

awn, 1 April 2006

Musharraf foresees key role for Saarc: Sri Lankan president arrives

ISLAMABAD, March 31: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Friday that Pakistan was actively promoting cooperation in the region and striving hard to make Saarc a dynamic vehicle for development. He was addressing a banquet hosted in honour of visiting Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse. The conclusion of South Asian Free Trade Agreement is a milestone on the road to regional prosperity, Gen Musharraf said. Referring to decisions taken at the Dhaka summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation last year, he observed that the admission of Afghanistan as a member and observer status for China and Japan would help shape Saarc's future direction. This will reinforce the capacity of the organisation to secure the cause of peace and prosperity in South Asia. About the peace process between Pakistan and India, he said Islamabad remained committed to the process which had helped build confidence and improve political environment. He, however, underlined the need for grasping the opportunity to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

awn, 1 April 2006

Aziz, Musharraf review political situation

RAWALPINDI, March 31: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz called on President General Pervez Musharraf here on Friday and discussed the domestic political situation, law and order and economic developments in the country, particularly in Balochistan. The president and the prime minister expressed the hope that the target of seven per cent economic growth this year would be achieved during the current fiscal year. Mr Aziz exchanged views with the president on issues likely to come up during his forthcoming visit to the United Nations, United States and Spain. President Musharraf said that no country should be allowed to establish monopoly on the UN Security Council in the name of the body's expansion. Expressing satisfaction over the country's economic growth, they said that further steps would be taken to alleviate poverty. They reaffirmed that the ongoing crackdown on terrorists in Waziristan and Balochistan would continue.

awn, 1 April 2006

Unbiased approach by N-group urged (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, March 31: Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri on Friday called for a non-discriminatory approach by all 4 members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) towards cooperation with Pakistan in the civilian nuclear sector. He said this during a meeting with a delegation of the French Senate commission for foreign affairs, defence and armed forces. The four-member delegation was headed by former foreign minister Jean Francois-Poncet. A statement issued by the foreign office spokesperson said: The foreign minister also briefed Senator Poncet about Pakistan's growing energy requirements in view of its rapid economic development and stressed the need for a non-discriminatory approach by all NSG members, including France, towards cooperation with Pakistan in the civilian nuclear sector.

Daily Times, 1 April 2006

PPP demands fresh interim setup for polls this year

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Punjab has called for a fresh interim setup of national consensus, which should appoint a new chief election commissioner to hold the next general elections. President General Pervez Musharraf and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League have launched their election campaign and so have we. We'll be calling all PPP district organisations to Lahore in April to finalise the candidates for the general elections which we expect by the end of this year, PPP Punjab Secretary Information Naveed Chaudhry told reporters after the meeting of the party's Punjab executive council on Friday. Naveed said the executive committee had decided to hold a series of workers' and party conventions on 1 April to launch the election campaign. He said that all PPP Punjab district organisations would meet in Lahore from April 17 to April 30 to approve the names of suitable candidates for the elections. The names would be finalised by the PPP parliamentary board, he added.

Daily Times, 1 April 2006

Tensions high after church attacked in Mian Channu

MULTAN: Unidentified intruders broke into a church in a central Pakistani city and torched its furniture, in what officials described Friday as an attempt to stir up religious tensions. Police said they had no immediate idea who was behind the assault, which took place at around midnight on Thursday in the town of Mian Channu in eastern Punjab province. There were no injuries. We have started an investigation into the incident but we think it was designed to create religious unrest in the area, a local police official said. Another police official, Tikka Khan, said a pastor who lives in the same compound saw a gang of people entering the church after breaking glass windows and later setting fire to the furniture.

he Statesman, 1 April 2006

ditorial: Bringing peace to Bara

ere seems to be temporary lull in the hostilities between the followers of the two religious leaders of Bara. Yet the ostilities could erupt any time and be the cause of fatal tragedies. For the last four months the media has been warning bout the dangerous situation in Bara. For months the media has been advising the government to take timely and strict ctions. The government was advised to show its strength and will to curb any violence so as to discourage any intentions f armed confrontation in the area. The government was also advised by the press that at the same time it should start egotiations between the local rivals to encourage peaceful individuals to help in keeping law and order.

he Nation, 1 April 2006

teel Mills goes for Rs 21.68b (Haq Nawaz)

SLAMABAD - In the final round of bidding for the 75 percent strategic stakes in the Pakistan Steel Mills Corporation, ie consortium of Magnitogorsk Iron & Steel Works (Russia), Tuwairqi Steel Mills (Saudi Arabia) and Arif Habib ecurities has offered the highest bid, Rs 21.68 billion. The Privatisation Commission has accepted the bid offer and later issued the Letter of Acceptance in favour of the highest bidder. The bidding was held here Friday under the chairmanship f Minister for Privatisation & Investment and Information Technology Awais Ahmed Leghari while Federal Minister for industries, Production & Special Initiatives Jehangir Khan Tareen was also present on the occasion.

awn, 2 April 2006

alakot to be built at new location: Rebuilding process from 7th

AWALPINDI, April 1: The process of reconstruction in the quake-hit areas of Azad Kashmir and NWFP will commence from April 7. This was decided at a meeting held here on Saturday with President General Pervez Musharraf r the chair. The meting decided to build a new city in place of the completely ravaged town of Balakot in the light of the ismic survey report conducted by foreign experts. The NWFP government was asked to identify the site for the new own. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, NWFP Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani, AJK Prime Minister Sikandar Hayat, iformation Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad and Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (Erra) chairman taf M. Saleem attended the meeting.

awn, 2 April 2006

efence, economic ties to get boost: Aziz, Rajapakse hold talks (Ihtasham ul Haque)

SLAMABAD, April 1: Pakistan and Sri Lanka on Saturday decided to enhance bilateral cooperation in defence, security onomic and social sectors. The decision was taken during visiting Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's meeting ith Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The meeting, which lasted 45 minutes, agreed to enhance cooperation in all the major ectors with a view to benefiting their peoples. Mr Aziz said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka were strategic partners in efforts r peace in and prosperity of South Asia and added that their strengthened cooperation would help the region realise its ue potential.

awn, 2 April 2006

our injured in Balochistan explosions

UETTA, April 1: At least four people, including a woman, were injured in a landmine explosion in Pat Feeder area and hand grenade attack in the provincial capital on Saturday. Rocket attacks on Frontier Corps checkpoints in Dera Bugti ere also reported. According to official sources, three people where seriously injured in Pat Feeder area when their ehicle hit a landmine. "The victims were on their way to their village," a police official in Dera Murad Jamali said. The injured were sent to the Dera Murad Jamali Civil Hospital. Unknown people hurled a hand grenade into the house of olice constable Abdul Majeed in Sariab area, injuring a woman. The house was also damaged.

aily Times, 2 April 2006

ecurity forces take over Bara cleric's HQ

ARA: Paramilitary forces and tribal police on Saturday took over the headquarters of cleric Mufti Munir Shakir in allah Kajori in Khyber Agency after his supporters left the premises hours before an imminent operation, official ources said. All arrangements for an early morning operation against Shakir's supporters were finalised but the eadquarters were vacated during the night, security sources told Daily Times. Troops had closed entry and exit points to e area, but the operation was delayed at the request of tribal elders who wanted to give negotiations a last chance. The

ibal elders ultimately convinced the cleric's supporters to vacate the headquarters peacefully.

Daily Times, 2 April 2006

The challenge of Balochistan -Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi

To arrest the ongoing drift Balochistan needs a quick dose of effective economic and political measures and participatory management. The latest commitments to Balochistan by the prime minister should be implemented without unnecessary delay in a non-partisan and transparent manner. The ball is in the federal government's court. The Balochistan problem involves three sets of inter-related issues: the nation-building process, development of relatively backward areas, and provincial rights and interests. Most developing states have to deal with these issues. These issues can be tackled by a host of political strategies or by keeping them within manageable limits. If allowed to fester they can undermine national harmony and state structure.

The Nation, 3 April 2006

Defence to be made stronger (Mubashir Hassan)

AHORE - Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz Sunday pledged to make country's defence stronger, and at the same time vowed to raise people's living standard by passing on to them the fruits of development. Addressing a public gathering at Tehsil Choonian, district Kasur, the PM said country's defence was strong with its state-of-the-art missile and nuclear capability, and would be made even stronger. Prior to his address, the PM inaugurated supply of gas to the residents of Choonian Tehsil. Chief Minister Ch Pervaiz Elahi and MNA, Sardar Talib Hassan Nakai also addressed the gathering, while State Minister for Housing and MNA from Choonian, Sardar Asif Nakai presented welcome address.

The Nation, 3 April 2006

Editorial: Balakot reconstruction

The decision to commence the reconstruction phase of the quake-ravaged areas from April 7 has not come too soon. In fact, not much time is left for the new houses to come up before the next winter sets in some time in October. One can appreciate the priority for rescue and relief following the massive devastation caused by the October 8 earthquake and the time required to do a seismic survey with the help of foreign experts before deciding whether towns like Balakot should be rebuilt at the same site or relocated elsewhere. Now that it has been decided at a high-level meeting chaired by the president on Saturday and attended by Mr Aziz among others, to reconstruct it at a new, safer location, it is to be hoped that the government would provide ready technical advice to the people to raise their houses 'futuristically' as it is suggesting.

Dawn, 3 April 2006

Governor-CM showdown sparks crisis in NWFP (Zulfiqar Ali)

ISHAWAR, April 2: NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman has declined to summon a provincial assembly session on Monday for swearing in two notified women MPAs, triggering a controversy between the governor and the ruling alliance. Reacting to the governor's move, Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani said that the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) would submit a requisition to the speaker on Monday for an immediate assembly session. "This act of the governor is a black spot on democracy. Under the constitution, he (governor) is bound to act on my advice and summon the session on Monday morning," Mr Durrani told a councillors' convention here on Sunday. "The governor has been resurised not to summon the session. He can't independently use his power to fulfil his constitutional obligations," he remarked.

Dawn, 3 April 2006

Landmines kill 10 in Balochistan (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, April 2: Five levies personnel and five civilians were killed and 29 people were injured in four incidents of landmine explosions in Sani Shoran of Bolan district, Kohlu and Jaffarabad on Sunday. In the first incident, official sources said that a convoy of the Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) was moving to an exploration site in Sani Shoran. It was escorted by levies personnel who were in a pick-up which hit a landmine. The resulting explosion killed six people, five of them levies personnel, on the spot and seriously injured two levies personnel. Soon after the explosion, armed men opened fire on the convoy from the nearby mountains.

Daily Times, 3 April 2006

Christians protest attack on churches

MULTAN: Christians on Sunday protested against the desecration of the Holy Bible and arson attacks on their places of worship in various parts of the country, terming the incidents 'religious terrorism'. Special services were held for those who had died in various incidents of violence against minorities. "It is religious terrorism to set our church (in Mian Hanu) ablaze during the period when we (Christians) fast. It is an attack on our religion and belief. We feel unsafe and insecure," said Chaudhry Naveed Amer Jeeva, MPA and the coordinator of All Pakistan Minorities Alliance, South Punjab. He said that the present regime had failed to protect churches, missionary properties and religious leaders. He said that churches had been burnt down in Sargodha and Sukkur, more than 300 copies of holy Bible were set ablaze in Sanglil and the cross desecrated and Christians killed in terrorist activities.

Daily Times, 3 April 2006

Soldier killed, four injured in Waziristan attack

IRANSHAH: A Frontier Constabulary jawan was killed and four others, including a captain, were injured when unidentified people fired a rocket at Tochi Fort in Datta Khel in North Waziristan on Saturday night. Another rocket fired by the paramilitary troops in retaliation reportedly landed in a nearby house, injuring three children aged six to 10. The C jawan was Afzal of the Thal Scouts and the injured were Captain Muhammad Sohail, Hawaldar Sultan and Jawans Akhtar and Shah Nawaz. Witnesses said helicopters were also used in the search operation following the attack, which continued till Sunday morning. Agencies add: In a separate incident, two militants were wounded in a clash with police in Jera Ismail Khan, Reuters reported.

