

Nine Maldivians arrested in Waziristan

Minivan News, 1 April 2009

Nine Maldivians have been arrested with weapons near the Pakistani-Afghan border, the minister of defence and national security has revealed. According to Ameen Faisal, none of the detainees had criminal records, but Minivan News has learnt that one, Ali Shafeeq, 25, of R.Kandholhudhoo, had been arrested for his involvement in the bomb blast in September 2009, which injured 12 tourists in Male's Sultan Park. He was later cleared of all charges and released

Missile Strike Said to Kill 10 in Pakistan

New York Times, 1 April 2009

PESHAWAR, Pakistan -- Missiles fired from a suspected American drone struck a militant training camp in northwest Pakistan on Wednesday, killing at least 10 people in an attack apparently aimed at one of the area's most important Taliban leaders, Hakimullah Mehsud, according to news reports, militants and an intelligence official. Mr. Mehsud escaped unhurt, the intelligence official said, speaking in return for anonymity. The attack was the first of its kind in the Orakzai region, which lies southwest of Peshawar and close to the border with Afghanistan, residents said.

Mehsud threatens more attacks

Daily Times, 1 April 2009

PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief Baitullah Mehsud on Tuesday claimed responsibility for the attack on a police training academy in Lahore and suicide attacks in Islamabad and Bannu, and warned of further attacks in Pakistan in the coming days and later in the US. "These (attacks) were in reaction to (US) drone strikes in the Tribal Areas," Baitullah Mehsud told BBC Urdu over the telephone from an undisclosed location

Ankara summit : Pak-Afghan leaders to discuss security today

Daily Times, 1 April 2009

ANKARA: President Asif Ali Zardari arrived here on Tuesday to represent Pakistan at the third Ankara summit. Turkey has hosted the talks between Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Zardari that will focus on security and intelligence sharing to reduce tensions over militant attacks along their border. Turkish Environment Minister Veysel Eroglu and Governor Ankara Kemal Onal received Zardari at the Ankara airport. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is in The Hague to attend the UN-backed conference on Afghanistan, will join the president. Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Kayani and ISI Director General Lt Gen Shuja Pasha will also attend the summit. Karzai will also arrive in Ankara from the Netherlands.

US reserves 'right of last resort' in Pakistan

Daily Times, 1 April 2009

WASHINGTON: General David Petraeus, the head of the US Army's Central Command, said on Monday his country reserved right of last resort for attacks inside Pakistan. Speaking to the FOX News in the context of the Obama administration's preparations for stepping up the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, the general added however that the US government would prefer to enable the Pakistani military to do the job itself

SC restores Shahbaz govt

Daily Times, 1 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: A five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court restored Shahbaz Sharif as the chief minister of Punjab on Tuesday, suspending the February 25 verdict that had

disqualified the Sharif brothers from electoral politics. "We direct that till the final disposal of the main petition under review, the operation of February 25, 2009 order of the Supreme Court shall remain suspended and the petitioner shall assume the office of the chief minister with immediate effect," the short order announced by the court said

Indian buses not being allowed to ply on Pak roads : Official Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2009

AMRITSAR: In the wake of the terror attack on the Police Training Academy in Lahore, Pakistan has stopped the movement of Indian buses beyond the Wagah border for security reasons, an Indian official said today. Lahore-bound Indian buses are being evacuated at the Wagah border and their passengers shifted to Pakistani tourist buses for their onward journey due to rising security concerns following the attack on the Academy, an official posted at the international Attari check post said. After the attack at the Police Training Centre close to the Wagah border, security agencies in Pakistan are apprehensive that Indian buses could be next on the target of terrorists

Manmohan, Obama concerned over growing terror in AfPak Hindu, 1 April 2009

London (PTI): Setting the tone for their first meeting, U.S. President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday voiced deep concern over the growing hold of terrorist elements in Pakistan and Afghanistan with the Indian leadership getting increasingly worried over the dangerous situation in its neighbourhood. Mr. Singh, who will meet the new American leader here on Thursday immediately after the conclusion of the G20 summit, said that "the epicentre of terrorism" was in Pakistan and "the world community has to come to grips with this harsh reality"

Al Qaeda is planning attacks on US from Pakistan: Obama Daily Times, 2 April 2009

LAHORE: United States President Barack Obama on Wednesday said Al Qaeda was planning attacks on the US from its hideouts in Pakistan, a private TV channel reported. Obama said the US would "chase and defeat the terrorist organisation wherever it is present in the world", the channel said. Addressing a joint press conference with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London, Obama said US policy was clear for both Pakistan and Afghanistan and Kabul would not be allowed to become a safe haven for Al Qaeda

Pakistan and Afghanistan pledge military cooperation Daily Times, 2 April 2009

Pakistan and Afghanistan pledge military cooperation
ANKARA: Army chiefs and intelligence officials from Afghanistan and Pakistan, led by their presidents, pledged military cooperation against extremists at the Turkish-sponsored talks on Wednesday. Turkish President Abdullah Gul, who chaired the talks, said the participation of the respective chiefs of staff, land forces commanders and senior intelligence officials was "the most important" element of the talks, the third of their kind since 2007

14 terrorists enter Islamabad, Lahore: intelligence report Daily Times, 2 April 2009

LAHORE/PESHAWAR: Intelligence agencies have warned law-enforcement agencies of the entry of 14 terrorists into Islamabad and Lahore, a private TV channel reported on Wednesday. According to the report, the men are disguising themselves as preachers. It recommends beefing up security at important government and private buildings, hotels, and other public places.

