

The News, 1 August 2005

Govt has taken concrete steps to curb extremism, says Sherpao

NOWSHERA: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao has said that in order to win a good name for the country in the comity of nations, the government has taken some concrete steps to eliminate extremism. Addressing a delegation led by Malik Khalid Khan and Malik Ejaz from union council Jalozai, Nowshera that called on him here Sunday, the minister regretted that the growing trend of extremism and hate literature had made irreparable losses to the country and its people. He resented that offensive printed material brainwashed the youth and spread hatred in the country.

Sherpao said the government had taken pragmatic steps banning hate materials and extremist organisations in the country. He said the banned extremist groups would not be allowed to operate with a new nomenclature.

The News, 1 August 2005

Pakistan, India to discuss trade on 9th (Tariq Butt)

ISLAMABAD: Top commerce officials of Pakistan and India meet in New Delhi on August 9 and 10 to discuss 30 Indian proposals for promotion of bilateral trade and commercial and economic cooperation. Six of the Indian proposals that it would make in the forthcoming meeting of the commerce secretaries are new while 24 were submitted by New Delhi at a similar meeting last year. The two countries had constituted a Working Group headed by their commerce secretaries to discuss Pakistan's objections. Commerce Secretary Tasneem Noorani will lead the Pakistan delegation into the talks with his Indian counterpart. An inter-ministerial meeting will be held on Wednesday to firm up Pakistan's response to the Indian proposals.

The News, 1 August 2005

Qazi condemns expulsion of foreign students from seminaries

BANNU: President Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Qazi Hussain Ahmad MNA on Sunday criticised the federal government's policy towards religious seminaries and announced that his party would organise conferences for their protection. While talking to reporters soon after attending a Walima, the MMA leader said that the rulers taking action against Madaris only to appease the UK and America. He condemned the government's decision to expel the foreign students presently studying in Madaris, adding they (students) came here following obtaining visas from the government and would return to their respective countries after completion of their studies. He said that the expulsion of these students would be a great unjust.

Daily Times, 2 August 2005

Musharraf's word on foreign seminary students is final: FO

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Monday that foreign students studying in local religious seminaries would have to return to their respective countries and only President Pervez Musharraf's statement on the issue was correct. "Only what President Musharraf has said about sending back foreign students is correct. They will have to return to their countries. The Interior Ministry will work out the modalities in this respect," said Foreign Office spokesman Naeem Khan at his weekly briefing. Pakistan had signed an accord with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) under which it would work with the association to curb terrorism, he said, adding that Pakistan would also contribute \$50,000 to the fund set up by the ASEAN Regional Forum to promote economic and social activities between member states.

Daily Times, 2 August 2005

Hasba Bill violates basic rights: AGP (Mohammad Kamran)

ISLAMABAD: The Hasba Bill is an unconstitutional and parallel legislation which takes away the right of access to justice, infringes on the fundamental rights of the people and imposes unreasonable restrictions on the private lives of citizens, stated Makhdoom Ali Khan, the attorney general for Pakistan (AGP), before a nine-member bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Monday. "The contents of the bill are open-ended, ambiguous, undefined and indistinct which do not conform to constitutional norms and provide unbridled powers to a new office of the mohtasib to act on his discretion and whims," said Makhdoom Ali Khan while opening the argument on behalf of President General Pervez Musharraf who has filed a reference against the Hasba Bill passed by the NWFP Assembly. The bill is presently pending with the NWFP governor and the SC will give its advice under Article 186 of the Constitution after hearing arguments of the state and the province.

Daily Times, 2 August 2005

Pakistan may lift four-year ban on Indian sugar imports

KARACHI: Pakistan will lift a four-year ban on sugar imports from its old rival India, government officials said on Monday, as it struggles to rein in domestic prices of the sweetener to cushion the impact of high inflation. Government officials in New Delhi welcomed the move and Indian traders said they would be able to supply sugar

at competitive prices. Nuclear-armed neighbours Pakistan and India, which have fought three wars in half a century, import commodities from as far away as South America despite having surpluses to meet each other's needs. Pakistan's attempts to check sugar prices that reached a four-year high in February have been thwarted by low rainfall, which is set to trim its crop by at least a fifth. Imports from other countries haven't been enough to make up the shortfall. "We have decided to allow sugar imports from India, and a formal announcement in this regard is expected soon," a senior government official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

Dawn, 2 August 2005

Pakistan to get largest supply of F-16s: FO (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: Pakistan on Monday declared that under the new deal being worked out with the Bush Administration it would be getting the largest supply ever of F-16 fighter jets from the United States. Foreign office spokesman Naeem Khan said this at his weekly briefing while answering questions about the sale of F-16 planes to Pakistan. Asked if the government was disappointed at the Bush Administration's decision to provide only two F-16 jets to Pakistan at this stage, he said: "No we are not disappointed. We are getting two F-16s as a first step but Pakistan's request is there with the American side for additional supply of F-16s." In reply to a related question, he said: "Please understand these aircraft are just the beginning and this does not in any way mean that Pakistan is being looked down upon or there is something wrong with the relationship."

Dawn, 2 August 2005

Seven-day mourning announced: Musharraf to attend funeral

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: The government of Pakistan on Monday announced seven-day mourning on the death of Khadim Al-Harain Al-Sharifain King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud. The decision was announced by Information and Broadcasting Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad. He said the national flag would fly half-mast during these days. President Gen Pervez Musharraf would attend the funeral and later Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz would also visit the Kingdom, the minister said. Meanwhile, President Musharraf and Prime Minister Aziz expressed deep grief over the passing away of King Fahd. In a message addressed to King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Khadim Al-Harain Al-Sharifain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President Musharraf paid tributes to the late king Fahd as an outstanding statesman who had dedicated his life for advancing international peace and understanding.

Dawn, 2 August 2005

Pakistan sent infiltrators to Kashmir in '65: Nur Khan (Arshad Sharif)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 1: Pakistan Air Force and Navy were not taken into confidence by the top army command as they started a secret operation to launch infiltrators into Kashmir ? an operation which finally led to Pakistan-India war in 1965, said former chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Nur Khan, here on Monday. The 82-year-old retired former Air chief revealed this to Dawn as he shared his memories of leading PAF from the front during the 1965 war, a fact also acknowledged in a recently published article by Air Marshal S. Raghavendran of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Air Marshal Khan said the decision to launch the infiltrators in Kashmir in 1965 was taken by the then President, Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Gen Muhammad Musa Khan and the divisional commander with some in cabinet and the foreign ministry also being on board.

Dawn, 3 August 2005

Compliance urged with weapons convention (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 2: Pakistan has called on the international community to implement earnestly instruments on prohibition or restriction of the use of 'Certain Conventional Weapons' (CCW) to effectively address humanitarian and security concerns of states. A dispatch received here on Tuesday from the country's mission to the United Nations in Geneva said Pakistan's Permanent Representative Masood Khan made the plea at a meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts of CCW. He emphasized that the delicate balance in the international instruments to minimize human sufferings without sacrificing the legitimate security interests of states must be maintained.

Dawn, 3 August 2005

US to help Pakistan meet energy needs

ISLAMABAD, Aug 2: The US Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca, on Tuesday said the US realised Pakistan's energy needs and would begin a dialogue to assist Islamabad meet its growing energy needs. Answering questions through a video conference by Pakistani journalists at the US embassy, Ms Rocca emphasised that the US had different relations with India and Pakistan, Ms Rocca said: "Will Pakistan get exactly the same deal (commercial nuclear trade)? I don't think the issue comes up in that format because we are not into mirror imaging." She also opposed the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project and said Islamabad and New Delhi should explore alternative sources for meeting their energy needs.

Daily Times, 3 August 2005

Govt getting tough with Afghan refugees (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Tuesday decided to speed up the repatriation of the 2.9 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and take steps to prevent them from re-entering Pakistan. Participants of a meeting of the cabinet committee on Afghan refugees agreed that most repatriated Afghan refugees snuck back into Pakistan and indulged in criminal acts. The meeting was chaired by Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao. Sources told Daily Times that the meeting participants decided that Afghan students in seminaries should be "among the first to leave the country". They said that Afghan refugees were a security hazard.

Daily Times, 3 August 2005

Seminary reforms: Squabbling ministries reach consensus on new set-up (Mohammed Rizwan)

LAHORE: Internal, religious affairs and education ministries have reached an agreement over the management of madrasa reforms after President Pervez Musharraf intervened personally to stop them from squabbling about who was going to lead the reforms. The new set-up, as directed by the president, will be led by the Ministry of Education. Federal Education Minister Javed Ashraf Qazi will be the head of the Madrasa Reform Board and Minister of Religious Affairs Ijazul Haq will be its vice chairman. There is also a proposal, to which Wafaqul Madaris has already given its seal of approval, that the Madrasa Reform Board, the brainchild of former education minister Zubaida Jalal, oversee a commission that will look after financial affairs and syllabi of more than 11,221 seminaries across the country.

Daily Times, 3 August 2005

Pakistan allows import of sugar from India (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has allowed the duty free import of sugar from India after a span of four years to control sugar prices in the country. The government made the decision at an Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, a senior government official told Daily Times on Tuesday. Pakistan had banned the import of sugar from India in 2001, the official said, adding that with the decision the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) and private sector could import the sugar from India. The official also said TCP had been asked to import 100,000 tonnes of sugar to increase its sugar reserves. He said the government also decided to extend the guarantee for seven new ATR42-500 turboprop aircraft to be purchased by Pakistan International Airline Company (PIAC) for \$100 million.

Daily Times, 3 August 2005

Pakistan will enhance intelligence sharing with UK, says Aziz

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has promised to enhance intelligence-sharing with the United Kingdom as part of the hunt for those behind the London bombings and warned against the assumption that there is a link between the bombers' visit to Pakistan and the incidents. The Financial Times quoted Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz saying that he had pledged to enhance intelligence sharing with the UK in the hunt for the London bombers but said that "it would be simplistic to say that somebody who visited Pakistan would be prompted to do something like this?". "There is no linkage of the visits to Pakistan and these terrible events," Aziz said in an interview published in the newspaper on Tuesday.

Daily Times, 3 August 2005

India giving 10,000 visas to Pakistanis every month

ISLAMABAD: With an increase in the number of Pakistani visa seekers the Indian high commission is processing more than 14,000 visa applications and issuing almost 10,000 visas every month. Long queues have also gone down because of the high commission's initiative to receive applications through courier service. Requesting anonymity, a high commission official said if visas were rejected, it was mostly because the applications were incomplete. Usually passports were sent back within a fortnight, barring some exceptions, he added. The official said applicants who wanted to go to India for medical treatment were given preference and that there was a separate window for medical visa applicants.

Dawn, 3 August 2005

Banned outfits activists ousted from contest: 11 papers rejected (Mohammad Asghar)

RAWALPINDI, Aug 2: Intelligence agencies detected 18 aspirants for the local government seats in Rawalpindi region belonging to the banned religious groups and consequently the nomination papers of 11 were rejected, security sources told Dawn on Tuesday. It is believed that the papers of the remaining seven candidates had also been rejected but they went into appeal which would be decided on Wednesday. Of the 18 allegedly having shady past, 11 belong to Attock, five to Rawalpindi and one each to Chakwal and Jhelum. Interestingly, among the 11 unwelcome candidates from Attock is a woman, Sahib Noor. She has filed papers for a general councillor's seat

from UC-51. She apparently aroused suspicion because her late husband, Mohammad Bashir, was said to have been an activist of the banned Millat-i-Islamia group, formerly known as Sipah-i-Sahaba.

Daily Times, 4 August 2005

Hasba Bill right or wrong in toto: SC

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) will not strike down the Hasba Bill and will only rule on its constitutionality, Chief Justice (CJ) of Pakistan Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry said on Wednesday. "We are not here to strike down some clauses of the Hasba Bill. We will decide whether it (Hasba Bill) is constitutional or unconstitutional," he said, APP reported. Mohammad Kamran adds: "We are not here to strike down the provincial legislation, but to form an opinion on its constitutional status under our advisory jurisdiction," the CJ said while hearing the arguments of the defence counsel on the bill. Khalid Anwar, counsel for the NWFP government, said the Hasba Bill was just legislation passed by the provincial assembly and was not an enforced law so the Supreme Court could not give an adverse ruling on it.

Daily Times, 4 August 2005

Madrasa registration and foreign students' repatriation: Shujaat disagrees, digs his heels in (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Wednesday that there would be no compromise on the repatriation of foreign students studying in local religious seminaries. Musharraf said this in a meeting with Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain who called on him to discuss the foreign students' issue. Sources privy to the meeting told Daily Times that the president expressed his resolve to rout extremism and terrorism. "Foreign students will have to be repatriated to their countries and seminaries will have to be registered," the sources quoted Musharraf as saying.

Daily Times, 4 August 2005

Pakistan rejects Afghan request not to repatriate refugees

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected Afghanistan's request not to repatriate Afghan refugees and seminary students. Nayangalai Tarzi, Afghan ambassador in Pakistan, called on Interior Minister Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao and formally requested him not to repatriate Afghan refugees living in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Sources said that the ambassador questioned Pakistan's decision to send back foreign students in madrassas without letting them complete their education. He said that the law and order situation in Afghanistan was not suitable and Pakistan should first consult the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on the repatriation of refugees, sources said.

Daily Times, 4 August 2005

Aziz says he'll continue as PM, rules out World Bank job

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said he would continue to serve Pakistan and ruled out the possibility of either joining World Bank (WB) or the United Nations (UN) in the near future, Geo news channel reported on Wednesday. Speaking in a channel programme, Aziz said all reports that the WB had given him an assignment or the UN had offered him a job were baseless. He said he would continue to check his cabinet ministers' performance. He said that he summoned his ministers and questioned them about the annual targets set for them. Aziz said he had offered his cooperation, assistance and guidance to ministers to help them achieve their targets.

Daily Times, 4 August 2005

Talks on nuclear CBMs tomorrow

NEW DELHI: A Pakistani delegation will arrive here tomorrow (Friday) for two-day expert-level talks with India on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). Foreign Affairs Ministry additional secretary Tariq Osman Hyder will lead the nine-member delegation. Indian External Affairs Ministry Additional Secretary Meera Shankar will lead the Indian side in talks. Later, experts-level talks on Conventional CBMs will be held here on August 8. Indian External Affairs Ministry Joint Secretary Dileep Sinha will lead the Indian delegation while Hyder will lead the Pakistani delegation. agencies

The Nation, 4 August 2005

Pakistan lax in Osama's hunt, say US experts

WASHINGTON - A former member of the US independent Sept. 11 inquiry commission and two American senior diplomats Tuesday accused President Pervez Musharraf of doing too little to capture Osama bin Laden, despite Pakistan's vigorous efforts to get the al-Qaeda chief. Bin Laden, who has a \$25 million bounty on his head, has been the target of a worldwide manhunt by U.S. forces since 9/11 attacks on the United States. He is reportedly

hiding in the mountains along the Pak-Afghan border. The three experts expressed their concerns at the latest hearing convened by members of the Sept. 11 commission to press for implementation of the panel's year-old recommendations. They said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan remain key breeding grounds for Islamic extremism that fuel terrorism.

