

International

Sharif calls for third party mediation on Kashmir

QUETTA, Nov 19: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appealed for world support today for his proposal of third party mediation on Kashmir, whose settlement, he stressed was must for peace, reports PPI.

He issued that call on the eve of his departure for Washington for talks with President Clinton of America. The prime minister who was addressing a prestigious institution of the Command and Staff College here, made it clear that Pakistan had spared no efforts to settle differences with India, but the latter had remained adamant, and unmoving.

That had made the task of Pakistan difficult, but he expected the international community to heed to Islamabad's desire for peace in the region, and the world at large, emphasising that he will continue with his endeavours.

He has already taken a number of initiatives to reduce tension in the subcontinent by holding talks with the Indian leadership, but he regretted that without much success.

The latest of these endeav-

ours was the resumption of secretary level talks, and a subsequent meeting of defence and other high level officials in New Delhi. The negotiations at both these levels were mainly due his meeting in September with Indian counterpart Vajpayee, the premier said.

However he felt sad that India had turned down all those proposals which Pakistan had made on Sir creek issue, Wuller Barrage, Siachen and similar issues.

The Indian obduracy was something beyond his comprehension, he said, and listed in detail the results of the talks held in the Indian capital between officials of the two countries.

Nawaz Sharif said that the lesson of recent times is that the security of a country is best safeguarded by a healthy and vibrant economy, in an environment of peace and stability. This, unfortunately, has eluded South Asia.

"In our case, our main preoccupation over the past fifty years has been to safeguard our

security which has reminded threatened by a neighbour, which harbours hegemonic ambitions. The unresolved Kashmir dispute over all these years has been the main cause of the conflicts and tension that have bedeviled our part of the world."

He told his audience that Pakistan has long international borders but very little strategic depth. From the security perspective the textbook definition of an adequate defence mechanism is the ability of a country to defend itself, since Pakistan does not have the resources for acquiring such a defence capability. Its interests in the regional stability.

"It is this quest for regional equilibrium that has defined and must continue to define Pakistan external policies."

"I am a man of peace" the Premier said and added, "My agenda is for the growth and rapid development not only of Pakistan, but of the entire region. Both the people of Pakistan and India require development and progress. This mo-

tivated me to offer the resumption of the dialogue with India soon after assuming office in February 1997. In a significant development, the foreign secretaries of the two sides agreed in their June 1997 meeting on an eight point agenda including, for the first in several decades, the Kashmir issues."

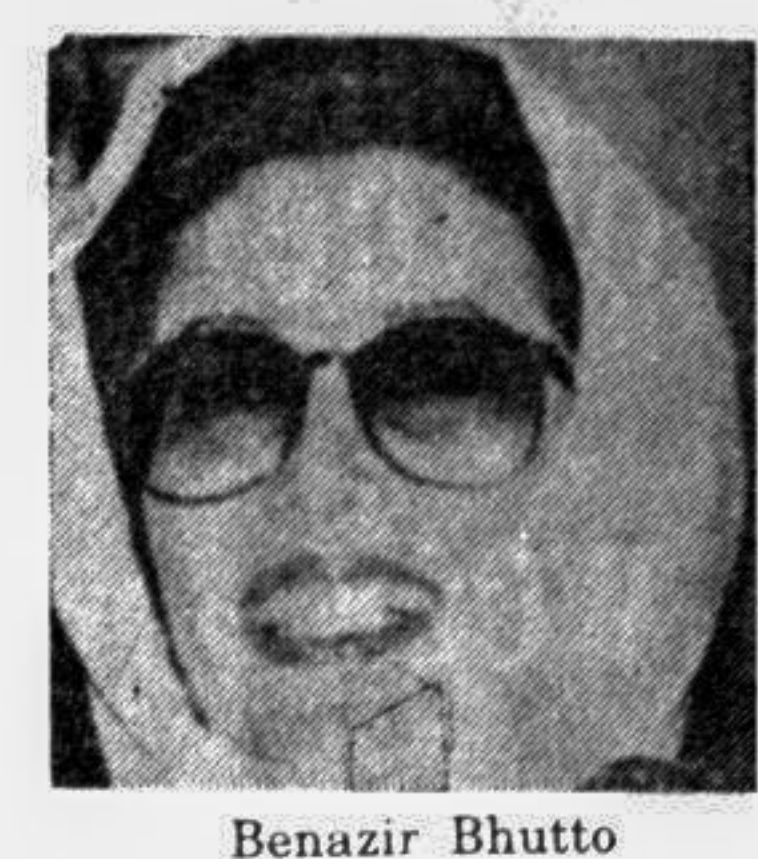
India soon resiled from this agreement. However our consistent efforts, as well as incremental international pressure after South Asia was nuclearized compelled New Delhi to resume talks on the basis of the June 1997 agreement. This decision was arrived at during my meeting with the Indian Prime Minister in New York, in September this year."