Shahbaz calls on Gilani in goodwill gesture: PML-N invited to join federal cabinet

Daily Times, 2 April 2009

Shahbaz calls on Gilani in goodwill gesture: PML-N invited to join federal cabinet
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani offered the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to join the federal cabinet in a meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Wednesday. Shahbaz, who had called on Gilani in a goodwill gesture, assured the prime minister of his party's cooperation for the implementation of the Charter of Democracy (CoD) and strengthening of state institutions. He offered the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to continue being part of his Punjab cabinet

Editorial: A bigger battle zone

News, 3 April 2009

The first US drone strike in Orakzai Agency has killed 12 people. Reports say the victims were all militants, including a close associate of Baitullah Mehsud. The strike may have come as a response to a threat by the TTP leader of attacks on the US just 24 hours before the attack. But what is clear is that the US is determined to continue its strategy of drone strikes. There has indeed been some acceleration in the number of the bombings by unmanned aircraft since Barack Obama took up reins at the White House. It is also clear that the attacks, this time hitting a militant camp in the heart of Orakzai Agency, are also quite evidently backed by immaculate intelligence information. There is another element to the drone strike that is significant. Orakzai Agency is the only one of Pakistan's seven tribal territories that does not border Afghanistan.

NWFP 'at war', governance becoming difficult: Hoti

Daily Times, 3 April 2009

PESHAWAR: The NWFP is at 'war' and governance of the province is "becoming difficult", Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti said on Thursday. "Financial turmoil in the province has resulted in the birth of various problems," he told officers training at the National School of Public Policy during a briefing. He said the federal government should provide "enormous funds" to the province, as its people were "fighting a war for the survival and existence of the whole country". "FATA-like conditions are slowly developing in other parts of the country after starting in the settled districts of the province. There is a need for the other three provinces, in collaboration with the federal government, to help us because ignoring these conditions today could cause severe problems tomorrow," he added

Mullen says he is comfortable with Pakistani nukes

Daily Times, 3 April 2009

NEW YORK: The top United States military officer on Thursday said he was 'reasonably comfortable' about Pakistan's nuclear weapons being secure amid a rising tide of insurgent violence aimed at the government. Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said the US had invested in an effort to keep the weapons secure and that Pakistan had "taken significant steps in recent years, so I'm comfortable". "If Pakistan gets to a point where it implodes, you've got a country that could be an Islamist... country with nuclear weapons. One of our goals is to make sure that doesn't happen," Mullen said

US Senate okays \$4bn increase in aid to Pakistan

Business Line, 3 April 2009

WASHINGTON: The US Senate voted on Wednesday to boost aid to Pakistan by \$4 billion next year. As the US lawmakers continued work on a \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint for the

upcoming fiscal year, Senator John Kerry, a Democrat, won adoption of a \$4 billion increase next year in aid to Pakistan, a key ally in the war on terror. Earlier, the Associated Press had reported that the Obama administration plans to seek as much as \$3 billion over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan's military and is considering sending 10,000 more troops to battle the Taliban in Afghanistan

Video of Taliban Flogging Rattles Pakistan
New York Times, 4 April 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The video shows a young woman held face down as a Taliban commander whips her repeatedly with a leather strap. "Leave me for the moment — you can beat me again later," she screams, pleading for a reprieve and writhing in pain. An undated image taken from mobile phone footage released by Dunya TV Channel shows a woman in a body-covering burka face down on the ground being flogged. Paying no heed, the commander orders those holding her to tighten their grip and continues the public flogging. A large group of men quietly stands and watches in a circle around her.

Eight FC men dead in Islamabad suicide attack
News, 4 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: Eight security men were killed and several others injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a check post of Frontier Constabulary (FC) in Sector F-7/3 Margala Road, Islamabad on Saturday. SSP Tahir Alam said security men were taking dinner when the attacker entered the check post and blew himself up, killing eight of the security men and injuring several others. He said one suspect was arrested from the blast site. The SSP denied any exchange of fire, saying the security men fired in the air to scare away any other attackers

No NATO troops for Pakistan: Obama
Daily Times, 4 April 2009

BADEN-BADEN/STRASBOURG: US President Barack Obama said on Friday he did not expect NATO troops to have to enter Pakistan. "My focus on Pakistan does not envision NATO troop activities," Reuters quoted him as telling a news conference following talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. However, addressing a rally of thousands of European youth in France, he said Europe must do more to help the US win the war in Afghanistan. "Europe should not simply expect the United States to shoulder that burden alone," he said. Obama said Al Qaeda posed more of a threat of Europe than it did to the United States. "...It is probably more likely that Al Qaeda would be able to launch a serious terrorist attack on Europe than on the United States because of proximity," he said

24 dead, 35 injured in Chakwal Imambargah suicide blast
News, 5 April 2009

CHAKWAL: At least 24 persons died and 35 were injured at the Imambargah suicide bombing here. One killer blew himself up with explosives during annual Majlis Aza being held at the Imambargah located in the centre of the town at Mohala Sarpak of City police station area. The blast ripped apart the bodies of the faithful at the Imambargah, leaving a horrific scene of scattered body parts and blood all around the incident site. Eyewitnesses said that following a Majlis, the faithful had crowded the main gate of the Imambargah, while those entering into the Imambargah were being frisked, when a youth 16/17 year old during checking blew himself up, which resulted in on the spot death of 20 persons, while the other four succumbed to their injuries in hospital. Four children were also included among the dead, they said.

52 'illegal migrants' found dead in Quetta

Daily Times, 5 April 2009

QUETTA: At least 52 Afghan immigrants were found dead in a container at Hazar Ganji Bus Terminal in Quetta, Commissioner Naseem Lehri said on Saturday. The men died of suffocation in the tightly sealed shipping container. Lehri told reporters that another 51 Afghan people, crammed inside the container, were found unconscious. The commissioner said human smugglers had packed nearly 100 Afghan in the shipping container in a bid to smuggle them to Iran.