Dawn, 5 August 2005

Pakistan, UK ink extradition treaty (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and UK have inked a bilateral extradition treaty to facilitate the exchange of wanted persons required in acts of terror and other crimes, said diplomatic sources here on Thursday. Both the states have been working on the finalization of this treaty for months but they speeded up this process in the aftermath of horrendous 7/7 terrorist attacks in London, the sources said. It was soon after the London bomb blasts that the two sides agreed to give final touches to the extradition treaty, they said, adding that the UK was of the strong desire that suspects in possible connection to 7/7 attacks be handed over to the British authorities. The recent unannounced visit of Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri to London played a key role in the finalization of Pak-UK extradition treaty, a source said, adding that in next few days the cabinets of two states would ratify this important legal instrument.

Daily Times, 5 August 2005

Pakistan, India ready for deal on missile tests

NEW DELHI: Officials from India and Pakistan will meet here today (Friday) to pursue discussions on nuclear safeguards aimed at cutting risks of accidental war between them amid a faltering peace drive. The two-day talks are likely to lead to a formal agreement on advance notification of missile tests. A nine-member Pakistani delegation lead by Additional Secretary Tariq Osman Hyder arrived here on Thursday for talks on nuclear confidence building measures (CBM). "We are going there with an open mind and hope that the talks will be held in a congenial atmosphere," Hyder told reporters before leaving for New Delhi.

Daily Times, 5 August 2005

SC declares key Hasba sections unconstitutional (Mohammad Kamran)

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday advised the NWFP governor not to agree to the Hasba Bill in its present form, as its sections relating to the powers and duties of the mohtasib were unconstitutional. "For reasons to be recorded later, in our considered opinion Section 10 (sub-sections b, c and d); Section 12(1) (sub-sections a, b and c); Section 23 (sub-sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14 and 27); Section 25(1 and 2) and Section 28 of the Hasba Bill 2005 passed by the NWFP Assembly are ultra vires of the constitution. Therefore, the NWFP governor may not assent the bill in its present form," states the short order pronounced by the court after four hours of in-camera consultation in a presidential reference against the bill.

Daily Times, 5 August 2005

5 soldiers killed near Miranshah (Iqbal Khattak)

PESHAWAR: Five soldiers including a junior officer of the Pakistan Army were killed in a remote-controlled bomb explosion in North Waziristan on Thursday afternoon, a military official said on Thursday. The improvised explosive device was placed between Dattakhel and Miranshah area to targeted a military convoy, said the official who asked not to be named. The condition of two wounded soldiers is stated to be serious. "Four jawans were killed on the spot. The fifth died on his way to hospital," the source said. He did not say where the convoy was heading. The dead soldiers were a havaldar, a JCO and three sepoy.

Daily Times, 5 August 2005

India ready to join pipeline consortium

NEW DELHI: India is likely to join a consortium with Iran and Pakistan to build the much-delayed \$7.4 billion Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. The construction of the pipeline is slated for 2007. At the end of the two-day Indo-Iran joint working group meeting on the pipeline, New Delhi stepped down from its earlier position that it would take the delivery of gas at the Indian border. It said that it would go to the cabinet for approval on joining the project consortium once the three countries decided on the project framework by end of 2005.

Dawn, 5 August 2005

Imran tells opposition to join hands

KARACHI, Aug 4: Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf chief Imran Khan has hinted towards the formation of a united front of all opposition parties to compel the government to set up an independent election commission with consensus before the next general elections. He said soon after the local government elections, the opposition parties would

have an opportunity for mass mobilisation against pre-and post-poll rigging to prove to the world that the Musharraf government could not hold fair, free and transparent elections. Mr Khan, who was in Karachi on a brief visit, was addressing a press conference on Thursday at the party's provincial secretariat. Earlier, he had presided over PTI's Sindh council session.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

MMA legislator threatens to take control of Pakistan (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: A former Sipah-i-Sahaba leader and a member of the NWFP Assembly has claimed that "it will be difficult for the government to really ban us," adding, "if we wanted to, we could bring life in Pakistan to a standstill and take control". The challenge comes from Ibrahim Qazmi, a 28-year-old cleric whose interview appears in Friday's Washington Post. Datelined, Landi Arbab in the Frontier, the report bears the by-line of Post reporter NC Aizenman.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

Israeli jailed for shipping nuclear gadgets to Pakistan

WASHINGTON: An Israeli businessman who conspired to ship controlled nuclear technology to Pakistan was sentenced to three years imprisonment at a United States' federal prison on Thursday. US District Judge Ricardo Urbina sentenced Asher Karni, who pleaded guilty last year to helping ship devices that could be used to test, develop and detonate nuclear weapons. Karni, who was based in South Africa, admitted routing sophisticated oscilloscopes and high-speed electrical switches through South Africa to avoid raising authorities' suspicions. The scopes and the switches were then shipped to Pakistan.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

We will not change stance on Kalabagh Dam, says Elahi

ISLAMABAD: There will be no change in Punjab's principled standpoint on the construction of Kalabagh dam, Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi told the Sindhi press on Thursday. "Punjab will continue to favour the project since it will generate more electricity than any other dam. " Talking to senior editors and journalists from Sindh at Punjab House on Friday, Elahi said that Punjab would not take a stance which would adversely 'impact the interests of any province'. He said that Kalabagh's previous design had been altered after Sindh and NWFP objected to it.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

Refugee camps in FATA being closed by 31st

PESHAWAR: The government has informed Afghans in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) that all refugee camps in Bajaur and Kurram agencies will be closed by August 31 and has offered the refugees voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan. According to a United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) press release, the announcement is based on a decision by the government last year to close refugee camps in FATA due to security concerns. There are about 105,000 refugees in 32 camps in FATA.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

Madrassa body backs registration

ISLAMABAD: The Tanzeemul Madaris of Pakistan has assured the government of cooperation in the madrassa registration campaign and has also allowed audit reports and other information needed by the government. Syed Noorul Haq Qadri, chairman of the Tanzeemul Madaris Raabta Committee, made these assurances during a meeting with Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao on Friday. Sherpao told Qadri and other members of the delegation that the government had not started any campaign against the madrassas, adding that the government was only acting against individuals and seminaries that were spreading hate in society. The government had stopped the printing and publishing of hate material and all those involved in doing so would be punished under the law, said Sherpao, adding that the government would not allow the misuse of loudspeakers.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

Pakistan may test N-capable missile soon

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani scientists are fine-tuning a new version of nuclear-capable missile which could suggest the country will test fire it soon, an official at one of Pakistan's main nuclear facilities said on Friday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to speak to the media, refused to say whether it was a long-range missile, or provide any other details. "Our scientists have started putting the final touches on a missile and Pakistan may test it soon," the official said. A local Urdu newspaper had reported on Friday that

Pakistan was likely to test fire a ballistic missile before August 14. But army spokesman General Shaukat Sultan refused to confirm the report, saying he had no such information.

The Nation, 6 August 2005

MMA takes U-turn on Hasba Bill

PESHAWAR - The NWFP government Friday vowed to continue legal battle for Hasba Bill by filing a writ petition in the apex court against stopping the provincial governor from giving his assent to the Bill. Speaking at a press conference here, provincial Law Minister Malik Zafar Azam also announced that the Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal would soon launch countrywide mass awareness campaign about the Constitution. Provincial ministers Asif Iqbal Dawoodzai and Maulana Asmatullah were also present on the occasion.

The Nation, 6 August 2005

Pakistan, India parleys on nuclear CBMs held

NEW DELHI (APP) - India and Pakistan on Friday held third round of experts level talks on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures here with extensive interaction on the issue of pre-notification agreement on missile tests. At the two-day parleys, the Pakistan delegation was headed by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tariq Osman Hyder while Indian side was led by Meera Shankar, Additional Secretary (UN), External Affairs Ministry. Among others, the nine-member delegation including Director General South Asia, Foreign Office, Syed Ibn-e-Abbas. Deputy High Commissioner to India Munawar Saeed and Defence Advisor in Pak High Commission, Brig Javed Sultan also participated in the dialogue.

The News, 6 August 2005

We're not bound by SC opinion: NWFP minister (Javed Aziz Khan)

PESHAWAR: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal government of the NWFP would file a writ petition before the Supreme Court against the orders of its larger bench that stopped the NWFP governor from signing the Hasba Bill. "The Supreme Court has just given an opinion and no appeal can be filed against it. Neither the governor nor the MMA government are bound to follow it," NWFP Law Minister Malik Zafar Azam told newsmen at a press briefing about their future line of action over the Hasba Bill. "We are waiting for the detailed judgment," the minister added. "After consultation with eminent lawyers and our friends, we will file a writ petition in the Supreme Court against stopping the NWFP governor from signing the Bill, as it was contrary to the constitution."

Daily Times, 7 August 2005

India, Pakistan to set up hotline, notify missile tests (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: The two-day talks between India and Pakistan on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) ended on Saturday on a positive note with both sides finalising the text of an agreement on the pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles. Both countries also agreed to establish hotlines between their foreign secretaries and director generals of military operations next month to prevent misunderstandings and reduce risks of mishaps. At the end of the 10-hour discussion, both sides issued a joint press statement, which said both countries had reached an understanding on the proposed agreement on the pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles. "The agreement commits both sides to pre-notify flight-testing of ballistic missiles in a structured format with the objective of increasing mutual confidence and engendering predictability and transparency of intent," it added.

Daily Times, 7 August 2005

No canals from KBD, Musharraf assures Sindh

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that no canals would be drawn from Kalabagh Dam and that the interests of Sindhis would be well protected after the dam's construction. Talking to a delegation of Sindh newspaper editors at Army House, Musharraf gave his word to construct Kalabagh Dam, saying the project was central to Pakistan's economic and agricultural progress and future water needs. "For a better Pakistan, we will have to build large dams, be it Kalabagh, Bhasha, Skardu or Akhori. Since I consider Kalabagh a project vital to Pakistan's socio-economic prosperity, the Kalabagh project will be pursued with determination," he added. "Sindhis must believe me when I say Kalabagh Dam's construction won't hurt their stakes and I can even give my personal surety on it," he said. Musharraf said that he could not understand how Sindhis wanted more water while opposing the construction of large dams at the same time.

Daily Times, 7 August 2005

MMA, not president, enlightened, says Fazl

MULTAN/Peshawar: The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) is an enlightened and progressive party while General Pervez Musharraf is a reactionary and his claims of being enlightened are false, said Maulana Fazlur Rehman,

leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Maulana Fazl, who is also the MMA secretary general, said that if foreigners were a threat to the country's security, the government should expel all foreigners from Pakistan. "There is no justification in expelling foreign students who have come to Pakistan on valid study visas," he added. Maulana Fazl said that madrassas were not promoting extremism, adding that the seminaries were producing true Muslims who loved humanity irrespective of creed or colour.

Daily Times, 7 August 2005

Foreign students in seminaries: Islamic states informed of expulsion plan (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has formally informed Islamic countries about its decision to expel foreign students from the country, official sources told Daily Times on Saturday. Sources said that 56 ambassadors and high commissioners of Islamic countries in Pakistan had been informed in writing about the government's decision and they had assured the government that they would cooperate in repatriating the students to their respective countries. Among others, the letters were sent to the embassies of Afghanistan, Iran, Indonesia, Yemen, Sudan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Oman, Libya, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Brunei, Qatar, Lebanon, Morocco and the Central Asian States. Sources said the federal government was considering Pakistan Muslim League President Shujaat Hussain's proposal that genuine foreign seminary students should be allowed to appear in the examinations to be held next month.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

Government trying to hoodwink US: Fazl

LAHORE: The Pakistani government is deceiving the US and the West by helping militants freely enter Afghanistan from Waziristan, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) Secretary General Maulana Fazlur Rehman said on Sunday. He told a press conference that the government should give the identity of the infiltrators and its (government's) motives for helping them enter Afghanistan. "They must also give the nation the identities of the men being moved from Waziristan to militant camps in Mansehra. This is hypocrisy. The rulers are not only trying to deceive the US and the West, but also hoodwinking the entire nation," he added. Earlier, Fazl had said that if pressured he would reveal facts that would open a Pandora's box.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

India knows who sold war plans: Gohar

NEW DELHI: Former foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan has said that he would reveal the name of the Indian Army officer who allegedly sold India's 1965 war plan to his late father Field marshal Ayub Khan "at an appropriate time", the Hindustan Times reported on Sunday. The paper quoted Gohar Ayub as saying that New Delhi already knew who the person was. He said that he had already given a "clue to the clueless" Indian government about the man. He said the name of the person would not come as a shock to Indian authorities, as they had already questioned the former officer. "I will disclose the name at an appropriate time," Gohar Ayub said. He claimed that after his revelation last month, the Indian government had investigated the person. "But they (Indians) don't want to name him," he added.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

Family dispute delays exhumation: Shujaat off to London to bring Rehmat's body (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain left for London on Sunday to bring back the remains of Chaudhry Rehmat Ali, the man who named Pakistan. "Shujaat has left for London to bring Rehmat Ali's remains back on August 14 (independence day)," Senator Tariq Azeem told Daily Times. Rehmat Ali's remains are likely to be exhumed on August 12. He is buried in Cambridge. Rehmat Ali named Pakistan in a booklet 'Now or Never', which he wrote and published on January 8, 1933. 'P' for Punjab, 'A' for the Afghan border (ie NWFP), 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sindh and 'tan' for Balochistan were put together to name the new country.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

3 blasts in Balochistan

QUETTA: A homemade bomb exploded in a remote town in Balochistan province, shattering windows at a bakery and two other explosions elsewhere in the province damaged two power pylons early Sunday, officials said. No one was reported hurt. The explosion that damaged the bakery occurred in the main bazaar in Turbat, a town about 650 kilometers (400 miles) southeast of Quetta, local police official Abdul Sattar said. The bomb was planted in a drain near the bakery in Turbat, shattering the shop's windows, he said. Two other explosions

damaged two large electricity pylons in southeastern Rakhni district, disrupting power to thousands of homes and businesses, said Jibrael Khan, a spokesman for the Water and Power Development Authority.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

Pakistan must ask US for nuclear deal, says Sen Khawaja (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Citing the India-United States nuclear deal as a precedent, Pakistan must urge the United States for extending similar assistance to it for meeting the country's growing energy needs, Pakistan People's Party Senator Akbar Khawaja told Daily Times. Khawaja said the government should bring into confidence all parliamentarians on such national issues, no less than the leaders of the mainstream parties living in exile. He said the Indo-US deal could have an adverse effect on Pakistan's future relationship with India, Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. This shift in US policy had also brought new pressures to bear on Pakistan's civil and military assets.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

Police give madrassas forms seeking detailed information (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: On the Interior Ministry's directive, the Islamabad Capital Territory Police on Sunday distributed two forms in mosques and seminaries in Islamabad for information about foreign students studying there. Qari Hanif Jalandhry, coordination secretary of the Ittehad-e-Tanzimat-e-Madaris-e-Dinya (ITMD), a representative organisation, told Daily Times that ITMD had directed all religious seminaries not to provide information to the government and not fill the forms, which have 10 columns each. Sikanader Hayat, Senior Superintendent of Islamabad Police wrote to all police station house officers (SHOs) and sub-divisional police officers (SDPOs) to distribute and have the forms filled out in detail and sent to him by Tuesday.

