

## US should change its N-stance: DPRK

TOKYO, Dec 17: In its most direct recent comment on the status of negotiations over its secretive nuclear programme, North Korea said Friday that it was up to the United States to change its stance, reports AP.

The United States and the United Nations have been pressing North Korea to open all its nuclear sites to international inspections. Communist North Korea's refusal to do so has sharpened suspicions that it may be building nuclear weapons.

North Korea offered earlier this month to let inspectors change batteries and film in monitoring cameras at two of its nuclear sites — a proposal US officials rejected as inadequate.

At a meeting December 10, they proposed inspections of all nuclear sites and the resumption of dialogue between North Korea and its rival, South Korea.

— North Korea's Foreign Min-

istry on Friday accused the US negotiators of using delaying tactics and "laying artificial obstacles" to resolving the nuclear dispute.

"Clear is our position," it said in an official Korean Central News Agency report monitored in Tokyo. "It entirely depends on the US attitude whether the third round of talks are held and the nuclear problem is solved, or not, in the future."

North Korea has insisted on discussing the nuclear issue only with the United States, apparently in a bid to gain a degree of recognition from Washington, which has no diplomatic relations with the North.

"In case the last opportunity of a negotiated settlement of the nuclear issue should be lost because of this unreasonable act of the United States threatening our existence as today, it would be the United States that would regret this," it said.

## Bosnian Muslims, Croats agree on Christmas ceasefire

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dec 17: A Christmas and New Year's ceasefire announced Friday between Muslim-led government troops and Croat forces could bring respite from bitter fighting for thousands of civilians in central Bosnia, reports AP.

Agreement on the cease-fire coincided with fresh talks to try to end Bosnia's devastating war.

A day after Serb and Muslim leaders talked at Sarajevo airport Thursday, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic and Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic were to meet in Vienna, Austria with international mediators.

Rasim Delic, commander of Bosnia's government forces, and Ante Roso, commander of rival Bosnian Croat troops, agreed to cease fire from midnight (2300 GMT) December 23 until midnight January 3, Croatian TV reported Friday.

The agreement was reached in five hours of talks mediated by UN commander Gen Francis Briquemont Thursday in the central Bosnian town of Visoko, about 20 kilometres (12 miles) north of Sarajevo. Central Bosnia has seen some of the most bitter fighting of the 20-month war since a Muslim-Croat alliance fell apart last spring.

The Vienna talks, announced by Australian Foreign Minister Aloysius Mock, bring the Bosnian leaders together with mediators Lord Owen of the European Community and UN special envoy Thorvald Stoltenberg.

Diplomats characterised the talks as part of ongoing effort to get Bosnia's three warring sides to compromise on peace.

A new round of Bosnian peace talks is due in Geneva on December 21, with participants travelling a day later to the EC

in Brussels.

The EC-inspired talks aim to secure more land for Bosnia's Muslim-led government in exchange for a promise to lift world sanctions against Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

In Sarajevo Thursday, Silajdzic met at the airport with Bosnian Serb assembly speaker Momcilo Krajisnik. As they talked, Sarajevo was under heavy shelling for a second day.

Each side blamed the other for the fighting, but they also discussed peace, the official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said.

"The Muslim attitude was that if their demand for more territory was fulfilled, they might be ready to sign a peace agreement," Tanjug quoted Krajisnik's office as saying. "That brought a certain optimism into the talks."

But the Serbs said they

would not yield more land in eastern or western Bosnia. Tanjug said differences also remained over Sarajevo, which the Serbs want divided and the Bosnian government has agreed to put under UN jurisdiction.

Silajdzic told Sarajevo radio he and Krajisnik made no progress on stopping the shelling of Sarajevo or on agreeing to territorial concessions. But he said they agreed on letting humanitarian convoys pass and continuing talks Monday.

Serb shelling Thursday wounded at least 25 people. The Serbs said Bosnian government forces advanced to the south and northwest. UN officials reported a major Serb offensive to the north, in central Bosnia.

The Bosnian army's 1st Corps said more than 500 shells hit western suburbs in barracks that sandwiched a failed infantry attack.