Pakistan aid tied to tackling terrorism threat, says Obama

Daily Times, 5 April 2009

STRASBOURG: Release of additional US aid for Pakistan will be dependent on how Islamabad tackles the threat of terrorism, US President Barack Obama said on Saturday at the end of a NATO summit. "I informed our allies that despite difficult circumstances we are going to put more money into Pakistan, conditional on action to meet the terrorist threat," he told a news conference

26/11: Hafiz Saeed, three others challenge detention

Hindu, 5 April 2009

Lahore (PTI): LeT founder Hafiz Saeed, who was put under house arrest by Pakistan government after his outfit was blamed for the Mumbai attacks, has challenged his detention in the Lahore High Court, along with three of his associates. A petition filed by Saeed and his aides Amir Hamza, Col (retired) Nazir Ahmed and Mufti Abdur Rehman in the Lahore High Court said they should be produced before the court so that it could see that they had been detained unlawfully

More Drone Attacks in Pakistan Planned

New York Times, 7 April 2009

WASHINGTON — Despite threats of retaliation from Pakistani militants, senior administration officials said Monday that the United States intended to step up its use of drones to strike militants in Pakistan's tribal areas and might extend them to a different sanctuary deeper inside the country. On Sunday, a senior Taliban leader vowed to unleash two suicide attacks a week like one on Saturday in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, unless the Central Intelligence Agency stopped firing missiles at militants. Pakistani officials have expressed concerns that the missile strikes from remotely piloted aircraft fuel more violence in the country, and some American officials say they are also concerned about some aspects of the drone strikes

Pakistan's Chief Justice Assails Attorney General Over Taliban Flogging

New York Times, 7 April 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The newly restored chief justice of Pakistan displayed his reputation as a human rights advocate and a prod to the government on Monday, when he hauled the attorney general and other officials before the Supreme Court and rebuked them over the flogging of a 17-year-old woman in the Taliban-controlled area of Swat. The chief justice, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, assailed the officials for laziness and self-importance, and challenged them for not taking up the case until it became a national scandal in recent days, when a video showing the woman pinned to the ground and repeatedly whipped by a Taliban commander was broadcast on Pakistani television

Editorial: Facing reality

News, 7 April 2009

The suicide blast outside an Imambargah in Chakwal on April 5, killing 22 and adding to the rising toll extracted by sectarian violence, is another terrible atrocity we find ourselves subjected to. What is though a positive development is the admission by the

adviser on interior that the bombing and other recent terrorist attacks, including that on a police check post in Islamabad that killed eight FC personnel, are the work of Pakistanis. It is not clear how, why or when this light has suddenly dawned on the man responsible for safeguarding our security, but certainly it makes a change from the past tendency to immediately point fingers in the direction of neighbouring countries

National Security Committee finalises recommendations
News, 7 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee on National Security has finalized the recommendations for implementation of 14 points resolution passed by joint-session of the parliament. This was announced by Chairman NSC Senator Raza Rabbani, while speaking to newsmen here on Tuesday. Rabbani said the recommendations were unanimously framed by all members of the committee. The recommendations would be submitted in National Assembly and Senate sessions, he said

Zardari, Holbrooke, Mullen discuss security
Daily Times, 7 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is fighting the war on terror for its survival and will not surrender to pressure by the Taliban, President Asif Ali Zardari said during a meeting with US Special Representative Richard Holbrooke and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen on Monday to discuss regional security. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi also attended the meeting.

Taliban Shura hiding in Balochistan, says Admiral Mullen
Daily Times, 7 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The top leadership of the Taliban is hiding in Balochistan province, Admiral Mike Mullen, the US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said. Pakistan lies at the core of America's strategic concerns, said Richard Holbrooke, the new US Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

UN team arrives for BB's murder probe
Daily Times, 8 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: A six-member team of the United Nations (UN) arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday, to prepare the ground for an international fact-finding commission to look into the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. According to sources, the UN investigation team – during its three-day stay in Pakistan – would meet senior officials from various ministries. The team would also meet police and officials from law-enforcement agencies. An inspection of the site where Benazir was assassinated on December 27, 2007, is also on the agenda of the team – which includes legal experts, field support, political experts and consultants.

Nawaz's plane conspiracy case file missing since 2007
Daily Times, 8 April 2009

KARACHI: The file of the plane conspiracy case against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has been missing from the Sindh High Court (SHC) records since 2007, it was found on Tuesday when three miscellaneous applications were filed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Lawyers' Forum seeking certified copies of the judgement by an anti-terrorism court (ATC-I) for Karachi division. An SHC appellate bench had handed out a life term to Nawaz, but acquitted Shahbaz Sharif, Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and others.

News
Daily Times, 9 April 2009

America's special envoy to our region, Richard Holbrooke, is a busy man. Prior to his appointment by President Obama he had been working with, among other organisations, the New York-based Asia Society's Task Force; which he both set up and led. The group had a distinctly heavyweight feel to it and included Barnett Rubin, Thomas Pickering (a past ambassador to India) and General James Jones, a national security adviser. Holbrooke and Jones have stepped down since their appointment to the Obama administration but the report that they both have had a hand in is set to generate a frisson of unease in India. Titled "A Strategy for Stabilising Afghanistan-Pakistan" it is reflective of the willingness of the Obama presidency to consider 'other options.' The task force which prepared the report is recommending that the Obama administration find ways to incorporate Pakistan into the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and enter into a dialogue with it to discuss how its nuclear status could be acknowledged

Biden says Osama hiding in FATA

Daily Times, 9 April 2009

Biden says Osama hiding in FATA

LAHORE: Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders, including Osama Bin Laden, are hiding in Pakistan's Tribal Areas, US Vice President Joe Biden said on Wednesday. "In the FATA ... that is a war on terror. That's where Al Qaeda lives. That's where Bin Laden is. That's where the most radicalised part of the Taliban is," Biden told CNN's Wolf Blitzer. "The situation ... in other parts of the world, they aren't all related to terror," he said in response to a question if the Obama administration had stopped use of the phrase "global war on terror".

Taliban will soon capture Islamabad, says Mullah Nazeer

Daily Times, 9 April 2009

MINGORA: Pakistani Taliban commander Mullah Nazeer Ahmed said in an interview with Al Qaeda's media arm, Al-Sahab, that the Taliban would soon capture Islamabad. Pakistani Taliban factions had united and would take their war to the capital, he said. "The day is not far when Islamabad will be in the hands of the mujahideen."