Daily Times, 8 August 2005

Talks with India on CBMs today

NEW DELHI, Aug 7: Encouraged by tangible progress at the two-day dialogue on nuclear CBMs, Pakistan and India will hold day-long talks on conventional Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) here on Monday. Leader of nine-member delegation and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tariq Osman Hyder, will lead Pakistani side at the talks, while Indian delegation will be headed by Joint Secretary (Pakistan), External Affairs Ministry, Dileep Sinha. Pakistan and India had agreed Saturday to notify each other of ballistic missile tests in a structured format and operationalize the hotline between the foreign secretaries next month. Talking to newsmen at the conclusion of two-day talks on nuclear CBMs, leader of Pakistan delegation said, "We are hoping that we will have equally good progress at the talks on conventional CBMs on August 8. We are looking forward to another round of result-oriented talks on Monday".

The Nation , 8 August 2005

Pakistan, China join hands to defeat G-4

BEIJING (APP)—Pakistan and China are in close contact through diplomatic channels to develop consensus on UNs proposed reforms, said Chinese official sources. Both the countries follow a joint strategy, not allowing the G-4 or group of four countries to seek expansion of the Security Council by forced voting. " We believe that voting on the Council's reform will be "highly divisive" and will be "in the final analysis a fruitless exercise, the sources said while talking to APP here Sunday. Pakistan and China have shared objectives for the UN reform and we have shared objectives for the Security Council expansion. But definitely both sides see that the process now being pushed by the G-4 is damaging the prospect of the UN reform.

The Nation , 8 August 2005

Pak exports to US, UK set new benchmark (Javed Mahmood)

LAHORE - Despite a wicked and malicious anti-terrorist campaign against Pakistanis in the United States and the United Kingdom, Pakistan's exports to the US and UK have set a new benchmark, by reaching the highest mark in 2004-05. Latest details obtained by The Nation revealed that in 2004-05 for the first time Pakistan's exports the United States crossed \$3 billion mark and settled at \$3.154 billion, showing a affable growth of \$391 million in last fiscal year. Similarly, country's exports to the United Kingdom also exceeded one billion dollars level for the first time in last financial year and stood at \$1.035 billion as against \$893.22 million in 2003-04, indicating an increase of 142 million dollars. In other words 30 per cent of Pakistan's total exports in 2004-05 were destined to the United States and the United Kingdom.

The Nation , 8 August 2005

Shaukat leaves for Japan, Hong Kong today

ISLAMABAD (NNI) - Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will leave for five-day official visit of Japan and Hong Kong today. The Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz is visiting Japan on the invitation of his Japanese counterpart Junichiro

Koizumi from August 8-11. During the visit, the Prime Minister will hold talks with Junichiro Koizumi to review bilateral matters as well as exchange views on regional and global developments. P M Koizumi will host a banquet in his honour. The Prime Minister will also meet important cabinet ministers including Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Minister for Finance, Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry and Minister for Foreign Affairs. He will also meet CEOs of leading Japanese businesses who will host a lunch in his honour.

The Nation , 8 August 2005

Transnational gasline tops govt's strategy (AFZAL BAJWA)

ISLAMABAD - Materialising the transnational gas pipeline projects tops the government's strategy under formulation to introduce a mechanism for gas supply and distribution to the economy's key sectors besides domestic consumers, officials confirmed on Sunday. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has given the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources two weeks to finalize a gas supply and distribution mechanism. The officials involved in formulation of the mechanism, as directed by the PM, find no alternative to the project of transnational gas pipelines. Secretary Petroleum Ahmed Waqar when contacted by The Nation confirmed that his ministry had been working on the supply mechanism, which would be made public to keep the existing and the future users informed about the gas supply.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

Infiltration charges pretext to redeploy Indian troops: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday called statements by Indian leaders about an increase in cross-border infiltration baseless. "Pakistan's commitment to the peace process with India is unquestionable. Pakistan believes that India is creating the bogey of infiltration to deploy more troops in Jammu and Kashmir so as to quash the liberation movement in the state," Foreign Office spokesman Naeem Khan said at his weekly press briefing. There was need for India to address the issue of state terrorism and improve the human rights situation in Kashmir by reducing troop levels, the spokesman said, adding that President Pervez Musharraf had also talked to the Indian prime minister about cooling down the situation and continuing the peace process.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

Madrassa registration: I won't tolerate any hindrance, says Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: President Gen Pervez Musharraf has said stated the decision to register madrassas was "final" and cautioned people that "no hindrance whatsoever would be tolerated in the registration process". "The registration of madrassas is imperative. Modern scientific education should be imparted in seminaries so that students who graduate from them can play their part in all walks of life," he told NWFP Governor Khalilur Rehman, who called on him at Army House on Monday. The president said that the ongoing campaign against terrorists in Waziristan would be "stepped up".

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

France warned to watch its Pakistani community

PARIS: The Central Directorate of General Information (DCRG) has warned that several hundred Pakistanis in France have terrorist links and recommended surveillance of the community, said French newspaper Le Figaro newspaper on Monday. According to the newspaper, the report said that while most Pakistanis aspire to integrate into French society, several hundred "have chosen the path of terrorism and Salafism to express their hatred of the West." An Interior Ministry official confirmed the existence of the report, but cautioned that it was "a very technical study on the Pakistani community in France." He said it was not aimed at lecturing Britain on what might happen on its own soil.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

Osama Bin Yousaf important Qaeda operative: officials (Mubasher Bukhari)

LAHORE: Osama Bin Yousaf, arrested from Faisalabad on Sunday, is said to be an important Al Qaeda operative, a close aide of Abu Faraj Al Libby and Amjad Hussain Farooqi and was in contact with other Al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan and Europe, intelligence officials told Daily Times on Monday. "Bin Yousaf confessed to being part of the Al Qaeda network and to have provided logistic support to militants," officials added. His cell phone numbers were found in Al Libby's telephone index after which American and Pakistani intelligence agencies put him on their watch list, intelligence officials said, adding that he was arrested after the Cellular Call Tracking System (CCTS) that was installed in several locations countrywide phone calls made by him to Italy, Germany and the UK.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

Pakistan and UK to sign extradition treaty

ISLAMABAD: Britain and Pakistan are set to complete an extradition treaty, the Foreign Office said on Monday. FO spokesman Muhammad Naeem Khan said both sides were finalising formalities before the treaty was signed, but did not say when that would be. "Right now the status is that the extradition treaty is in the final stages," he said at his weekly news conference. He gave no further details, other than saying that such treaties were to extradite individuals "who are wanted by the courts to be tried in their respective countries". Simon Smart, a spokesman for the British High Commission in Islamabad, confirmed that the treaty was expected to be signed soon. Smart also said the extradition treaty and a memorandum of understanding Britain and Pakistan signed last month had "got nothing to do with happened in London last month", apparently referring to the deadly bombings there.

The Nation, 09 August 2005

7-CBM accord on military tension

NEW DELHI (AFP) - Pakistan and India, striving to end decades of hostility, agreed Monday on seven steps to reduce military tension, including a ban on the building of new army posts along their frontier in divided Kashmir. The two sides also agreed to continue a ceasefire along the Line of Control, said a joint statement after day-long talks between senior foreign ministry officials. In addition, India and Pakistan would upgrade an existing military hotline and hold monthly 'flag' meetings between senior military officers along their borders, the statement said. Other measures were the continuation of existing agreements to respect each other's air space, to speedily return civilians who inadvertently stray across their borders and constantly to review existing confidence-building measures.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

Pakistan's nuclear policy result of Indian detonations: Aziz (Khalid Mustafa)

ON BOARD PM'S SPECIAL PLANE: Pakistan firmly believes in non-proliferation of nuclear arms and it had conducted the nuclear tests following the nuclear detonations by India, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told journalists on the way to Japan. "Pakistan is against proliferation by any country and in fact it was forced to carry out nuclear tests following India's nuclear explosions," he said. "Pakistan is a declared nuclear power and its nuclear programme is under a strict command and control system. "About UN reforms, the prime minister said Japan was fully aware of Pakistan's stand on the issue. "To this effect, Pakistan's policy is not country specific; rather it is based on the principles of equality, justice and fair-play." He said that Pakistan and India's talks on commercial and economic cooperation to be held on August 9 (today) and 10 in New Delhi were part of the ongoing composite dialogue.

Daily Times, 09 August 2005

India-Pakistan trade talks today

ISLAMABAD: Two-day trade talks between Indian and Pakistani secretaries of Commerce will begin today (Tuesday) in New Delhi. Both sides will discuss eight-point confidence building measures (CBMs) including improving economic, trade and commercial cooperation and business interaction, and upgrading shipping, rail, air and postal links. Officials said that Pakistan was looking forward to correcting the trade imbalance between the two countries during these talks. "Pakistan will propose that a second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade and Commerce be held here," said the officials. They hoped that India would propose ways to remove impediments in the import of Pakistani products. Commerce Additional Secretary Syed Asif Shah will lead a six member Pakistani delegation.

Daily Times, 10 August 2005

Britain too soft on radical clerics, says Musharraf

LONDON: President Pervez Musharraf said on Monday that Britain had been too lenient with radical Muslim clerics and must clamp down on them after last month's bomb attacks in London. Asked by the BBC in an interview if Britain had been too soft on radical clerics, Musharraf said, "Yes I think so, absolutely. It should be stopped, nobody should be talking of hatred and militancy and aggression. That is not what the mosque is meant for. That should be stopped immediately." On Friday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair unveiled plans for sweeping anti-terrorism measures to silence or deport Islamist radicals after 52 people were killed in the bomb attacks on London's transport network in July.

The Nation, 10 August 2005

Musharraf for more trade among OIC

RAWALPINDI (APP) - President General Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday called for greater trade between the Muslim countries through removal of barriers for their rapid and sustainable socio-economic development. He was addressing a meeting pertaining to the reform of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) aimed at making it an

effective institution, capable of facilitating speedy development of the Muslim world through enhanced trade and investment. "The Bank should be enabled to lead initiatives in bringing down trade restrictions and expanding the trade volume from its current mere 12 per cent so that the Muslim countries may complement each other's economies through utilisation of their enormous resources," he said.

Daily Times, 10 August 2005

Status quo on Kashmir no solution, says Aziz (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Tuesday that India, Pakistan and Kashmiris would have to resolve the Kashmir issue, which had held regional peace hostage for a long time. "So far all three stakeholders haven't been able to sit at the table together and resolve the issue according to what all three want," he said after talking on 'The situation in and around South Asia and future prospects for the South Asian region' at the Japan Institute of International Affairs.

Daily Times, 10 August 2005

Pakistan rejects importing diesel from India

NEW DELHI: Pakistan on Tuesday ruled out importing diesel from India, saying new additions to the positive list of importable goods were not possible in the immediate future. At the commerce secretary-level talks, Pakistan said it had already put 70 items on the 'positive' list of importable items from India and further additions to the list were not possible immediately, government officials said. Islamabad may look into importing diesel from India in the future, but did not give any timeframe. State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) had offered to sell 325,000 tonnes of diesel at a discount to Pakistan from October 2005 to March 2006.

The Nation, 10 August 2005

Open Wahga-Atari route

NEW DELHI (APP) – Pakistan and India on Tuesday held talks on Economic and Trade Cooperation within the framework of Composite Dialogue process and discussed agenda items. Secretary (Incharge) Commerce, Syed Asif Shah is leading a six-member Pak delegation at the talks. Indian side is headed by Commerce Secretary, S.N. Menon. Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmad Khan, Deputy High Commissioner, Munawar Saeed, Director General South Asia, Foreign Office, Syed Ibn-e-Abbas, Trade Minister in Pak High Commission Fazal Abbas Mekan also attended the trade parleys.

The Nation, 10 August 2005

Pak, Indian PMs and FM's to have N-hotline (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and India will upgrade the nuclear hotline further to top political level of heads of two governments and foreign ministers. The South Asian nuclear states had agreed to set up the hotline at the foreign secretaries level at the end of their two-day talks on nuclear CBMs in New Delhi on Saturday. They also agreed to formalize the MoU on pre-notification of missile tests. The hotline at the top official level in foreign ministries is meant to reduce the risk of a nuclear accident, which could occur due to misunderstandings. This hotline, to be established next month, would further be upgraded to the level of foreign ministers, said diplomatic sources here.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

Pakistan, India discuss steps to boost trade (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, Aug 9: Pakistan and India on Tuesday appeared to have agreed to a slew of measures, including setting up branches of their banks across the border with prospects of more trade routes opening up, to boost largely untapped bilateral trade. The commerce secretaries of the two countries are believed to have had a "friendly, cordial and forward-looking" round of talks on the first day of their trade talks that are expected to end with a joint statement on Wednesday. Such was the confidence in the talks that have almost concluded on a happy note for both, that the buzzword was that neither India and nor Pakistan mentioned the MFN status issue that New Delhi usually injects into the talks. Sources close to the talks told Dawn that both countries were expecting to push through a new shipping protocol, indicate more aviation links and work for a better streamlined Wagah-Attari land crossing to beef up trade and other business contacts.

Daily Times, 11 August 2005

Elections without women will be void, says CEC (Mohammad Kamran)

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar warned on Wednesday he would take stern action against anyone barring women from local polls next week, including cancelling results in affected areas. He spoke out after police and rights groups said candidates in parts of the NWFP were ganging up to stop women casting their votes. "This is an electoral offence, legal action will be taken against anyone involved and such a poll will be void," Justice Dogar told a news conference. He said he had ordered district officials in the

province to investigate complaints about stopping women from filing nomination papers or casting their votes. "I also facilitated 506 women in filing their nomination papers in four districts of the NWFP by extending time by one day," Dogar said, referring to the hardline Battagram, Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Kohistan districts.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

Musharraf says UK too soft on radical clerics

LONDON, Aug 9: President Pervez Musharraf said on Monday that Britain had been too lenient with radical clerics and advised it to clamp down on them after last month's bomb attacks in London. Asked by the BBC in an interview if Britain had been too soft on radical clerics, President Musharraf said: "Yes I think so, absolutely. It should be stopped, nobody should be ... talking of hatred and militancy and aggression. "That is not what the mosque is meant for. That should be stopped immediately." A British official said on Monday that Britain was considering charging Muslim clerics with treason if they incited violence or praised suicide attacks. This sparked criticism from some opposition politicians who argued treason laws were outdated and impractical. President Musharraf said he thought the July 7 and 21 bombings were possibly linked and supervised by the same mastermind.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

Pakistani held in France with fake UK IDs

PARIS, Aug 9: A Pakistani man arrested with several false British identity papers in his possession is in French custody after being arrested at a Paris airport, airport and law-enforcement officials said on Tuesday. Mohammad Billal Youssaf, 23, a resident of Brescia in Italy, had arrived at Charles de Gaulle airport from Lahore and was headed to London when he was arrested on Sunday, one official said. He had five fake British passports and five fake British driving licences on him, the official said. The documents had already been filled out and contained photographs of different individuals. Youssaf was being held by the police crimes unit and checks were being conducted to confirm his identity given in the Pakistani passport he was using.