Daily Times, 4 April 2006

Lawyer rules out governor's rule (Shahzad Raza)

ISHAWAR: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) government is "extremely strong and no one can topple it," NWFP Chief Minister Muhammad Akram Khan Durrani said on Monday. Referring to Governor Khalilur Rehman's refusal to summon an assembly session on Sunday, Durrani told reporters in his NWFP Assembly chambers that it was an attempt to prevent two newly nominated MMA women MPAs from taking their oaths of office. "But we have thwarted the conspiracy," he said. "How can someone who cannot even sign a summary impose governor's rule in the province" He said that the MMA government was strong and enjoyed the support of 70 MPAs. "Monday's session is the victory of democracy and the speaker has made the right decision," he said.

The Nation, 4 April 2006

Five killed in NWA blast and shootout

ISHAWAR - As many as seven persons including two alleged militants were killed while nine others including six troops injured in separate incidents in Miranshah and Mirali towns of North Waziristan Agency on Monday. The two alleged militants were killed in troops' return fire in Mirali while five civilians killed when the passenger pick-up hit a landmine. The security personnel during a routine patrolling in Mirali bazar found some three suspected persons who were asked to surrender but instead of complying with the orders they pelted a hand-grenade towards troops as a result six troops injured. In retaliation, the troops also opened fire as a result two alleged militants were killed on the spot while their third accomplice managed to escape.

The Nation, 4 April 2006

Pakistan won't accept LoC-based solution (Afzal Bajwa)

ISLAMABAD - Terming the Line of Control (LoC) as part of Kashmir problem, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri Monday said that Pakistan would not accept any LoC-based solution while flexibility and initiatives were only meant to alleviate sufferings of the people of disputed territory. The foreign minister was addressing the concluding session of a seminar on "Conflict Resolution in Kashmir: The Human Dimensions and Political Imperatives."

The Nation, 4 April 2006

Editorial: Yet another crisis

THE NWFP crisis seems to have deepened as the provincial assembly met Monday morning despite the Governor's refusal to summon the session following his row with the Chief Minister. Two women MMA members, who were declared MPAs in place of the ones recently unseated through a constitutional reference, took oath as the day's proceedings began 20 minutes ahead of schedule. The Speaker had convened the House to meet at 11:30 after receiving a requisition duly signed by Treasury members. While the PML(Q) boycotted the session it was attended by other opposition parties, including the ANP, PPP(S), PPP-P and the PML(N). On Sunday, accusing Governor Khalilur Rehman

f acting under pressure, Mr Akram Durrani got the signatures required to requisition a session.

awn, 4 April 2006

resident vows to establish govt writ: Commanders discuss situation in Balochistan, Waziristan

SLAMABAD, April 3: President Gen Pervez Musharraf declared on Monday that no one would be allowed to damage national assets, and expressed the hope that development work in Balochistan would go on uninterrupted. Presiding over the 59th Formation Commanders Conference at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, he said the writ of the government would be established at all costs in Balochistan. He said the law-enforcement agencies and the Frontier Corps were playing their role in effectively dealing with the law and order situation in the province.

tatesman, 4 April 2006

Uncertainty ends as MPAs take oath (Riaz Khan Daudzai)

ESHAWAR: Putting an end to the week-long uncertain situation at least for the time-being, the two newly-elected lady members of the provincial assembly, Saira Bano and Fozia Naz, Monday took oath in an extremely hurriedly requisitioned session of the assembly. The speaker, Bakht Jehan Khan, who was presiding over the secession, administered oath to the newly-elected members. Earlier, he announced resignations of four MPAs, Maulana Dildar Ahmad, Gorsaran Lal, Rukhsana Raz and Yasmin Khalid and informed the House that the Election Commission of Pakistan had issued notification declaring MMA's Saira Bano and Fozia Naz as new members of the assembly.

he Nation, 5 April 2006

IS asked to adopt 'package approach' (Abdul Ahad)

SLAMABAD - Pakistan on Tuesday reiterating position on the need of addressing its legitimate civil nuclear energy needs has called for a package approach to prevent arms race in South Asia and promote restraint in the region. Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri told the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Richard Boucher who called on him here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday. Kasuri also shared Pakistan's perspective on US civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India, while briefing the US official about Pakistan's growing energy requirements. He underlined the need for a "package approach" in this regard

aily Times, 5 April 2006

Russian planes in review: Pakistan buying Chinese F-10 fighter aircraft

SHORE: Pakistan has decided to buy state-of-the-art Chinese F-10 multi-role fighter-cum-bomber planes, while it will make a decision in July regarding the purchase of US-made F-16s, reports the Gulf Times. The first batch of JF Thunder-7 aircraft being jointly manufactured by Pakistan and China are expected to be ready for induction into the Pakistan Air Force ahead of schedule early next year. PAF chief Air Chief Marshal Tanveer Mahmood Ahmad will visit China shortly to inspect the project. It will be his first foreign trip as air chief. According to sources in defence production, Defence Production Secretary Lt Gen Ali Jan Orakzai, who visited China last month, had an "extremely fruitful" visit.

aily Times, 5 April 2006

Editorial: Trade hub? What trade hub?

The world would like Pakistan to transform itself from a 'warrior' state to a 'trading' nation because that would make it easier for everyone to deal with Pakistan. That however requires an overhaul of the state institutions where important decisions are made, a rewriting of textbooks that buttress our jihad-oriented nationalism, an across-the-board revamping of the public mind through the use of the media, and a gradual and politically viable rolling back of the forces of disorder. Trade-related pragmatism dawned on our ruling politicians recently when they discovered that the formula of \$1 billion for development and \$ 11 billion for defence was simply not sustainable.

aily Times, 5 April 2006

In the aftermath of the visit - I M Mohsin

Democracy is "Pakistan's future" as Bush affirmed in Islamabad, then there is hope for a meaningful dialogue leading to solution of the Kashmir dispute in the future. It is perhaps too early to assess the impact of George W Bush's visit to South Asia. However, his reservations with regard to a solution of the Kashmir dispute may have affected the spasmodic Indo-Pak parleys. India may have successfully sold him the propaganda of Kashmir being an "atoot ang" of India and demonised the freedom struggle of the Kashmiris by linking it to the war on terror.

awn, 5 April 2006

soldiers killed by landmines: Bugti

UETTA, April 4: At least seven personnel of Frontier Corps were killed and 11 injured in two landmine blasts in Loti and Ghori area of Dera Bugti district on Monday and Tuesday, according to Nawab Akbar Bugti. Official sources, however, confirmed death of two FC men with six others suffering injuries. Sources said that FC soldier Mohammad Masir was killed when he was hit by a landmine in Habib Rahi area of Sangsilla while defusing it.

awn, 5 April 2006

IPAs seek ban on alien trawlers in Balochistan waters (Amanullah Kasi)

UETTA, April 4: The Balochistan assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution against exploitation of precious marine life by domestic and international trawlers operating within the coastal limits of the province. "Such exploitation is tantamount to the economic slaughter of local fisherfolk," the lawmakers said in the resolution. The session was chaired by Speaker Jamal Shah Kakar

aily Times, 6 April 2006

6 militants and 4 troops killed in Waziristan gunfights (Haji Mujtaba)

IRANSHAH: Sixteen militants were killed and 19 arrested after security forces retaliated to two deadly attacks at two sites in North Waziristan on Wednesday, military spokesman said. "Four troops were killed and eight injured in the attacks," Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan, the Inter Services Public Relations director general, told Daily Times. A purported spokesman for pro-Taliban local militants in North Waziristan, Tariq Jameel, confirmed attacks on the security forces but denied "any loss of militants". He said the late Tuesday night attacks were "revenge" against the killing of two militants in Mir Ali town on Monday.

aily Times, 6 April 2006

US wants civilians in control of military (Rana Qaisar)

SLAMABAD: The United States looks forward to the day that there is civilian rule in Pakistan and civilian institutions have supremacy over the military, the top US official on South Asia said on Wednesday. "We firmly believe in civilian rule and civilian control of military in Pakistan," US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Richard Boucher said at a press conference after meeting President General Pervez General Musharraf. Asked if it is not a contradiction in US policy that while it supports a democratic society in Pakistan, it is silent on the issue of Gen Musharraf's uniform, he said: "This (uniform) indeed is an issue. But we have to see how this issue is addressed by President Musharraf."

aily Times, 6 April 2006

Aziz pleads for Pak-US N-deal

NEW YORK: The US-India civilian nuclear technology cooperation agreement has "serious implications" for the security environment in the South Asia region and the US can rectify this by offering Pakistan a similar deal, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Tuesday. "A selective and discriminatory approach will have serious implications for the security environment in South Asia as well as for international non-proliferation efforts," Aziz said in an address to the World Leaders Forum at Columbia University. "Nuclear non-proliferation and strategic stability in South Asia will be possible when the US fulfils the needs of both Pakistan and India for civil-nuclear technology on an equal basis," he said.

aily Times, 6 April 2006

'Pak-US ties vital for stability'

SLAMABAD: The Pak-US relationship is vital for peace, stability, economic growth and prosperity at the regional and global level, said Senate Chairman Muhammad Mian Soomro during a meeting with Richard Boucher, the US assistant secretary of state for South Asian Affairs, at the parliament house on Wednesday. Boucher also met National Assembly speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain and exchanged views on democracy in Pakistan. Soomro briefed Boucher on the senate's functions and its formation, stating that it was created to provide equal representation to the federating units at the central level

awn, 6 April 2006

Aziz reiterates call for civilian N-package (Masood Haider)

NEW YORK, April 5: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Tuesday asked the United States to reconsider a package civilian nuclear deal for India and Pakistan "with a view to preventing a nuclear arms race in the region". Delivering a keynote

address to a large gathering at Columbia University, Mr Aziz asserted: "In my view, a major opportunity could be lost if such a package deal is not considered," noting "there is still time to rectify the situation". Mr Aziz said that a "selective and discriminatory approach will have serious implications for the security environment in South Asia as well as for international non-proliferation efforts".

The Nation, 7 April 2006

America to work with Musharraf

WASHINGTON (APP) - US National Security Advisor Steve Hadley said Wednesday that the United States must use its increasing influence with India and Pakistan to encourage them to work out their differences, especially on matters such as Kashmir. He made the remarks while addressing the National Bureau of Asian Research Strategic Asia Forum. He said the US strategy for the South Asian region starts with the premise "that we can and must improve relations with both of these countries simultaneously." In Pakistan, the advisor stated President Bush "underscored that our commitment to Pakistan is broad-based, strategic and long-term, and that we support the development of a modern, democratic and prosperous state." "It outlined several areas of cooperation for the two countries, setting an agenda going forward." He referred to President Musharraf's remarks that Pakistan was striving for "democratic reform" in Pakistan. Hadley said, adding: "Kashmir is a point of conflict."

The Nation, 7 April 2006

US to help Pak meet energy needs

ISLAMABAD (APP) - US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A Boucher has said that US is interested in helping Pakistan to meet its growing energy needs. In an interview with PTV late Wednesday night, he said he held broad-based discussion with President Pervez Musharraf, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and other officials in this connection. He said, these matters were also discussed with the US president during his visit to Pakistan which helped in enhancing the broadening of relations and added now "we have deeper relations which we had never before."

The Nation, 7 April 2006

Editorial: Electioneering

WITH the campaigning phase for next year's general elections effectively under way, the ARD's Lahore meeting on Saturday should be of profound importance. It comes just prior to Makhdoom Amin Fahim's meeting with Mian Nawaz Sharif in London, which in turn is to precede the much-awaited Nawaz-Benazir summit. Therefore, from here will begin to show that will determine what kind of front the exiled former PMs mount against General Musharraf's quest for a second term as President, and just when they decide to come back to the country to give their campaigns the proverbial kiss of life. So, while ARD component parties are taken into confidence at the onset of the process, certain important aspects need to be taken into account.