Pakistan needs a Marshall Plan: Haqqani

Daily Times, 9 April 2009

LAHORE: Ambassador to the US Husain Haqqani on Tuesday called for a \$30 billion Marshall Plan for Pakistan and Afghanistan over the next five years to fight Al Qaeda, blunt anti-Americanism and secure Pakistan from extremists. Haqqani told The Washington Times that the cost to the West was negligible compared to that of rescuing failing banks and corporations. "...the cost of a Marshall Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan is going to be minuscule [compared] to the bailouts being given to American car companies," Haqqani said. "And the impact in terms of American security and in terms of the longer term stability of the world in a very precarious region will be far greater. Pakistan has the will to fight terrorists, it needs the means and the United States should provide those."

US has promised no drone strikes in Balochistan: Zardari

Daily Times, 9 April 2009

LAHORE: The United States has assured Pakistan it will not carry out drone attacks in Balochistan, President Asif Ali Zardari said in an interview with Daily Times Editor Najam Sethi for Dunya TV on Wednesday. "Not only the people of Pakistan, but also the government is concerned over the drone attacks," Zardari said. He said the US had incorporated several of Pakistan's suggestions in its new policy for Afghanistan, but the two countries disagreed on the drone strikes. However, he said Washington "has assured us it will not carry out drone attacks in Balochistan"

No AfPak solution without India: US

Asian Age, 9 April 2009

April 8: The United States expects India to play a bigger role regionally and globally, and a top American official said here on Wednesday that New Delhi's involvement was vital for stabilising the situation in Afghanistan. "We can't settle issues like Afghanistan [and] many other issues without India's full involvement," US special envoy for the AfPak region Richard Holbrooke said towards the end of a five-day tour of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India

Editorial:Expansionist aims

News, 10 April 2009

It would be foolish to say this had not been expected. For months it has been quite clear the Taliban have now set their sights on the whole of NWFP, and indeed on the entire territory of Pakistan, not just on the remote northern areas where they have so far concentrated their efforts. One day, not very long from now, we may see women being flogged on the streets of Islamabad or Lahore or Karachi; our Armani-suited elite may be forced into shalwars that rise above the ankle and made to grow unruly beards. The signs of what the Taliban plan are visible everywhere. There is no point living on in a state of denial. Taking advantage of the peace accord, hordes of the Taliban from Swat have now moved south into the Buner region. They have made it quite clear they intend to take control of the area and impose the same restrictions that now rule life in Swat. Local people from Buner have sworn they will resist – but the task is not so easy. Already at least two members of a 'Lashkar' that dared to oppose the Taliban have been slain. The militants will no doubt kill others as they endeavour to spread their tentacles into Buner – and then after that to other parts of NWFP. The people of Buner and elsewhere face terrible danger

US embassy, foreign agencies suspend services over security threat

Daily Times, 10 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The US embassy on Thursday decided to suspend all consular services for today (Friday) due to heightened security in the federal capital, spokesman Lou Fintor said. He said emergency services would be available to US citizens and they would be able to contact the embassy. Also, Islamabad-based offices of international donor organisations would remain closed today due to the security threats.

Obama to avoid Bush's Musharraf mistake

Daily Times, 10 April 2009

LAHORE: Bruce Riedel, adviser to US President Barack Obama, said on Wednesday that while the United States under President Obama was determined about its relationship with Pakistan's elected leadership, it was not "hooking our fate to any particular individual. The Bush administration made this mistake with Pervez Musharraf and we saw what a disaster that was". In many ways, he said, Pakistan was the harder part of the Afghanistan problem. "After all, the sanctuary for Al Qaeda is in Pakistan. The leadership of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, is in Pakistan. That is the more critical territory for them."

Violence in Balochistan after 3 Baloch leaders killed

Daily Times, 10 April 2009

QUETTA: The mysterious killing of three leading Baloch nationalist leaders – who were allegedly arrested by intelligence agencies last Friday – have sparked a wave of massive protests and violence all over Balochistan that has so far killed one police official. Police found the decomposing bodies of the three Baloch leaders – veteran politician Ghulam Mohammad Baloch and Lala Munir of the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and Sher

Muhammad Baloch of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP) – in Pidrak area of Turbat district on Wednesday evening.

President writes letter to PM

Daily Times, 10 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called upon the government to take urgent steps to fulfil his promise to the parliament of the implementation of the Charter of Democracy (CoD). In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, the president said the measures required for the implementation of the CoD, such as the repeal of some sections in the Legal Framework Order of 2002 and the 17th Constitutional Amendment, or amending other acts, was the prerogative of parliament

Deadly doings

News, 11 April 2009

Cities and towns across Balochistan have slid into violence following the mysterious murder of three Baloch nationalist leaders. The mutilated bodies of Ghulam Muhammad Baloch, Lala Munir and Sher Muhammad Baloch were found in Turbat, apparently several days after they were foully killed, their faces blown away by gun shots. What are we to make of this latest act of violence? The lawyer of the three men from whose office they were taken away, as well as others both inside and outside Balochistan, have alleged that the three leaders, who had been facing trial, were abducted by agency men. Human rights groups say they have solid evidence that these intelligence outfits were behind the brazen kidnapping and presumably the consequent killing of these men. The ISPR has vehemently denied such charges. The question is why? On whose orders were the killers acting and what was the purpose of their action?

2/3rd of terror plots probed in UK originated from Pakistan: Brown

Daily Times, 11 April 2009

LONDON: Two-thirds of the terror plots investigated in the United Kingdom originated from Pakistan, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on Friday. In an interview with Al Jazeera English television, Brown said Pakistan "has got the problems of an economic set of difficulties at the moment but also groups of terrorists in their country operating from their country"

India behind Liberty, Manawan attacks: CCPO

Daily Times, 11 April 2009

LAHORE: Terrorists involved in last month's attacks on the Sri Lankan cricket team near the Liberty roundabout and at the Manawan Police Training School have links with India, CCPO Pervaiz Rathore said on Friday. He was talking to reporters at the foundation laying ceremony of a hospital at the Qila Gujjar Singh Police Lines. He said the police had gathered concrete evidence in this regard. While refusing to disclose the proof, Rathore said the police would make that public at the appropriate time. He said the police and intelligence agencies had jointly interrogated terrorists arrested during the attack on the school. He said they had confessed to their links with India.

