Govt resolution defeated in Pak parliament

ISLAMABAD, Nov 28: Absences by parliamentary deputies brought Prime Minister Benazif Bhutto's coalition government an embarrassing defeat in a vote on Sunday. hours after she began a six-day visit to Britain, report Reuter.

Her one-year-old government dismissed its first such parliamentary defeat as insignificant and challenged the opposition to prove its strength on any important is-

But a jubilant opposition called on President Faroog Leghari to ask Benazir Bhutto to seek a confidence vote from the 217-seat House. Where the government says it has the backing of more than 125 members against the opposition 76.

Two separate votes were held on the question of the uproar and first fights which erupted during and after an annual presidential address to a joint session of the twochamber parliament on November 14. The government lost both.

A government sponsored resolution condemning the incident and calling for action against those involved was defeated by 58 votes to 56.

The assembly passed by 59-57 votes an opposition backed resolution that also condemned the manhandling of deputies but called for an inquiry by a committee with equal representation from Benazir's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League of Opposition Leader Nawaz Sharif, who was not present in the house.

At least six ruling coalition members have accompanied Benazir on the British tour and about 50 others were absent. government sources said.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Iqbal Haider said the vote should not be taken as a major event. It is not of a highly important nature, he told reporters.



Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto talks to the waiting media on Sunday upon her - AFP photo arrival at London's Heathrow Airport.

Strike partially paralyses Bombay

BOMBAY, Nov 28: India's commercial capital Bombay was partially paralysed today by a general strike called by opposition parties to protest against police action which triggered the deaths of 113 demonstrators in a stampede last week, reports Reuter.

The national airline Air-India cancelled 10 flights originating in Bombay, while several other airlines cancelled or rescheduled flights.

Most taxis and buses were off the roads, schools and shops were closed. Some trains were running.

Security was tightened across Bombay, the capital of the western state of Maharashtra, and armed police stood on street corners to prevent vio-

Police said they had arrested 800 people in Bombay

ahead of the strike to prevent trouble. Officials, reported a few minor incidents across the city of 12 million people, including

a scooter-rickshaw which was set on fire. Opposition parties called

the strike in Maharashtra after baton-wielding police charged a tribal demonstration in the dental city of Nagpur on Wednesday, triggering a stampede in which 113 people died and 500 were injured.

The 50,000 tribal demon strators were demanding concessions on jobs.

BRIFFI

21 Pakistanis held in S Korea: Twenty-one Pakistani workers have been caught off South Korea's east coast attempting to illegally enter Japan on a fishing boat, police said Monday, AP reports from Seoul.

The illegal aliens, caught shortly after their departure from Pusan port in southern South Korea Sunday, had been working here illegally, they said.

Baath Party man killed in Iraq: ruling Baath Party official in southern Iraq was kidnapped and killed recently, an Iraqi opposition radio said on Sunday, AFP reports from Nicosia.

Lafta Uweid, secretary of the party section in Basra, 550 kilometers (330 miles) southeast of Baghdad was kidnapped in the city centre with his bodyguards on November 15, the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) said.

Bandits group caught in Beijing: Two undercover police officers have caught a group of bandits in the act of raping a woman on a long-distance bus in westcentral China, an official report said Monday, AP reports from Beijing.

The police caught the gang of four young men after a woman who was being attacked by one in the back of the bus screamed for help, the newspaper Guangming Daily said.

14 feared dead in Filipino tornado: At least 14 people were missing and feared dead after a tornado ripped through farming villages in the southern Philippines, authorities said Monday, AP reports from Cotabato City, Philippines.

The tornado struck during a heavy downpour in eight villages of Datu Piang town late Saturday, destroying at least 160 houses and a school, said Unson Dimaguel, a field worker of the Department of Social Work and Development.

Army kill 5 Khmer rebels: The Cambodian army has launched an attack against a Khmer Rouge stronghold in southern Kampot province, killing five rebels and wounding 12, state run radio said yesterday, Reuter reports from Phrlom Penh.

The army moved on bases at Damrey Roneal and Koh Slar, one of the last known sanctuaries for fugitive Khmer Rouge commander Noun Paet.

Peres in Brussels: Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Brussels yesterday for talks with PLO leader Yasser Arafat and to meet donor states in a bid to speed up international funding of Palestinian self-rule projects, Reuter reports from Brussels.

