

## Pakistan urges Oman to mediate Kashmir issue

MUSCAT, Mar 29: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto asked the Sultan of Oman on Monday to try to mediate with India for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem, reports AFP.

"We have asked Sultan Qaboos to help us in urging India to work out a peaceful solution (to the Kashmir conflict) and end human rights violations (in that region)," she told a news conference shortly before leaving Muscat.

Benazir said she asked Oman to attempt to mediate an "end to the escalation of tension" in Jammu-Kashmir because of the "good relations between India and Oman."

She said that "Jammu-Kashmir is an important question and should not be ignored, and should be resolved according to international rights."

The Pakistani premier who met the Sultan on Sunday, said

"It is impossible to close our eyes to the presence of 600,000 Indian soldiers in Kashmir."

On other matters, Benazir said it would "not be advisable" to build a pipeline to Oman for Omani gas.

"We do not see the utility of building a gas pipeline between Oman and India, but we believe it would be simpler to build one between Oman and Pakistan," she said.

Oman, where large groups of Indians and Pakistanis live, signed a letter of intent with India in 1993 for the construction of a 1,440 kilometre (900 mile) pipeline to deliver gas to the Indian subcontinent.

Omani economic sources said Pakistan was interested in importing gas from the Sultanate, which expects to be producing five million tonnes of liquefied gas annually by 1999.

## HR issue being used as means of pressure: India

NEW DELHI, Mar 29: The Indian Defence Ministry in its annual report for 1993-94 said that the issue of "human rights" is being used as a "means of pressure" by some countries with double standards, reports Xinhua.

"Ironically some of the countries espousing human rights in other countries appear to have different in fact opposite standards for themselves. Their own practices fail to recognise the standards they preach to others," the report said.

The international strategic context had therefore become difficult and we need to be firm in our resolve to counter the pressures which may be sought to be placed on us."

In recent months, almost all western governments, including the United States have made the issue of human rights one of the central concerns in their dealings.

## Liberian clashes claim 80

TUBMANBURG, Liberia, Mar 29: Ethnic clashes within one of Liberia's former warring factions has claimed at least 80 lives over the past three days, reports AFP.



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