More importantly, we also spell out the future course of the dialogue in a landmark joint statement. By expressing our shared belief that a durable environment of peace and security was in the supreme national interest of Pakistan and India and that resolution of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir was essential for this purpose."

Benazir worried at Indian war games

ISLAMABAD, Nov 19: Leader of Opposition Benazir Bhutto has expressed grave concern over the massive Indian military war games on Pakistan's sensitive Southern Plank and said these exercises which also includes an amphibious landing shows how "dangerous alienating Karachi in particular and Sindh in general can prove for the integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan," reports PPI.

The nations expected that in the light of series of Indo-Pak talks which have taken place, the "undemocratic Nawaz



Benazir Bhutto

Sharif regime would have sought a postponement of Indian military exercises, as a measure to build confidence between the two countries. Unfortunately the insecurity driven politics of the Nawaz regime which has made politics of revenge, corner stone of its governance, has internally weakened Pakistan and made it borders vulnerable. Last summer we had hot pursuit across Kashmir for the first time since the fall of Dhaka. This was followed by relentless Indian firing"

Sharply reacting to the Indian military war games, Benazir Bhutto warned her Wednesday that a situation similar to the one in Dhaka earlier is threatening Pakistan, which no patriotic citizens wants to see. The amphibious assault exercises indicate that in the event of conflict, the Indians could consider storming Karachi by sea and terrorists freed by Nawaz Sharif amongst the alienated Karachites might come up as their rear guard defence, she further warned.

DPRK denies US access to suspected N-site

SEOUL, Nov 19: North Korea rebuffed a US request for unconditional access to an underground construction site suspected of being used for development of nuclear weapons, the State Department said Wednesday, reports AP.

The United States has "absolutely rejected" the idea of paying for the right to inspect a suspected nuclear weapons site in North Korea, leaving the two sides far apart, officials said Thursday.

"There is still a rather wide gap between our positions and I have to say that we are not yet satisfied that we have a solution at hand," US Ambassador Charles Kartman said on his way home from a two-day meeting in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

Kartman led a US delegation in 12 hours of talks in which the US asked to be allowed to inspect a large underground construction site detected on satellite photos and suspected of being used for development of nuclear weapons.

He told a news conference that he stopped in Seoul to brief South Korean allies on the talks and get their input.

Kartman said North Korea repeated earlier denials that the facility is nuclear related and again demanded compensation if no nuclear activity is found.

"We absolutely rejected the concept of compensation," Kartman said, declining to say how much North Korea is seeking. Without naming its sources, the South Korean news agency Yonhap said Thursday the figure is believed to be 300 million dollars.

The talks ended as President Clinton began a trip that will include Japan and South Korea. The outcome of the Pyongyang talks is expected to be on Clinton's agenda at those stops.

In Washington on Wednesday, US State Department James P Rubin said any North Korean attempt to develop nuclear weapons would violate the letter and the spirit of a 1994 agreement

Ayurvedic rival for Viagra

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: An Indian firm claims to have perfected a centuries-old recipe to develop an antidote to male impotency which it says will pose a serious challenge to Viagra across the world.

Gurudas Ram Saini, proprietor of a family-owned company manufacturing medications based on the ayurveda, system of Indian herbal medicine, said he was "100 per cent sure that the new medicine will be the most popular, one around the globe."

"It is better than Viagra," he told AFP. "It is totally herbal, it has no side effects it is not only an aphrodisiac, not for sex alone but also can stop lack of appetite, improve muscle tone and give energy."

