

People's Party claims victory in Pakistani elections

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Benazir Bhutto claimed victory Thursday on the basis of early returns that showed her populist party leading in Pakistan's first open elections in more than a decade.

Ms. Bhutto, who would be the first woman to lead this Islamic nation, said her Pakistan People's Party had won at least 80 of the 205 Moslem seats being contested in the National Assembly election.

She told a news conference in the southern city of Larkana her party's main rival, the conservative Islamic Democratic Alliance, had won 13 seats. The nine-party alliance includes loyalists of President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, the military president who died in a plane crash three

months ago.

There was no independent confirmation of Ms. Bhutto's claim but official results showed her party leading the alliance 18 seats to five with 37 of the 205 districts reporting. The remaining seats went to smaller parties and independents.

"The victory the PPP achieved is because of the selfless sacrifices, the struggle by people of the PPP," Ms. Bhutto told the news conference after a rally of 8,000 people on the lawn of her family home.

The crowd chanted "Long Live Benazir!" and "Benazir, prime minister!"

Former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, one of Bhutto's main rivals from the Islamic Alliance,

conceded defeat late Wednesday in his bid for an assembly seat.

"We're on the losing side," he said of his defeat by a Pakistan People's Party candidate in his hometown of Sindhri. He said the Bhutto party had "succeeded very well" national.

The other main rival of Ms. Bhutto, chief minister Nawaz Sharif of Punjab state, claimed victory in the race for an assembly seat in Lahore, his hometown.

Ms. Bhutto's father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, won the last open election in 1977 by a landslide and prompted a coup by Gen. Zia. Bhutto was convicted of complicity in a murder conspiracy and hanged in 1979.

About 48 million of Pakistan's 107 million people were eligible to vote and unofficial estimates said slightly more than half voted. Illiterate millions chose their candidates by symbol - an arrow for the Bhutto party, a bicycle for the Islamic Democratic Alliance and other symbols such as a ladder, flower or ink pot for nearly 30 smaller parties.

Men and women voted separately, in keeping with strict Moslem practice.

At stake were 205 of the 207 Moslem seats and 10 for non-Moslems in the 237-member National Assembly. The remaining 20 seats are reserved for women and will be filled later by vote of the assembly.

Voting for two Moslem seats was postponed because of the death of an elderly candidate in each district.

On Saturday, Pakistanis vote to fill the 483 seats in Pakistan's four provincial assemblies.

Both major parties have said they would maintain the long-standing friendship with the United States and continue support for Moslem guerrillas fighting the communist government in neighboring Afghanistan.

Of more than 5 million Afghans who have fled during 10 years of civil war, at least 3 million live in Pakistani border cities and refugee camps that serve as bases and supply points for the insurgents.

Trade deficit down, but still not enough

WASHINGTON — The U.S. trade deficit narrowed by 17 percent to \$10.5 billion in September, the government said Wednesday, but not enough to prevent a new assault on the dollar over worries about what the head of the Federal Reserve called a "dangerous corrosion" of the American economy.

