

## BRIEFLY

**Clinton signs arms sales policy:**

US President Bill Clinton has recently signed a new conventional arms transfer policy, formalising his administration's support for continued high levels of US arms sales abroad. Xinhua reports from Washington.

With signing the classified policy, the Clinton administration made its commitment to help the US defence industry maintain its predominance in international markets, according to the latest monthly Arms Control yesterday.

**Cambodian Muslim leaders meet:**

Cambodia's Ministry for Cults and Religion yesterday opened a two-day seminar for Muslim leaders in the central province of Kompong Cham, a press statement said. Reuter reports from Phnom Penh.

"The purpose of the seminar is to assess and evaluate past activities and plan future projects, and to look specifically at the education activities of the Muslim people in Cambodia," the press release said.

**FFS's talks with Zeroual fail:**

A leading Algerian political party, the Socialist Forces Front (FFS), reaffirmed its opposition to a presidential election after talks with President Liamine Zeroual failed on Sunday. AFP reports from Algiers.

"We get the feeling that no negotiation is possible, given what we have just been told by the president," the party's interim secretary general, Mohammed Bouhaded, said on Sunday at a press conference.

**Morocco issues visa in Gaza:**

Morocco's liaison office in the self-rule Gaza Strip issued its first visa on Sunday to a Palestinian policeman hoping to spend his holidays in the North African country. AFP reports from Gaza City.

Majed Wasfi, 24, who has a Jordanian passport, said: "I dream of going to Casablanca and I have friends in Rabat."

**Iraq doubles exit fees:**

Iraq has doubled an exit fee its citizens have to pay to leave the country in an apparent attempt to curb the exodus of Iraqis trying to flee poverty and hunger worsened by an international embargo. AP reports from Amman.

Baghdad residents, reached by telephone from Amman, said on Sunday that the fee was hiked to 200,000 dinars, or 167 dollars, up from 100,000 dinars in February.

**19 drown in Zambian boat capsizes:**

At least 19 people, including women and children, drowned when a passenger boat capsized in a Zambian river during the weekend, police said yesterday. Reuter reports from Lusaka.

"Only three people out of 22 Zambians and Zaireans on the vessel managed to swim ashore," police spokesman Francis Musonda told reporters.

**Mir supply ferry launched:**

A space ferry loaded with supplies for the orbiting space station Mir was launched on Sunday night from the Baikonur cosmodrome, space officials said. AP reports from Moscow.

The Progress M-27 was to link up early Wednesday with the Mir station, where the current crew consists of American astronaut Norman Thagard and Russian cosmonauts Vladimir Dezhnev and Gennady Strekalov. The docking will coincide with Cosmonauts Day in Russia, the anniversary of the launch on April 12, 1961, of the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin.

**Rally against death penalty:**

Thousands of people marched through Rome to the Vatican on Sunday to press demands for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty. Reuter reports from Rome.

The march was organised by Italy's Radical Party and "Hands off Cain," an international group promoting the abolition of the death penalty around the world by the year 2000.

**Quake shakes western Japan:**

An earthquake, measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale, rocked much of western Japan on Monday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, the Meteorological Agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

The epicentre of the quake, which struck at 10:16 am (01:16 GMT), was located around 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) west of Tokyo in East China Sea, the agency said.

**28 die in Chinese bus mishap:**

A bus racing down a highway in southern China plunged more than 100 metres (yards) into a ravine, killing 28 people and seriously injuring 32. The Wen Hui newspaper said on Monday. Reuter reports from Beijing.

The military-licensed bus shot off a section of road in Qinghai county of southern Guangdong province that has been the scene of several serious accidents recently, the newspaper said.

**Haitian poll to be postponed:**

Parliamentary elections in Haiti will be postponed at the request of the political parties who want more time to organise, a Parliamentary Electoral Council spokesman said on Sunday. Reuter reports from Port-au-Prince.

The elections will now be held on June 25 with a runoff on July 16, he said. Elections were originally scheduled for June 4 and a runoff on June 25.

**2 civilians die in Bosnian blast:**

Two civilians, including a 15-year-old girl, were killed and three people were wounded as explosions rocked Sarajevo on Sunday night, hospital staff said. Reuter reports from Sarajevo.

City authorities sounded a general alert after the detonations occurred at about 8.15 pm (18:15 GMT) in the Bosnian capital, which has come under Serb mortar attack in recent days. It was unclear if the explosions were caused by mortars or other heavy weapons.

**Road mishap claims 5 in Austria:**

At least five people were killed and several others injured in an accident on a motorway near the Austrian town of Bregenz, police said yesterday. AFP reports from Vienna.