## Gaddafi calls Arabs to withdraw from UN

TRIPOLI, Dec 16: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi called late Wednesday for Arab and other states to withdraw from the United Nations, which he accused of being in the service of "imperialist countries," reports AP.

He told the opening of a "forum of Arab revolutionary and democratic forces" that "instead of helping to solve the world's problems the United Nations has become a sword suspended above people's heads."

"Since we don't encourage our people to join NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), all we can do is withdraw from the UN," he said.

He also criticised Arab countries applying UN sanctions against Libya that were imposed to force Tripoli to hand over for trial in Britain or the United States two Libyans alleged to have taken part in the bombing of a US airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988.

## BBC programme on Mao's personal life Monday

LONDON, Dec 17: Mao Tse-tung's flamboyant sex life threatens to widen the gulf between Britain and China at a time of icy relations over the future of Hong Kong, the Times newspaper reported Friday, says AP.

Beijing has asked the British foreign office to try to censor a BBC television broadcast to be screened on Monday, which details the chairman's taste for group sex with young girls, the paper said.

Dr Li, Mao's personal physician, and other former Chinese officials tell the programme that China's greatest hero behaved more like a tyrannical, sex-crazed emperor than a simple-living father to the masses.

A British embassy official in Beijing has been called to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and the foreign office in London has been asked to "made representations to the BBC about the content of the programme," a government spokesman said.

## Castro to use capitalist techniques

PARIS, Dec 17: Cuban President Fidel Castro says his country, devastated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, will use some capitalist techniques to help its communist system, reports Reuters.

"We are like other countries, like China which tries to open up and manages quite well by using some capitalist mechanisms," he said in an interview published on Thursday by the French weekly Paris Match.

Castro said Cuba looked to China as an example of a communist country using capitalism to improve its technology and economic management.

Cuba's economy has been hit hard by the loss of financial support from the former Soviet Union.

"Women have always been the slaves of slaves in this country," said bestselling author Larisa Vasilieva, who called Women of Russia's strong showing "a great personal joy."

Vasilieva wrote the popular "Kremlin Wives," a gossip, historical account of Communist "first ladies" from Vladimir Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, to Raisa Gorbacheva.

"The attitude toward women in private life has remained the same as in the Middle Ages," Vasilieva said.

Russian women typically hold the lowest-paying jobs and

## Off the Record

### "Final betrayal of motherhood"

BOISE, Idaho: Robin Row was sentenced to death for killing her husband and two children by setting their home on fire. She becomes the only woman on Idaho's death row, reports AP.

Judge Alan Schwartzman on Thursday called her crime "the final betrayal of motherhood" and "a descent into the blackened heart of darkness."

Row, 37, was convicted of murder for setting the 1992 fire that killed her husband, Randy, 34, and her children, ages 8 and 10, as they slept.

Two months ago, during a hearing, Row admitted setting the fire but said she did it only to damage the house and convince authorities that she and the children should leave her husband, whom she had accused of abusing her.

Schwartzman called Row a liar, pointing to 276,000 dollar in insurance policies she had taken out on her family and a love affair she had had.

Twenty-one men await execution in Idaho.

### Because he wouldn't stop talking

TORONTO: A 64-year-old Toronto woman repeatedly stabbed her husband with a butcher knife because he wouldn't stop talking while she was watching a television programme, Toronto police said Thursday, reports Reuters.

Margaret Armstrong repeatedly warned her husband George, 60, to stop talking while she was watching television Wednesday. When he persisted, she went to the kitchen, picked up a butcher knife and attacked her husband, police said.

"She wanted to watch television and he wouldn't stop talking so she took a knife to him," said detective sergeant Derrick Sykes. "She slashed him about six times."

Sykes said Armstrong suffered wounds to his arms, chest and face but said the injuries aren't life-threatening.

His wife of 25 years has been charged with two counts of aggravated assault and one count of possessing a dangerous weapon in an attack.

### Man dies after eating entire pig by himself

LA PLATA, Argentina: A 300-kilo (660 pound) Argentine man died Thursday of complications from eating an entire roast sucking pig, reports AP.

Alfredo Rosales, 32, died in a hospital where he had undergone treatment since ingesting the 12-kilo (26-pound) pig by himself about a week ago, authorities said.