Saini's new offering is named Ashwa (Sanskrit for stallion) and consists of a poultice of herbs and metal extracts it will be released in the market next month and exported to the Middle East and Germany.

Sandhya Sharma, a traditional doctor who heads Saini's research and development wing, said it was based on a recipe contained in the 2,500-year-old medical treatise *Bharishaya Ratnavali* or 'treasure of herbal medicines.'



Mickey Mouse celebrates the 70th anniversary of the opening of his first cartoon, "Steamboat Willie" Wednesday, with a special birthday cavalcade at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Joining him for the celebration was his longtime co-star Minnie Mouse, as well as other Disneyland characters.

LDP to form alliance with defectors

TOKYO, Nov 19: Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is expected to announce today a broad agreement with a group of defectors to form a parliamentary alliance, newspapers said, reports AFP.

The LDP, which has been pushing for a coalition, is to propose broad cooperation in parliament with the Liberal Party the third largest opposition party formed by former LDP members, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun and the Yomiuri Shimbun said, quoting sources.

In the proposal, the LDP, asks the liberals to jointly draw up a state budget for the year starting next April, according to the sources, it will also seek cooperation with the liberal party outside cabinet with the aim of forming a coalition government next year.

India's state polls widely seen as referendum on popularity of BJP

NEW DELHI, Nov 19: Indian politicians are shedding tears over skyrocketing onion prices with state elections just a week away, and the voting is widely seen as a referendum on the popularity of the federal governing coalition that has been in power less than a year, reports AP.

Though the elections won't directly affect Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, they could result in a political realignment in the world's most populous democracy.

The run-up to Wednesday's elections for four state assemblies have been dominated by one issue: high food prices. Devastating floods that destroyed crops have pushed prices of onions — a key ingredient in savory Indian dishes — and other staples to all-time highs across India.

Few people believe politicians when they say they voted to power. Produce from farms pass through a complex

network of brokers and consumers end up paying four to five times what the farmer gets. Successive governments have tried to reform the system in vain.

Newspapers are speculating that the Bharatiya Janata party now in power in the capital city of New Delhi and in Rajasthan state, could lose to the Congress Party in local elections in those two areas over food prices. The Congress, which is in power in the populous central state of Madhya Pradesh, is riddled with reports of corruption and is widely expected to lose to the BJP there. In the tiny north-eastern state of Manipur, regional groups are vying over mostly local issues.

A defeat in prestigious New Delhi, which is governed as its own state, could prompt the many regional parties in Vajpayee's governing coalition to rethink their support for the BJP. Several of Vajpayee's partners repeatedly threaten to pull out of the government, bringing it down.

On the other hand, a defeat for the Congress could also trigger debate within the party over Sonia Gandhi's leadership," said Shekhar Iyer, political columnist of the mass-circulation *Hindustan Times* newspaper.

The Italian-born widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi took over the party for the February-March national elections. Although she was unable to lead Congress to victory, she was able to halt the growing popularity of the BJP.

Party workers critical of Mrs. Gandhi could step up a campaign against her leadership if Congress fares badly this time, Iyer said.

All the parties are fighting high voter apathy, as evidenced by slow sales of party flags, stickers and posters.

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Iraqi opposition groups to meet in Britain

LONDON, Nov 19: In a bid to unite opponents of Saddam Hussein, Britain said Wednesday it will host a meeting of Iraqi opposition groups next week. The United States announced it held talks with a key opposition figure.

The Foreign Office said London-based representatives of more than a dozen opposition groups have been asked to meet Derek Fatchett, a minister at the Foreign Office, on Monday.

The international community as a whole could only all welcome Saddam Hussein's disappearance from the scene," said a Foreign Office spokesman, speaking anonymously.

But he stressed that the current objective on both sides of the Atlantic is to get Saddam to comply with UN resolutions and stick to undertakings he gave at the weekend in agreeing to allow UN weapons to do their work.

The United States announced that Ahmed Chalabi, who heads the Iraqi National Congress, had met with Assis

tant Secretary of State Martin Indyk Wednesday.

The meeting was held "in the context of the president's statement that we will support the opposition," Andrew Steinfield, a State Department press officer said. "We are looking forward to a day when someone else governs Iraq."