At least six vehicles including a German car, an Italian car and a minibus caught fire after colliding in a tunnel on the A-14 motorway near the town on the western tip of the country.

**'Kurds ready for guerilla war'**

BEIRUT, Lebanon, Apr 10: The leader of Turkey's Kurdish rebels says his fighters have shaken off a three-week-old Turkish offensive in northern Iraq and are ready for a long guerilla war, reports AP.

Ahmedullah Ocalan, who heads the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, also said he will soon announce the formation of a Kurdish parliament-in-exile as he moves toward creating federal cantons for the 20 million Kurds in the Middle East.

Ocalan, known among his 10,000 hard-core rebels as Apo, spoke in an interview with the independent Beirut daily Al-Nahar that was published Monday.

The newspaper said questions were transmitted to Ocakan at his secret headquarters through aides, with his answers received two days later.

**'Bharat Ratna' Morarji Desai was an ardent Gandhian**

BOMBAY, Apr 10: Morarji Panchhodji Desai, a former prime minister of India, died here today. He was 99 reports PTI.

Desai's political career began way back in 1930, had remained till his last breath an ardent Gandhian, a staunch prohibitionist and a fierce advocate of Hindi as the national language and was known for his puritan views as an orthodox Hindu.

Through his hundred eventful years, Desai was an integral part of Congress in the struggle for independence and at the age of 81, headed the first non-Congress government of the country.

The last destination of his political career — Prime Ministership of India during the Janata Party regime between 1977 to 1979 — came his way after he lost the bid to

become the premier twice. In 1964 after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, and in 1969 when he was expelled from Congress.

However, the premiership did not last long as Desai had to resign from the post due to internal squabbling and later retired from active politics. In the prime of his youth, Morarji Desai came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and his ideals. He entered public life with a rare courage of conviction and possessed an abiding faith in the purity of means and ends.

Truth to him was an article of faith and not an expediency. Desai had once defined his credo "I am a rightist in the sense I believe in doing right." Born on February 29, 1896 at Bhadeli near Bulsar in Gujarat, Desai was the eldest in the family of eight children. He

belonged to the Anavil Brahmin Community who traditionally were farmers and known to be outspoken and industrious.

Just three days before his marriage to Gajrabai, when Morarji was just 15 years old, his father committed suicide, leaving him to assume responsibility of his young bride, grandmother, mother, three brothers and four sisters.

After passing metric, he came to Bombay for higher studies on a scholarship from the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. He joined the science faculty in Wilson College living in a free boarding house.

After graduating with a first class in 1917, Morarji was recruited to the Bombay Provincial Civil Services the next year and was posted as deputy collector in Ahmedabad. The national emancipation

Desai had cherished, did not conform to the working under an alien government and he resigned in May 1930.

He openly expressed later that every Indian how served the British government was in fact doing harm to the cause of his country as to work for the British honestly was to perpetuate its administration and perpetuate it.

Morarji joined the Congress in 1930 and was elected general secretary of the local unit. It was during this period, that the Civil Disobedience Movement of Mahatma Gandhi was getting tremendous response from people.

Active participation in the freedom struggle saw him in and out of jail several times between 1930 and 1934. He was imprisoned in the 1940s for almost a year in Sabarmati and Yerwada prisons.

In 1946, Desai was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly and appointed Home and Revenue Minister, a post he retained till general elections held in independent India in 1952.

He became the Chief Minister of Bombay and continued in that capacity till the end of 1956 when he joined the Union Government as Minister for Commerce and Industry.

On March 22, 1958, Desai assumed finance portfolio following the resignation of T T Krishnamachari. However, in July 1969, he was relieved of his finance portfolio by Indira Gandhi, which led to his resignation.

In 1971, Desai was re-elected to the Lok Sabha from Surat constituency, later in 1975 he undertook a fast to protest against the delay in

## Pak-US summit meet today in White House

**Benazir will ask Clinton to 'deliver jets or refund money'**

WASHINGTON, Apr 10: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan is coming to the White House this week with a message for President Clinton: Deliver on contracts for fighter planes or refund Islamabad's money, reports AP.

"The planes or our money back. That simple, that fair," she said during a speech on Sunday at Princeton University in New Jersey. Later on Sunday she arrived in Washington, where she has an appointment with Clinton on Tuesday.

The conversation is likely to focus in part on the 28 US-made F-16 jets and the 1.4 billion dollars that Pakistan paid for them that were impounded under a 1990 US law.

The law bars the United States from providing Islamabad with military or economic aid unless the US president certifies Pakistan is not seeking to make atomic weapons. President Bush refused to

issue such certification in the latter part of his term, based on intelligence that Pakistan had the know-how to make nuclear bombs, though it hadn't actually produced any.