European diplomats said Peres would meet Arafat to discuss details of Palestinian elections and autonomy plans under the Israeli-PLO peace deal.

Bodies of 17 Thais recovered:

Cambodian troops have recovered the bullet-ridden bodies of 17 Thai forest workers killed last week by Khmer Rouge guerillas in a Cambodian border area, officials said yesterday, Reuter reports from Bangkok.

Soldiers found 10 bodies late on Sunday after recovering seven on Saturday, Officials said about 20 workers were killed by the rebels in the jungle area.

22 die in Colombian mishaps: A passenger van collided with another van from the same transport company in southwestern Colombia on Sunday, bring the number of dead in weekend traffic accidents to 22.

the RCN radio network reported, Reuter says from Bogota. The network said the van was on a winding road when it struck the other vehicle head on near the town of Hobo, more than 125 miles (200 km) southwest of Bogota. That crash killed 10 passengers and wounded five others.

On Saturday, a chartered bus drove off a highway and crashed into a barricade just outside Bogota, killing at least 12 people and injuring 18 others.

Edn ministers' confce opens: Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Leghari opened a four-day Commonwealth eduction ministers conference in Islamabad on Sunday, calling for tangible steps to promote intra Com-

monwealth student mobility. AFP reports from Islamabad. Leghari said in a speech the mobility had been depressed by the "steep rise," in fees since the 1980s.

22 die in Chinese blast: An explosion in a bus in the southern Chinese province of Hunan killed 22 people and injured 15, according to a newspaper received in Beijing yesterday, Reuter reports from Beijing.

The Hunan Daily said the bus was travelling on a highway near Yongzhou on November 22 when explosive materials carried by a passenger exploded.

ports AP.

Perry rejects quick pullout

WASHINGTON, Nov 28: US Defence Secretary William Parry rejected Republican calls on Sunday for a quick withdrawal of US troops from Haiti.

But incoming Senate major ity leader Bob Dole said the nearly 10,000 US soldiers should come home as soon as possible and he raised the possibility that new Republican Congress could cut off funding

for the Haitian operations have a security situation estabbringing up a Haitian police force. We are in the process of training that police force today," Perry said on NBC televi-

gramme. Perry said more than a

BJP hopeful of winning Karnataka, Andhra polls NEW DELHI, Nov 28: Inwill affect the elections due in loting is scheduled on Decem-

dia's main opposition party is hoping to bounce back to the centre stage of national politics by winning crucial state elections now under way, but analysts say it taces a tough task, reports AFP.

The Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). (Indian People's Party) is for the first time fighting for power in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh states in a determined bid to make in roads into the country's south.

The BJP says a possible win in Karnataka, where the first round of polling took place on Saturday, would help put the lid on its shock defeats in last year's elections in three key northern states.

"These polls are very important because their results

Rafsanjani to

boycott OIC

meet

President Ali Akbar Hashemi

Rafsanjani is to boycott a

summit of the Organisation of

Islamic Conference (OIC) to be

held in Morocco in December

in protest at King Hassan's

"submission" to Israel, a

newspaper said today, reports

formed source, said the deci-

sion was also taken in protest

at the policy of rapprochement

pursued by many Islamic coun-

tries towards the Jewish state.

Akbar Velayati would attend

the conference for Rafsanjani,

any peace deal with Israel and

urged Arab states to leave the

US-sponsored ME process.

the daily added.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali

Iran is fiercely opposed to

Iran News, quoting an in-

TEHRAN, Nov 28: Iranian

six states next year and ultimately the parliamentary election of 1996," BJP spokesman Krishna Lal Sharma, 70, said

south, a traditional bastion of the Congress (I) Party of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. has until now turned its back on the BJP, whose influence is mainly limited to the populous north and west.

"We hope to achieve some breakthrough in the south, said Sharma, adding it was the reason the BJP was contesting all 224 seats in Karnataka and 285 out of 294 seats in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Rao's home state.

The BJP is also supporting nine independent candidates in Andhra Pradesh, where bal-

BEIJING. Nov 28: China

and Taiwan have failed to re-

solve several thorny legal dis-

putes during their latest round

of talks; although they did

agree to open express mail

services, an official report said

... The rival Chinese govern-

ments remain at odds over

repatriation of aircraft hijack-

ers, illegal immigrants and the

settlement of fishing disputes.

the newspaper China Daily re-

The five-day talks in the

southern city of Nanjing.

which ended on Sunday, were

the first since Taiwanese

troops accidentally shelled the

mainland a week ago, injuring

four people. Taiwan has apolo-

gised for the shelling, which

occurred during anti-aircraft

on Monday, reports AP.

ported.