Dawn, 7 April 2006

Leaders return prerequisite for fair polls: ARD: Boucher meets Fahim, Raja Zafar

ISLAMABAD, April 6: President of the People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) Makhdoom Amin Fahim and chairman of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Raja Zafarul Haq on Thursday told US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher that opposition parties could boycott the next elections if former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were barred from the process. Talking to a group of reporters after an hour-long breakfast meeting with Mr Boucher at the US Embassy here, the leaders of the two major component parties of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) said that they had told the US official that Ms Bhutto's and Mr Sharif's return was a prerequisite for free and fair polls in the country

Dawn, 7 April 2006

Leaders return prerequisite for fair polls: ARD: Boucher meets Fahim, Raja Zafar

ISLAMABAD, April 6: President of the People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) Makhdoom Amin Fahim and chairman of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Raja Zafarul Haq on Thursday told US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard Boucher that opposition parties could boycott the next elections if former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were barred from the process. Talking to a group of reporters after an hour-long breakfast meeting with Mr Boucher at the US Embassy here, the leaders of the two major component parties of the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) said that they had told the US official that Ms Bhutto's and Mr Sharif's

turn was a prerequisite for free and fair polls in the country

awn, 7 April 2006

What could brighten the country's image -Dr Ayesha Siddiq

HE government of Pakistan is concerned about building a positive image for the country for which it seems to be struggling to hire highly paid and presentable consultants. These people are meant to take the Pakistan roadshow to the rest of the world to prove that the country is as sane as any other in the South Asian region, if not the entire world. Unfortunately, those responsible for projecting the positive image or the policymakers in general fail to emphasize the good things that the country has always had such as the extremely liberal family laws, especially the divorce law.

atesman, 7 April 2006

0 militants killed in Miran Shah

ESHAWAR: The authorities said on Thursday that up to 40 militants were killed by security forces in clashes a day earlier in North Waziristan Agency. "The clashes that took place between the miscreants and security forces in two different areas of North Waziristan Agency on Wednesday left as many as 40 miscreants dead," A spokesman of the Governor's Secretariat FATA said in statement here. The statement said that the clashes started when the miscreants attacked the Datta Khel Fort on the night of 4th April 2006 at about 11PM with missiles. As the result two jawans of the security forces Hawaldar Umar Hayat and Sepoy Shafi were injured.

atesman, 7 April 2006

Editorial: CM's political failure

Chief Minister Mohammad Akram Durrani has suspended tehsil nazim Lakki for 90 days on the grounds that he was creating law and order situation. One can only be sorry for this kind of reasoning to suspend an elected official. The MMA government has been unable to make any dent in the activities of professional criminals, who steal, rob, murder, kidnap, and hijack cars, sell fake medicines, sell counterfeit items, government officials who refuse to do their jobs without being bribed by the citizens, engineers who would not approve bill unless paid commission by contractors and suppliers, medical staff at government hospitals selling medicine in the private market that was meant for poor patients of government hospitals. The MMA government has been unable to apprehend most of these criminals.

aily Times, 8 April 2006

Vaziristan clerics ask army to leave ((Haji Mujtaba and Akhtar Amin)

IRANSHAH/MARDAN: Pro-local Taliban tribal clerics in North Waziristan on Friday demanded the army pull out of the area while parliamentarians and nazims of seven Frontier districts asked government to take military action against outlaws in Malakand Agency. Two separate jirgas were held in Mir Ali and Mardan. In Mir Ali, clerics asked the army to leave North Waziristan and guard the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The jirga in Mardan agreed to take action themselves if the government failed to initiate a military operation against outlaws in Malakand Agency within 24 hours.

aily Times, 8 April 2006

Great India, Pakistan equally, Aziz asks US

ISLAMPUR: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that there should be a level playing field for all countries, particularly for Pakistan and India, to get civil nuclear technology for power generation. Talking to the Spanish media, he said Pakistan had been working for nuclear non-proliferation in the region. He said that Pakistan's energy needs were growing at a fast pace and it should be given a similar deal from the United States as had been agreed by it with India recently. Aziz said Pakistan had prepared a plan to meet its energy requirements, which envisages the production of 8,800 megawatts of energy through nuclear resources within the next 25 years

aily Times, 8 April 2006

SP vows to establish caliphate worldwide

ISLAMABAD: Activists of the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) vowed to establish a global caliphate, beginning with Pakistan. In a rally attended by thousands of activists of the banned group to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on Friday, leaders of the SSP called for an Islamic theocracy in Pakistan. "The concept of nation state is an obstacle in the way of the establishment of Khilafat. We will start the establishment of Khilafat in Pakistan and then will do so across the world," said Zaheerul Islam Abbasi, a former general who was sacked and arrested in 1995 for trying to topple the government of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto

Daily Times, 8 April 2006

India may pull out from Siachen

NEW DELHI: The government of the United Progressive Alliance appears to have buckled under US pressure and the persistent demands of Pakistan to completely withdraw its 4,000 troops from Siachen, the highest battlefield in the world, Indian newspaper The Pioneer reported on Friday. The paper reported that following a secret meeting between Indian National Security Adviser MK Narayanan and Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Dubai in the last week of February, India has agreed in principle to the phased withdrawal of the Indian Army from its positions.

Daily Times, 8 April 2006

Making the peace process forward ? Abbas Rashid

The process also needs to be energised with achievements that go beyond trade and transport links. In this context it is useful to refer to the Indian prime minister's observation that it was possible to come to a meaningful agreement on issues like Siachen, Sir Creek and Baglihar. All three are important but for its possible impact on the peace constituencies in both countries, perhaps none more so than Siachen

Daily Times, 8 April 2006

What is happening in Balochistan? - Shaukat Qadir

While the quantity of gas produced in Balochistan is only 30 percent of the country's total production, its superior quality means that it accounts for nearly 70 percent of the gas-energy. Had they been paid royalty in accordance with the retail price and the calorific value it would be possible to provide gas throughout the province

Daily Times, 9 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Falsehoods about Waziristan

The government's policy to cleanse the tribal agencies, especially South and North Waziristan, of hardened extremist Taliban and Al Qaeda elements has drawn increasing flak from various quarters. The political opposition, including the religio-political alliance, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, says the policy is being pursued under pressure from the United States. The MMA also says there are no foreign elements in the area and the security forces are killing Pakistani tribesmen. On the other hand, non-religious and even some liberal elements want the government to remove the blanket ban over the region.

The News, 9 April 2006

Musharraf kick-starts reconstruction of quake zone

MANSEHRA: President General Pervez Musharraf launched on Saturday the reconstruction of the earthquake-hit areas in the NWFP and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and assured no stone would be left unturned in providing "better than before" infrastructure, including homes and schools. "There is no dearth of funds for reconstruction and the government would fulfill its responsibility by constructing the whole infrastructure in the affected areas of the country," he said while addressing a big public meeting after initiating restoration work on the Jamia Masjid and performing the ground breaking of a primary school in the Kodar village of Mansehra district's Siran Valley devastated by the Oct 8 quake.

The News, 9 April 2006

Kishanganga project (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: The Permanent Commission of Indus Waters (PCIW) of Pakistan and India is currently in the process of making a joint report to recommend the respective governments for initiating joint efforts to appoint a neutral expert for the resolution of the 300 MW controversial Kishanganga hydropower project. A Swiss professor, Raymond Lafitte, appointed neutral expert by the World Bank, is already listening to Pakistan and India to resolve the 450 MW Baglihar hydropower project issue. Under the Indus Waters Treaty, as a first step, both sides of the permanent commission are in process of making a joint report about the project. The Pakistan Commission of Indus Water has submitted its report to the government saying the talks at the level of Permanent Commission of Indus Waters have failed to resolve the Kishanganga hydropower project and recommended to move a neutral expert.

The News, 9 April 2006

100 Bugti tribesmen surrender

QUETTA: Dozens of alleged supporters of Nawab Akbar Bugti laid down their arms on Saturday and surrendered to

authorities in restive Balochistan, an official said. The 40 men said they had been fighting government forces and amassing gas facilities in Balochistan on the orders of Nawab Akbar Bugti, said Abdul Samad Lasi, the district coordination officer (DCO) Dera Bugti district. The militants led by Zafar, alias Zafru, and Shah Mor surrendered their weapons at a public ceremony in Dera Bugti, 300 kilometres south-east of the provincial capital, Lasi said.

The News, 9 April 2006

Troops moved to Malakand to smash kidnapper dens (Ikram Hoti)

ISLAMABAD: More than 1,000 Army troops have been moved to Malakand Agency possibly for carrying out an operation against gangs of kidnappers, authorities told The News here on Saturday. When contacted, DIG Police Malakand Rao Amin Hashim said, "We spoke to chief secretary NWFP a fortnight ago and there was a long session on the issue of kidnappers' gangs operating in the area and challenging the writ of the state. I suppose these troops might be arriving here for that purpose, and I don't see any other purpose of the movement of such thick contingent." When asked if he had been informed in advance on the movement of the force, he said his knowledge was limited to a programme for smashing the gangs of criminals in the area.

The News, 9 April 2006

Gen Majeed to be new Ten Corps commander (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Lt General Tariq Majeed will be the new corps commander of Ten-Corps (Chaklala Corps) vice lieutenant General Salahuddin Satti. Gen Tariq Majeed is currently chief of the general staff (CGS) in the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the armed forces. General Satti, who has served incumbent corps for about two years, is expected to join the GHQ as an important principal staff officer (PSO). He may have swap with General Tariq Majeed.

The News, 10 April 2006

Rockets fired at FC post in N Waziristan

IRANSHAH: Suspected militants fired rockets at a Frontier Corps post near Miranshah on Saturday night and troops retaliated by firing with artillery guns. There were no reports of losses in the exchange of firing by the two sides. Official sources said the FC post at Tuth Naray in the Dattakhel area came under a rocket attack at night. They said the rockets missed the target. Meanwhile, a big tribal Jirga would be held today in Mir Ali to discuss the issue of Pakistan Army's presence and military operations in North Waziristan

The News, 10 April 2006

Peshawar-Jalalabad regular bus service from 15th (Mohammad Ali Khan)

ESHAWAR: All is set for starting a regular bus service between Jalalabad and Peshawar by April 15, channelising a road link between Pakistan and Afghanistan after a gap of 27 years. NWFP Chief Minister Muhammad Akram Khan Aurani will formally inaugurate the service by flagging off the bus to Jalalabad, Noorul Haq, NWFP secretary transport, told The News on Sunday. The first bus of the service from Jalalabad reached provincial capital on March 15, while a similar bus from this side went to Jalalabad on March 17 as per an agreement reached between authorities in February 2006 at Islamabad.

Daily Times, 10 April 2006

BLA declared terrorist outfit (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has banned the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and declared it a terrorist outfit that committed terrorist acts in Balochistan. The Interior Ministry issued a notification to this effect on Sunday and referred it to the provincial governments for action. The federal government exercised its powers under Section 11(b) of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 to declare the BLA a terrorist outfit. The decision was made soon after the government cancelled arms licences issued earlier to Baloch nationalist leaders. The Interior Ministry said it had evidence that the BLA was involved in rocket attacks on national installations, the civilian population and security forces. The BLA was also accused of laying landmines in the province.

Daily Times, 10 April 2006

9 die in stampede after congregation in Karachi (Abbas Naqvi)

KARACHI: At least 29 women and children died and more than 50 of others were injured in a stampede as a crowd exited a weekly religious gathering held at the Daawat-e-Islami headquarters near Old Sabzi Mandi at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday. Thousands of women and their children were leaving the Daawat-e-Islami's sprawling Faizan-e-Madina mosque

headquarters after the gathering. They were using its sole "Bab-e-Janat ul Baqi" gate when one woman slipped down the slope outside the gate apparently after fainting from the heat. When women around her stopped to pick her up, they locked the exit of the stream of women emerging, and chaos ensued

Daily Times, 11 April 2006

Taliban offer peace talks in North Waziristan (Iqbal Khattak)

ISLAMABAD: Tribal Taliban offered to enter into negotiations with the government for peace in the tribal areas as thousands attended a jirga in Mir Ali, the second biggest town in North Waziristan, on Monday. "Troops should leave Waziristan, all arrested people should be released, wanted men be given amnesty, military operations be halted and innocent people should no longer be killed or their homes demolished and the ban on display of weapons be lifted," were some of the key Taliban demands read out from a letter by clerics at the jirga, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) general-secretary Maulana Abdur Rehman told Daily Times by phone.

Daily Times, 11 April 2006

No more talks with Bugti: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday that the government would hold no more talks with Nawab Akbar Bugti to resolve the Balochistan issue. The government will be in control of the troubled areas of the province within a couple of months, the minister told reporters in Parliament House. He said members of the banned Balochistan Liberation Army had been arrested and they had confessed their crimes. "They have admitted that they were involved in targeting important national installations and bomb blasts for which they were being paid," Ahmed said, adding that they also admitted they were working for Nawab Akbar Bugti.