The Congress is an umbrella group in London that seeks to unite numerous groups opposed to President Saddam Hussein. At one time, it succeeded in bringing together Shiite Muslim groups, former ruling party officials and Kurdish guerrillas who sought autonomy in northern Iraq.

Calling off a US military attack on Iraq last weekend, President Clinton declared the administration would back opposition groups — a promise echoed by Blair.

The Foreign Office spokesman said Britain was not prepared to provide large amounts of money for opposition groups and instead would concentrate on finding common ground.

US asks Italy to extradite Kurd leader to Turkey

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: The United States has asked Italy to extradite Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan to Turkey to face trial, the state department said Wednesday, reports AFP.

"We believe he should be extradited and brought to justice, we hope a way will be found to extradite him to Turkey consistent with international and Italian law," said spokesman James Rubin.

Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was arrested Thursday in Italy after arriving from Russia.

Turkey wants Ocalan extradited, holding him responsible for the more than 3,000 people estimated killed during the war led by his movement since 1984 to win a Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey.

Fact file on key figures in impeachment process

UNDATED: Key figures in impeachment hearings by the House Judiciary Committee:

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON — Only the third US president to face an impeachment inquiry, Clinton had endured investigations into his Whitewater financial dealings and numerous White House controversies before the Monica Lewinsky matter surfaced last January. He denied a sexual affair but eventually admitted an improper relationship with the former intern. Accused of perjury and obstruction of justice, Clinton maintains he did nothing illegal. Recent polls show most voters approve of his job performance and don't want him impeached. But a majority also believe the scandal has affected his ability to lead.

KENNETH STARR — The independent counsel has spent four years investigating Clinton's activities, beginning with the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas. Since January, Starr has focused on allegations that Clinton committed perjury and obstructed justice to cover up his relationship with Ms Lewinsky. His report to congress in September laid out "substantial and credible information" that he said might warrant impeachment. Starr has been called to defend and elaborate on that report before the committee Thursday. Democrats defending Clinton say Starr has been partisan and overly aggressive in pursuit of the president.

MONICA LEWINSKY — Allowed to testify before a court investigative panel with immunity from prosecution, the 25-year-old former White House intern described in great detail her sexual trysts with the president. She said that Clinton

talked with her about ways to conceal their relationship and that his close friend Vernon Jordan helped her get job offers. When she was subpoenaed to testify in the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit, Lewinsky denied having a sexual relationship with the president. Starr's investigation of the affair and alleged cover-up began after one of Lewinsky's friends, Linda Tripp, gave prosecutors secretly recorded tapes of their telephone conversations about Clinton.

DAVID KENDALL — As the president's personal attorney, he will cross-examine Starr during the impeachment hearing. Kendall is the architect of Starr's investigation and overtly aggressive in both Starr's criminal investigation and the House impeachment inquiry.

GREGORY CRAIG — As a new special counsel, Craig coordinates the president's impeachment defense inside the White House and is the lead spokesman on the issue. Previously, Craig worked for the State Department as special coordinator overseeing US policy toward Tibet. He also was an aide to Democratic Sen. Edward M Kennedy and helped represent John Hinkley Jr after he attempted to assassinate President Reagan in 1981.

REP HENRY J HYDE — This Illinois Republican, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, convenes the first impeachment hearing Thursday. His panel will be first to assess the independent prosecutor's report and decide whether there are offenses that warrant impeachment. Hyde is known for his strong opposition to abortion and his skill as an orator. Recently he said the House has a constitutional duty to move forward with impeachment proceedings, despite pressure to "forget all of this."

REP JOHN CONYERS — As the highest-ranking Democrat on the Judiciary panel, this Michigan congressman leads the president's defense in Congress. Conyers' efforts to end the inquiry were bolstered by his party's gain of five House seats in the midterm elections and a growing sentiment among some Republicans that the House is unlikely to vote for impeachment. Conyers is one of the founders of the Congressional Black Caucus. Other caucus members also have taken lead roles in defending the president.

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Off the Record

Oh those monks ...

SEOUL: Shorn-headed, gray-clad Buddhist monks fought each other with rocks, batons and icy water Thursday for control of a major temple in central Seoul. Seven were injured, reports AP.