Doctors tried in vain to treat Rosales' serious heart and breathing problems stemming from his overeating.

It took eight firemen to get Rosales from his house into a truck and to hospital, where he lay in a reinforced bed.

Rosales, who worked at a tannery, apparently suffered from nervous problems.



The Princess of Wales carries a bouquet of flowers as she leaves the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London Thursday where she fulfilled her final official engagement at the annual meeting of the homeless charity Centrepoint.

— AFP photo

## Russia must provoke wars: Zhirinovsky

MOSCOW, Dec 17: Right-winger Vladimir Zhirinovsky was quoted on Thursday as saying "we must provoke wars" between neighboring peoples and make them beg to be let into Russia as provinces, reports Reuters.

"It's difficult to build borders between native tribes. To do this we don't even have to wage war actively, we simply need to avoid interfering," the Moscow newspaper Kuranty quoted Zhirinovsky as saying.

"They will slaughter each other—Armenians against Azerbaijanis, mountain peoples against Turks, Afghans against Tajiks. Tajiks against Uzbeks and so on," said Zhirinovsky, whose

party looks set to take around a fifth of seats in Russia's new parliament following Sunday's election.

"And then they — or rather, those who are still alive — will come rushing to ask Russia to accept them as Volosts (rural districts) or provinces," the leader of the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) added.

Zhirinovsky said Russia should be "thinking about colonies" instead of "rubbish cotton" from Uzbekistan. He did not elaborate on the "colonies" remark.

Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party stunned opponents with a strong showing in parliamentary elections.

The ceremony was held in the gilded salons of the Culture Ministry and coincided with the opening of a two-day forum on the politics of humanitarian intervention.

France awards Toni Morrison

PARIS, Dec 17: France on Thursday gave American author Toni Morrison, winner of this year's Nobel literature prize, one of its most prestigious awards for excellence in the arts, reports AP.

Culture Minister Jacques Toubon also awarded the Commander of Arts and Letters insignia to American geneticist Yoshua Lederberg, the 1958 Nobel laureate in medicine, and his wife Marguerite, a French psychiatrist.

## BRIEFLY

### Arafat, Rabin to meet Dec 22:

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will meet in Cairo on December 22 or 23 to resolve the deadlock over an Israeli troops withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, a PLO official said on Wednesday. Reuter reports from Cairo.

Nabil Shaath, chief of the Palestinian negotiating team with Israel, made the announcement after meeting Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

### Blast claims one US marine:

A US marine was killed and two more wounded when a motor bomb exploded in its tube during training south of Mogadishu, a US military spokesman said yesterday. Reuter reports from Mogadishu.

Colonel Steven Rausch said the marine died in hospital of his wounds after the 81 mm mortar exploded four km (six miles) south of Mogadishu on Wednesday. One marine was treated and released. The other was in stable condition with a hand injury.

The dead man's body, in a coffin draped in the US flag, left for Dover, Delaware, aboard an army C-5 plane yesterday. The names of the three men were withheld until families were notified.

### Riot leaves 4 dead in Argentina:

At least four people were killed and 50 injured Thursday when rioting civil servants burned public buildings and looted officials' homes in the capital of one of Argentina's poorest provinces, Reuter reports Buenos Aires.

Civil servants in the province of Santiago Del Estero, some 650 miles (1,000 km) northwest of Buenos Aires, angry at not being paid, rioted against Argentine president Carlos Menem, his government, and the province governor, Fernando Lobo, as they rampaged through the city, local television reported.

### 2 Filipinos die in air crash:

An airforce training plane crashed Friday south of Manila, killing its pilot and his student, military sources said. It is the second fatal accident involving a military aircraft this week. AP reports from Manila.

The single-engine Italian-made Marchetti crashed near Mataas na Kahoy town in Batangas province, 72 kilometers (45 miles) south of Manila shortly after it took off from the Fernando Air Base in nearby Lipa City, the military's Joint Operation Centre reported.

No other details were immediately available.

### Clinton, Assad to meet in Geneva:

The summit meeting between US President Bill Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Al-Assad will take place in Geneva next January 16, Israeli foreign Minister Shimon Peres revealed here yesterday. AFP reports from Paris.