The Nation, 11 August 2005

Pak mediating to defuse Iran crisis (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is mediating between the United States and Iran to help defuse the grave crisis arising out of Tehran's refusal to accept the EU economic incentives followed by resumption of uranium conversion. The United States has requested Pakistan to help resolve the row over Iran's nuclear programme, said the diplomatic sources, adding that Islamabad has accepted this request and now it has been striving to help settle the issue in an amicable manner. They said being a close ally state of the United States in global war on terror as well as an old friendly nation of Iran, Pakistan was best fit in the role of a mediator between Washington and Tehran. Islamabad has already made it clear that it was for a peaceful settlement to US-Iran standoff over Tehran's nuclear programme and also that it would oppose the use of force to resolve the issue.

The Nation, 11 August 2005

Bail refused to Pakistani Imam in US

NEW YORK-A judge in San Francisco declined to set bail Tuesday for a Pakistani Imam detained in a terror probe after government and defence lawyers offered divergent portraits of him — casting him as a conspirator in an al Qaeda-linked plot or a moderate who has grown to love America. Shabbir Ahmed is "both a flight risk and a danger to the community," Judge Anthony Murry said after a four-hour hearing, according to media reports. Ahmed, a citizen of Pakistan, is accused only of violating the terms of his religious-worker visa and is fighting deportation to Pakistan, the San Francisco Chronicle said. But Tuesday's testimony detailed some key pieces of the probe, in which a father and son in Lodi, California, are charged with lying about the son's attendance at a terror training camp in Pakistan.

Daily Times, 11 August 2005

Pakistan, Japan sign deals on water, power and tourism (Khalid Mustafa)

TOKYO: Pakistan and Japan have signed three agreements whereby the latter will give financial assistance for infrastructure projects and tourism promotion in Pakistan. Two agreements on water and power were signed by Hina Rabbani Khar, minister of state for economic affairs, and the chief of Japan Bank for International Cooperation. Under the two agreements, Japan will give Pakistan two soft-term loans worth \$157 million for two projects - \$36 million to upgrade the National Power Control Cell and \$121 million for the rehabilitation of Chenab Canal in Punjab, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told a press conference after talks with his Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi. The loans will have to be repaid over 30 years at an interest rate of 1.3 percent, with a grace period of 10 years.

Daily Times, 11 August 2005

Explain visits to Libya, Rashid tells Fazl

LAHORE: Maulana Fazlur Rehman should explain why he makes frequent trips to Libya, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Wednesday. "He goes to the UAE and then it emerges that he has reached Tripoli. I had said that he should take the nation into confidence about it, but it seems that he got offended," Ahmed told reporters after attending an Independence Day show for television at the Alhamra. Asked about foreign seminary students, the minister said, "We want them to go back to their countries respectably. There is no logic in them staying here after examinations, which are either in progress or going to be held in the next few days."

The Nation , 12 August 2005

Pakistan joins cruise club

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) - Pakistan Thursday successfully test-fired its first cruise missile and joined a select club of nations which have developed the ground-hugging projectiles, the military said. President Pervez Musharraf hailed the launch of the Hatf VII Babur, which is capable of carrying nuclear warheads, as a 'major milestone' in the country's defence programme, an army statement said. Pakistan did not give advance warning to India, despite a deal made at the weekend between the two countries to notify each other before missile tests and to set up a hotline to prevent an accidental atomic exchange. The agreement only refers to ballistic missiles and not to cruise missiles, foreign ministry spokesman Naeem Khan told AFP. "The scientists and technicians involved had again done the nation proud by mastering a rare technology," General Musharraf added in the statement. "We are proud of this achievement, we shall never let our deterrence level come down and today's test also manifests our resolve to further reinforce our defence capabilities," he told reporters at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Daily Times, 12 August 2005

Jihadis running for local elections (Mohammed Rizwan)

LAHORE: The much-publicised Election Commission's directions to all district returning officers (DROs) to exclude members of 18 outlawed jihadi organisations from the local bodies elections have proved to be a damp squib as DROs feel that many jihadis have slipped the net and are running for seats in the local councils. The DROs said that they only received the directions and the list of the suspect candidates well after the scrutiny process was over. "There was little we could do (to stop members of banned organisations). They only needed to submit an affidavit to be eligible for the elections," said a returning officer. Judging by the number of complaints the DROs have received in this regard, there is great fear that dozens of candidates associated with outlaw jihadi organisation might have slipped the net and are running for local council seats. On July 19, Election Commission of Pakistan, through a confidential letter, directed all DROs that members of 18 outlawed organisations were not eligible to run for any local government seat and should be disqualified. The list was reportedly attached with the letter.

Daily Times, 12 August 2005

Brother seeks protection for Pearl murder suspect

KARACHI: The brother of a militant suspected of links to the murder of US reporter Daniel Pearl has asked a court to ensure his brother's safety. A petition calling for the protection of suspect Mohammad Hashim Qadir had been filed with the Sindh High Court. Qadir's lawyer Rai Bashir Ahmad said two of seven suspects wanted in connection with the kidnapping and murder of the Wall Street Journal reporter had been killed in encounters with security men. "We fear they might also kill Qadir," Ahmad told reporters. Pearl, 38, was kidnapped in Karachi in January 2002 while researching a story on Islamist militants. He was later killed. Ahmad said Qadir's brother, Mohammad Khalid Imran, had expressed fears that Qadir might be killed as police had no evidence to prosecute him in the Pearl case.

The Nation , 12 August 2005

Shaukat wants more investment from Hong Kong (MEHTAB HAIDER)

HONG KONG - Pakistan will seek investment in construction of ports, real estate development, airlines and other sectors of economy from Hong Kong investors during the visit of Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz who arrived here Thursday. Shaukat would hold meetings with Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Fund Managers for issuance of Eurobond, business community, think-tanks, media and Pakistani community during his two-day stay. "We will seek investments in ports, airlines and real estate development from Hong Kong investors. We will hold meetings with fund managers related to launching upcoming Euro bond," Prime Minister Aziz said while talking to reporters during his special flight from Nagoya (Japan) to Hong Kong. Responding to a question regarding the New Murree Project and its impact on pollution, the premier said the government has found that this project would not affect environment. "We held meetings before my recent visit and it is consensus among all ministries and departments that this project will not affect its environment," he added. When a journalist commented that some influentials had purchased lands there, the premier denied such reports.

Daily Times, 12 August 2005

Japanese firms will invest in Pakistan: Aziz

ON BOARD PM's SPECIAL PLANE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz called his visit to Japan successful and said that mainstream Japanese companies would invest in key projects in Pakistan, including proposed gas pipelines, the liquefied natural gas terminal at Karachi and power and hydroelectric projects. The prime minister said that major Japanese corporate leaders were serious in investing in Pakistan. Talking to journalists in his special plane while travelling from Japan to Hong Kong on the second leg of his tour as part of his 'Look East policy', Aziz said the New Murree Project was feasible and not a threat to the environment. He said the Ministry of Environment had allowed the project. The prime minister said that Pakistan would ask businessmen in Hong Kong to invest in the real estate business. He was dissatisfied with the Pakistan Pavilion in Expo 2005 Aichi wherein 120 countries were participating. He said that the Pakistan's Pavilion could have been improved. Khalid Mustafa

The Daily Times, 12 August 2005

Pakistan won't seal Pak-Afghan border: Sultan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan ruled out sealing its border with Afghanistan has said that only strict vigilance will be maintained at the border to control infiltration of terrorists from the neighbouring country. "No decision has been taken to close our border with Afghanistan next month and we have no intentions," said military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan. Some newspapers quoting unnamed sources claimed that Pakistan was planning to seal the Torkham and Chaman border crossings with Afghanistan from next month. In a chat with Pajhwok Afghan News, Gen Sultan said they were keeping a vigilant eye on terrorists and illegal migrants, but there was no question of closing the border for common Afghans. online

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Pakistan will get two F16s by December

WASHINGTON: Jehangir Karamat, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, on Friday said that Pakistan would get two F16s by December. In an interview to APP, the ambassador said there were a lot of stages that had passed and things were going smoothly after the approval for F16s sale to Pakistan early this year. Right now, he said, the exact configuration, cost and number of F16s to be sold to Pakistan were being negotiated between the two countries. "We are looking at something like 75 F16s." About the state of Pakistan-US relations, Jehangir said these were "very very good" at the moment. "There are no problems as such, except that there are ongoing discussions on visas to Pakistani citizens and formalities at airports and border points, especially at the Canadian border" The point, he said, was that relations in all areas had broadened and the two countries were addressing mutual concerns and pursuing mutual interests. app

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Shaukat reiterates nuclear restraint offer to India (Khalid Mustafa)

HONG KONG: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that the risk of a nuclear exchange and a conventional arms race in the South Asian region would decrease if India accepted Pakistan's offer to set up a strategic restraint regime. The Pakistani prime minister said this when asked about the role nuclear deterrence had in the 21st century, as the notion was an obsolete method to ensure peace. Addressing a lecture on 'Pakistan's Vision for the Asian Century: Promoting Cooperation for Peace and Development' at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Aziz said that however Pakistan would maintain a minimum nuclear deterrence to ensure peace in the region, as it was Pakistan's nuclear capability and intervention by important countries that started the Indo-Pak peace process after India gathered a million troops on its border with Pakistan in 2001, increasing tension in the region. "We achieved peace through strength," he added.

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Banned literature being distributed in Punjab offices (Ali Waqar)

LAHORE: Hate-provoking religious literature is being openly and freely disseminated in government offices including the offices of senior bureaucrats in the Punjab Civil Secretariat, Daily Times found on Thursday. Even though such banned religious material has been in most government departments, only the Punjab Home Department, announced that they were confiscating the material immediately. Some unknown person visited the Civil Secretariat on Thursday and freely distributed extremist religious propaganda material, including the latest issues (August 2005) of monthly newspaper Majalat-ul-Dawa published from Lahore, weekly newspaper Ghazwa and another monthly newspaper for women Tayyabaat.

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

SC lets madrassa certificate holder contest polls

LAHORE: A full bench of the Supreme Court (SC) has provisionally allowed a madrassa certificate holder candidate for nazim to contest the elections. The court said that the eligibility of madrassa certificate holders

would be decided after hearing the parties in detail. Rana Shaukat Ali, a candidate for Faisalabad Union Council 234, had moved the SC against rejection of his nomination papers by the Lahore High Court. The SC raised questions whether the ordinance relating to educational certificates of madrassas had been made a law, which institution or department was competent to declare a madrassa certificate equal to the certificates or degrees issued by a secondary board or university, and whether subjects taught in madrassas are recommended by the Higher Education Commission?

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Qadeer Khan's son-in-law remanded (Shahzad Malik)

ISLAMABAD: A court on Friday sent Saad Ali Khan, son in-law of nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, to Adiala Jail on judicial remand. Saad was produced in a court where the investigation officer sought his physical remand, but the court did not concede to the latter's arguments. The Capital Police had arrested Saad from Sector E-7 for allegedly assaulting British diplomats. According to police, British diplomats Mr and Mrs Lee were on the way when a speeding car came out of a street. The diplomats reprimanded Saad and this led to a verbal row, the police added. Later, Saad and his four accomplices, carrying clubs and iron rods, trespassed into the diplomats' house and assaulted them. Reuters adds: British HC to Pakistan Mark Lyall Grant said the two victims required medical treatment after the "vicious and unprovoked attack".

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Hasba Bill now in Balochistan Assembly: Fazl

QUETTA: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, opposition leader in the National Assembly and Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) general secretary, has said the MMA will amend the Hasba Bill to remove the Supreme Court's reservations on some articles. He said the Hasba Bill would now be tabled in the Balochistan Assembly. Addressing the Nifaz-e-Shariat and Tahaffuz-e-Deen conferences in Quetta on Friday, Fazl said the MMA was prepared to meet the government's challenges. MMA President Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, deputy parliamentary leader in the National Assembly, JUI Quetta Ameer Maulana Noor Muhammad, MNA Sayed Nasib Ali Shah, provincial minister Maulana Abdul Qader Luni and Maulana Abdul Qadeer Chishti also addressed the conferences.

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

'Blasphemy' author gets life term

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court sentenced a man to life imprisonment for writing an allegedly blasphemous book about the Quran and the Islamic justice system, a lawyer said on Friday. Police arrested 40-year-old writer Younis Sheikh early this year in Karachi after he brought out the book called 'Shaitan Maulvi' (Satanic Cleric). "The court has sent him into jail for life as he described the four Imams as Jews in his book," public prosecutor Naimat Ali Randhawa said after the court in Karachi sentenced the man on Thursday. The four Imams were the third generation interpreters of the religion after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and their views on law are widely respected by the world's Muslims, he said. The writer also committed blasphemy by saying that stoning to death for adultery was "not mentioned in the Quran", he added. afp

Daily Times, 14 August 2005

Musharraf tells army to be ready to maintain order (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Saturday asked the army to be ready to maintain law and order in the country during the upcoming local government elections. "Be prepared to assist the civil administration should such a need arise to maintain law and order during the local government elections," ISPR quoted the president as instructing the top brass of the Pakistan Army. Chaired by the president at GHQ, the 92nd meeting of corps commanders was attended by the vice chief of army staff, corps commanders and principal staff officers. The meeting reviewed the internal and external security situation and operational preparedness of the Pakistan Army besides training and other matters of professional interest

Daily Times, 14 August 2005

No progress on seminary reform (Ali Waqar)

LAHORE: The government has made no movement on seminary reforms and registration for some three weeks, with no related meetings scheduled and new no policy guidelines issued to government departments, Daily Times has learnt. "Vested interests appear to have delayed the process. No further guidelines have been forwarded to the departments concerned," said one federal government official. He would not say what he meant by "vested interests". The official said the last meeting to discuss madrassa reforms was held three weeks ago and chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. He said there were no more meetings scheduled. The reforms plan had already been temporarily suspended after the provinces expressed reservations about the plan and suggested revisions in the policy in the last quarter of 2004. The federal government has allocated another Rs 1 billion for madrassa

reforms in fiscal 2005-06. President General Pervez Musharraf, in a televised address on July 21, said all seminaries in Pakistan would have to register by December 2005.

Daily Times, 14 September 2005

'No terror mastermind behind London bombers'

LONDON: Groups behind the July London bomb attack that killed 52 people and a failed attempt to strike again soon after appear to have been acting independently of an Al Qaeda mastermind abroad, a newspaper reported on Saturday. The Independent, quoting police and intelligence officials, said it was also likely that four July 7 suicide bombers were probably not linked to another group of four who failed to blow up explosives on buses and underground trains two weeks later. But some of the report's conclusions were questioned by a terror analyst, who said it would be difficult for Islamic militants in Britain to prepare and set off explosive devices without some training in Pakistan, Afghanistan or elsewhere. The newspaper said police and intelligence sources felt the fact there was no leader from abroad showed how other "self-sufficient" units could be hiding in Britain.

Daily Times, 14 September 2005

UAE deported Fazl for his own acts: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, opposition leader in the National Assembly, was deported from Dubai only because of his own wrongdoings, Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said on Saturday. "The government was not behind Fazl's deportation. It's only his evil deeds that made the UAE authorities send him back," Rashid told reporters at a training workshop for journalists. Rashid said the United Nations was about to introduce laws for blacklisting religious outfits involved in terror and extremist acts anywhere in the world. He said 37 new private TV channels would be given licences in the next phase

Daily Times, 14 September 2005

'UK has given no list of suspected seminaries' (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao on Saturday denied news reports that the British government had given a list of seminaries involved in terrorist activities to the Pakistani government. Sherpao told journalists that the Interior Ministry had information about the activities of seminaries. He said that not even the Interior Ministry had prepared the list of suspected seminaries. He said that 202 operatives of banned outfits had been arrested throughout the country. He said 79 people had been caught distributing hate material, while six people had been arrested collecting funds for banned organisations. The NWFP government arrested 35 people under the Anti-Terrorism Act, he added. He said the US government warned its citizens against travelling to some parts of Pakistan after its embassy in Islamabad received threatening letters.