Obama's new war strategy not enough: Pak, Afghan envoys

Daily Times, 11 April 2009

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama's anti-terror escalation may not prove enough to break the back of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, Pakistani and Afghan envoys warned on Thursday. Both ambassadors called on the United States (US) and its allies to provide more cash and military tools to defeat terrorism on the battlefield and alleviate the poverty and ignorance that sustained extremism

NA approves formation of body on CoD

Daily Times, 11 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday unanimously adopted a resolution authorising Speaker Fahmida Mirza to form a parliamentary committee to propose amendments in the Constitutional (17th Amendment) Act 2003 and other laws – in a bid to restore the 1973 constitution in line with the Charter of Democracy (CoD). The resolution was tabled by Federal Parliamentary Affairs Minister Babar Awan in accordance with a directive by President Asif Ali Zardari during his address to the joint session of parliament for the implementation of the CoD.

Taliban recruiting anew in Swat

Daily Times, 14 April 2009

WASHINGTON: The Swat Taliban have renewed efforts to recruit fighters and supporters following delays in the implementation of their peace agreement with the government. "As long as we were there enforcing peace, they were not recruiting," Rizwanullah Farooq, son of Sufi Muhammad, told Bloomberg on Monday. "Now recruitment is going on even in Buner because they don't see a chance for peace. The government must understand this." The drive into Buner brings the Taliban closest to Islamabad in the five years since they began fighting the government for territorial control

Pakistan may get close to \$4bn aid in Donors' Conference

Daily Times, 14 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The upcoming Tokyo Donors' Conference might pledge \$4 billion to Pakistan over the next two years, Japan's Special Representative for Assistance to Pakistan and Afghanistan Motohide Yoshikawa said on Monday. Talking to reporters at the Japanese embassy, he said Tokyo had been advocating for assistance to Pakistan and had raised the issue at the G-20 group meeting. He said Pakistan's stability and prosperity was in the interest of the world

President signs Nizam-e-Adl after NA nod

Daily Times, 14 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari signed the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation for Swat on Monday, after the National Assembly passed a resolution in favour of the draft regulation. "Yes, the president has signed the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation before leaving for Dubai on a two-day visit," presidential spokesman Farhatullah Babar told Daily Times

Pak finds DNA identical to Kasab's

Asian Age, 14 April 2009

April 13: Pakistan on Monday said it will not be possible to continue its investigation of the Mumbai terror attacks with the information given to it by India. The information, it said, was "not specific" and included identical DNA samples but from two persons — slain terrorist Mohammed Ismail and the only terrorists captured alive, Ajmal Kasab. "We need specific information. We cannot continue investigations with general information. We have asked India to give us specific details," said Mr Rehman Malik, the head of Pakistan's interior ministry

US to make aid pledge for Pakistan but backs 'strings'

Daily Times, 15 April 2009

WASHINGTON: The United States said on Tuesday that it planned an aid pledge to Islamabad at this week's conference in Tokyo, but rejected pleas that the assistance be without conditions. "We'll be making a pledge," State Department spokesman Robert Wood told reporters. He declined to give details ahead of Friday's conference in the

Japanese capital

Rs 5m reward for information on Baloch leaders' killing

Daily Times, 15 April 2009

QUETTA: Interior Adviser Rehman Malik on Tuesday announced a reward of Rs 5 million for anyone providing information regarding those involved in the killing of three Baloch nationalist leaders in Turbat. The interior adviser also said a committee – headed by the Balochistan police chief – would be formed to probe the killings. Malik was accompanied by Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani and Home Minister Zafar Zehri

Nizam-e-Adl against rights, democracy: US

Daily Times, 15 April 2009

WASHINGTON/LAHORE/PESHAWAR: The White House said on Tuesday the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation accord signed by the Pakistani government with the Taliban to put part of the country under Islamic law was against human rights and democracy, AFP reported. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said President Barack Obama's administration believed that "solutions involving security in Pakistan don't include less democracy and less human-rights. The signing of that denoting strict Islamic law in Swat valley goes against both those principles"

Editorial: The capitulation continues

New York Times, 16 April 2009

Within hours of the signing of the Nizam-e-Adl regulation, TNSM chief Sufi Muhammad Khan has claimed its provisions grant militants immunity against prosecution for crimes they have committed. This means that murderers, rapists and torturers – such as those who flogged a hapless woman on the streets – will get away scot-free. It is hard to know if the government agrees with the militant interpretation of the new law; an NWFP minister, when asked, declined to comment – but given that we saw what amounts to complete capitulation by the National Assembly as it recommended that the law be signed, it is not hard to believe that this stance by the militants will be greeted only with the silent acceptance of the defeated.

Pakistan-UK at odds over arrested terror suspects

Daily Times, 16 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday called British Deputy Political Counsellor Alastair King Smith to the Foreign Office and demanded sharing of information and consular access to alleged Pakistani students arrested by UK. "It is true that we have asked them to give us information and our high commissioner in London to give consular access, but they have not committed," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Abdul Basit said

Extremists serious threat to Pakistan's existence: US

Daily Times, 16 April 2009

LAHORE: Al Qaeda and other militant groups within its territory pose "an ever more serious threat to Pakistan's very existence", General David Petraeus, head of US Central Command (CENTCOM), has said. In an interview with Trudy Robin of the Philadelphia Inquirer, he said US President Barack Obama had made Afghanistan and Pakistan the focus of his foreign policy because of the presence of Al Qaeda in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan. To questions on why troops were being increased in Afghanistan if the real threat were in Pakistan, he said: "You have to ensure that Afghanistan doesn't become once again a place where Al Qaeda establishes safe havens." If Taliban ideologues regain control of Afghanistan, it would further destabilise Pakistan, he added

Nizam-e-Adl will be reviewed if peace not restored: Zardari

Daily Times, 16 April 2009

LAHORE/TOKYO: The government may review the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation 2009 if peace is not restored in Swat, President Asif Ali Zardari said on Wednesday. Addressing the Pakistani community in Tokyo, he said the Nizam-e-Adl, and not sharia, had been imposed in Malakand division, a private TV channel reported. The president was in Japan to attend the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FODP) ministerial meeting and a donors' conference.