President Clinton has voiced readiness to review the policy.

Changing the law, known as the Pressler Amendment, could be a long process, however, because its author, Sen Larry Pressler of South Dakota, opposes repeal. He belongs to the Republican Party now controlling Congress.

Benazir's government has been offering alternatives of refunding the money, and perhaps agreeing to ship some impounded spare parts for older F-16s and military gear already in Pakistan.

The prime minister put her case to several leading members of Congress during a preliminary visit to Washington last

week. Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said he was "impressed with her arguments."

Officials in her party said memorandums envisioning more than 6 billion dollars worth of new investment were signed at Washington and New York meetings with US industrialists.

After staying at a downtown hotel last week, the prime minister's party motorcaded from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, directly to Blair House, the official guest residence across Pennsylvania Ave from the White House.

Besides Clinton, she has appointments with Acting Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary and World Bank and International Monetary Fund officials. Vice President Al Gore and Mrs Gore are hosting

dinner on Tuesday.

Continuing a media blitz that began last week, Benazir plans appearances on three major television programmes and is meeting with editors of the major newspapers in New York, Washington and Los Angeles, where she flies on Wednesday.

Security precautions prompted cancellation of Benazir's planned visit to Bloomington's department store in New York where Pakistan is sponsoring an exhibition of export handicrafts, reports were told.

Threats of violence from fundamentalist and other extremist critics of the Benazir government were reported in both Pakistan and the United States after Benazir's recent agreement to extradite to America a Pakistani accused of masterminding the New York World Trade Center bombing.

**State employees begin 15-day strike in Kashmir**

SRINAGAR, Apr 10: Thousands of state employees began a 15-day strike in Jammu-Kashmir on Monday to protest the dismissal of 22 workers for alleged ties with Islamic militants, reports AP.

To avoid being dismissed themselves, the strikers are reporting to work but refusing to do their jobs, said Ishtiq Hamad Qadri, the president of the Government Employees Association.

The strike by the 50,000 state employees in Jammu-Kashmir is expected to produce shortages in government-funded rations such as sugar and maize, and make it difficult for the general public to get help if water or electricity runs out in their neighbourhoods.

**Ramos suspends Filipino envoy to Singapore**

MANILA, Apr 10: President Fidel Ramos today suspended the Philippine Ambassador to Singapore and seven other Singapore-based diplomats for "neglect of duty, inefficiency and incompetence" after a Filipina maid was hanged there, reports AP.

Ramos said he had asked the office of the Ombudsman to "consider criminal prosecution" against these officials as well as two former administrators of the overseas workers' welfare administration for alleged failure to help the maid, Flor Contemplacion.

He added that he would decide, at a cabinet meeting today, on the future of Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo and Labour Secretary Nieves Confesor, who are also being blamed for failure to assist Contemplacion.

**Russian guards kill 9 more Tajik rebels**

MOSCOW, Apr 10: Russian border guards killed nine Tajik rebels in overnight clashes on the Tajik-Afghan border as heavy cross-border fighting in the former Soviet republic entered its fourth straight day Monday, reports AP.

Meanwhile the Muslim opposition fighters bombed a strategic road leading out of the Tajik border city of Khorog, effectively blockading Russian forces in the city, a Border Guard spokesman in Moscow said.

No Russian servicemen were killed in the overnight fighting, spokesman Anatoly Prokopyev said. At least 43 people have been killed since the fighting broke out Friday along Tajikistan's border.



Israeli soldiers jump from their jeep beside the wreckage of the car that was used by a suicide bomber to kill 6 Israelis and injure 40 when it hit a bus near the settlement of Kfar Darom on the Gaza Strip on Sunday. The Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack. — AFP/UNB photo

**Hamas vows more violence**

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip, April 10: Palestinian police arrested 150 Muslim militants in an massive security operation today after two bloody suicide bombings which killed six Israeli soldiers and wounded 54 other people, reports AP.

PLO Leader Yasser Arafat's self rule military court also jailed for 15 years a hardliner who trained children as young as 10 to be suicide bombers.

The Islamic resistance movement Hamas issued a defiant response to the crack-

down saying it would launch even bloodier attacks in its campaign to derail the peace process.

Israel said the bombings, which inflicted the heaviest losses on the Israeli army in Gaza since 1967, had jeopardised in July 1 target date for reaching a deal on extending the fragile self-rule accord.

Armed with lists of names and wearing bullet-proof vests, Palestinian police raided the homes of hardliners from Islamic Jihad and Hamas

which claimed the two car bombings.

Officials from the two groups said 150 were arrested after Israel urged Arafat's Palestinian authority to crack-down on militants following Sunday's attacks outside the Jewish settlements of Kfar Darom and Netzarim.