The News, 14 August 2005

India rejects inclusion of cruise missiles in treaty

ISLAMABAD: India rejected a proposal by Pakistan to include cruise missiles in a treaty the two countries finalised last week on giving each other advance information on planned ballistic missile tests, a Pakistani official said on Saturday. Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Naeem Khan said New Delhi was not aware at the time that Pakistan, like India, has cruise missiles. Pakistan on Thursday test-fired its first cruise missile, named Babur, and didn't give any prior information to India about it.

The Nation, 16 August 2005

New dates for Kishanganga talks (SYED ABDUL AHAD)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan on Monday proposed a new set of dates for the Kishanganga project talks i.e. August 29 to September 3, and said the Indian response on the subject is being awaited. Foreign Office Spokesman Muhammad Naeem Khan at a weekly briefing told newsmen that the Pakistani delegation, including technical experts, would also like to visit the project site during the same period. India had earlier offered the dates of August 4-8 and then extended them to August 11-20. On the issue of Baglihar Dam project, the spokesman said Islamabad had prepared a memorandum, which would be presented to the neutral expert soon.

The Nation, 16 August 2005

Pakistan receives \$73.6b foreign exchange in 4 years (Javed Mahmood)

LAHORE - Pakistan has received a massive \$73.60 billion foreign exchange in the last four years. This has played a pivotal role in putting the debt-trapped economy on track to stability and growth. An in-depth details gathered by The Nation from different sources revealed that during 2001-02 to 2004-05, the corporate sector had raised a hefty amount of \$47.20 billion through exports while \$14.70 billion had been received in shape of remittances, \$3.73 billion as Foreign Direct Investment and \$8 billion foreign economic assistance (loans and grants) had been provided by the donors agencies and countries. A major chunk of the foreign exchange _ about

\$62 billion had been received by the corporate sector and individuals in the shape of exports receipts, foreign investment and remittances while the rest amount of foreign exchange, loans and foreign investment in state-run companies, had been received by the federal government.

The Nation, 16 August 2005

PML-N MNA joins Q-League

LAHORE - PML (N) MNA, Mian Jalil Ahmad Sharaqpuri has announced to join the PML (Q) after having a meeting with Punjab Chief Minister, Ch. Pervaiz Elahi at the Chief Minister's House. Senator Naeem Hussain Chatha, MNAs, Brig. (Retd) Zulfiqar Ahmad Dhiloon and Saeed Ahmad Virk, MPAs, Abid Hussain Chatha, Ejaz Rasool, Ali Abbass Gul Agha and Khalid Mahmood were also present on the occasion. Pervaiz Elahi welcomed the decision of Jalil Sharaqpuri to join PML (Q) and said it would strengthen the party. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has cleared the name of Jamal Leghari for nazim slot in DG Khan district. Pervaiz Elahi observed that Jamal Leghari was the most suitable candidate to lead the district. Meanwhile, the PML leadership has not yet taken any such decision regarding Rajanpur district. Meanwhile, Pervaiz Elahi has said that Bab-e-Pakistan project would be a symbol of solidarity of the country and remind the coming generations of the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan movement leaders and workers for achieving a separate homeland where Muslims could live according to tenets of Islam and cultural and social norms.

Dawn, 16 August 2005

WB chief assures aid for major projects, social sectors (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 15: The World Bank has assured to provide substantial financial and technical assistance especially for adequately improving Pakistan's physical infrastructure and social sectors. Official sources told Dawn that the visiting World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz held a detailed meeting with senior Pakistani authorities on Monday and said that his bank would like to offer sizable assistance for strengthening the country's infrastructure, especially relating to power and energy sectors. Similarly, he asked how best his bank could support Pakistan in improving its social sectors with a view to alleviating poverty and creating new job opportunities in the country.

Dawn, 16 August 2005

'Terrorism infrastructure' allegations rejected (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 15: Pakistan on Monday rejected as "fabricated and false" a renewed Indian charge of allowing a terrorism infrastructure helping guerrillas fighting Indian rule in disputed Kashmir, but said the peace process between the two nuclear rivals remained on track despite recent polemics. "There is no infrastructure of terrorism anywhere in Pakistan or in territories under Pakistan's control," a foreign ministry spokesman told reporters about Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's remarks in a speech on Monday morning. "Reports of such infrastructure are fabricated and false," spokesman Naeem Khan said at his weekly news briefing when asked to comment on the Indian leader's speech in New Delhi on India's Independence Day, which Kashmiri resistance marked as a protest "black day". Mr Singh acknowledged Pakistan had "put some checks on the activities of terrorists from its soil" but said it was "not possible to achieve success through half-hearted efforts".

The Nation, 18 August 2005

US strategic shift not to affect WB support (Ayesha Haroon)

ISLAMABAD—The World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz Wednesday said that Bank is able to provide extra financial resources that Pakistan might need if Washington scales down financial support to Islamabad being provided for its support in war on terror. 'The argument in US that Pakistan needs resources because Pakistan is an important ally in war on terror, may go away', Wolfowitz told a group of editors in Islamabad at a breakfast meeting, but it is not going to go back to the 1990s situation when Pakistan was isolated. 'In any case, I think, it is good to have those extra resources. We at the World Bank are able to scale up that has nothing to do with 9/11'. Answering a question whether the Bank would fund Kalabagh Dam, Patel said, if Islamabad comes up with a good project proposal, the Bank would be open to the idea. He said five to 10 years ago the bank was not very keen on big infrastructure projects but now if there are binding concerns that are necessary for development than it would. According to Wolfowitz the Bank would now handle infrastructure projects 'more carefully' than it did in the past.

Daily Times, 18 August 2005

50 Afghan refugees arrested in Bajaur Agency

KHAR: The political administration of Bajaur Agency arrested 50 Afghans and the Levy Force raided Afghan shops and businesses on Thursday, after Afghan refugees living in the agency said they would not return to their homeland by August 31. The refugees held a jirga at Siddiqabad, which was also attended by Bajaur councillors

and members of the National Assembly, a few days ago at which Maulvi Rehmat Khan and Maulvi Hashim said the refugees would not return by the August 31 deadline as they had shops and property worth millions of rupees in the agency and Pakistanis had taken loans in million of rupees from them. The political administration on Thursday arrested 50 refugees with businesses in Khar Bazaar, Anayat Kalay, Siddiq Kalay and Nawagai, and shifted them to Khar jail. staff report

Daily Times, 18 August 2005

Pearl murder charge man appears in court

KARACHI: A suspected militant charged by police for his alleged role in the 2002 kidnapping and murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl was remanded in custody by a court on Wednesday, investigators said. Hashim Qadeer, who was detained last month in the Punjab, appeared at an anti-terrorism court in Karachi and was ordered by a judge to return on August 27. "The judge has sent him to jail and has ordered police to submit the charge sheet at the next hearing," police investigator Ghulam Hameed Samoo said outside the court, which was closed to reporters. Police said late on Tuesday that they had arrested and charged Qadeer over the kidnapping of Wall Street Journal reporter Pearl.

The Nation, 18 August 2005

Madaris registration must in Punjab, NWFP (MUBASHIR HASSAN)

LAHORE - Following instructions from the centre, the Punjab Government has, through an amendment in Societies Registration Act, 1860, made it obligatory for all religious institutions across the province to get themselves registered as a society with the registrar. For this purpose, the Acting Punjab Governor, Muhammad Afzal Sahi has promulgated an ordinance that comes into effect from August 15, 2005. A new Section-21 has been inserted in the said Act, according to which, "A Deeni Madrassah by whatsoever name called shall not be established or operated without being registered as a society under the said act". Under the new legislation, it would be binding on every religious institution to submit annual report of its activities and performance to the registrar, besides maintaining books of accounts of its expenditures and receipts, the annual report of which shall also be submitted to the registrar.

The Nation, 18 August 2005

Pak seeks WB help for tribal areas' uplift (MEHTAB HAIDER)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has sought loans from the World Bank for establishing a trust fund to develop the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, said Advisor to PM on Finance Dr Salman Shah. "We have presented a long-term vision covering 30 to 50 years plan to the World Bank president in order to meet the water, energy and infrastructure sectors requirements," Dr Salman Shah said at a news conference along with WB President Paul Wolfowitz here on Wednesday. The WB has also decided to jack up its credit line up to 1.5 billion dollars per annum for medium term vision from \$ 1 billion in which around \$ 800 to \$ 900 million will be IDA funding (soft loans). The total WB funding for the next three years will be hovering around \$ 4.5 billion in which around \$ 2.5 billion will be from the IDA.

Daily Times, 18 August 2005

British military attache in Pakistan removed

LONDON: Britain's military attache to Pakistan has been removed from his post after losing the confidence of the British High Commission in Islamabad, the British Ministry of Defence said on Wednesday. The decision was taken after Brigadier Andrew Durcan formed an "inappropriate relationship" with a suspected female Pakistani spy, according to a report in the Sun newspaper. "We can confirm that Brigadier Durcan has been removed from his post following an internal investigation into his conduct," a ministry spokesman in London said. "The Ministry of Defence decided to replace him after he lost the confidence of the high commission," he added, without elaborating. The Sun's defence editor said Durcan, 56, was relieved of his position by the Foreign Office, which runs the high commission, after he had been "tricked into a close friendship by the attractive woman". It described the unidentified woman as a "defence academic" in Islamabad who is "also believed to be an undercover agent for rogue elements within Pakistan's intelligence services".

Daily Times, 18 August 2005

Kuwait bans family visas to Pakistanis

KUWAIT: Kuwait has imposed a ban on issuing family visit visas to seven countries including Pakistan. The Kuwaiti Interior Ministry has issued a notification to the Immigration Department stating not to issue family visas to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Libya, Iran, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria. It has also been notified to the Immigration Department to search for families who visited Kuwait on visit visas, but had not left the state after their visas expired. Kuwaiti security agencies have been asked to take stern action against such people. online

Dawn, 18 August 2005

US deports two for running seminary

ISLAMABAD, Aug 17: The US government has repatriated its two citizens of Pakistani origin who have been running a seminary in California, sources in the interior ministry told Dawn on Wednesday. The sources said that Dr Adil and his son Hassan Adil had been running Madressah-i-Farooqia in California for the past many years. The actual reason for their repatriation could not be ascertained. The two had been living in the United States for over a decade. The sources said that Dr Adil's father had also been running a seminary in Karachi for several years. At their arrival in Pakistan, both were handed to the Federal Investigation Agency for interrogation.

Dawn, 18 August 2005

Pakistani detained in US

LOS ANGELES, Aug 17: The US authorities have detained a Pakistani suspected of involvement in a possible plot to attack the Israeli consulate in Los Angeles and other targets, officials said on Wednesday. The authorities are investigating three people detained in recent days, a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) spokesman, Laura Eimiller, told AFP. A Pakistani, Hammad Riaz Samana, 21, was detained on Aug 2 in Los Angeles, according to the prisons service which is holding him at a federal detention centre. Riaz Samana is being detained as part of an investigation into a possible terrorist cell based in California, a source said. The Los Angeles Times said the FBI and police were investigating a suspected conspiracy to organize attacks by extremists held at the Folsom state prison.

The Nation, 18 August 2005

People cast vote in LB polls first phase today

LAHORE - Electorates will go to polls in the first phase of Local Body (LB) elections today (Thursday) in 54 districts of the country including 17 in Punjab amid tight security arrangements. More than 32.9 million voters will cast their votes to elect their representatives. As many as 3,074 union councils have been selected from the four provinces for the initial phase of LB polls. Some 114,496 male and female candidates are in the run for different offices of the union councils. Ten Punjab districts have been declared sensitive, as voters are going to cast their votes to choose UC nazims, naib nazims and general councillors, who would, in turn, act as electoral college for the district and tehsil nazims and naib nazims in October. Polling would start from 8 am and continue till 5 pm. The unofficial results would be declared at each polling station the same day after the polling, while official results would be declared on August 20 (Saturday), after two days.

Daily Times, 17 August 2005

Petition by madrassa certificate holders

LAHORE: A full bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has ruled that holders of madrassa certificates (sanads) can contest the local elections if they have passed English, Urdu and Pakistan Studies exams from an intermediate education board. The three subjects are compulsory in matric. The bench of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry, Justice Sardar Mohammad Raza Khan and Justice Saiyed Saeed Ashhad made the ruling while dismissing petitions moved by applicants holding madarassa certificates. The bench observed that the applicants had not qualified in the three compulsory subjects, did not have certificates from a recognised seminary and did not have equivalence certificates.

Daily Times, 17 August 2005

EC given list of 180 linked to banned outfits

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry has made a list of 180 candidates of the local council polls who belong to outlawed organisations and has given it to the Election Commission and all four provinces. Interior Ministry sources said that the Interior Ministry had received information from intelligence agencies that most of the candidates belonging to the proscribed organisations were running for seats in the NWFP and Balochistan. Nearly 60 of the candidates are running for the nazim and naib nazim seats ? a violation of the code of conduct issued by the Election Commission. The Interior Ministry has asked the provincial governments and the Election Commission to stop these candidates from contesting the elections. online

Daily Times, 17 August 2005

Seminary registration to be completed by Nov 1 (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The government announced on Tuesday that the registration of seminaries, according to the amended Societies Registration Act of 1860, would be completed by November 1. After registration, these institutions will impart conventional education from grade 1 to 10."The amended society act has been enforced in

Sindh and Balochistan and will be enforced in NWFP and Punjab soon," Ejazul Haq, religious affairs minister, told a news conference. He added that President General Pervez Musharraf would soon promulgate an ordinance for the registration of the seminaries in the capital. Haq said that all issues related to religious schools had been settled through talks between the government and the Ittehad-e-Tanzimat-e-Madaras-e-Dinya (ITMD). "The ITMD has agreed in principle to introduce conventional education in religious schools from grade 1 to grade 10," he said, adding that subjects that were taught in government and private schools would now be included in the syllabus of religious schools.

Dawn, 17 August 2005

\$10bn sought for power projects, dams

ISLAMABAD, Aug 16: Pakistan has sought \$10 billion assistance from the World Bank for hydropower projects and large dams to meet future energy needs of its growing economy, Dawn has learnt. Officials said on Tuesday that the government had recently requested the World Bank to provide the funds directly or through other international financial institutions to develop the country's hydropower infrastructure. The bank, sources said, responded positively but wanted to have a detailed presentation on the funding requirements before making a commitment. Accordingly, it was agreed that the matter would be taken up during the ongoing visit of World Bank President Paul D. Wolfowitz. The country needed the \$10 billion assistance in the next 15 to 18 years, they said.

