One has been developed to fight the locusts and grasshoppers that have plagued farmers from Biblical times, more recently in the American Dust Bowl and in the Sahel region of Africa. The fungus was described by Hans R Herren, a Swiss who works at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture at Ibadan, Nigeria.

He told how his researchers had worked with others in neighboring Niger to mass produce the fungus, which does not hurt other organisms. He said field tests in Benin, Niger and Mali had effectively controlled grasshoppers in 10 days.

Iran-Iraq talks end

BAGHDAD, Oct 21: Top-level talks between Iraq and Iran ended on Wednesday and a senior Iranian official said the two countries were set to take practical steps to solve the issue of prisoners of their 1980-1988 war, reports Reuter.

"I hope in the near future we can take practical steps on both sides to resolve this issue," Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif told reporters.

Zarif's visit to Baghdad was the first by a ranking Iranian official since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

"Our talks took place in a very friendly atmosphere," he said.