In a statement Hamas said: "We are going to launch even bloodier attacks against soldiers and Israeli settlers and we advise them to leave with their suitcases and children."



Thousands of demonstrators gather on Sunday in Washington protesting policies of the 104th US Congress regarding poor women, abortion and violence against women. Coming at the end of the first 100 days of the new GOP-led Congress, the rally focused on the conservative agenda of Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich and fears that Congress would end abortion rights, curtail spending on welfare programmes and cut funding to prevent domestic violence. — AFP/UNB photo

**India urges EU for wider disarmament campaign**

NEW DELHI, Apr 10: India on Sunday expressed its rejection of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and said it had told the European Union (EU) of its campaign for a wider, more acceptable, disarmament pact, reports AFP.

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said he had voiced India's views during talks in Paris with representatives from France, Spain and Germany — the present, past and future presidents of the EU council of ministers.

Mukherjee also voiced India's desire for better economic ties with EU nations during his talks with officials of the troika and called for a cut in duty to boost exports of farm products.

Speaking on the scheduled review of the NPT next month, Mukherjee said he expressed the "stated views" of India, which is not a signatory to the treaty, during his two-day visit of France that ended on Friday.

"I explained our position that we consider the NPT discriminatory and we want to create a nuclear weapon-free world through a multilateral,

non-discriminatory and universally-verifiable pact," the minister said.

India exploded a nuclear device on 1974 but said it was for peaceful purposes.

Mukherjee said the NPT had failed to stem clandestine transfers of weapons-grade nuclear technology from former Soviet republics or the West to developing countries and called for a sweeping agreement on disarmament.

Referring to reports that Pakistan, India's arch-foe, was making a plutonium-producing reactor, the foreign minister said it underlined New Delhi's fears over the transfer of weapons-grade technology.

"It confirms our apprehensions that the NPT has failed to stop the transfer of nuclear technology... it enhances its strike power," he said of the reported reactor of Pakistan. India has fought three wars with that country since 1947.

Mukherjee said that during talks with French officials, he had expressed India's reservations on the sale of submarines by Paris to Islamabad.

**Off the Record****New biography of Liz out**

NEW YORK: Actress Elizabeth Taylor popped pills like candy to cope with a marathon of affairs and marriages, according to a new unauthorised biography, reports AP.

The 63-year-old actress tried to get a court order to stop publication of "Liz: An Intimate Biography of Elizabeth Taylor" by C David Heymann. He also wrote the best seller "A Woman Named Jackie."

But the book comes out this week, cataloguing drug use along with Taylor's marriages (eight) and flings (infinite), including supposed romps with Frank Sinatra, Rock Hudson and Victor Mature.

A request for comment, left early today with a receptionist at the New York office of Taylor's publicist, Chen Sam, was not immediately returned.

The book says that without her knowledge, Husband No. 3 Michael Todd taped their lovemaking and passed out copies to his buddies. It also says Todd beat Taylor, once knocking her unconscious.

Husband No. 1 Nicky Hilton also punched her, the book claims, so violently that she required a doctor's treatment. Taylor also had a fling with Sinatra, but "He dropped her the moment she brought up marriage," according to Sinatra pal Jilly Rizzo.

The new book also says Taylor fought a 10-year battle with prescription drugs, including dozens of different painkillers, tranquilizers and anti-depressants, ranging from Ativan to Xanax. In 1981 alone, it claims, the actress got more than 300 prescriptions.

The book, published by Birch Lane Press, also alleges that Taylor's father, Francis Taylor, was bisexual.

**Bandit Queen's marriage breaks up**

NEW DELHI: "Bandit Queen" Phoolan Devi, who spent 11 years in prison for allegedly gunning down 22 men to avenge her gang rape, has broken up with her husband of nine months, the United News of India (UNI) said Monday, reports AP.

The news agency, citing unidentified sources close to the former outlaw, said that police arrested Devi's husband, Umed Singh, on Saturday after she filed a complaint saying he had threatened to kill her.

Singh, a businessman who married Devi in August just months after her release from prison, was arrested and released on bail on Sunday, UNI said.

The former "Bandit Queen," in a complaint to the police, also charged that Singh had been pressuring her to become a Buddhist and to lend her money so he could buy a gas station in New Delhi, UNI said.

The news agency said Devi, who is in her early 30s, had "vowed never to have anything to do with him again."

The marriage, for all practical purposes, is over as far as Phoolan is concerned," it quoted the sources close to the former outlaw as saying.

Asked if Devi would file for divorce, the sources said that it would not be necessary since the marriage may not have been considered legal anyway because Singh's previous marriage had not been annulled.