Dawn, 17 August 2005

WB to help get money siphoned off abroad: Wolfowitz briefed on reforms

ISLAMABAD, Aug 16: World Bank President Paul D. Wolfowitz has promised to help Pakistan recover billions of rupees siphoned off abroad by some people. The assurance came during the World Bank chief's meeting with a team led by the Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance Dr Salman Shah. "Mr Wolfowitz stated that the World Bank would assist in any way to stop corruption and to assist Pakistan to recover money sent abroad through illegal means," said a statement issued by the finance ministry. National Accountability Bureau Chairman Lt-Gen Munir Hafeez highlighted the government's anti-corruption strategy and gave details of the money recovered from bank defaulters and others. He asked "the WB president to help Pakistan recover its money siphoned out abroad by some Pakistanis through illegal means". He highlighted his organization's role for creating awareness and eradicating corruption.

Dawn, 17 August 2005

Islamabad against dual citizenship: Delhi

NEW DELHI, Aug 16: Minister of State for Home Affairs Shriprakash Jaiswal has said that Pakistan is opposed to an agreement to grant people of both countries dual citizenship. According to the United News of India, the minister was grilled by lawmakers in the Lok Sabha, who wanted to know why the Indian government had not considered Pakistanis and Bangladeshis eligible for the citizenship law they later passed on Tuesday. The bill, which replaces an ordinance promulgated on June 28, seeks to extend the scope of Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) of all countries, except Pakistan and Bangladesh, as long as their countries allow dual citizenship in any form under their laws. At present, the dual citizenship is applicable to PIOs settled in 16 countries.

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

Pakistan could have 110 N-bombs by year end (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: By the end of the current year, Pakistan will have produced enough weapons grade uranium to manufacture 50 to 110 nuclear weapons against India's 75 to 110. According to a study published by the Non-proliferation Centre of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, India may be producing significant quantities of highly enriched uranium at its gas-centrifuge plant in Trombay, outside Mumbai, though the amounts produced remain unknown. The study says both India and Pakistan possess components to deploy a small number of nuclear weapons within a few days or weeks, with fighter-bomber aircraft being the most likely delivery vehicle. Pakistan's nuclear weapons are stored in component parts, with the fissile core separated from the non-nuclear explosives. It is not known where the fissile material and warheads are stored. India, states the study, continues to produce nuclear materials for use in weapons and has not officially said how many weapons it has and how many it intends to produce. Pakistan has been equally discreet.

Dawn, 19 August 2005

WB offers \$2bn for projects

ISLAMABAD, Aug 18: The World Bank has indicated that it will provide \$2 billion for infrastructure development in the country, including rehabilitation of roads, railways and port facilities. This was discussed at a meeting presided over by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz here on Thursday at which a World Bank team made a presentation about

improving infrastructure and logistic networks, according to an official statement. The prime minister said the proposed funding would cover improvement of road network, railways and ports and streamlining of customs and documentation procedures. These measures, he added, would reduce operating costs and transit time. He directed the planning commission to set up a coordination cell and prepare a plan in consultation with the World Bank experts within four weeks so that an appropriate decision could be taken without any delay.

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

13 killed as 53 districts go to polls in first phase (Mohammad Kamran, Zakir Hussain, Azizullah Khan, Mubasher Bukhari, Qamar Jabbar and Khawaja Naseer)

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR/QUETTA: At least 13 people were killed and 234 injured in clashes between supporters of rival candidates in the local government elections on Thursday. Security was beefed up for the first round of the three-phase elections in 53 districts across Pakistan, with some 35,000 policemen, 10,500 paramilitary troops and 40,000 soldiers deployed to guard polling stations and voters. Polling was held from 8am to 5pm in 17 districts in Punjab, 10 in Sindh, 12 in the NWFP and 14 in Balochistan at 31,000 polling stations in the presence of 450,000 polling staff. Polling in the remaining 56 districts will be held on August 25. Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao said despite the pockets of violence "the polls have largely been peaceful". The chief election commissioner said voter turnout was close to 50 percent.

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

Women barred from voting

PESHAWAR: Women in several NWFP districts were barred from voting in the local elections on Thursday, polling staff and a women's rights advocacy group complained. "There are complaints from Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Karak, Bannu, Buner and Swabi districts where women were not allowed to vote," an Aurat Foundation spokesman told Daily Times. NWFP Senior Minister Sirajul Haq dismissed the reports as "propaganda". "We have received no such report from any district and I don't know why the media is so sensitive about this issue," he told reporters. In Sheikh Muhammadi Union Council in Peshawar, women's polling station No 51 was deserted as local elders stopped women from voting. "Not one voter has turned up between 8:00am and 1:00pm," a woman presiding officer said. Women were also not allowed to vote in Mariam Zai, Mariam Kagawala, Atman Zai, Tori Zai, Hazar Khawani and Bhana Mari UCs. Razia Sultana, a candidate for nazim in Charsadda, said JI and ANP workers took away ID cards from her voters. In Dera Ismail Khan's six UCs, women voters stayed home. iqbal khattak

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

Report against 'bad' seminaries submitted to Musharraf, Aziz (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: Intelligence agencies want to shut down religious seminaries spreading hatred and sectarianism, Interior Ministry sources told Daily Times on Thursday. The Interior Ministry gave reports to President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz for their approval of action against 'bad' seminaries, sources added. Sources said no decision had yet been taken over action against 'bad' seminaries. The crackdown against operatives of banned religious and militant groups started after the July 7 London bombings. Interior Minister Aftab Khan Sherpao had said law enforcement personnel had arrested more than 200 operatives so far. The government has throughout denied that the operation against outlawed outfits is also against seminaries. However, most arrests have been made from seminaries.

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

India's madrassas 3 x Pakistan's (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India outdoes Pakistan in the number of madrassas or Islamic seminaries operating within it. In Pakistan, there are just 10,000 registered madrassas, but in India, 27,518 registered Islamic seminaries dot the country except for a few states. According to a reply filed by the government in response to a question in the parliament on Thursday, the states without madrassas are Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Pondicherry and Jammu and Kashmir – a surprising occurrence since the state is India's only Muslim dominated region. The states of Kerala and Madhya Pradesh have the most number of madrassas with 6,000 in each. They are followed by Uttar Pradesh (4,292), Bihar (4,102), Rajasthan (1,985) and Gujarat (1,727). Even remote areas like the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have 54 madrassas. The states of Sikkim and Goa have only one registered seminary each. The government report says that the state government of Jammu and Kashmir intimated that there were no madrassas, but the State Wakf Board was running 86 private schools.

Dawn, 19 August 2005

Oil prices worrying govt (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 18: The government is worried about high international oil prices owing to their inflationary

impact but is hopeful that budgetary targets would not go out of hand and the prices would subside in the days ahead. Pakistan had set budgetary targets when international oil prices hovered around \$56-57 per barrel, which have now risen to \$67 per barrel. The fiscal impact is likely to be met through higher-than-expected returns of the public-sector corporations like the OGDCL and PTCL. "The international oil prices have come down today to \$63 per barrel and we hope these would subside further," Dr Salman Shah, adviser to the prime minister on finance and revenue, told Dawn on Thursday. There has been a lot of fluctuation in the oil prices and the government is trying to absorb its impact as much as possible so that inflationary pressures remain in check, he said.

Daily Times, 20 August 2005

Ruling coalition on top in poll 1st phase (Mohammad Kamran, Mohammed Rizwan, Iqbal Khattak and Azizullah Khan)

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE/PESHAWAR/QUETTA/KARACHI: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League and its allies have won the most seats in the first phase of local elections in 53 districts, according to unofficial results issued by the Election Commission (EC) on Friday. Returning officers will issue final notification of the winning candidates today. With results in from 1,300 of the 1,654 union councils in 17 districts that went to polls in Punjab, the PML appears to be heading for a clean sweep, though the opposition made gains in Multan, Sialkot, Sargodha and Gujranwala cities. In Sindh, PML-ally the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) won convincingly in Karachi. The PML and allied parties, including the PML-Functional, also won in Tharparkar, Thatta, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Tando Allahyar and Naushehro Feroze. The PPP-backed Awam Dost panel was doing well in the three other districts of Jacobabad, Kashmore and Sanghar.

Daily Times, 20 August 2005

Provinces ordered to speed up seminary registration process (Shahzad Malik)

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has asked the provinces to speed up the registration of religious seminaries under the amended Societies Act 1860 to meet the deadline. These directives were passed at a meeting under the chairmanship of Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah. The meeting was attended by high-ranking officials of the four provinces and district administration of the federal capital. The meeting decided that the teams should personally examine facilities being provided by the seminaries and should complete the registration process within the stipulated time, by the end of 2005. The meeting was informed that only 15 religious schools had been registered so far out of a total of 272 located in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Khalid Pervez, chief commissioner, apprised the meeting of the where the seminaries were located. The chief commissioner also apprised the meeting that more than 150,000 Afghan nationals living in the ICT had been served notices informing them that if they did not return to their homeland by September 15, they would be shifted to refugee camps in Mianwali.

Daily Times, 20 August 2005

Not a single Pakistani handed over to the US: Kasuri

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has not handed over a single Pakistani to the United States during the war against terrorism, said Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri. In an interview to a local private channel on Friday, Kasuri said that Pakistanis detained in Guantanamo Bay had all been arrested in Afghanistan during the US military campaign, adding that on its part, through persistent efforts, the Government of Pakistan had been successful in getting 60 Pakistanis released from there. Only a few Pakistanis remain in detention in Guantanamo Bay and the government is making efforts for their release, he said. Kasuri said that all Al Qaeda-linked individuals handed over to the US were foreigners required by the US for threatening US interests, adding that military action against them had been taken after they had failed to respond to repeated assurances by President Pervez Musharraf that no action would be taken against them if they voluntarily lay down their weapons and promised to live peacefully.

Daily Times, 20 August 2005

Musharraf calls for joint effort to curb terrorism

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has strongly condemned bomb blasts in Bangladesh, saying terrorism affected not just one country and all countries of the region had to work together against it. President Musharraf told Himayatul Din, foreign secretary of Bangladesh, who called on him at Army House in Rawalpindi on Friday, that Pakistan made enormous efforts against terrorism, but it was imperative that root causes of terrorism should be addressed. He agreed to the need for making South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) an effective forum and forging better interaction among the countries of the region. Pakistan was keen to establish close economic and trade ties with Bangladesh as vast potential to enhance volume of bilateral trade between the two sides existed, the president said. He pledged to cooperate with Bangladesh in the eradication of terrorism. online

The Nation, 20 August 2005

UK deports Pakistani on security concerns (ASSAD HAMEED)

Islamabad - The British authorities on Friday deported another Pakistani after he was apprehended on security concerns in the United Kingdom, an official at Islamabad airport revealed. Arif Mehmood, son of Muhammad Aslam, was deported from Manchester following his arrest by the British law-enforcement agencies a few days ago. Reason for Arif's arrest and subsequent deportation was stated as his alleged involvement in some criminal activity on the British soil. However, the exact charge or any other detail was not known to the Immigration authorities at Islamabad airport. Even Arif was allowed to go home after a brief questioning at the airport shortly after his deportation through a flight from Manchester (PK-702).

Dawn, 20 August 2005

ADB approves \$25 million for infrastructure

ISLAMABAD, Aug 19: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$25 million loan to help Pakistan prepare and implement an infrastructure development programme that will support the country's economic growth and reduce poverty. The project will prepare an investment programme, for the short, medium, and long-term, that will help the government develop its infrastructure sectors in an integrated manner. It will prepare infrastructure projects that will expand the country's economic foundation by providing electricity, transportation, and water resources. ADB's loan, which covers about 75 per cent of the total estimated project cost of \$33.67 million, comes from its concessional Asian Development Fund. The loan carries a 32-year term, including a grace period of 8 years, with interest set at one per cent per annum during the grace period and 1.5 per cent per annum thereafter. The government will contribute \$8.33 million equivalent toward the project cost. The Planning and Development Division is the executing agency for the project, which is due for completion around September 2009.

Dawn, 20 August 2005

Islamabad welcomes pullout

ISLAMABAD, Aug 19: Pakistan on Friday welcomed the Israeli pullout from Gaza Strip as 'a first positive step' that would lead to a complete vacation of the Palestinian territories occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. A foreign ministry statement, following two days of dramatic scenes of evacuations by Jewish settlers in Gaza, expressed the hope that the move would pave the way for the establishment of "a sovereign and independent Palestinian state living in peace side by side with Israel." It urged the international community to continue working for that goal. "Pakistan has consistently supported all initiatives and developments that contribute to the just settlement of the long-festering Palestinian problem and durable peace in the Middle East," the statement said. It recalled Pakistan's support to efforts for a solution based on the UN Security Council resolutions numbers 242 and 338, recent initiatives of a Middle East quartet and the Beirut Declaration of the Arab League members. "It is vital that the international community must continue to work for the realisation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people that demand the establishment of their independent state in Palestine with Al Quds as the capital," the statement said.

The Frontier Post, 21 August 2005

Pak, BD views synchronize on regional, international issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Bangladesh Saturday agreed to continue to cooperate closely at the UN and other international and regional fora for the promotion of international peace and security and for the reform of the UN System based on the principle of sovereign equality. In a joint statement issued after the third round of annual foreign secretary-level bilateral consultations here, the two countries also expressed satisfaction over their excellent relations, while agreeing on steps to further enhance these ties. Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan and his counterpart from Bangladesh Hemayetuddin, headed their respective delegations at the two-day meeting. The two foreign secretaries discussed and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues. They expressed satisfaction at the excellent relations that exist between the two brotherly countries and agreed to further expand economic, commercial, trade and investment cooperation. Both sides stressed the need for organizing single country trade fairs in each other's important cities on a regular basis and frequent exchange of visits of business delegations for expansion of trade between the two countries.

Daily Times, 21 August 2005

Barring of women from voting (Mohammad Kamran)

ISLAMABAD: Local council elections will be declared null and void if it is proved that women were barred from voting in any part of the country, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Abdul Hameed Dogar told Daily Times on Saturday. "However, such a decision will be taken after the receipt of authentic complaints and collection of evidence to this effect," he added. The Election Commission (EC) was compiling final election statistics and a decision in this regard would be taken after the second phase of local council elections, he said. Formally announcing the election results of 3,032 union councils in 53 districts, the CEC declared 39,416 candidates

successful in the first phase of the local council elections and claimed an overall 45 percent turnout with a record number of women participating. The CEC also claimed to have acquired complete data regarding women voters, saying a large number of women exercised their right to vote everywhere, including in the NWFP. "It is for the first time that votes cast by women have been compiled and we can prove active participation of women in the elections," he said.

Daily Times, 21 August 2005

Baglihar Dam issue: Pakistan submits case to neutral expert (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has formally submitted its case over the controversial 450MW Baglihar hydropower project with the coordination office of the neutral expert in Washington DC three days ago, a senior government official told Daily Times on Saturday. "Attorney General of Pakistan Makhdoom Ali Khan submitted the case to the neutral expert appointed by the World Bank. A Pakistani team headed by Water and Power Secretary Ashfaq Mehmood prepared the case, which was based on the latest report by Pakistani government representatives who recently visited the Baglihar project site. Pakistani Commission of Indus Water Commissioner Syed Jamaat Ali Shah led the government representatives," the official added. After submitting the case, India would come up with a counter case and the neutral expert would start proceedings, he said.