Daily Times, 11 April 2006

No more talks with Bugti: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday that the government would hold no more talks with Nawab Akbar Bugti to resolve the Balochistan issue. The government will be in control of the troubled areas of the province within a couple of months, the minister told reporters in Parliament House. He said members of the banned Balochistan Liberation Army had been arrested and they had confessed their crimes. "They have admitted that they were involved in targeting important national installations and bomb blasts for which they were being paid," Ahmed said, adding that they also admitted they were working for Nawab Akbar Bugti.

Daily Times, 11 April 2006

3 killed, 20 injured in Kohlu blast (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: At least two people were killed and 20 injured when a powerful bomb exploded in a barber shop in Kohlu, some 300 kilometres east of Quetta, on Monday morning. A bakery and an adjacent flat were completely destroyed, said Akbar Marri, the district administrative officer. He said that a levies constable was killed on the spot and another man died on the way to hospital. Marri said that seven suspects had been arrested, including a man who was seen running from the spot after the incident.

Daily Times, 11 April 2006

No decision to arrest Bugti, says Sharpao

ISLAMABAD: The government has not yet decided whether or not to arrest tribal chief Nawab Akbar Bugti, Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao said on Monday, Online reports. Talking to reporters here at Parliament House, Sherpao said the Bugti tribal chief was not in government detention. Asked to comment on Nawab Bugti's denial that a group of armed men who surrendered to the administration in Dera Bugti on Saturday were linked to him, Sherpao said the Bugti chief would also probably deny that he had forcefully evicted thousands of Bugti tribesmen from Dera Bugti. He said thanks to government initiatives, thousands of these tribesmen had now resettled in their homeland.

Dawn, 13 April 2006

Top leadership of Sunni Tehrik wiped out (Habib Khan Ghori)

CARACHI, April 12: The entire central leadership of the Sunni Tehrik has been wiped out in Tuesday's blast at Nishtar Park. Its chief Mohammad Abbas Quaderi, Maulana Iftikhar Ahmad Bhatti, Maulana Ikram Quaderi and Dr Abdul Wahid were among those who were killed in the blast. The other prominent leaders of the Ahle Sunnat who were also killed in the tragedy included Hafiz Mohammad Taqi of Markazi Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan, Qari Mukhtar Qaderi of Darul

floom Amjadia, Federal B Area, Haji Mohammad Hanif Billo, President of Awam Ahle Sunnat, and Sahibzada Faridul Isnain Kazmi.

Dawn, 13 April 2006

Editorial: How will the ban help?

THE government has begun to betray its sense of desperation and helplessness in the strategy it has adopted vis-à-vis the insurgency in Balochistan. Having proved ineffective in curbing the violence in the besieged province, Islamabad has now resorted to measures that are bound to prove counterproductive. The latest step it has taken is to ban the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) after declaring it to be a terrorist organisation. Exactly how the authorities expect the ban to help suppress the on-going violence in Balochistan is not very clear. True, the BLA has claimed responsibility for many of the acts of sabotage which are harming Balochistan's civil society and its economy. But experience has shown that militant outfits taking recourse to violence usually follow a hit-and-run mode of operation, making their detection and reining them in extremely difficult. The BLA can therefore be expected to remain in existence as an organisation fighting for the rights of the Baloch in its own way. The ban will only create more bad blood between the two sides and make conciliation more difficult.

Dawn, 13 April 2006

Editorial: A horrific atrocity

NO words are strong enough to express one's grief and horror over Tuesday's carnage at Karachi's Nishtar Park. That the perpetrators of this dastardly crime should have chosen a day like Eid Miladun-Nabi to spill blood adds both to the mystery as to the motive. It was not a time-bomb, nor a device exploded by remote control, because it is now confirmed that a suicide-bomber had carried out the attack. But who motivated him and with what motive? The security authorities have, of course, come in for criticism, especially for being late after the blast had killed 47 people and injured more than 100. The security authorities' version is that they had cleared the stage as being safe, and that the blast was the work of a suicide bomber, who had mixed with the crowd. It is humanly impossible for any security agency to check every person in a procession or crowd of such magnitude.

Dawn, 13 April 2006

Islamabad annoyed over AJK lawmakers' visit abroad (Tariq Naqash)

ISLAMABAD, April 12: The federal government has taken strong exception to a recent visit by AJK lawmakers and officials to several foreign countries, Dawn learnt on good authority here on Wednesday. An eight-member delegation of lawmakers and officials was constituted by the AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Sardar Siab Khalid to visit the United States, United Kingdom and Norway, apparently to highlight the Kashmir cause.

The News, 13 April 2006

Interior Sindh shut to protest Karachi blast

HYDERABAD: A complete shutter-down was observed on Wednesday in several districts and towns of interior Sindh, including Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Thatta and Larkana, against the killings of over 50 people in a bomb blast at a religious gathering in Karachi's Nishtar Park on Tuesday. Reports said rallies and protest demonstrations were also staged while youths torched tyres at some places. All shopping centres and markets remained shut while thin traffic was plying on roads in many districts and towns of the province in response to the call given by mainstream political and religious parties to observe three-day mourning over the Karachi tragedy. Hyderabad wore a deserted look as its main shopping and trade centres remained shut throughout the day.

The News, 13 April 2006

Karachi mourns 47 blast victims amid tension (A H Khanzada)

KARACHI: Uncertainty and tension triggered by a bomb blast at Nishtar Park here on Tuesday evening continued overnight and on Wednesday as the city mourned the loss of 47 innocent lives in the terrorist act. Police and Rangers, who had disappeared following the blast, were seen patrolling some vital city parts on Wednesday. The metropolis remained completely closed, wearing a deserted look. However, no untoward incident was reported.

The News, 13 April 2006

IMA blames Muttahida (Fasihur Rehman Khan)

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday adopted unanimously a motion moved by the combined opposition to

ebate Tuesday's terrorism incident in Karachi on Thursday, suspending all other business, but Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed did not mince words in pointing fingers at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), kicking yet another political blame game in the country.

Daily Times, 14 April 2006

President asks agencies to probe Karachi blast

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Thursday directed all federal intelligence agencies to investigate the Karachi suicide bombing on Eid Miladun Nabi and bring the people behind it to justice, sources said. In a meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, the president expressed firm resolve to fight terrorism. The prime minister briefed the president on his Karachi visit. The president and the prime minister reviewed the overall law and order situation in the country, especially in the context of the terrorist act in Karachi. They expressed the government's determination to punish the culprits...

Daily Times, 14 April 2006

Reflections on a massacre - Tanvir Ahmad Khan

Sadly, the development process is turning the bubble in which upper classes live into a greater retreat than ever before. The heady wine of growth statistics makes the elite oblivious of the social protest that, in the absence of representative political parties, manifests itself in disorder and rebellion. Yes, it (the name of God) is the most heavy-laden of all human words. None has become so soiled, so mutilated...

Dawn, 14 April 2006

Top Al Qaeda man, 8 others killed in raid (Pazir Gul)

HIRAMSHAH, April 13: Nine militants, including a top Al Qaeda operative carrying a bounty of \$5 million on his head, have been killed in an air strike six kilometers from here, senior security officials said. Muhsin Musa Matwalli Atwah alias Abdur Rehman alias Abu Muhajir, wanted by the US for his involvement in the 1998 bombings on American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, was killed in an attack on Wednesday night, the officials said. The 41-year old militant was said to be from Egypt.

Dawn, 14 April 2006

Access to N-energy vital for Pakistan?

RAWALPINDI, April 13: President General Pervez Musharraf on Thursday underscored that Pakistan must have access to civil nuclear energy and looked forward to international cooperation in this regard. Speaking to US Senator Chuck Hagel, who called on him, the president said that Pakistan's expanding energy requirements would be met through a variety of sources, including nuclear power generation. He outlined Pakistan's views on the US-India nuclear agreement and said there were concerns about its implications for regional stability and security...

Dawn, 14 April 2006

Politicising a tragedy

POLITICAL AND acts of arson were not the only unfortunate occurrences in the wake of Tuesday's bomb blast in Karachi's Nishtar park; another more unfortunate development is the politicisation of what obviously was a fiendish act of terror. Many political parties, including the party whose leadership was virtually wiped out by the blast, have held press conferences and issued statements designed to make political capital out of what indeed was one of the worst acts of terrorism of its kind in Pakistan...

Dawn, 15 April 2006

Strike observed against Karachi killing

KARACHI, April 14: A protest was observed in Karachi and most cities and towns of interior Sindh on Friday in response to a strike call given by the Jamaat Ahle Sunnat and endorsed by several other political organisations to condemn Tuesday's blast in Nishtar Park in which 47 people were killed and over 100 injured. A partial strike was also observed in several cities and towns of Punjab. In Lahore, traffic was thin on intracity and inter-city roads. Major markets and shopping centres, however, closed only for Friday prayers.

Daily Times, 15 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Battle for Waziristan

Opposition political parties, especially the religio-political alliance, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, bitterly criticise the government policy of stationing troops in the tribal agencies. This is an issue we have discussed before but it bears repeating because the opposition has been trying to fudge facts on what is going on in some of these agencies, especially South and North Waziristan that abut Afghan territory. One of the lies given out by the MMA and other religious groups is to deny the presence in these areas of foreign Al Qaeda elements. Now we have yet another story of a raid, which has allegedly killed a top Al Qaeda operative and at least 12 other suspected militants...

Daily Times, 15 April 2006

Govt isn't serious about Baloch crisis, says Mengal (Aziz Sanghur)

KARACHI: President General Pervez Musharraf has launched an undeclared war against the smaller provinces, which nationalist forces would resist, Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM) President Sardar Attaullah Khan Mengal said on Friday. Talking to Daily Times at his residence, he said that the present government was not serious about resolving the Balochistan issue. Akhtar Mengal, former chief minister of Balochistan, MNA Rauf Mengal and a large number of party workers were present...

Daily Times, 16 April 2006

7 killed in major Afghan battle

KANDAHAR: Forty-one suspected Taliban and six policemen were killed in a major battle in southern Afghanistan in an area where the Taliban leader once lived, a governor said on Saturday. The battle southwest of Kandahar city lasted almost the entire day on Friday, with helicopters from the US-led coalition firing rockets in support of Afghan forces on the ground...

Daily Times, 16 April 2006

More troops deployed on border

DIR: US and Afghan troops launched a joint operation in Afghanistan's Kunar province as Pakistan deployed paramilitary forces along the Pak-Afghan border to check the possible infiltration of fleeing Al Qaeda and Taliban elements. Military authorities said that forces were deployed to check the movement of terrorists from Afghanistan to Pakistan, rejecting claims that the troops were deployed to assist US forces. A source in Dir civil administration said that paramilitary soldiers were being deployed along the border stretching from Dir Lower to Dir Upper and Chitral districts...

Daily Times, 16 April 2006

Musharraf and Sultan vow to boost trade, defence ties

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf and Saudi Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud on Saturday held wide-ranging talks focusing on expanding bilateral economic, trade and defence cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders agreed on augmenting trade and commercial cooperation to bolster their multifaceted relations. They exchanged views on regional and international issues including Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestinian, Kashmir, Iranian nuclear issue and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference reforms.

Daily Times, 16 April 2006

Religious extremism and violence- Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi

The government cannot contain religious extremism and violence by simply issuing executive orders. It requires a comprehensive approach that entails monitoring supporters of the militant groups in the civil and military administration, curtailing societal sources of support, and strict action against the hard core militant elements that use violence. The government must adopt measures to address socio-economic inequities which have increased during the last six years...

Law, 16 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Jirga's rash edict

It is disappointing to hear that a jirga in the Upper Dir region of the NWFP has banned the registering of honour crimes on the pretext that they are part of local culture. In vowing to uphold their tradition, tribal elders have also warned of strict action against anyone who registers an FIR against an honour crime, adding that they would be equally harsh against those who "misused" the custom to settle feuds or financial disputes. That jirgas feel that they have the right to pass such sweeping edicts — which only serve to harm the people they claim to represent — is disturbing...

Dawn, 17 April 2006

Strategic talks with US begin on 26th (Qudssia Akhlaque and Anwar Iqbal)

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON, April 16: The inaugural meeting of the Pakistan-US Strategic Dialogue to be co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan and the US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns will be held in Washington on April 26, it is reliably learnt. Mr Khan will be leading a six-member team from Pakistan for the two-day talks that will mark the formal launching of the broad-based dialogue aimed at building a long-term, sustainable partnership...