Taliban Exploit Class Rifts in Pakistan

New York Times, 17 April 2009

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — The Taliban have advanced deeper into Pakistan by engineering a class revolt that exploits profound fissures between a small group of wealthy landlords and their landless tenants, according to government officials and analysts here. Supporters of Islamic law on Thursday in the Swat Valley, a Pakistani region where the Taliban exploited class rifts to gain control. The strategy cleared a path to power for the Taliban in the Swat Valley, where the government allowed Islamic law to be imposed this week, and it carries broad dangers for the rest of Pakistan, particularly the militants' main goal, the populous heartland of Punjab Province.

China and US to work together for Pak-Afghan peace

Daily Times, 17 April 2009

BEIJING: The United States and China have agreed to work together on bringing peace to Afghanistan and Pakistan, officials said on Thursday following a visit to Beijing by US special envoy Richard Holbrooke. Holbrooke left China after holding talks with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and leading cabinet official Dai Bingguo during a two-day trip.

Political situation key risk to growth in Pakistan: IMF

Daily Times, 17 April 2009

TOKYO: Pakistan must focus on reforming its tax system and lowering inflation to restore its economy, but political instability is a key risk to growth, the International Monetary Fund said on Thursday. Allies of cash-strapped Pakistan meet in Tokyo today (Friday) to pledge aid and seek assurances from the nuclear-armed country that it will implement economic reforms and take more urgent action against an increasingly formidable insurgency.

Marshall Plan-style aid drive needed for Pakistan: Zardari

Daily Times, 17 April 2009

TOKYO: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called for a major aid drive like the Marshall Plan to fight poverty and militancy in Pakistan, writing in a newspaper on the eve of a major meeting of donors. Zardari was in Tokyo for the aid conference on Friday, hosted by the World Bank and Japan, which is expected to raise up to six billion dollars to help stabilise what is seen as a frontline state in the battle against extremism.

PML-N won't rejoin federal cabinet: Nawaz

Daily Times, 17 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Thursday formally announced it would not rejoin the Pakistan People's Party-led federal cabinet, but assured the government of unconditional support to tackle challenges confronting the country. PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif made the announcement after chairing a joint meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) and the parliamentary party at the Punjab House.

Friends pledge \$5bn for Pakistan

Daily Times, 18 April 2009

TOKYO: Pakistan secured more than \$5 billion in fresh aid over two years at a donors' conference on Friday after President Asif Ali Zardari vowed to step up the fight against the Taliban. The pledges, bigger than an expected \$4 billion, reflect the international community's worries that an economic meltdown in Pakistan could fan popular support for Al Qaeda and other militant groups. "The participants also noted concern about the security situation in Pakistan and the impact on development, the investment climate, and growth," co-chairs Japan and the World Bank said in a statement

Editorial: The red peril?

News, 18 April 2009

The release of Maulana Abdul Aziz, the prayer leader of Islamabad's Lal Masjid, could not have come at a worse time. The recently signed Nizam-e-Adl in Swat has been widely interpreted as evidence that the government has caved in to terror. The fact that the controversial cleric who was captured 21 months ago while trying to sneak out in a burqa will now be heading its affairs once more adds to the suspicions of complete capitulation. Although Aziz, released on bail on Supreme Court orders, has said he will not seek revenge, this is no reassurance. Aziz was taken from Adiala Jail to Lal Masjid by a bevy of supporters shouting slogans of martyrdom. This too suggests the old passions that led to students armed with sticks emerging from madressahs housed at the Masjid and attempting to impose their own brand of morality on Islamabad live on. Over the past few weeks there has been continued speculation that Islamabad could become the next target for militants. Some comments to this effect have been made by leaders of the TTP. Quite obviously, the 'conquest' of the capital would be a spectacular gain on their part. Within security circles too, there are those who hint that a threat may indeed exist - if not immediately than in the not too distant future

Eighteen security men among 20 killed in Hangu attack

News, 18 April 2009

HANGU: Twenty people were killed including 18 security personnel and scores others injured in a suicide attack at a security check post here on Saturday. According to sources, the suicide bomber rammed his explosives laden vehicle into the security check post near Doaba Police Station, causing a loud blast which was heard in a wide radius. DSP Hangu, Fareed Khan confirmed 20 deaths in the deadly attack including 18 security men and two civilians

Editorial: Friends at last

News, 19 April 2009

After listening to a dramatic speech by President Asif Ali Zardari in which he warned of a growing terrorist threat in the northern areas of his country, and told an already scared world "If we lose you lose," the Friends of Pakistan group, at its ministerial meeting in Tokyo, pledged more than five billion dollars as new financing over the next two years. Zardari's grim portrayal of the situation in a part of the world where he said no army has succeeded coincides with remarks from several Pentagon experts alluding to the fact that Pakistan, as a state, seemed to be spinning rapidly out of control. The analysts say Pakistan could split into fiefdoms run by warlords, creating an unparalleled security threat to the world given that the country also has a large arsenal of nuclear weapons that could fall into the hands of militants. The funds, which include a billion dollars each from the US and Japan, 700 million from Saudi Arabia and 640 million over four years from the European Union are intended, according to a statement from Japan and the World Bank who co-chaired the Tokyo meeting, to support human development and the building of social safety nets. The 40 nations and other groups also reaffirmed their commitment to ongoing projects worth US \$15 billion