The melee began when about 20 monks, armed with helmets and shields and aided by 100 hired bodyguards, stormed the five-story, pagoda-shaped headquarters of the Chogye Temple. Fifty rival monks hopped up inside the building fought back by hurling down fire extinguishers, furniture and spraying water from hoses, repelling the invaders in a half-hour battle.

The temple grounds were strewn with smashed window panes and burnt furniture and garbage. Police said the injured were hospitalized with minor head and other injuries.

The leadership dispute in Chogye, South Korea's largest Buddhist order, erupted last week when the head monk, Song Wolju, announced his bid for a third four-year term.

His opponents, including the order's spiritual leader, Wol Ha, 83, urged him to step down, accusing him of incompetence and corruption. When he refused, they raided the temple, the denomination's headquarters, and took control.

Thursday's raiders were supporters of Song, who has been trying in vain to regain control of the temple.

All for the water of life

GLASGOW, Scotland: A whisky fan paid 5,750 pounds (9,600 dollars) for a bottle of 50-year-old macallan at an auction here Wednesday devoted entirely to the water of life, reports AP.

The sale brought in a total of 194,874 pounds (325,434 dollars) and was one of the biggest of its kind, the British auction house Christie's said.

A bottle of "Titanic Scotch Whisky" produced specially in 1912 to celebrate the launching of the ill-fated liner went for 1,930 pounds (3,223 dollars) to a collector.

Monet paintings auctioned

NEW YORK: Two works by Claude Monet sold for a total of 14.5 million dollars at an auction of impressionist and 19th-century art on Wednesday, while a Paul Signac painting set a new world record for the artist, reports Reuters.

The total for the evening sale was 44,934,500 dollars, Christie's said.

"Concarneau, calme du matin," an 1891 work that depicts sardine fishing boats in Brittany, was bought by an anonymous buyer for 4,402,500 dollars, easily eclipsing the previous record for a Signac of 2,750,000 dollars which was set in 1989.

The Signac's pre-sale estimate was dollar 2.5 to dollar 3.5 million.



A supporter of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) carries a mock coffin decorated with pictures of US President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky that reads, "this is the coffin of the Wye agreement, Israel and the CIA" at a rally at An-Najah University in the West Bank town of Nablus Wednesday.

BRIFFLY

22 killed in chopper crash: Two helicopters collided in mid-flight between two oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday, killing all 22 passengers and crew aboard both aircraft, officials said, Reuters says from Mexico City.

The privately owned helicopters crashed at 7:30 am local time (1:30 GMT) on their way to the oil platforms owned by Mexican oil monopoly Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX), the company said.

Temblors shake Indonesia: A moderate earthquake hit an island in eastern Indonesia on Wednesday, but no damage or casualties were reported, a meteorology official said, Reuters says from Jakarta.

An earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter Scale hit Seram Island at 3:48 pm (1:48 GMT) about 200 km to the east of the provincial town Ambon, the official said.

Turkey to buy US missile planes: The Pentagon Wednesday announced the sale to Turkey of three mothballed Perry class guided missile frigates and eight Knox class frigates for an estimated 205 million dollars, AFP says from Washington.

The older Knox class frigates are currently under lease to the Turkish navy, which also already has six Perry class frigates.

Bomb blast kills 1 in Philippines: A driver was killed and 20 passengers were wounded yesterday when a home-made bomb exploded inside a bus and another went off at a bus terminal in the southern Philippines, police said, Reuters says from Philippines.

The bombings in Dipolog city and in nearby Plaridel town occurred within 30 minutes of each other and appeared to be the work of either a group of saboteurs or political extremists, they said. Police have made no arrests.

Convicted Canadians freed in Brazil: Brazil will send home two Canadians convicted of kidnapping a supermarket mogul in 1989 in a failed bid to raise money for communist rebels, Brazil's government said on Wednesday, Reuters says from Brasilia.

"We will put the transfer of Christine Lamont and David Spencer into effect," said spokesman Breno Altman for Brazil's justice ministry.

Algerian govt likely to resign: The government of Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia will "very probably" resign after presenting Parliament with the annual report of its work, likely in December, government spokesman Hamraoui Habib Chawki said Wednesday, AP reports from Algiers.

The spokesman who is also the culture minister, said he could not provide an exact date, not knowing how long it would take the Parliament to complete its current agenda.