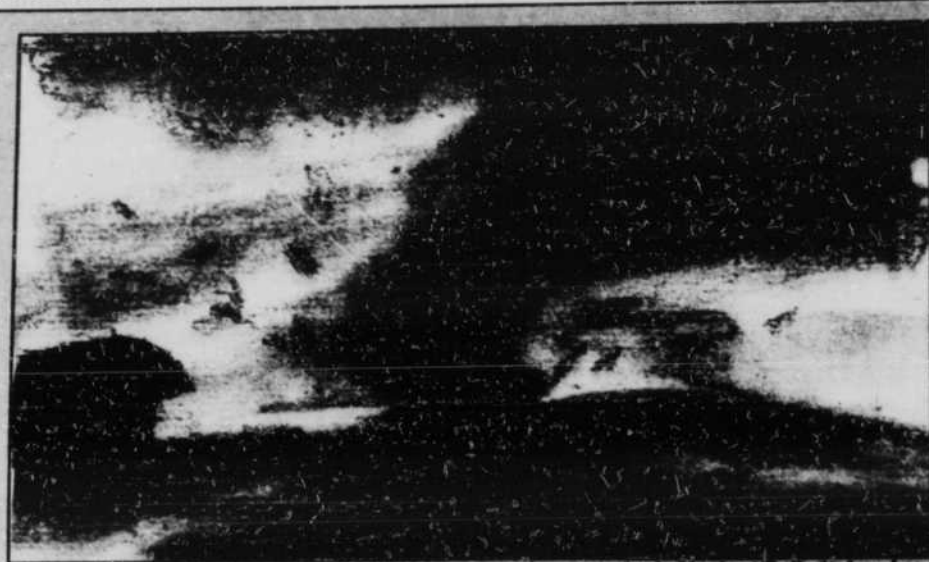
Exports rose by \$700 million to a record high \$28.2 billion, the Commerce Department said. Imports declined by 2.5 percent or \$1.1 billion to \$38.7 billion from a record high in August. The \$10.5 billion trade gap for September was down by \$1.8 billion from the revised August trade deficit figure of \$12.3 billion.

But neither change was big enough to stem a new selling wave of dollars by traders worried about inflation from an overheating economy and skeptical of President-elect George Bush's promise to reduce the federal budget deficit through a "flexible freeze" without any tax increases.

The dollar, resuming its downward path of last week, fell about a half-percent against the Japanese yen and 1 percent against the West German mark on Wednesday despite what currency traders said was intervention by the Fed to prop it up through massive purchases of dollars using yen.

In the past month, the dollar has fallen nearly 9 percent in value against the yen and about 7 percent against the mark, halted only by a brief respite Monday when Bush and Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady promised that the new administration would not scrap a two-year effort to maintain its stability.

Stock prices, in turn, resumed their downward turn, with the Dow Jones average of 30 industrial stocks falling 38.59 points.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Clean-up begins after tornadoes

SCOTT, Ark. — National Guardsmen helped keep order Wednesday after up to 10 tornadoes churned through Arkansas, killing six people, damaging scores of homes and businesses and temporarily knocking out power to 16,000 customers.

The twisters destroyed or damaged 240 homes and mobile homes and eight businesses, said Gary Talley, spokesman for the state Office of Emergency Services. No monetary estimate of the damage was available Wednesday.

Seven counties were declared disaster areas by Gov. Bill Clinton, who set aside \$350,000 in state emergency funds.

At least 49 tornadoes touched down in Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois and Iowa on Tuesday night. A seventh person was killed in southwest Missouri. The same

storm system left three people dead in road accidents in Colorado and was blamed for the electrocution death of a woman in Illinois.

The National Weather Service said the storms were caused by a cold front colliding with warm, moist air.

"We saw it coming, but there was nothing we could do," said Police Chief Darnell Scott of the central Arkansas town of Lonoke, where two people were killed and about 30 houses were reported heavily damaged.

At the height of the storm, 16,000 customers of Arkansas Power & Light Co. lost power for different periods, said AP&L spokesman Jerol Garrison. By Wednesday morning, only about 1,000 customers still had no power, he said.

Group warned of deficit dangers

WASHINGTON — The National Economic Commission opened its post-election attempt to break a seven-year deadlock on the budget deficit with repeated warnings Wednesday that the deficit represents the nation's greatest economic threat.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, one of the leadoff witnesses before the bipartisan panel, said "The deficit already has begun to eat away at the foundations of our economic strength, and the need to deal with it is becoming ever more urgent."

Greenspan joined other witnesses in saying that Congress and President-elect George Bush must reach agreement quickly on ways to slash the deficit or run the risk that foreigners will stop financing America's borrowing needs.