Anti-terrorism policy to be shared with US next month: PM

Daily Times, 19 April 2009

KARACHI: Pakistan will share its counter-terrorism policy with the United States during forthcoming talks next month, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said on Saturday. He told a press conference at Chief Minister's House after presiding over a special session of the Sindh cabinet that it was wrong to assume Pakistan did not have a policy on the war on terror, APP reported. "Our policy is ready," he said, adding that Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi would visit the US in the first week of May to share this policy with the American administration. President Asif Ali Zardari might also visit the US in this regard, he added

27 killed in Hangu suicide attack

Daily Times, 19 April 2009

HANGU: At least 27 security personnel were killed and 55 others were injured in a suicide attack on a security checkpost in Doaba area of Hangu district on Saturday, hospital sources said. Locals told Daily Times that the attack on the checkpoint, about 45 kilometres southwest of Hangu, took place at around 4:15pm when security forces personnel were visiting the area for the inspection

TTP says Osama welcome in Swat: Taliban reject peace accord

Daily Times, 22 April 2009

MINGORA/LAHORE/NEW DELHI: Swat Taliban have said they are not bound to honour the peace accord between the government and cleric Sufi Muhammad, a private TV channel reported on Tuesday. According to the channel, they said the NWFP government had signed the deal with Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi, and not with the Taliban

US does not want to see Osama in Swat: State Dept

Daily Times, 22 April 2009

LAHORE: A spokesman for the US government has said Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar should not be welcome in Swat. Asked to comment on a statement by the Taliban that the two were welcome there, the State Department spokesman said: "... This is not a place where they should be welcome. ... Violent extremists need to be confronted." He said the US would work with Pakistan and Afghanistan to help root out such extremists

Pakistan seeks permission for Amritsar consulate

Daily Times, 22 April 2009

LAHORE: Islamabad has formally requested India to allow a consulate in Amritsar to facilitate Sikh pilgrims who want to visit their holy sites in Pakistan. "We made the request on the wish of the visiting Indian Sikh pilgrims," Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) chairman Asif Hashmi said. Hashmi said Sikh pilgrims, especially from India's Punjab state, had reported problems in obtaining visas to visit Pakistan. "During the latest visit, in connection with the Baisakhi festival, they raised the issue with us. We then requested the Indian government to do the needful at the earliest." The ETPB looks after Hindu and Sikh holy sites and shrines across Pakistan and facilitates visiting pilgrims. Hundreds of Indian Sikhs and Hindus visit shrines in Pakistan every year. daily times monitor

Obama to Host Talks With Afghan, Pakistani Presidents

Washington Post, 22 April 2009

The presidents of Pakistan and Afghanistan will travel to Washington early next month

for meetings with President Obama as the administration struggles against daunting hurdles to implement its new strategy for the region. The visits, on May 6 and 7, will elevate to summit level a trilateral exchange begun by the administration with senior aides from each government in late February. Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Afghan President Hamid Karzai will meet separately with Obama, and the three will also sit down together, officials said yesterday

US urges Pakistanis to oppose ceding territory to Taliban

Daily Times, 23 April 2009

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Wednesday that Taliban advances pose "an existential threat" to Pakistan and urged Pakistanis worldwide to oppose a government policy yielding to them. Pakistanis "need to speak out forcefully against a policy that is ceding more and more territory to the [Taliban]," Clinton said, underscoring "the seriousness of the existential threat posed to the state of Pakistan by the continuing [Taliban] advances, now within hours of Islamabad.

Taliban closing in on Islamabad: Fazl

Daily Times, 23 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman warned in a speech in the National Assembly on Wednesday that the Taliban were closing in on Islamabad. "You talk about Swat and Buner, but according to my information, they have reached Kala Dhaka and Tarbela. And if they continue advancing, there will be only Margalla Hills between them and the federal capital," he said. He blamed the "civil war-like situation" on former president Pervez Musharraf's decision to join the US-led war on terror. He said the fallout would also affect India and China

India behind unrest in Balochistan: Malik

Daily Times, 23 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik claimed on Wednesday that India is backing the Balochistan Liberation Army (LBA) to fuel an insurgency in the province. Winding up debate in the Senate on the unrest in Balochistan, Rehman said 'some hostile agencies' were hatching conspiracies to destabilise Pakistan. He also dismissed BLA chief Brahamdagh Bugti's demand for an independent Balochistan, and claimed the "militant organisation raised by Russia during the Afghan war is now being backed by India"

Taliban step into Shangla as Buner showdown looms

Daily Times, 24 April 2009

MINGORA: Eight Frontier Constabulary platoons rushed to Buner on Thursday to protect vital state installations in the northwestern town now virtually under Taliban control, while the Taliban entered the adjacent Shangla district in another brazen move. Local residents and police in Poran tehsil of Shangla said around 30 armed Taliban arrived in the town on Thursday morning. "They entered the tehsil in cars and are still in the area," a police official said

No one will be allowed to run parallel govt: Zardari

Daily Times, 24 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari vowed on Thursday not to allow anybody to challenge the government's writ or run a parallel government in any part of the country, and said the government is aware of the problems emanating from extremism and terrorism. The pledge came during talks with US president's special envoy Richard Holbrooke, who had called the president over the telephone. Zardari and Holbrooke discussed the threat of increasing Taliban influence in Pakistan.

Editorial:Death for blasphemy

News, 24 April 2009

The death penalty is now mandatory for blasphemy, under Article 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code. The option of a life term for a person convicted on the charge has been taken away. This has come about purely on the basis of a technicality. The Supreme Court's Shariat Appellate Bench dismissed an appeal against a 1990 Federal Shariat Court ruling making death compulsory – because there was no prosecution by the appellant. But the results of this verdict are potentially dire. The fact is that for any person accused of blasphemy, the possibility of obtaining a fair hearing have over the past decade or so become slimmer and slimmer with each passing year. Each time an accusation is made, an environment of hostility is quickly whipped up – often by extremist forces – creating a highly charged atmosphere. Neither the police nor the lower judiciary is able to function independently or without bias, and courts at the district and sessions level repeatedly pass the maximum sentence – if only because judges fear for their lives.