Dawn, 17 April 2006

Commitment to anti-terror fight renewed: Pakistan-Saudi statement

ISLAMABAD, April 16: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Sunday reiterated their commitment to continue their cooperation in the fight against terrorism and extremism and to protect Islam's identity and values. According to a joint statement issued following the visit of Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to Pakistan, both the countries also agreed on the need to foster better understanding and harmony among diverse faith through inter-faith and dialogue...

Dawn, 17 April 2006

Culprits to be caught: Musharraf: Karachi carnage

KARACHI, April 16: President Pervez Musharraf said on Sunday that a high-level probe into the Nishtar Park carnage was under way and those behind the dastardly act would be apprehended and awarded severe punishment. The president was speaking to ulema at the Chief Minister's House here. "A high-level inquiry is under way to apprehend the culprits responsible for this suicidal attack," he said. He told the ulema that the ugly incident had caused him more anguish and pain because it had taken place on the blessed occasion of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi...

Daily Times, 17 April 2006

No religious party will be allowed to indulge in militancy, says Musharraf

KARACHI: Pakistan does not need any Sipah, Jaish or Lashkar because the "Pakistan Army is the sole Sipah or Lashkar of this country", said President General Pervez Musharraf while talking to Islamic scholars at the Governor's House here on Sunday. In the backdrop of the April 11 Nishtar Park bombing, the president said that his government would not allow anyone party, including religious parties and groups, to indulge in militancy, according to sources.

Daily Times, 17 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Pak-Saudi "special" relationship

The visit of the Saudi crown prince, Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, to Pakistan comes in the wake of Iran's self-declaration as a member of the "nuclear club" that has compelled many states to think in strategic terms. Under the circumstances, Prince Sultan and President Pervez Musharraf have jointly impressed upon the United States that the problems arising out of the Iranian case at the IAEA should be addressed through negotiations only. But, equally significantly, the two leaders have also talked about cooperation in "defence production and training" between the "armed forces of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia"...

Dawn, 18 April 2006

Hayat accuses PML of forcing defection of Patriots' MNAs

ISLAMABAD, April 17: The members of the Pakistan People's Party (Patriots) on Monday expressed concern over efforts of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) to cause defection in the party and criticised two of their MNAs for leaving the party and joining the PML. Speaking at a news conference after a meeting of the group here on Monday, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas Makhdoom Syed Faisal Saleh Hayat and federal Minister for Defence Rao Sikandar Iqbal said that they would also raise the issue with President Gen Pervez Musharraf...

Dawn, 18 April 2006

Pakistan may seek more N-power plants from China

ISLAMABAD, April 17: Pakistan has been assured that its energy needs will be met by China "to a reasonable extent" and the matter is expected to be finalised during President Pervez Musharraf's visit to Beijing in June. Informed sources told Dawn on Monday that the president would seek four to six more nuclear power plants, costing about \$6.5 billion, from China in addition to the two, worth \$1.2 billion, it agreed in principle to supply earlier this year...

awn, 18 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Stop this brinkmanship

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has called for a dialogue and a compromise to resolve the controversy surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. He has also said that Pakistan is opposed to the use of force as that would exacerbate an already complex regional situation. This is a sane piece of advice which the parties involved would do well to heed. By exercising restraint, Iran and the United States can prevent the crisis brewing in our neighbourhood from spinning out of control. So far only the head of the IAEA, Dr Mohammad ElBaradei, has been issuing sensible statements that qualify him as the most suitable mediator to defuse the tension and resolve the crisis...

awn, 18 April 2006

Setting the course right-Shahid Javed Burki

There are a number of prior conditions before a serious dialogue can start between Islamabad and the people — the self-styled experts and know-alls” as one senior official put it during a TV discussion — the capital city views as its extractors. Policymakers must demonstrate that they really understand the current structure of the economy, its many strengths and many more weaknesses; show the willingness to discuss and debate openly, honestly and calmly; be prepared to learn from the history of not only Pakistan but also of other countries that have dealt with problems similar to those Pakistan confronts; and muster the political will to bring about the much needed change. Would Islamabad be prepared and able to do all this?...

awn, 18 April 2006

Key areas of concern-Mahdi Masud

It has been said that an epoch comes to an end when its underlying illusions are no longer credible. In spite of major disappointments, however, the ideals which inspired the Pakistan movement, including the bonds and aspirations of Pakistani nationhood, remain real for a good majority of the people of Pakistan...Pakistan's underlying malaise, however, is the widespread loss of faith generated over several decades. The conviction that self-interest, nepotism and corruption in different forms are a way of life has generated a depressing level of political cynicism and created a chain reaction which threatens to undermine even the well-intentioned efforts of the government to resolve the country's problems and set it on the road to progress and development.

Daily Times, 18 April 2006

Peace restored in Balochistan

KARACHI: The government has resolved the Balochistan issue “amicably” and no law and order situation exists there anymore, said President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday. The government will introduce administrative reforms in Balochistan, said the president...

Daily Times, 18 April 2006

Peace restored in Balochistan

KARACHI: The government has resolved the Balochistan issue “amicably” and no law and order situation exists there anymore, said President General Pervez Musharraf on Monday. The government will introduce administrative reforms in Balochistan, said the president...

Daily Times, 18 April 2006

FATA system to be abolished

KARACHI: Musharraf said on Monday that the government was well aware about the prevailing situation in Waziristan, and the issue will be resolved very soon”. The government will introduce administrative reforms in the FATA and under these reforms the political administrator will be abolished soon, he said...

Daily Times, 19 April 2006

Committee begins talks with Bugti: minister

KWADAR: A joint committee of the provincial assembly has initiated dialogue between the government and Nawab Akbar Bugti to resolve the Balochistan issue. Balochistan Minister for Culture and Tourism Syed Shair Jan said the committee, led by Chief Minister Jam Muhammad Yousaf, had faith in dialogue to reach a consensus on the Balochistan issue. He claimed the committee had made progress to develop contacts with Bugti. The minister criticised some

arliamentarians and civilians for trying to sabotage the ongoing dialogue process...

Daily Times, 19 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Admitting Taliban rule in FATA

The federal interior minister, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, is said to have told the cabinet on Monday that Taliban forces had so far killed 150 pro-government tribal 'maliks' in North and South Waziristan Agencies and openly challenged the writ of the government by engaging the security forces there. 'The presence of the Taliban in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is a threat to national security and Pakistan's economic development. Religious extremism, militancy and terrorism are continuously undermining Pakistan's image in the international community,' he said. Moreover, the 'Talibanisation' of Waziristan is damaging other parts of the NWFP, and the local maliks and political agents have been confined to their houses and offices...

Dawn, 19 April 2006

India ready for modification: Kishanganga project

NEW DELHI, April 18: In an effort to end the long-standing dispute over the Kishanganga project, India will now propose to Pakistan modifications in the 330 MW hydro-electric power plant in Jammu and Kashmir to convert it into a run-of-the-river project, instead of generating electricity from water stored in a dam. A decision by the union cabinet on Tuesday to convert the project into a run-of-the-river scheme comes in the wake of Pakistan's objection to the storage of 20 million cubic metres of Indus River water in a reservoir and production of electricity.

Dawn, 19 April 2006

Gas pipeline blown up (Saleem Shahid)

QUETTA, April 18: - Gas supply to vast areas of Mastung and Kalat districts was suspended after a gas pipeline was blown up near Mastung, 55km off here, on Tuesday. A member of a security agency was seriously injured when he stepped on a landmine in the Pir Koh area near Sui in Dera Bugti district. Tribesmen fired rockets at a Frontier Constabulary checkpost in Kohlu town. According to sources, a powerful explosive device had been planted under the pipeline supplying gas to the two districts of Balochistan, two kilometres away from Mastung Cadet College. The device went off with a big bang around 11am...

Dawn, 19 April 2006

When religion & politics mix-Zubeida Mustafa

LAST week's shocking carnage at Karachi's Nishtar Park on Eid Milad Nabi a tragedy waiting to happen? People still find it difficult to fully comprehend why any one would want to kill scores of innocent people in cold blood on an occasion considered auspicious by all Muslims. The ghastly attack wiped out the top leadership of the Sunni Tehreek, which was evidently the main target of the perpetrators of this evil deed...

Daily Times, 20 April 2006

Tripartite Commission meeting

ISLAMABAD: The Tripartite Commission of senior military and diplomatic representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan and US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan reviewed the security situation on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border on Wednesday. Delegates at the 16th meeting of the Tripartite Commission agreed to enhance communication and coordination at Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas. NATO-ISAF participated in the meeting as an observer.

Daily Times, 20 April 2006

Musharraf to consult lawmakers on re-election

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf is set to start consultations this week with lawmakers regarding his standing for re-election as president in the next elections, as well as other matters of national political importance, sources said on Wednesday. They said that security had been beefed up at parliament's presidential chambers, adding that security teams on Wednesday had run a thorough security check along the presidential route from Parliament House to the presidential chamber.

Daily Times, 20 April 2006

Whatever happened to my Gilgit? — Kamran Shafi

Imagine my dismay and disgust when, upon entering Gilgit this time we were stopped and searched for weapons! Of

course I had read about the sectarian violence in Gilgit, but was it this bad? We didn't have long to wait, for as soon as we entered Gilgit Cantonment we came upon sand-bagged bunkers with machine-guns peeping from the firing slits, soldiers peering down their sights at passers-by. Such was the level of readiness all across the city, with armed and helmeted patrols everywhere, that it made me feel I was somewhere else, not Gilgit where I had spent much gentle time, many a wonderful evening with gentlemen like Group Captain Shah Khan and the late and very dapper Hussain Wali Khan; and had pleasant lunches (always lunches!) with the late Mir Sahib of Nagar. What had happened to my Gilgit, I asked myself?

Daily Times, 20 April 2006

missiles land in Bajaur

ISLAMABAD: Three missiles fired from Afghanistan side of the border landed in Bajaur Agency on Wednesday, residents said. There were no casualties or infrastructure damage when the missiles landed near a house in Charmang, said Hazrat Gul, a resident, told Daily Times. Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan, the military spokesman, said there was a possibility that the missiles landed in Pakistani territory from across the border

The News, 20 April 2006

Bush's nuclear bluff?

ISLAMABAD: As President Bush said in Washington on Tuesday that "all options are on the table" with regard to a nuclear strike against Iran, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri made it clear that Pakistan was opposed to US military action there. Mr Kasuri said "diplomacy can work and should be given a chance" since Iran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and that it intends to keep it civilian. Like Mr Kasuri, Mr Bush talked of diplomacy too, but with a gun to Iran's head.

The News, 20 April 2006

Terror's toll - Kamila Hyat

The suicide attack in Karachi, and the unrest it has left behind, has inevitably focused attention once more on the issue of militancy, and all it involves. But amidst the debate as to blame or the vociferous demands that those behind the attack be apprehended, the real victims are, as before, being forgotten. Indeed, across the country, these victims of past terror attacks live lives acutely affected by the shootings, bombings or suicide blasts that took away family members. Children have been forced to give up schooling; widows have had property seized; some live in constant fear even years after the killings due to threats made by sectarian extremists against anyone attempting to pursue the case.

The News, 20 April 2006

The spirit of coexistence-Dr M S Jilani

The bombing of Sunni Tehrik's Milad-e-Nabi Conference at Karachi was important in many ways: It happened on an occasion that is sacred to all Muslims; it took place in spite of workers who had proven their efficiency only weeks before by holding one of the most peaceful mammoth processions in Karachi's history; in one swipe almost the entire leadership of a religious movement was eliminated; the episode delivered the ominous message to the people and the administration that anybody, anywhere can be subjected to acts of terrorism in spite of most stringent security measures. The incident also carried the gruesome message that differences among religious groups can also be settled through bloodshed and violence by adherents of the same faith

Daily Times, 20 April 2006

President and PM okay commission to reform government

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz have approved the establishment of a national commission on government reforms to simplify rules and procedures for the benefit of the common man. The approval was given at a meeting at Aiwan-e-Sadar on Friday. The chief ministers of the four provinces also attended the meeting. The president underlined the need to remove obstacles for the provision of services to improve the life of the common man. "We must fill the gap between the formulation and implementation of policies and the simplification of rules will be a major catalyst in this respect," the president said...