The summit was announced last Thursday in Damascus by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, but he gave no date.

"We are seeking a peace agreement with Syria," Peres told a press conference. "We need complete peace with everyone and that is why the Syrians are important."

### Tanaka passes away:

Japan's former Premier, Kakuei Tanaka, has died in a Tokyo hospital, NHK Public Television Network reported yesterday. Reuter reports from Tokyo.

Tanaka, 75, architect of Japan's dominant political system over the past two decades and the prime minister who normalised Japan's ties with China in 1972, had been undergoing treatment for diabetes.



ANC President Nelson Mandela (L) presents to James April, member of the Umkhonto We Sizwe (armed wing of the ANC) a medal for bravery at the 32nd anniversary celebrations of the ANC army in Sweto Thursday.

— AFP photo

## SA parliament begins debate on non-racial constitution

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Dec 17: Parliament started debating a constitution Friday that guarantees equal rights for blacks and whites and which will finally end white-minority rule, reports AP.

"This is an exceptional day for all of us," said Constitutional Minister Roelf Meyer, introducing the constitution that will be voted on next week in the last major action by South Africa's all-white parliament chamber.

"If ever, in the eventual history of our beloved land, there was a day that dawned with great promise, it is this day."

The constitution is the product of two years of negotiation by the government, the African

National Congress and about 20 other political parties. It was approved at multi-party talks in November.

However an alliance of pro-apartheid whites and conservative blacks who boycotted the talks oppose the 200-page document, which they say does not allow a sufficient degree of federation or self-determination for minority groups.

The majority held by President FW de Klerk's National Party guarantees the new constitution's passage in parliament. The vote is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday.

Meyer, the government's chief negotiator, used the occasion of introducing the constitution to offer a formal apology

for the policy of apartheid, or racial separation.

"We, who were responsible for apartheid, are now saying that we want to leave that wrong behind. We are saying we are sorry. But we are also saying that we are now determined to rectify what went wrong," he said.

The African National Congress, which is expected to win the April 27 election, sent a delegation headed by its general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, to watch the debate.

"I'm feeling quite elated," he said. "It's a culmination of what our people have struggled for for many years. It leads us into a transition that will finally lead to democracy."

Fedulova said her party wants to improve living standards for ordinary people and bring women into political life — particularly into Yeltsin's Cabinet.

The party has a sketchy platform, and its leaders are a seemingly conflicting mix of former Communist functionaries, like Fedulova, pro-reform entrepreneurs, or "biznes-ledis", and military wives. There's also a well-known actress, Natalya Gundareva.

It still isn't clear who voted for them, said Yuri Levada, director of the Russian Centre for Public Opinion and Market Research.

Some say the party tapped women's discontent over Yeltsin's market reforms, which are blamed for soaring prices, rising crime and the deterioration of many social institutions.

Women were the first to look to their sisters with hope... above all because of their especially hard fate today," the former Communist newspaper Pravda surmised in a front-page article Thursday.

## Ranariddh cancels peace talks with Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH, Dec 17: Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh on Friday cancelled peace talks with the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group because he said it failed to address him as head of the government, reports AP.

Ranariddh said Thursday that he had accepted a written request for talks from Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan.

But apparently Ranariddh later read Khieu Samphan's letter again. Sources close to Ranariddh said the letter addressed him as head of his political party.

## Women can be key political players in Russian parliament

MOSCOW, Dec 17: Pollsters are stumped, and newspapers can't make sense of it: Women? In Russian politics? The astonishing success of extreme nationalists in the parliamentary elections Sunday has overshadowed another upset. The obscure Women of Russia movement defied all predictions to finish fifth among 13 parties, reports AP.

Women suddenly could be key political players in Russia — where since Catherine the Great's death in the 18th century they have entered the halls of power mainly as cleaning ladies.

Incomplete results give

Women of Russia 8 per cent of parliament seats. That makes them crucial in the coalition-building that has already begun among the top three finishers: the racist and ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the reform forces supporting President Boris Yeltsin, and the Communists.

The women's bloc leaders insist they will be "independent."

"You journalists are so anxious to see a woman leaning on a man," party leader Alevtina Fedulova said at a news conference Wednesday when reporters repeatedly asked about coalitions.