Editorial: Baloch backlash

News, 24 April 2009

In a shockingly insensitive and senseless speech to the Senate, the adviser on interior has said India, Afghanistan and – oddly enough – the Russians were engaged in unrest in Balochistan and that the Baloch Liberation Army and the Baloch National Army had links with them. He has also attacked their leaders as traitors, declared the recent kidnapping of UNHCR chief John Solecki to have been a conspiracy hatched in Kabul, said one of the nationalist leaders killed recently in a grotesque murder was a terrorist and insisted that Baloch complaints of thousands of people being missing or women being tortured in lockups were lies. Let us not even pause to discuss the veracity or otherwise of Mr Malik's remarks. There are other facts that are far more important than the insults he hurled towards Baloch nationalists, in a move that seems geared to sabotage the reconciliation process initiated in the province by President Zardari. The reality is that feelings of deprivation and anger exist everywhere in Balochistan. It is these that have led to the emergence of nationalist outfits in the province over a period of decades. It is quite possible other countries have used the resentment that exists for their own purposes; this after all is a tactic we are familiar with – but they could not have done so had Balochistan been a more content federating unit within the state of Pakistan

U.S. Questions Pakistan's Will to Stop Taliban

New York Times, 24 April 2009

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — As the Taliban tightened their hold over newly won territory, Pakistani politicians and American officials on Thursday sharply questioned the government's willingness to deal with the insurgents and the Pakistani military's decision to remain on the sidelines. Some 400 to 500 insurgents consolidated control of their new prize, a strategic district called Buner, just 70 miles from the capital, Islamabad, setting up checkpoints and negotiating a truce similar to the one that allowed the Taliban to impose Islamic law in the neighboring Swat Valley.

Clash averted after Taliban block army convoy in Swat

Daily Times, 26 April 2009

PESHAWAR: Taliban blocked the main highway linking Swat with the rest of the country on Saturday to stop a military convoy carrying supplies to Mingora, but a major clash was averted after intervention by the Awami National Party-led provincial government. "Yes, we have stopped the convoy from entering Mingora as it was a

violation of the deal with us," Taliban spokesman Muslim Khan told Daily Times

Editorial:Setting things straight
News, 26 April 2009

The COAS has spoken out; and he has done so loudly and clearly. Addressing a meeting at the GHQ he has made it clear the army is determined to combat militancy and that while he was aware about the questions being raised about its intent, these were simply not valid. The unusual release by the ISPR of the details of remarks made by the COAS at an internal meeting suggests just how concerned the military is over the doubts expressed over its capabilities and its willingness to take on the militants. There has indeed been a chorus of comment on this, suggesting the civilian and military leadership is divided on this issue. It is believed opinions to this effect have also been conveyed to Washington, where of course there seems to be mounting panic over the situation in Pakistan and the country's perceived capitulation to the Taliban. Washington's attempts to intervene have too been criticized by General Kayani in his remarks and he has said that Pakistan is capable of defending itself

Operation launched against Taliban in Dir
Daily Times, 27 April 2009

MINGORA/PESHAWAR: At least 26 Taliban, including an important commander, and a troop were killed after security forces launched an operation in Maidan area of Lower Dir on Sunday, according to an ISPR statement. "At least 26 bodies of Taliban were found from Lal Qila. The FC has taken control of Lal Qila," said the security forces, after the government decided to establish the writ of the state in areas bordering Swat. Sources said the security forces entered Lal Qila after an intense battle.

'US threatened to attack Swat Taliban if Pakistan failed to act'
Daily Times, 27 April 2009

LAHORE: The United States made it clear last week that it would attack the Taliban in Swat valley unless the Pakistani government stopped their advance. A senior Pakistani official told The Times newspaper, the American government intervened after Taliban moved in Buner.

President Zardari to start 10-day foreign tour tomorrow
News, 27 April 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari is likely to leave for a 10-day long tour of foreign countries on Monday. The president will make official and private visits to four countries comprising Dubai, Kenya, US and London. In the first phase of his 10-day tour, President Zardari is expected to fly to Dubai from where he will head to Libya on April 30. Zardari will also attend a trilateral meeting along with US President Barack H. Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Washington on May 6 and 7. From Washington, he is scheduled to visit London on an unofficial tour.

23 killed as violence grips Karachi
Daily Times, 30 April 2009

KARACHI: At least 23 people, including political workers, were killed and several wounded on Wednesday as violence erupted in the capital of Sindh province after two MQM workers were allegedly killed by Pashtuns in North Karachi. Various television channels, however, reported that at least 34 people had been killed. The violence erupted in North Karachi when bodies of two MQM workers, Khalid and Mehmood, were found.

Action against Taliban in Pakistan's own interest: US
Daily Times, 30 April 2009

LAHORE: The US government believes that the military operation in Lower Dir and Buner is in the interest of Pakistan, a State Department spokesman said on Tuesday. Asked whether the US sees the action as an effort to build 'goodwill' ahead of President Asif Zardari's visit to the US, he said, "I don't think it's a question of goodwill. This is something that's in the interest of the government of Pakistan. These Taliban and other extremists pose an existential threat to Pakistan. They've also caused problems for the government of Afghanistan. So this is not the government of Pakistan showing the United States goodwill. This is Pakistan taking action that it believes is in its own interest.

Army fears disintegration if war ordered on Taliban'

Daily Times, 30 April 2009

LAHORE: The Pakistan Army officers are afraid that if they ask the rank and file to fire on the Taliban too much, the whole army might disintegrate, Bruce Riedel, a senior Obama administration official, has said. The Obama administration is considering expediting aid to Pakistan to block militants threatening a cluster of strategic installations, The Washington Times has reported