Dawn, 21 April 2006

2007 polls next year, says Aziz

ISLAMABAD, April 20: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz reiterated on Thursday that 2007 would be election year and urged

akistan Muslim League workers to prepare themselves for the challenge and strengthen the party at the grass root level. Addressing a PML Workers' Convention at the Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium, the prime minister urged party workers to work hard and strengthen the party ahead of the elections...

awn, 21 April 2006

Fazl says MMA won't quit provincial govts

UETTA, April 20: Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said the MMA has no plan to quit provincial governments of the NWFP and Balochistan. "No such suggestion or plan is under consideration by the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal," he told newsmen at the residence of the Balochistan Assembly speaker here on Thursday. He added that the MMA's supreme council had not received such suggestion from the Jamaat-i-Islami so far...

awn, 21 April 2006

Govt writ in Dera Bugti: JWP chief

UETTA, April 20: Jamhoori Watan Party chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti has said the government has failed to establish its writ in Dera Bugti despite the presence of around 26,000 security personnel in the area. Talking to journalists on a satellite phone, he said heavy casualties of security personnel showed there was no government writ in the area...

awn, 21 April 2006

EDITORIAL: Kishanganga issue

The Indian willingness to modify the Kishanganga hydroelectric project on the Neelum makes good news. While, on the one hand, this vindicates Pakistan's stand on the project in the light of the Indus Basin Water Treaty, the Indian decision, on the other, shows a welcome willingness on New Delhi's part to abide by the international treaty on sharing the waters. As Islamabad has indicated, it will not hesitate to accept the modified version of the project if it does not interfere with the flow of Neelum waters into Pakistan as guaranteed by the treaty. Unfortunately, this is not the only controversial project India is building in occupied Kashmir; the Baglihar dam also violates the treaty because it seeks to divert the waters of the Chenab...

awn, 21 April 2006

Foreign policy expediencies - Naeem ul Haque

Since we turned our backs on a friendly Afghan government out of fear of annoying a threatening superpower, our foreign policy has become completely devoid of any moral basis. In our effort to please Washington we have reduced ourselves from a country aspiring to become the leader of the Muslim world to being a geo-political errand boy of the United States...

The News, 21 April 2006

Parting of ways in Balochistan: Fazl (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

UETTA: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman has dispelled the impression that the alliance's high command is reviewing a proposal to part ways with the coalition government in Balochistan. He was talking to newsmen at the residence of Speaker Balochistan Assembly Jamal Shah Kakar here on Thursday. Chief Minister NWFP Akram Khan Durrani and the provincial ministers belonging to the MMA were also present on the occasion...

The News, 21 April 2006

Military solution to Balochistan issue - Rahimullah Yusufzai

One was surprised by President General Pervez Musharraf's recent claim that the Balochistan issue had been amicably resolved. In his speech at the State Bank of Pakistan headquarters in Karachi on April 17, he said peace had been restored in the province "in letter and spirit." Another pleasant news that he gave on the occasion was the likely solution of the Waziristan problem in the near future. The two claims appear too good to be true. The situation on the ground in Balochistan and in the two Waziristans, both South and North, is so uncertain and dangerous that one gets the feeling that the president was misquoted...

awn, 22 April 2006

Tribunal seeks time for final award (Khaleeq Kiani)

SLAMABAD, April 21: The arbitral tribunal on Wapda-NWFP dispute over hydel profit has sought six months

extension until October 31 to give a final award, it is learnt. The five-member tribunal led by former Chief Justice Ajmal Khan appointed on Oct 31, 2005, was originally required to adjudicate the dispute in six months, i.e. by April 30, 2006. Informed sources told Dawn on Thursday that both the parties to the dispute — Wapda and the NWFP government — had asked the tribunal for extension in the deadline and the tribunal chairman agreed to the proposal because a lot of work was required to be done to reach a final decision...

Dawn, 22 April 2006

Musharraf, Aziz in bid to keep coalition intact (Ahmed Hassan)

ISLAMABAD, April 21: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz held a meeting with President General Pervez Musharraf at the latter's camp office here on Friday and discussed the latest political situation in the country. Political analysts viewed the meeting as significant since it came on the heels of the president's meeting with a PPP(Patriots) delegation. According to sources, President Musharraf, who had promised to address the grievances of the Patriot leadership vis-?-vis the ruling PML, discussed ways and means to narrow the differences between the coalition partners that had flared when Patriot MNAs Raees Munir and Khalid Lund joined the PML...

Dawn, 22 April 2006

India-talks with India begin on 25th (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, April 21: Pakistan and India will hold back-to-back expert-level talks on nuclear and conventional confidence building measures in Islamabad next week amid guarded optimism that a draft agreement on 'Reducing Risk of Nuclear Accidents' would be firmed up. The two-day nuclear talks aimed at reducing the risk of accidental war and promoting strategic stability begin on Tuesday and will be followed by a meeting on conventional CBMs.

Dawn, 22 April 2006

Editorial: No alternative to talks

WAZIRISTAN has become a festering wound for Pakistan. Operations in the tribal area are now more than two years old but going by the results it seems the end is nowhere in sight, and the militants hiding there continue to create trouble. On Thursday, 13 people, including eight soldiers, were killed when militants fired upon a Frontier Corps convoy near Miranshah. A day earlier, five security personnel were wounded when terrorists triggered a bomb by remote control and blew up a truck. This is in addition to the beheading of "American spies" every other day. So far, they have killed nearly 50 tribal maliks suspected to be "pro-government" - their term for anyone who disapproves of the presence of foreign militants in their midst...

The Nation, 22 April 2006

17 polls to be free and fair (Rana Latif and Ch Aamer Waqas)

LAHORE - Speakers at Allama Iqbal Day function held at Aiwan-i-Karkunan-i- Tehreek-i-Pakistan on Friday urged for transformation of Pakistan into a democratic welfare State as envisioned by Allama Iqbal and Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. They called for efforts to regain the lost honour of the Muslims by striking advancement in science and technology, reconstruction of religious thoughts in the light of Allama Iqbal's philosophy, reformation of self, safeguarding our faith and ideology and unity in ranks by shunning sectarianism. The Iqbal Day function was City's mega event of the day. It started with recitation from the Holy Quran by Qari Abdul Majid Noor while Hafiz Marghoob Ahmad Hamdani recited the Naat and Kalam-i-Iqbal...

The Nation, 22 April 2006

Editorial: Waziristan situation

DESPITE repeated assurances that the situation is about to be brought under control, militants continue to launch attacks in North Waziristan on government installations and security personnel with impunity. In the latest incident, seven paramilitary troops were killed in ambush and over two dozen wounded. This is reportedly the third attack within days on security forces along the main Miranshah-Razmak Road. In the first attack, two troops were killed while in the second, four were abducted. In another incident five personnel of Thal scouts were seriously injured when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device. On the night between Wednesday and Thursday, military camps and posts in Miranshah and Firali in North Waziristan and Shakai in South...

The Nation, 22 April 2006

Stabilising coalition blues

NOTWITHSTANDING Mr Shaukat Aziz's assertion that the PML will sweep the next general elections, the first workers convention in Peshawar on Thursday must have been something of a disappointment for the party leadership as the function was attended by little more than 10 percent of the expected gathering of 100,000. The organisers had to wrap up the show in 30 minutes since the workers started leaving the venue soon after the PM's arrival when they came to know that General Musharraf would not be attending the convention. In his brief address on the occasion, Mr Aziz learned doubts created by his own colleagues about the possible postponement of polls and said 2007 would be the election year, asking the party workers to prepare themselves for the challenge by strengthening the party at the grassroots...

Dawn, 23 April 2006

Kalabagh dam at all costs: President

ISLAMABAD, April 22: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that Kalabagh dam would be constructed at all costs because of the acute shortage of water in the country. "About 75 to 80 per cent of the people support construction of Kalabagh dam," the president told the Students' Convention 2006 at the Jinnah Convention Centre here. President Musharraf said he was committed to addressing issues such as the construction of water reservoirs, including Kalabagh dam, and problems regarding development at the grass root level in Balochistan.

Dawn, 23 April 2006

Earthquake survivors protest for relief

PUZZAFARABAD, April 22: Angry protesters burnt tyres and laid obstacles on roads as the city observed a crippling strike on Saturday on relief and reconstruction related issues. The strike was called by the United People's Front, an alliance of local organisations, to press the government to meet the demands of quake survivors. Although the educational institutions and government offices were open, shops and businesses remained closed and traffic remained off the roads in almost all parts of the city from morning to afternoon...

Dawn, 23 April 2006

Earthquake survivors protest for relief

PUZZAFARABAD, April 22: Angry protesters burnt tyres and laid obstacles on roads as the city observed a crippling strike on Saturday on relief and reconstruction related issues. The strike was called by the United People's Front, an alliance of local organisations, to press the government to meet the demands of quake survivors. Although the educational institutions and government offices were open, shops and businesses remained closed and traffic remained off the roads in almost all parts of the city from morning to afternoon...

Dawn, 23 April 2006

Karachi carnage and after -Anwar Syed

THE tragic and disgraceful event that happened in Karachi on April 11 was not the first of its kind. The number of persons killed and injured this time was greater than that reported in previous such incidents, but the deed in all of them was the same in nature, springing from the same frame of mind or design... But since nobody knows who the bomber was, or who his relatives are, the lab will have nothing to compare his remains with, unless the relatives themselves choose to come forward, which is not likely. We may never know who the perpetrator and his instigators were....

The Nation, 23 April 2006

US for democratic process in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (Online) - The United States has said it supports the 'democratic process' in Pakistan and expects that elections in that country in 2007 would be 'free and fair'. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was asked whether the US would welcome any announcement by President Pervez Musharraf to step down, said the United States had supported democratic processes in all countries'...

The Nation, 23 April 2006

Editorial: "Very broad agenda"

Referring to the Pak-US 'strategic cooperation', US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher again pointed out that other than the so-called War on Terror, Pakistan and America were pursuing a "very broad agenda." The cooperation includes broadening economic ties for mutual benefit and helping Pakistan with much-needed education reforms. Interestingly, through Mr Boucher, the US has also registered increased concern about Pakistan's democracy drive,

ghtly saying it is not just about conducting elections, but goes on to include erection of institutions and infrastructure so laringly missing in our part of the world...

awn, 24 April 2006

Forces claim foiling attack on Sui plant: 11 missiles defused (Saleem Shahid)

UETTA, April 23: The main pipeline supplying gas to the Loti plant was blown up on Sunday while security forces foiled a missile attack at the Sui plant recovering 11 Russian-made missiles. Official sources said armed tribesmen blew up the pipeline suspending supply to the main plant in Loti area of Dera Bugti district. "They planted explosives under the pipeline and blew it up in the early hours," a senior official of the Dera Bugti administration said. He said the 18-inch pipeline supplies gas to the plant from well No 1...

awn, 24 April 2006

ML wins Balochistan by-election

UETTA, April 23: Mir Haider Ali Jamali, a candidate of ruling Pakistan Muslim League, won Balochistan Assembly seat PB-25 Nasirabad-1 in the bye-election held on Sunday. According to unofficial results, Mir Haider Ali Jamali begged 2,276 votes while his arch rival Naiz Ali Umrani of PPPP, who also enjoyed support of Balochistan National Party-Fengal, could get 1,382 votes...

awn, 24 April 2006

Soldier among 3 killed in Miramshah clash

MIRAMSHAH, April 23: One soldier and two suspected attackers were killed and three other people, including a bystander, wounded in a shootout near Miramshah on Sunday, officials and witnesses said. Tension ran high following the killing and overnight shelling by security forces on residential compounds in Datakhel area. Miramshah Bazaar remained closed on Sunday...

awn, 24 April 2006

Editorial: Elections in 2007

Is 2007 election year or not? The prime minister has just said it is. But other ruling party bigwigs, including Chaudhry Ishaq Hussain, continue to suggest that elections can be put off by a year, "constitutionally" they add, as if to show how utterly committed they are to constitutionalism and democracy. Why is doubt being created about the elections, which are absolutely crucial for our survival as a democratic nation and which bid fair to finally take us out of the morass of military and quasi-military rule? It is obvious that the fate of many ruling party stalwarts will be at stake in the polls and most of them owe their present positions to the patronage of the army and the last elections...

awn, 24 April 2006

Editorial: Protecting minority rights

At a minority rights conference held in Islamabad, various religious leaders once again made an impassioned appeal for the repeal of discriminatory laws like the one relating to blasphemy as these are often used to persecute minorities. Since the blasphemy law came into existence under General Ziaul Haq's rule, it has largely been abused; often it has been used to settle scores. Thousands of innocent people (including Muslims) have suffered as a result of this law, whose complete repeal has been called for many times. However, those calls have been ignored by governments fearing a strong reaction from religious bigots...

he News, 24 April 2006

Qaim flays Musharraf's statement over KBD construction

HYDERABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh president Syed Qaim Ali Shah said on Sunday the Kalabagh dam (KBD) could only be constructed "over the dead bodies of the people of Sindh". Addressing a press conference at the residence of MPA Zahid Bhurguri, he condemned President Pervez Musharraf's statement in his address to the Students Convention 2006 that the Kalabagh dam would be constructed at all costs. The PPP leader said the people of Sindh had already rejected the construction of Kalabagh and others dams on the Indus river, adding that the KBD could only be built over the "dead bodies of the people of Sind"...

he News, 24 April 2006

Editorial: Hasty closure

Questions are rightly being raised at the government's hastiness to close down relief camps set up for the survivors of the massive earthquake last year. Press reports suggest that many of the camp dwellers are being forced to go back to their villages that still lack facilities as basic as roads, schools, hospitals, clean water, sanitation and electricity. While the physical infrastructure is still in a shambles, the earthquake survivors are expected to return to their places of origin and resume their normal lives when a large number of them have no livelihoods to go back to. Many of the victims do not own land, either to live on or to cultivate, while many others lost it under landslides. Their ordeal may not be over yet...