Sino-Taiwanese talks

make little progress

ber 1 and 5. The second round of voting in Karnataka will also take place on December 1.

The elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, two of The country's sprawling India's major states, are also considered crucial for Rao 73. A defeat in Andhra Pradesh is expected to spark a rebellion in the Congress against the premier.

"This election will be the beginning of our ultimate goal of achieving a majority in parliament," said Sharma, a BJP general secretary. A party source admitted: "A defeat will seriously hit our morale."

The Congress' main challenge in Andhra Pradesh is from the region Telegu Desam Party and in Karnataka from the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party).

· firing practice on the offshore

Association for Relations

Across the Taiwan Straits, said

the two sides should be able to

make progress on those issues

in further discussion, the re-

rector of the department of le-

gal affairs of Taiwan's Mainland

Affairs Council, told the

Associated Press that a lack

of sincerity on the Chinese

side had spoiled chances for a

fled to the island after the

communist takeover of the

Chinese mainland. Beijing thus

regards Taiwan as a renegade

Taiwan's ruling nationalists

But Yu Jui-Teh, deputy di-

Sun Yafu, deputy head of the

islands of Quemoy.

port said.

final agreement.

province.

Kumaratunga rejects honorary degree

COLOMBO, Nov 28: Presi dent Chandrika Kumaratunga has turned down an honorary degree from Sri Lanka's most prestigious university, saying it was "inappropriate" for her to accept it," officials said today, reports AFP.

Kumaratunga was offered a Doctorate of Literature (D. Litt) honoris causa by the University of Peradeniya following her landslide victory in the November 9 presidential elections.

"She thanked the university for the gesture but said it would be inappropriate for her to accept such a degree," a spokesman for Kumaratunga

Several Sri Lankan politicians have been conferred such degrees in the past and they have been happy to accept them and use the honorific "Dr.."

Pak court acquits Christian of blasphemy charge

istani Christian sentenced to death under a controversial law for blasphemy against Prophet Mohammad SM, was acquitted by a higher court yesterday, reports Reuter.

Lahore court ordered the release of Gul Masih, rejecting the prosecution charge that he had uttered blasphemous remarks against the prophet. lawyer Naeem Shakir said. Masih was sentenced to

Masih was arrested in December 1991 after a complaint by another man and charged under section 295 C of the

LAHORE, Nov 28: A Pak-

A two-judge bench of the

death by the additional district and sessions judge in the Puniab town of Sargodha in November 1992.

Pakistan Penal Code,

Norwegians set to reject EU membership

OSLO, Nov 28: Norwegians appear set to go it alone and reject membership of the European Union today, despite a late surge in support for a 'yes' vote, reports Reuter.