"We must put our fiscal house in order so that we can address the other problems which are important to us as a nation," said Alice Rivlin, former head of the Congressional Budget Office. "Getting the budget deficit behind us is a test of our ability to govern."

The comments offered a sharp contrast to much of the debate during the presidential campaign when both candidates sidestepped questions concerning the deficit because they did not want to offer detailed solutions.

However, some of the witnesses said Bush, now that he is president-elect, very well could be forced by events in financial markets to seriously bargain with Congress or risk triggering a free-fall in the value of the U.S. dollar.

"The rest of the world may well give up on the dollar if it foresees four more years of towering twin (budget and trade) deficits," said C. Fred Bergsten, head of the Institute for International Economics.

Bush staffers given gag order on new appointees

WASHINGTON — Leaders of George Bush's transition team closed ranks publicly on Wednesday, refusing to talk about the reported selection of Washington outsider John Sununu as White House chief of staff. Bush asked aides to sign a pledge designed to prevent leaks and conflicts of interest.

As the capital buzzed about the choice of Sununu, the feisty, conservative governor of New Hampshire, Bush spent the day in separate meet-

ings with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov.

The vice president was mum about filling the chief of staff's job, saying "no final decisions" had been made.

Sources close to Bush said, however, he would name Sununu to the post. Next to the president, the chief of staff is the most powerful person in the White House with influence over access to the Oval Office, the agenda, scheduling and other matters.

The other contender for the job was Craig Fuller, who has been Bush's vice presidential chief of staff for four years.

Sununu, who returned to New Hampshire after a Monday night meeting with Bush, said, "We've had discussions ... about that job (chief of staff) in particular."

At a news conference in Concord, Sununu said, "A request isn't a formal request until the tall thin guy (Bush) sings. And the tall thin guy hasn't

sung publicly, and therefore I'm not going to comment on this in any way at all."

"Until the vice president decides yes or no - and he certainly could decide no in the interim - I don't think it's appropriate for me to comment."

In Washington, Fuller said at a news conference he did not know if Bush had made a decision.

Fuller said he raised the question with Bush in a morning meeting. "His comment was, 'Just let them know

that when I'm ready to make an announcement, they'll hear from me on this.'"

Denying reports that he had tried to block Sununu's appointment, Fuller said, "I have in no way been opposed to John Sununu for the chief of staff."

Meanwhile, all of the staff and volunteers involved in Bush's take-over of power were asked to sign a "standards of conduct" document that applies both during the transition and a Bush presidency.

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Givens files libel suit against Tyson

NEW YORK — Actress Robin Givens filed a \$125 million libel suit on Wednesday against her estranged husband, heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, for allegedly telling a newspaper that she was trying to steal his money.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Manhattan, accused Tyson of holding Givens, 23, up "to public contempt, ridicule, embarrassment disgrace and prejudice."

The latest swing in the marital punchout between Tyson and Givens stemmed from a Nov. 7 New York Post article which quoted Tyson as saying "Robin Givens is trying to 'steal' his money and property."

The Post was not named as a defendant in the lawsuit, which described the article as "false, defamatory, malicious and libelous."

The New York Post had no immediate comment.

Tyson and Givens, married Feb. 12, have filed for divorce. He is suing her in New Jersey and she is suing him in California.

The lawsuit, filed by noted New York divorce lawyer Raoul Lionel Feldberg, seeks \$25 million for damages and injury and an additional \$100 million in "punitive, compensatory and special damages."

"I think it's funny," Tyson

manager Bill Cayton told The Associated Press.

Among the Tyson quotes in the Post article that angered his wife were lines like: "She manipulated me. ... Now it turns out she was lying when she said she didn't want anything from me."

The article also quoted Tyson as saying: "The nature of those two women (Givens and her mother, Ruth Roper) is to be mean and vindictive. She said she wants nothing, but she refused to sign a release."

Also: "And she (Givens) stole money from me when we were together."