The News, 24 April 2006

Need for electoral reforms -Hasan Askree

After numerous attempts at constitutional reforms and experimenting with various models of checks and balances, Pakistan continues to face fundamental constitutional issues. These include an ineffectual legislative process; disregard for the basic principles of federalism; incursions on the independence of the judiciary; and the irreconcilability of various state institutions within the democratic polity...

The News, 24 April 2006

Democracy, Musharraf and the United States -Nasim Zehra

Among Pakistanis seeking a breakthrough in our deadlocked political situation, there is a tendency to "clutch at straws" that even remotely suggest the deadlock can be broken. Today, despite the government's achievements in the economic arena and the reorientation of the foreign policy and the ideology of the State, Pakistan's overall context, and its political system remain highly problematic. The political system is neither credible nor stable, and there is no indication that political polarisation will end soon. And unless it ends, the national agenda of curbing political extremism cannot be carried forward..

The Nation, 24 April 2006

US for democratic process in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (Online) - The United States has said it supports the "democratic process" in Pakistan and expects that elections in that country in 2007 would be "free and fair". Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was asked whether the US would welcome any announcement by President Pervez Musharraf to step down, said the United States had supported democratic processes in all countries"...

Dawn, 25 April 2006

Rolls under caretaker set-up, says CEC: Election on time promised

ISLAMABAD, April 24: Chief Election Commissioner Qazi Mohammad Farooq has said that the next general election will be held on time and under a caretaker set-up and opposition parties should not have any doubts about fairness of the process. Talking to reporters after a meeting with a three-member delegation of the People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) on Monday, the CEC said that those in the caretaker government would not be allowed to take part in the elections. The PPP leaders who called on the CEC were Senator Dr Babar Awan and MNAs Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman...

Dawn, 25 April 2006

Benazir and Nawaz vow to restore democracy (Ashraf Mumtaz)

LAHORE, April 24: Former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif met at the latter's Park Lane apartment in London on Monday with both sides renewing their pledge to restore democracy in the country by getting rid of the military rule. They also resolved to return to Pakistan, together if possible. This was their second meeting in 14 months, the first was held in Jeddah on Feb 10 last year. Ms Bhutto was accompanied by Makhdoom Amin Fahim, Wajid Hamidul Hasan and former FIA chief Rehman Malik. Shahbaz Sharif, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra and Syed Ghous Ali Shah assisted Mr Sharif in the two-hour talks...

Dawn, 25 April 2006

New ministers to take oath today (Amir Wasim)

ISLAMABAD, April 24: President Gen Pervez Musharraf will administer oath of office to new federal and state ministers at a ceremony at the Aiwan-i-Sadar here on Tuesday. Official sources said that no major changes were likely in the federal cabinet and between four and eight new federal and state ministers would take oath. Besides, there will be a minor reshuffle of portfolios. There was no official announcement about names of new ministers and the capital had been a grip of rumours about changes in portfolios after a meeting between Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and president of the

iling Pakistan Muslim League Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain...

awn, 25 April 2006

Proposals on nuke CBMs likely: FO (Qudssia Akhlaque)

SLAMABAD, April 24: Pakistan will hand over a draft agreement on prevention of incidents at sea and elaborate on its proposals to reduce threats on the Line of Control at the nuclear and conventional expert-level talks with India that begin here tomorrow. This was announced by Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasnim Aslam at the outset of the weekly news briefing on Monday. She said Pakistan would approach the talks with a positive frame of mind. "We have put a number of proposals on the table...we intend to bring some more proposals and have good discussions..."

awn, 25 April 2006

Issue of land ownership- Shahid Javed Burki

HERE is no issue that should receive greater analytical and public policy attention than that of land and there is no issue that has been more ignored in recent years by policymakers as well as policy thinkers. The last time serious attention was given to the set of issues that come together under the subject of land ownership was under President Ayub Khan. A high-powered commission was then set up to guide the government in formulating its policy towards land ownership in the countryside. That urban land policy was also worth the government's attention did not occur to the policymakers since it had not acquired the importance it has now in the country's economy...

he News, 25 April 2006

Doctors at Balochistan govt hospitals go on strike

QUETTA: Doctors observed stethoscope-down strike by boycotting their duties at the government hospitals as well as the out-patient departments (OPDs) all over the province on Monday, in protest over insecurity of the doctors and the lack of facilities in the hospitals. The academic staff also boycotted the classes at the Bolan Medical College (BMC) "the only medical teaching hospital being run in the public sector" on the call from the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), Balochistan chapter...

he News, 25 April 2006

Possibilities of electoral reforms -Hasan Askree

In the midst of the ongoing debate on the need for fundamental political reform, this article is an attempt to help readers visualize the extent to which the various constitutional issues of Pakistan can be addressed with an elaborate electoral system. The article describes a hypothetical electoral system not for the purpose of claiming feasibility or appropriateness, but merely to help readers visualize the strong linkage between the electoral system and the nature of power politics...

awn, 26 April 2006

Key portfolios changed in shake-up: Durrani replaces Rashid as information minister

SLAMABAD, April 25: Four new faces were inducted into the federal cabinet on Tuesday while some portfolios changed hands the most prominent among them being the ministry of information and broadcasting. President Pervez Musharraf administered oath to new ministers at a ceremony, also attended by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Salim Saifullah Khan, Khalid Lund and Kamil Ali Agha have joined the cabinet in place of outgoing ministers Dr Iftikhar Chaudhry and Dr Ishaq Dar while Prof Mushtaq Victor has been made minister of state for minorities affairs...

awn, 26 April 2006

Act to reduce risk of N-accidents discussed: Meeting on conventional CBMs tomorrow (Qudssia Akhlaque)

SLAMABAD, April 25: The fourth round of Pakistan-India expert level talks on nuclear confidence-building measures that began here on Tuesday focused mainly on a proposed agreement to reduce risk of nuclear accidents with the draft going back and forth. A draft agreement on reducing risk of nuclear accidents or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons was presented by India during the last round of talks in New Delhi in August 2005...

awn, 26 April 2006

Two soldiers, three militants killed

MIRAMSHAH, April 25: Two soldiers and three assailants were killed and 14 troops injured when an army convoy was ambushed in the Paikhel area, 15 kilometres from here on Monday evening. Several army vehicles, en route to

miranshah from Birman, came under rocket attack after a bomb planted on the road exploded. Two soldiers were killed in the spot. Three of the critically injured men were flown to Rawalpindi, while others were taken to Peshawar...

awn, 26 April 2006

[-concessions for India to disturb regional security: Kasuri

ERLIN, April 25: Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has stressed the need for a "package approach" towards Pakistan and India on transfer of civilian nuclear technology and said that unilateral concessions for India would disturb the regional security balance in South Asia. He stated this in a meeting with the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier here on Tuesday. Mr Steinmeier said he understood Pakistan's concerns, adding that Germany " a leading member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)" would look at the whole issue carefully when taking a decision in the 45 member NSG meeting, which would soon review the Indo-US nuclear deal...

awn, 26 April 2006

roops called in Astore, woman killed during protests

ILGIT, April 25: A woman was killed and two women and a police official were injured on Tuesday in cross firing between police and people in Astore where a dispute over establishment of district headquarters has been brewing up for almost one year. Astore district council member Tariq, chairman union council Eidgah Muhammad Ramazan and Astore election committee vice-president Abdul Wahab Lone told Gilgit reporters that 20-year old Farida was killed and two women were injured when police opened fire on protesters...

awn, 26 April 2006

ditorial: A caretaker set-up

An acting government to oversee the general election due next year is good news in a country where the sanctity of the ballot paper is no part of the political culture. The 1970 general election was truly fair, and the one in 1988, even though manipulated by the post-Zia set-up to pre-empt a PPP victory, did enable the party to achieve a plurality. Barring these two examples, all elections have been rigged by the party in power or the military. The election in 2002 was manipulated from the word go. A law forbade a person from becoming prime minister a third time, and the government used all its administrative machinery to ensure the Muslim League's victory. Against this background, Chief Election Commissioner Ijaz Muhammad Farooq's disclosure about an acting set-up for the next general election deserves to be welcomed, though certain questions remain unanswered...

he News, 26 April 2006

hree soldiers among six killed in N Waziristan

ESHAWAR: Three Pakistan Army soldiers were killed and 14 more sustained injuries when suspected militants ambushed their convoy with rockets in the North Waziristan tribal agency. Intelligence sources in Miranshah, headquarters of North Waziristan, said the incident took place on Monday night in a remote area on the way to the border with Afghanistan. Details belatedly became available on Tuesday...

he News, 26 April 2006

ditorial: Cabinet reshuffle

The much-anticipated reshuffle in the federal cabinet has finally come about. President Pervez Musharraf, who administered the oath to six federal ministers and three state ministers on Tuesday, had been saying that he was in no hurry to carry out the reshuffle. Still the time taken by the bosses in mulling their choices has been a subject of much speculation. To begin with, reshuffles never make any sense if they are meant to give those who have failed in one ministry a second chance. If they are not good enough, they should be relieved from duties in the cabinet and fresh faces from among the hundreds sitting on the treasury benches given an opportunity to show their mettle – especially in a government which calls itself reformist...

he News, 26 April 2006

he PPP/PML-N deal

Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif have finally decided to join forces. It's good that the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) decided to come together. Monday's meeting in London comes against the backdrop of a fractured political situation here: the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML -- aka PML-Q) is developing cracks; the pro-government PPP-Patriots look to be in the process of breaking up; the PML-MQM alliance is at best fragile; the

tuttahida Majlis-e-Amal has not advanced from being an electoral alliance since its formation in the beginning of 2002..

awn, 27 April 2006

11 reservoirs will be built: Musharraf: Diamer-Bhasha dam project launched

ISLAMABAD, April 26: President General Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday performed the ground-breaking of \$6.5 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam and declared that all dams, including Kalabagh, would be built under the '2016 Water Vision' to meet the growing water and energy requirements of the country. "Water and energy are matters of life and death for us. We have to build all dams," he said at the ceremony. "We have lagged far behind and have to work at a fast pace to catch up with the rest of the world," he said...

awn, 27 April 2006

Troops to be pulled out if tribesmen cooperate': Musharraf addresses jirga

ISLAMABAD, April 26: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday hinted at withdrawing troops from tribal areas if tribesmen cooperated with the government in its efforts to eliminate terrorism. Addressing a grand tribal jirga here at the Governor's House, the president dwelt at length on the menace of extremism and its domestic, regional and global implications. The president urged tribal elders to use the traditional jirga system to curb terrorism and said it would enable the federal government to minimise the deployment of security forces and subsequently withdraw them from their areas...

awn, 27 April 2006

Editorial: The more things change...

IT IS difficult to read any great significance in Tuesday's federal cabinet reshuffle except for the change in the information minister's portfolio, which is said to have some political overtones. Far from making an effort to trim the cabinet, it has been further widened, reflecting once again the cumbersomeness of a coalition government and the resultant inefficiency and drain on public resources. The reshuffle comes before the general elections scheduled for next year, but whether the new combination will succeed in creating a better image of the ruling party and its associates remains to be seen. Where the government has failed most abysmally is in establishing its credentials as an administration responsive to the people's daily concerns...