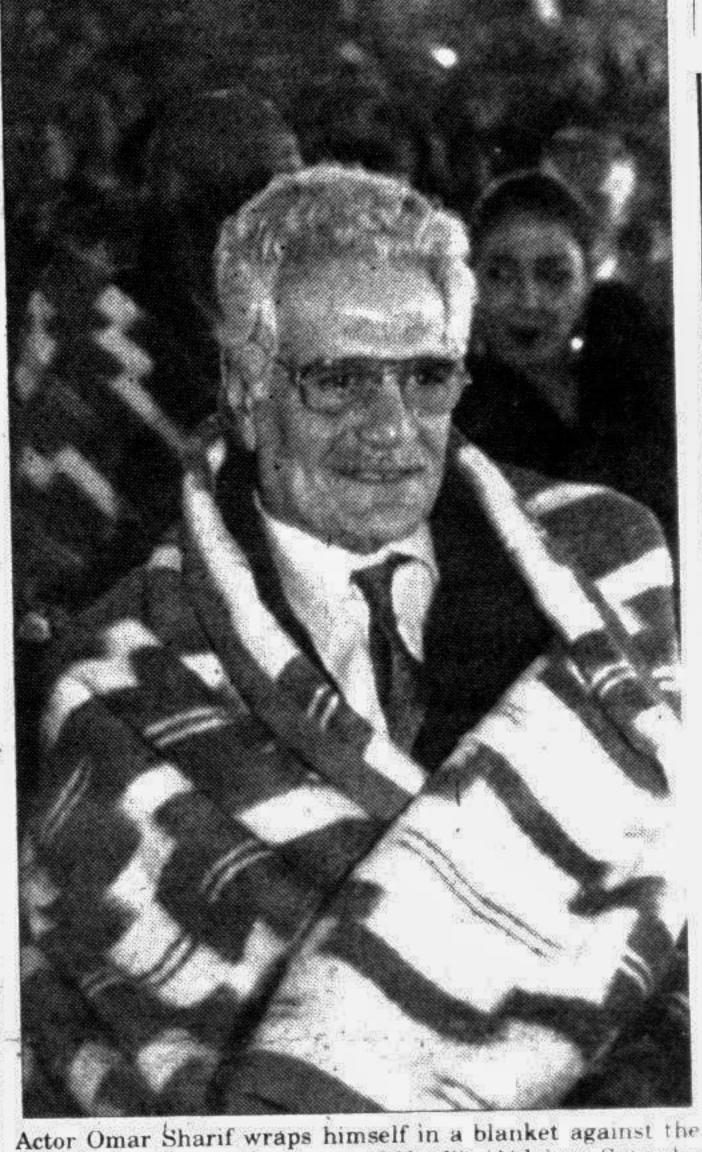
Opinion polls indicated that the pro-Europe share of the vote was rallying as two days of balloting began on Sunday, but that as in a similar referendum in 1972, a majority of the 3.2 million votes remained opposed to joining the EU.

Polls gave the opponents of membership a lead of between two and eight percentage points. Half of Norway's 435 com-

munes opened their polling stations on Sunday and electoral official reported an unusually heavy turnout. Pelling booths are open

from nine am (0899 GMT) today and close at nine pm (- AFP photo 2000 GMT).

Off the Record



cold during the performance of Verdi's 'Aida' on Saturday in a 4,000-seat outdoor amphitheatre built especially for this - AFP photo show in Luxor, Egypt.

Plan to become 'intelligent island"

SINGAPORE: Singapore took the first step Monday toward wiring all its 750,000 homes with cable television as part of a plan to become an "intelligent island," reports AP.

Workers of a monopoly cable TV company began laying op tical fibre cables in an eastern Singapore neighbourhood to provide 20 to 30 channels of news, entertainment, sports and other topics. The first customers will get the serwice by June

The 345 million dollars' project will cover the entire city state of 3.3 million people by the end of 1998, offering up to 64 channels, said Randall Coleman, president of Singapore CableVision, SCV.

It is run by a consortium comprising three state controlled companies and Continental Cablevision Inc. the third largest cable operator in the United States. When the cable TV revolution came to Asia in 1990, it by

passed Singapore, where air waves are strictly controlled by the government. It runs a monopoly television service formerly called SBC.

But SBC's staid fare has starved Singaporeans of quality en tertainment and news, and citizens have nicknamed SBC the "so boring channel.

Smokeless, ashless cigarette RALEIGH (North Carolina): American cigarette manufac

turer R J Reynolds Tobacco Co claims to have developed a near smokeless and ashless cigarette thanks to a technique which merely heats up the tobacco rather than burns it, reports AFP. Company spokesman Maura Ellis claimed here that its

prototype cigarette, called "Eclipse", gave off 90 per cent less smoke than an ordinary eigarette and was both odour and stain-free Reynolds Tobacco Co tried unsuccessfully six years ago to

launch its "Premier" smokeless cigarette.

stroller on Sunday in Drammen outside Oslo. dren was slower than norman Bhopal disaster victims still cry for justice The lone psychiatrist at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital has

Bhopal's second disaster, re-

Ten years after a cloud of toxic chemicals killed thousands of Indians in the world's worst industrial accident, a half-million people are still seeking compensation and sufis often ill. fering the effects of the

India's slow-moving courts are overwhelmed with the claims. Corruption riddles the bureaucracy and judiciary. The hospitals are inefficient. Doc tors demand bribes for adequate care.