Daily Times, 21 August 2005

QIZ to be set up at Pak-Afghan border (Sajid Chaudhry)

ISLAMABAD: International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been informed that Pakistan and Afghanistan will soon submit a joint proposal for establishment of Qualified Industrial Zone at Pak-Afghan Border to export to the United States of America, an official told Daily Times on Saturday. The Qualified Industrial Zone where the investors of both the countries would be facilitated to set up industries and the products of such industries would be exported to United States. According to the proposal, the US government will be asked to allow the imports from the QIZ on "Zero Duty" to enable generate healthy economic activities in the Pak-Afghan border areas so that poverty, and especially involvement of the local population in terrorist activities, could be checked, giving them law full earning opportunities. The proposal also contains that benefit arising out of establishing QIZ at Pak Afghan Border would be distributed among the two states, 80 percent to Pakistan and 20 percent to Afghanistan.

Daily Times, 21 August 2005

IAEA and Pakistani officials to meet next week on Iran uranium

VIENNA: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will meet with Pakistani officials here next week as part of its efforts to determine if Iran was using smuggled Pakistani equipment to make enriched uranium that could be used for atom bombs, diplomats said Saturday. Pakistan had in May sent centrifuge parts to the UN nuclear watchdog at its headquarters to enable it to compare microscopic traces of uranium on them with those found on equipment in Iran, believed to have been smuggled in from Pakistan. The IAEA concluded that "the highly enriched uranium appears to emanate from Pakistan," from the imported equipment and not from Iranian enrichment work, a Western diplomat close to the IAEA told AFP. This ruling "will be seen by those in favour of Iran as another checkmark in their column," to back up Tehran's rebuttals of US charges that it is secretly developing nuclear weapons, the diplomat said. The IAEA has since February 2003 been investigating US charges that the Islamic Republic, which says its nuclear program is a peaceful effort to generate electricity, has a covert weapons program.

Dawn, 22 August 2005

Pakistan to launch remote sensing satellite system

ISLAMABAD, Aug 21: Pakistan plans to launch a self-controlled Remote Sensing Satellite System (RSSS) at a cost of Rs19.3 billion to ensure strategic and unconditional supply of satellite remote sensing data for any part of the globe over the year. According to sources, the project will be executed by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) over a period of six years. President Gen Pervez Musharraf has approved the project in principle. The project will require another recurring expenditure of about Rs150 million per year and overall working expenses of about Rs1.15 billion. The president, sources said, had directed Suparco to develop the capability to make and launch different types of satellites, specially, communications, remote sensing and weather satellites.

Daily Times, 22 August 2005

Voter turnout reflects trust in Musharraf's system: Aziz

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Sunday that the voter turnout during the first phase of the local

council elections was 45.7 percent, which was encouraging and indicated the public's confidence in the system introduced by President Pervez Musharraf. Addressing a press conference at Governor's House, the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the peaceful and transparent conduct of elections. He said the voter turnout was 62.2 percent in the Punjab, 46.4 percent in Sindh, 43.7 percent in the NWFP and 30.5 percent in Balochistan, which was reflective of the people's confidence in the local council system. "The turnout proves that the system has taken root and has improved the image of the democratic process," he said, adding that except for a few minor incidents that took place after the election the first phase passed off smoothly. The prime minister said that in Pakistan's political culture those who were defeated never conceded defeat and people should now think beyond that. "Political maturity demands those facing defeat should concede defeat," he said.

The News, 22 August 2005

Six Pak envoys being replaced (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is going to change its ambassadors in at least six important capitals in a few weeks, diplomatic sources have said. According to the sources, Pakistan has decided to appoint new ambassador to Afghanistan in place of Akbar Zaib Khan, who assumed his responsibilities in Kabul only last month. Tariq Azizuddin Khan, chief of protocol at the Foreign Office, is replacing him and is expected to take up his new assignment in about a month after receipt of his agreema. The sources said that Akbar Zaib Khan has returned to Islamabad after relinquishing his charge in the Afghan capital. Tariq Azizuddin Khan, who comes from a distinguished family of Peshawar having intimate contacts with influential people in Afghanistan, has already served in Afghanistan twice. He has command over all the languages spoken in various parts of Afghanistan, including Pushto, Persian, Dari and Brahavi. He will take up the ambassadorial assignment for the first time in Kabul. It is learnt that Islamabad would make up its mind next month for posting its new envoys in New Delhi and Riyadh. Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar Ayaz Wazir Khan has come back to headquarters after completing his tenure and has been posted director general Afghan desk. Asghar Afridi will be Pakistan's new ambassador in Qatar.

Daily Times, 22 August 2005

Balochistan National Party leader goes missing in Karachi (Aziz Sanghur)

KARACHI: Balochistan National Party (Mengal) Karachi president Zahid Baloch has been missing in Karachi since Saturday, according to party sources. Sources said that he had been picked up by the law enforcement agencies in the Garden area, while he was on the way to his house in Lyari Town. Not a single law enforcement agency had so far confirmed that he was in their custody. The BNP urged the government to take action and asked the law enforcement agencies to release him. Otherwise, they said, they would launch a campaign against the arrest. "My son has been missing Saturday. We have approached every authority concerned but they did not tell the whereabouts of my son," said Khan Bibi Baloch, mother of Zahid Baloch.

Dawn, 22 August 2005

Three-nation pipeline talks likely by Nov (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 21: Pakistan, Iran and India are expected to start trilateral negotiations for the proposed \$7.2 billion Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline by October-November this year. Informed sources told Dawn that the three countries had agreed to enter into trilateral discussions on the project to minimize negotiation time so that work on the project could start by April 2006. The sources said India had earlier suggested three sets of bilateral negotiations but this was not considered viable. Pakistan has already offered transit facility for Iranian piped gas to India subject to a negotiable fee. This is the only issue where Pakistan has made an 'unbundled offer' for negotiations without linking it to the progress on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Nation, 22 August 2005

Pak-India missile tests pact in Sept (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and India will formally sign the recently agreed pact on advance notification of missile tests early next month when the two foreign secretaries will meet to review progress on the second round of peace talks. Besides, the top officials of two foreign ministries, in their talks likely to be held on 1st and 2nd September, would also announce the establishment of hotline between them to avert accidental or illegal use of nuclear weapons. Officials here said that Foreign Secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan would also discuss with his Indian counterpart the two main items on composite dialogue agenda, Kashmir as well as Peace and Security. However, they said owing to recurrence of intransigence in Indian behavior, any breakthrough on Kashmir problem was not expected.

The Nation, 22 August 2005

Eight rockets fired at two Waziristan towns

LADHA: Eight rockets were fired late on Saturday at two tribal towns in the tribal area, hitting a market, a school and a base housing troops, officials said on Sunday. No one was reported hurt, they said. Three rockets were fired into village Sarvikhel of North Waziristan tribal area near Bannu, a local police official Shahbaz Khan said. One rocket hit a school, another a home and the third exploded in a field, he said. Authorities were investigating who was behind the attack, Khan said. Five other rockets were fired late on Friday into North Waziristan's main town Miran Shah, local government administrator Iftikhar Ahmad Khattak said. One of the rockets damaged a shop in the bazaar, the second hit a watchtower in a base for paramilitary troops while three others slammed into fields, Khattak said. Army and paramilitary troops fired in the direction from where the rockets were fired but it was not known whether there were casualties among the attackers, he said.

Dawn, 23 August 2005

Officials to discuss peace process: Pakistan-India meeting on September 1 (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 22: Top Pakistani and Indian diplomats will meet in Islamabad on Sept 1 to review how the two countries have progressed on their peace process in one year before a planned bilateral summit at the United Nations, the two sides announced on Monday. A foreign ministry spokesman said it would be "a very important meeting" of the foreign secretaries of the two countries to review the progress of eight-items agenda of what is known as the "composite dialogue" that the two nuclear rivals resumed last year following a prolonged deadlock. The secretaries' review of progress on the eight subjects, including the main dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, will be followed by a foreign ministers' meeting at dates to be decided later, spokesman Mohammad Naeem Khan said. Other agenda items are: peace and security, disputes over Wullar Barrage in the held Kashmir, Siachen glacier and Sir Creek maritime boundary, terrorism and drug trafficking, economy and trade cooperation, and promotion of friendly exchanges.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

2nd phase of local council polls: CEC bars governors from polling stations (Khawaja Nasee)

LAHORE: Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar, acting chief election commissioner (CEC), on Monday imposed a ban on provincial governors and federal and provincial ministers visiting polling stations during the second phase of elections being held throughout the country. Justice Dogar gave these directives while presiding over a high-level meeting held to review arrangements for the second phase of local council elections in Punjab. The CEC said that during the second phase of elections in 18 districts in Punjab, 11 districts — Lahore, Sheikhpura, Hafizabad, Bhakkar, Mandi Bahauddin, Kasur, Rawalpindi, Okara, Faisalabad, Jhang and Narowal — had been declared sensitive, adding that army troops would be deployed in these districts to ensure transparent polls.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

Rocket attack rocks Kohlu on CM's visit (Azizullah Khan)

QUETTA: Four rockets were fired in Kohlu district on Monday, coinciding with the arrival of Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Muhammad Yousaf. FC troops retaliated by firing rockets at the assailants in Kohlu, some 350 kilometres east of Quetta. A Frontier Corp (FC) spokesman underplayed the attack as a 'routine matter', and dismissed claims they were related to the chief minister's visit. Unconfirmed reports alleged that the rockets landed near the helipad where the chief minister's helicopter was scheduled to land. Meanwhile, a man, calling himself Azad Baloch, claimed responsibility for the attack on behalf of the Balochistan Liberation Army and the Baloch People's Liberation Front. Azad Baloch said that the rockets had been fired specifically in view of the chief minister's visit. Meanwhile in separate incidents, three rockets were fired and two bombs exploded in Kohlu early Monday morning. The bombs went off near a doctor's clinic. Local government elections are scheduled to be held in Kohlu on August 25. Baloch nationalist forces accuse the chief minister of conducting the election campaign for Pakistan Muslim League (PML) candidates in violation of Election Commission regulations. Observers believe that the chief minister's visit to Kohlu was aimed for the PML-backed candidates' election campaign.

Dawn, 23 August 2005

Need stressed for long-term strategy: Uninterrupted energy supply

RAWALPINDI, Aug 22: President General Pervez Musharraf has called for a target-oriented strategy to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas and electricity to potential investors in the industrial sector. The president expressed the government's resolve to tap indigenous resources and import gas and electricity from regional countries to fulfil the country's growing energy requirements. He was addressing a meeting held to review Pakistan's energy requirements in the light of recent growth in the industrial sector. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz also attended the meeting. Assuring all-out facilitation to local and foreign entrepreneurs, the president said the government viewed provision of requisite energy futuristically to sustain its onward march on the path of high economic growth. He particularly highlighted the importance of sustaining momentum in the industrial sector which has maintained robust growth in the last two fiscal years.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

Wafaqul Madaris rejects registration ordinance (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqul Madaris Al Arabia (Deobandi) on Monday refused to register religious schools under the amended Society Registration Act 1860 and also refused to repatriate foreign students studying in its seminaries. The Wafaq runs approximately 8,200 schools. "More than 90 per cent of the ulema participating in the meeting rejected the ordinance," sources privy to the meeting told Daily Times. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, while addressing the meeting said the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) would resign from the NWFP and National Assembly if the government tried to curb the liberty of religious schools. "We are ready to sacrifice everything to maintain the sovereignty of religious schools," Fazl added. "The meeting rejected the September 30 deadline for repatriation of foreign students and the December 31 deadline for registration of seminaries," Maulana Qazi Abdur Rashid, nazim-e-aala of the Wafaq's Punjab chapter, told journalists. He said the meeting constituted a 19-member committee that would discuss the issue with the government and chalk out a strategy to resolve it.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

Nuclear black market: Western companies let off: Kasuri

LONDON: Pakistan uncovered the involvement of Western companies in the nuclear black market that Dr AQ Khan operated in, but the US and UK have taken no action against them, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has said. The US and Britain blacklisted 290 people who helped former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein build his nuclear set up, but they have not been touched, Kasuri said in an interview with the BBC Hard Talk programme. The minister said Pakistan had not and would not allow any foreign country or agency to interrogate Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, the scientist who confessed to selling nuclear secrets to other countries. He said Pakistan had shared information gleaned from Dr Khan with the US and the International Atomic Energy Agency. He said Dr Khan had been pardoned because he had cooperated with Pakistan's investigation agencies.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

Kabul asks Islamabad not to return refugees

KABUL: The Afghan government has asked Pakistan to postpone closing Afghan refugee camps in Kurram and Bajaur Agencies. An Afghan government statement issued on Monday said Afghanistan thanked the Pakistani government and people for supporting Afghan refugees for the last 25 years. Any decision regarding the fate of Afghan refugees should be taken according to international law and the provisions of a tripartite agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR, the statement added. Afghan refugees should also be given time to settle their transactions with the local population, the statement said. The Afghan government was committed to the implementation of the tripartite agreement, which ensured the voluntary, gradual and dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees to their country, the statement said. Pakistan has decided to shut down 32 refugee camps in Kurram and Bajaur Agencies where more than 240,000 Afghan refugees have been living for many years. online

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

SAARC states to launch energy trade (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat's Experts Advisory Council will appoint consultants to work on common grid stations, which will help interconnect SAARC states through energy trade, a senior government official told Daily Times on Monday. "Energy experts from all SAARC states have submitted their proposals to finalise terms of reference to appoint consultants," the official said, adding that the decision to this effect was made in the energy experts' conference in New Delhi in July. "However, India seems reluctant to interconnect the SAARC region through electricity trade, as it wants bilateral trade and not multilateral. "The official said Pakistan favoured the proposal to realise the integrated electricity system in the SAARC region and had submitted its proposals for finalisation of terms of reference for appointing consultants who will work on the feasibility to install common grid stations at various points in the region.

Daily Times, 24 August 2005

Prepare for 2007 elections: Develop consensus on nazims selection, says Musharraf (Shahzad Raza)

ISLAMABAD: President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday asked senior Pakistan Muslim League (PML) leaders to take its allies into confidence when it came to finalising candidates for the district nazim elections. He said this while meeting PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain in Rawalpindi. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and PML Secretary General Mushahid Hussain were also there. PML sources told Daily Times that Musharraf asked Shujaat not to have any controversies over district nazim slots within the ruling coalition. He said the list candidates must be finalised with consensus. Musharraf said the new representatives must not repeat the mistakes committed by their predecessors. Musharraf also said the political situation was not favourable for the ruling coalition in the NWFP. He asked Shujaat to strengthen the PML at the district and grassroot levels and prepare for the 2007 general elections.

Daily Times, 24 August 2005

Madrassas resisting registration

ISLAMABAD: Over 300 hardline Islamic schools in Pakistan have vowed to resist a government order to register with the authorities, a senior announced on Tuesday. Representatives of the madrassas met in Islamabad on Monday and denounced the order from President Pervez Musharraf as discriminatory. Under the order, 12,000 madrassas across Pakistan, some of which are suspected of being breeding grounds for Islamist militants, are required to register by the end of this year. Abdul Rashid Ghazi, a senior teacher at Jamia Faridia, one of Islamabad's main religious schools, said the government had enforced the law without consulting clerics. "This is a discriminatory and unilateral law. We reject it," he said. "Madrassas should not be singled out for registration. All private institutions and schools, some of which are preaching anti-Islamic and anti-Pakistani teachings, should also be registered." Musharraf's move came as part of efforts to rein in Islamist militancy after revelations that three of the four bombers in the July 7 attacks in London were Muslims of Pakistani origin, at least one of whom had visited madrassas in Pakistan.