The News, 27 April 2006

Editorial: The fourth round

The comprehensive nature of the Pakistan-India dialogue, whose fourth round is underway in Islamabad, gives the impression that the two countries are not merely marking time in their professed intention to put confidence-building measures in place. The dialogue ranges in scope from efforts to cut the risk of accidental nuclear conflict to prevention of incidents at sea. On the one hand, nuclear CBMs are needed now more than ever before because of the nuclear agreement signed in February by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. On the other, the frequency of Pakistani and Indian fishermen's arrests on the wrong side of their respective countries' marine limits shows how real the latter possibility is; such incidents can easily degenerate in times of tension...

The News, 27 April 2006

Macro-economic stability

The international financial institutions have acknowledged that Pakistan's economy has maintained its growth momentum despite high oil prices, a massive earthquake and elimination of international textile trade quotas. Pakistan's delegation to the recently held spring meetings of the World Bank and the IMF was informed by top officials of these international institutions that Pakistan's economy had showed the resilience to face these challenges...

The News, 27 April 2006

Let a thousand flowers bloom -Kamal Matinuddin

The ultra-religious parties and some retired senior military officers continue to pin the blame on the Americans, who, according to them, do not want to see the only nuclear Muslim state prosper. The Indian bashers, including some intellectuals, see RAW lurking in every corner. And now the Karzai administration is being included, by the pro-Taliban elements in our tribal areas, as our enemy-number three. Does the fault, dear countrymen, lie outside our frontiers or within ourselves that we are subject to acts of violence every so often? Why have we become so intolerant of other

people's political and religious beliefs? Who are those who motivate and glorify suicide bombers? President Musharraf is right when he says that there is no external threat to Pakistan today, the threat is from within...

Dawn, 28 April 2006

Agreement on border rules with India: Inadvertent crossers to return (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, April 27: The third round of Pakistan-India dialogue on conventional CBMs concluded on Thursday with experts agreeing on some important measures, including finalisation of 'ground rules' for implementation along the international border. Other confidence-building measures agreed upon between the two sides were: finalisation of modalities for holding quarterly flag meetings - and on needs basis - between sector-level commanders in the already agreed sectors; no new posts would be developed and no fresh defence work would be carried out along the LoC, and finalisation of an agreement on speedy repatriation of those who inadvertently cross the Line of Control...

Dawn, 28 April 2006

Islamabad, Berlin agree to boost defence ties

BERLIN, April 27: Foreign Minister Khurshid M. Kasuri and German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung on Thursday agreed to develop closer defence cooperation between their respective countries. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on many issues of common interest, including the Pakistan-India peace process, Afghanistan, Iran issues and the fight against terrorism. The two sides would discuss specific projects within the agreed upon framework later this year. Mr Jung praised Pakistan's important contribution in the fight against terrorism and said that Germany was willing "to meet Pakistan's defence equipment needs for fighting terrorism"...

Dawn, 28 April 2006

Time to broaden ties with China: president

RAWALPINDI, April 27: President General Pervez Musharraf on Thursday saw immense scope for joint ventures and investment between Pakistan and China in the energy sector and pledged to turn the country into a trade, industry and energy corridor for the benefit of the two countries and the whole region. "When Karakoram Highway was built, the world called it the eighth wonder. We can create the ninth and tenth wonders by establishing energy pipelines and railway linkages between the two fast growing economies," he said...

Dawn, 28 April 2006

Editorial: Strange inconsistencies

THE federal government's 'tolerance' of the local Taliban in Waziristan agency in FATA could have several adverse consequences. The most obvious, and something which has been reported many times in recent days, is the tendency among these ultra-conservative obscurantist elements is to take to violence and to be inimical to those who do not subscribe to their interpretation of religion. Take the reported burning of regional and national newspapers on Monday by our masked militants who, after setting the papers on fire, warned the driver of the van carrying them that further action will be taken unless the newspapers call them 'mujahideen' or 'Taliban'. One wonders what the government's reasons are for kowtowing to these elements...

The News, 28 April 2006

Editorial: But why pull the army out?

The ideal situation for the restive tribal areas would be for the tribesmen themselves to defend the peace, rather than the army, as President Musharraf proposed on Wednesday that they should. But is that feasible? If not, what's the hurry about pulling the army out of an area where a beheaded "spy" was found only the previous day? If the tribesmen were able to pacify the tribal areas on their own, driving out terrorists and eliminating the often grisly Talibanisation in the process, then the army wasn't required there in the first place. But the discovery of the corpse in Wana in South Waziristan, of a kidnapped man the Taliban are said to have executed as a US informant, is chilling proof of the need for the army's continued presence in the territory...

The News, 28 April 2006

Future options -Masooda Bano

There are increasing speculations about General Musharraf's days in power being numbered. There is no credible means to test the validity of these speculations but both internal and external factors do provide some support to them. One, the mere duration of the rule is finally taking its toll. Even those who genuinely believed in General Musharraf's commitment

reforms are now growing weary...At the same time, for those supporters of General Musharraf who were never concerned about democratic reforms, the economic conditions are starting to raise serious concerns. The continued price hike is not going unnoticed; neither is the unchecked government spending be it on foreign tours or the continuously expanding cabinet...

Dawn, 29 April 2006

Fight against terror in national interest: Musharraf

RAWALPINDI, April 28: President General Pervez Musharraf, facing a surge of anti-American sentiment, has warned that covert US air strikes against Al Qaeda inside Pakistan were an infringement of national sovereignty. Speaking to the Guardian at Army House in Rawalpindi weeks after a tense visit by the US president that brought a torrent of domestic criticism, Gen Musharraf insisted he was his own man. "When you are talking about fighting terrorism or extremism, I'm not doing that for the US or Britain. I'm doing it for Pakistan," he said. If necessary he had "teeth" to bite back, he added. Yes sir, I personally do. A lot of teeth. Sometimes the teeth do not have to be shown. Pragmatism is required in international relations."...

Dawn, 29 April 2006

Pakistan not in business of changing govts' (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, April 28: Pakistan has announced that it will not support the use of force against Iran, would like to maintain nuclear deterrence in South Asia besides seeking nuclear technology for producing energy. Foreign Secretary Ijaz Mohammad Khan made these assertions at a joint briefing with US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns after the first round of the US-Pakistan strategic dialogue which ended in Washington on Friday. "We made it very clear that we are opposed to any use of force in the area to resolve (the Iranian nuclear) issue," said Mr Khan. "There's no military solution."...

Dawn, 29 April 2006

Pipeline gas requirement estimate raised (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, April 28: Islamabad on Friday enhanced its gas off-take requirement to 2.6 billion cubic feet per day (BCFD) from the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project because of higher expected shortage in the country. Pakistan had originally sought 2.1BCFD of gas from Iran for its domestic requirement, which was updated to 2.6BCFD on Friday at the first round of three-day meeting of the project's joint working group, sources told Dawn. Petroleum Secretary Ahmad Waqar and Iranian Deputy Oil Minister Nejad Hosnienian led their sides at the seventh meeting of the group...

Dawn, 29 April 2006

Editorial: Do we need more laws and courts? -Khalid Jawed Khan

The wisdom of establishing a new high court at Islamabad is not self-evident. In the presence of a huge building of the Lahore High Court, Rawalpindi Bench, situated at a very short distance from Islamabad and the permanent availability of the learned judges of Lahore High Court there, the case for creating a new high court at Islamabad is hardly convincing. Although the federal law minister has stated that no constitutional amendment is required for establishing a federal high court, Article 175 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, categorically provides that there shall be a high court for each province and such other courts as may be established by law. Article 198 of the Constitution provides for Benches of four high courts at the principal seat of the provinces as well as at circuits...

Dawn, 29 April 2006

National security redefined-Javid Husain

A close look at the way our policymakers implement the national security policy leads one to the conclusion that their understanding of national security is limited only to its military dimension. In fact, national security is a much wider and more comprehensive concept than the practice in Pakistan would indicate. It includes, but is not limited to, military means to defend a country. To begin with, national security has two aspects: external and internal. External security undoubtedly requires as its centrepiece military means — armed forces and armaments — to deter the enemy. To defend the country against external aggression if deterrence fails. However, because of the changed nature of warfare in modern times, defence against external aggression requires not just the military means but also economic and technological strength...

he News, 29 April 2006

MMA, Muttahida continue temper tantrums (Fasihur Rehman Khan)

SLAMABAD: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement leaders on Friday raised tempers in the National Assembly by blaming each other for the worsening law and order situation in Karachi and minced no words in forecasting more tense days. Interestingly enough, no concerned government minister was there to cool things down as leaders of both the parties, archrivals in urban Sindh, especially Karachi, went on to play the blame-game to an alarming extent in a tense and politically challenging run-up to the next elections...

he News, 29 April 2006

Editorial: For men only?

The onerous burden of being a councillor has been eased for women in upper Dir. There is no need to attend to your duties or join in frivolous debates and legislative work in the area because your husbands, fathers and sons will take care of such problems for you. Barred from filing nomination papers during the local bodies polls last year, the women of upper Dir waged a relentless battle to carve an electoral niche for themselves in this conservative area despite all odds. With women also barred from voting in most parts of the district in any case, beleaguered female candidates were finally able to take part in the polls after the intervention of the prime minister's adviser (and now minister) Nilofer Bakhtiyar...

awn, 30 April 2006

Hatf VI missile test-fired

AWALPINDI, April 29: Pakistan on Saturday test-fired nuclear-capable, surface-to-surface ballistic missile Hatf VI (Shaheen II), an upgraded version of a missile system capable of hitting targets 2,000 kilometres away with high accuracy. A statement said the test was conducted to validate additional technical parameters beyond those that were verified in the first missile test in March 2005. It said that Hatf VI (Shaheen-II) was Pakistan's longest-range ballistic missile system and its advanced version had a potential to achieve a range of 2,500 kilometres. The two-stage solid-fuelled missile was capable of carrying high-accuracy nuclear and conventional warheads, the statement said. The test was witnessed by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who congratulated scientists, engineers and technical staff of Pakistan's Strategic Organisations on achieving "another milestone on the road to success"...

awn, 30 April 2006

24 militants killed in nine months: 39 operations conducted in Waziristan: ISPR

MIRAMSHAH, April 29: The army is in full control in the troubled region of Waziristan, where 324 militants have been killed in operations over the past nine months, officials said on Saturday. Briefing journalists at the military headquarters in the town, the officials said that 39 'major operations' had been conducted since July last year to flush out Al Qaeda-linked foreign and local militants. Miramshah was the scene of fierce battles between pro-Taliban militants and the army in March which killed 145 militants, including 23 foreigners, chief military spokesman Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said...

awn, 30 April 2006

Pakistan to respect UN sanctions against Iran' (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, April 29: As a UN member, Pakistan would have to honour any sanctions imposed on Iran but such restrictions could do more harm than good, Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan told journalists in Washington. Briefing the Pakistani media on the first round of the US-Pakistan strategic dialogue, Mr Khan said if the Security Council did impose sanctions, "they are binding on all members of the UN, so we'll have to respect" them. But he also said that it's too early to take this kind of action against Iran because such sanctions could "do more harm than good..."

awn, 30 April 2006

Editorial: No more appeasement

WHATEVER the genesis of the current rampant extremism in Pakistan, and whether or not Pakistani and American interests coincide in resisting this phenomenon, President Musharraf is right in saying that the fight against terrorism has to be fought for the sake of Pakistan. What is happening in Waziristan, with its trickle-down effect on the rest of Pakistan cannot be exaggerated. It is not just the problem with militants from Afghanistan; a new breed of Taliban cadres has sprung up in the frontier regions that seeks to replicate the ideology and the methods of its reactionary predecessors....

awn, 30 April 2006

Uniting political parties-Anwar Syed

It is well known that political parties play an indispensable role in the operation of a democratic political system. It is known also that it takes a good deal of money to run a political party. A genuinely functioning party must maintain some sort of a secretariat with permanent staff to take care of routine business. Then there are expenses in connection with periodic election campaigns: public meetings, rallies, demonstrations, and processions, all of which cost money. Party tables hold their own consultations requiring travel and stay away from home...