BHOPAL. Nov 28: It is

And everyday brings new patients with lung diseases. cancer, cataracts, gynecological disorders, psychiatric problems

The cocktail of chemicals that leaked from an under ground storage tank at a Union Carbide pesticide factory choked about 4,000 people to death in the adjoining shanty town the night of December 2. 1984. Nearly 3.000 more died slowly and painfully from the

Shyam Lal's lungs were permanently scarred. Lal. 80. coughs incessantly, tires if he walks a few feet (a metre) and "Every time I go to the court, it's the same story. The

> find by records. ...! will never get justice," he said. When his wife. Gomti, died, Lal filed a claim for 200,000 rupees, about 6.500 dollars about six times the yearly pay for a factory worker in Bhopal. But a doctor testified that the death was unrelated to the ac-

judge has not come or the doc-

tor has not come, or they can't

the case. That's because Lal did not bribe anyone," charged Abdul Jabbar, an activist who worked with victims of the gassing. Those who did pay people off got money swiftly, he claims

cident and the judge threw out

Lal appealed the judge's decision and was awarded

50,000 rupees, about 1,600 dollar. Now he is back in court hoping to win compensation for his own ailments. Once, the tall smokestacks

Norwegian twins, one asleep holding a poster saying Yes, the other saying No, sit in their

of Union Carbide Corp's Indian subsidiary symbolised opportunity. The plant gave 600 high-paying jobs to the slum residents of the neighbourhood.

Today, the smokestacks are rusty and the metal tank that leaked the deadly methyl isocyanate is smothered with weeds. The Danbury, Connecticut-based company sold off the last of its Indian hold ings this summer

Victims built a monument to remind people of the disaster - a concrete statue of a mother and two children. The government banned the monument, but left it alone after citizens put it unobtrusively on a sidewalk outside the abandoned factory

In 1989, Union Carbide

paid 470 million dollar - onetwelfth of india's original claim - in an out-of-court settlement that guaranteed immunity from prosecution for Carbidé executives. The government has paid out only 20 million dollar so

far and the balance has grown

to 316 million dollars. Two years after the agreement, India's Supreme Court struck down the immunity clause, while allowing the fi nancial settlement to stand. But the money has been locked in banks while bureaucrats and judges sort out the claims.

Eight officials of Union Carbide's Indian subsidiary were charged with manslaughter for alleged negligence, but no cases have been brought to

An Indian court order to try the then-chairman of the parent company, Warren Anderson, has shuffled between various government departments while India's leaders decide whether to seek his extradition from the United States. "Everyone blames me for

the delays" in paying compensation, said Welfare Commissioner A G Quereshi. "They forget that the case against Carbide dragged on for years and the settlement money was made available to me only two

Quereshi's office has settled 94,000 cases, less than half his target. Of the 56 judges who were supposed to deal with claims, only 13 are now working. Many of the others retired, were transferred or were dismissed on suspicion of corruption.

Studies have found that the gassing victims have three times more respiratory problems than the national average. get cataracts 15 years earlier and have more gynecological complications. Nearly all the victims have low immunity. and growth of affected chilso many cases that he can give just 10 minutes counseling to women and children suffering hallucinations, anxiety and de-

pression. Victims have to pay government doctors to get better care, said NP Misra, a retired professor of medicine.

He said patients at free government hospitals often are advised by doctors to meet them at their private clinics. Bhopal, a city of 1.2 million people, has about 2,000 clinics, compared with 13 a decade ago.

When Union Carbide finally sold the last of its holdings in India, a court order required it to earmark 19 million dollar for a hospital in Bhopal that will serve only gassing victims.

"After killing so many people, that's the least Carbide can do for us," said Mohammad Liaquat Khan, who quit his job as a steelworker to help rehabilitate fellow gas victims.

Muslim rebels plead for peace ZAMBOANGA. Philippines

Filipino govt,

Nov 28: Government and Muslim rebel negotiators today pleaded for peace in the trou bled southern Philippines after a breakaway guerilla group ambushed an army patrol, wound ing six soldiers, reports Reuter.

The three-day Zamboanga meeting will discuss the formation of a provisional gov ernment in response to rebel demands for autonomy for Muslim communities in the Mindanao region

"Our long dream for peace in Mindanao is tantamount to nothing without the sincerity and cooperation of both panels," Jumdam Manzur, head of the negotiating panel of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), told the opening ses-

There is no substitute for peace in Mindanao.

from Haiti

reports Reuter.

"We're not leaving until we lished there which includes sion's "Meet the Press" pro-

thousand people have been trained for the job.