Daily Times, 24 August 2005

Hasba Bill not meant to Talibanise NWFP: Qazi

LAHORE: The Hasba Bill has been wrongly portrayed as meant to Talibanise the NWFP when its actual purpose is to regulate government functions via an ombudsman, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal President Qazi Hussain Ahmed has said in an interview with BBC's Hardtalk programme. The JI chief agreed that there were some madrassas in Pakistan teaching bigotry and hatred, but did not support the reforms introduced by the president. "Pervez Musharraf is not a legitimate ruler, his rule is a continuation of martial law and he is not even an elected president," he said. He said Gen Musharraf was a "usurper" who had broken his promise to the MMA to quit as army chief in 2004. Qazi said he and his party supported peace with India, but not at the cost of Kashmiris' right to self-determination. He said with India deliberately delaying resolving the issue, Kashmiris were left with no option but to start an armed struggle. "We want to resolve the issue of Kashmir according to UN resolutions and support the Kashmiris' right to self-determination," he said.

Daily Times, 24 August 2005

Provinces to submit weekly reports on seminaries

ISLAMABAD: The Religious Affairs Ministry has directed the provinces and the federal capital to submit weekly reports regarding the registration of religious seminaries. "A meeting was held to review the progress of the registration process in which the secretaries of the four federating entities participated," Vakil Ahmed Khan, Religious Affairs secretary, told Daily Times after the meeting. He said the four provinces had nominated secretaries who would deal with the registration. "Punjab has nominated Khwaja Tariq, Evacuee secretary; Balochistan has nominated Tariq Ayub, Education secretary; Sindh has appointed Nadir Ali Malkani, Zakat and Usher secretary; and the NWFP has chosen Zubair Shah, Zakat and Usher secretary. Tariq Mehmood Pirzada, deputy commissioner of Islamabad, will look after registration-related matters in the federal capital," Khan said. He said that in their reports the provinces would provide information such as the number of religious seminaries registered during the week; number of forms distributed; and the number of applications for registration submitted.

The Nation, 24 August 2005

KBD not our concern: Jam (IMTIAZ ALI)

KARACHI - Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Yousaf on Tuesday categorically stated that no rocket was fired on him in Kohlu on Monday. "There was tribal clash going on," Jam said while addressing a Press conference at Balochistan House here on Tuesday. Chief Minister Jam Yousaf said that Kalabagh Dam was not their concern. "The construction of KBD would not affect Balochistan," he declared. He further said that his government was sticking to multiple criteria for the NFC award which included poverty and area. He said that if the Sindh government supported their demand in this regard, they would reciprocate by supporting contention of Sindh over the award. To a question, he claimed that RAW was involved in incidents of lawlessness in Balochistan province. He said that it was not an easy task to control incidents of rocket firing in rugged terrain and hilly areas.

Dawn, 24 August 2005

Democracy imperative for growth: Musharraf

RAWALPINDI, Aug 23: President General Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday said that Pakistan was moving forward on the path of sustainable democracy, which has great significance for development of the country and the wellbeing of its people. "I believe democracy is imperative for development and progress of the country and sustained socio-economic well-being of the people", he said reiterating his commitment to the democratic process. In a wide-ranging interaction with Asian parliamentarians, the president said the elected assemblies will complete their term and general elections in Pakistan would take place in the year 2007. Speaker National Assembly Chaudhry Amir Hussain and PML Secretary-General Mushahid Hussain Sayed were present on the

occasion.

Dawn, 24 August 2005

CEC orders report on women vote ban

PESHAWAR, Aug 23: Acting Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Hameed Dogar has said that the commission may decide about ordering re-election in areas where women were barred from voting in the first phase of the local government elections. "I have directed respective district returning officers to pinpoint the union councils in the NWFP where women were forced not to cast their votes," Justice Dogar told newsmen at the office of the provincial election commission here on Tuesday. He said that after receiving reports from the DROs, the commission would take a final decision regarding re-polling at women's polling stations. When asked about security arrangements for the second phase of polls to be held in 12 districts of the Frontier province on Thursday, he said he had asked the provincial government to ensure security. "District police officers and station house officers will be responsible if any mishap occurs in areas of their jurisdiction before and during polling," Justice Dogar said.

Dawn, 24 August 2005

Move to seek Interpol help: Trafficking of children (Sher Baz Khan)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 23: Pakistan will soon take help from Interpol to arrest its nationals who are residing in various Middle East countries and are involved in human trafficking, especially of children who are used as camel jockeys. "There are 7,000 to 10,000 Pakistani children who have been taken illegally to various Middle East countries. These children are working as camel jockeys. We would soon take help from the Interpol to arrest members of a number of Pakistani gangs who are operating in the Middle East and are involved in trafficking of Pakistani children to be used as camel jockeys," said Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Senator Tariq Azeem Khan, while speaking at a press conference here on Tuesday. He said 60 to 70 per cent of the children being used as camel jockeys in the Middle East were Pakistani. A majority of these children belonged to Rahim Yar Khan, southern Punjab and upper Sindh and a few of them were from lower Sindh and Balochistan. He said there were several Pakistani gangs involved and the law enforcement agencies had made 92 arrests and a number of them belonged to these gangs.

Dawn, 24 August 2005

Musharraf to address Jews in New York (Masood Haider)

NEW YORK, Aug 23: President Pervez Musharraf has accepted an invitation from the American Jewish Congress to speak about his campaign of "enlightened moderation" in Islam, chairman of the organization Jack Rosen said in an interview with Dawn on Tuesday. Mr Rosen, who also heads the Council of World Jewry, said that Gen Musharraf's speech in New York next month would be the first time a Muslim leader of international stature who publicly called for moderation in the Muslim world would address an event sponsored by the Jewish community. Mr Rosen said he and two colleagues from the American Jewish Congress were invited to meet President Musharraf in Islamabad in May after he had accepted the invitation from the leaders of the Jewish community in New York. The meeting with the American Jewish community will take place soon after a United Nations summit in New York from Sept 14-16.

Daily Times, 25 August 2005

UK unveils plan to ban Muslim hate preachers

LONDON: Britain on Wednesday unveiled the criteria it will use to bar foreigners it believes inspire terrorism as part of a broad crackdown on Islamist preachers after last month's bombings in London. Interior Minister Charles Clarke published a list of "unacceptable behaviours" that would prompt deportation or a ban on entry. "The terrorist threat facing the UK remains real and significant and it is right that the government and law enforcement agencies do everything possible to counter it," said Clarke in a statement. "That includes tackling those who seek to foster hatred or promote terrorism, sending a strong message that they are not welcome in the UK." The list of activities, which covers any non-UK citizen in Britain or abroad, includes expressing views which foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in pursuit of particular beliefs and seeking to provoke others to terrorist acts. The government said its plans covered views expressed through written, published or distributed material and websites as well as public speaking or preaching.

Dawn, 25 August 2005

'Dr AQ Khan provided centrifuges to N. Korea'

ISLAMABAD, Aug 24: President General Pervez Musharraf has denied the allegations that transfers of centrifuge designs to North Korea by Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan helped N. Korea in acquiring nuclear weapons. In an interview to Japanese news agency Kyodo here on Wednesday, the president confirmed that Dr Khan provided centrifuge

machines and their designs to North Korea, but said these transfers did not help North Korea acquire a nuclear weapons capability. Mr Khan confessed in February 2004 to having supplied nuclear technology and expertise to North Korea, Libya and Iran. Gen Musharraf said Mr Khan could not have been of immense help to North Korea nuclear weapons programme because his laboratory had engaged in uranium enrichment, and not involved in the other steps needed to make a nuclear bomb such as conversion of uranium into gas and development of the trigger mechanism and delivery systems.

Daily Times, 25 August 2005

Musharraf will decide fate of Indian spy, says Kasuri

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said on Wednesday it was up to President Pervez Musharraf to decide whether to pardon an Indian man facing execution for spying and involvement in bomb attacks, Reuters reported. Kasuri said he discussed the issue with Musharraf on Tuesday. He said Sarabjit Singh could petition the Supreme Court to review its decision and if that failed he could appeal to Musharraf. "As far as clemency is concerned, it's in nobody's hands. It has to go to the president of Pakistan," he told reporters. "If a mercy petition comes, then the president will decide on merit." Singh's lawyer, Abdul Hameed Rana, said he would file a petition asking the Supreme Court to review its decision in a few days. Kasuri said there was a need to change procedures to soften the plight of prisoners in India and Pakistan.

Daily Times, 25 August 2005

Provinces not opposed to Kalabagh Dam any more, says Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf on Wednesday said that the provinces had no reservations against the construction of the Kalabagh Dam as the government had aptly removed their qualms about the project, Online reported. "Pakistan needs the Kalabagh Dam and we'll go for it since its design has been altered to the provinces' entire satisfaction," Musharraf told ANG Abbasi, chairman of the Technical Committee on Water Resources (TCWR), during a meeting at Army House in Rawalpindi. The president said that the government would make an unambiguous decision on Kalabagh in September. "We can't afford to delay a decision on Kalabagh since we believe that delaying the construction of new dams will cost the country dearly," said Musharraf, adding that those opposing Kalabagh's construction were protecting their vested interests. Sources quoted ANG Abbasi telling the president that he had finalised the TCWR's proposal on large dams and would submit it to the president and the government before August 31.

Daily Times, 25 August 2005

Madrassa registration begins (Mohammad Imran)

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday started the registration of seminaries under the Amended Society Registration Act 1860. The deadline for the completion of the process, set by President General Pervez Musharraf, is December 31. The government has also decided to waive the Rs 500 registration fee for the madrassas, Religious Affairs Secretary Vakil Ahmed Khan told Daily Times. "The provincial government and capital authorities have nominated 'focal' secretaries to streamline the registration process," he said, adding that seminary owners had started visiting the Religious Affairs Ministry to obtain registration forms. Ahmed expressed confidence that the government would meet the deadline set by the president. He said that the first progress report would be submitted to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on August 31. "The government is also committed to repatriating foreign students studying in seminaries once their exams have completed," he added. Elaborating the role of focal ministers, Ahmed said that these officials would act as facilitators and coordinators between the federal government and the provinces. "They will also nominate registrars who will carry out the registration process," he added.

Dawn, 25 August 2005

Technical body sees five big dams feasible: Consensus to be evolved (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 24: The Technical Committee on Water has described as "technically feasible" at least five big dams, including Skardu-Katzara, Bhasha and Kalabagh, but it was premature to say if consensus could be achieved on construction of any one of them, official sources told Dawn. President General Pervez Musharraf would take a final decision as to which project should be constructed first, the sources added. He directed the chairman of the committee to submit his report to the ministry of water and power as demanded by Punjab and the NWFP and said construction of additional reservoirs was inevitable for present and future generations.

Dawn, 25 August 2005

Nuclear hotline in September: India (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, Aug 24: The foreign secretaries of Indian and Pakistan would be on a hotline from September to help avert mutual misunderstandings that could otherwise trigger nuclear tensions between the two, Indian

Minister of State for External Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. He said an understanding on the proposed agreement on a pre-notification of flight testing of ballistic missiles was reached during the third round of India-Pakistan expert level dialogue on nuclear confidence building measures held in Delhi earlier this month."The proposed agreement commits both sides to pre-notify in a structural format flight testing of ballistic missiles, with the objective of enhancing mutual confidence and engendering predictability and transparency of intent," Mr Singh said. Both sides recommended the agreed text of the proposed agreement to the foreign secretaries.

Dawn, 25 August 2005

Pakistan criticizes anti-peace moves in Afghanistan (Masood Haider)

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 24: Pakistan on Tuesday told the international community that apart from Afghanistan itself, no other country had a more vital stake in the establishment of peace, security and prosperity in that country than Pakistan. Addressing the UN Security Council meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations Munir Akram decried efforts by some countries "who wish to poison relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan". Saying that peace in Afghanistan is essential for tranquillity and development of Pakistan's own border regions, Mr Akram said: "Pakistan supports the continuation of the presence of the US and ISAF forces in Afghanistan unless peace and stability are fully restored there and a viable Afghan National Army can assume full responsibility for the country's security." "Most of the coalition's fuel, food and other supplies come from Pakistan.

The News, 25 August 2005

Rangers, BSF hold quarterly meeting

LAHORE: The quarterly coordination meeting between the Pakistan Rangers and the Border Security Force (BSF) of India was held at the Wagah border check-post on Wednesday. Pakistan Rangers (Punjab) Deputy Director-General Brig Sakhi Marjan along with Col Nasir Minhas, Col Adil Jahan, Lt Col Tayyab and Lt Col Abid from the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) represented host Pakistan. The Indian side was represented by BSF DIG Gurdarshan Singh (second in charge), PP Gupta and OP Sharma from the Narcotics Control Board, India. The meeting discussed in detail different issues, including infiltration, massive defence construction alongside border areas by India, joint patrolling, unintentional crossings on either sides of the border, smuggling, prisoners and welfare projects for the residents of border areas. At the end, both sides exchanged documents regarding minutes of the meeting. The meetings between the border forces of both sides are held on each other's soil alternately. To a question despite installation of barbed wires alongside the border India used to raise issue of infiltration, Gurdarshan said barbed wires were for noble people. He said both the countries would come over the problem through mutual cooperation.

Dawn, 26 August 2005

S. African men linked to Dr Khan network

JOHANNESBURG, Aug 25: Two men accused in South Africa of involvement in a global nuclear weapons black market face fresh charges after new evidence against them was uncovered linking them to Dr Qadeer Khan of Pakistan, prosecutors said on Thursday. Gerhard Wisser, a German living in South Africa, and his Swiss colleague Daniel Geiges were arrested in September last year after prosecutors said they had evidence linking them to the Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan network. Dr Khan, the father of Pakistan's atom bomb, has admitted to supplying nuclear secrets to countries under embargo, including North Korea, Iran and Libya, which in 2003 vowed to abandon its nuclear programme. Prosecutor Shaun Abrahams said the men had appeared in the Pretoria High Court on Monday and both parties agreed to a postponement.

Daily Times, 26 August 2005

29 killed in second phase of local elections (Mohammad Kamran, Mubasher Bukhari, Khawaja Naseer, Shahnawaz Khan, Razzak Abro, Ghafar Ali and Azizullah Khan)

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE/KARACHI/ PESHAWAR/QUETTA: At least 29 people were killed and dozens injured in violence across the country on Thursday as voters went to the polls in 54 districts in the second phase of local elections. Tens of thousands of troops and police were deployed in sensitive areas across the country after the first phase of the elections a week ago was marred by violence, in which at least 20 people were killed and 700 injured, and opposition claims of rigging. Acting chief election commissioner (CEC) Justice Hamid Dogar later confirmed 22 deaths on Thursday. "However, none of them were killed inside any polling stations and not all the cases were linked to election activity," the CEC said. The CEC said that the primary turnout was around 60% in Punjab, 40-45% in Sindh and 45% in NWFP. He said it was too early to say the turnout in Balochistan, but observers there put the turnout at around 30 percent.

The News, 26 August 2005

'Pakistan backs nuclear disarmament efforts'

GENEVA: Pakistan fully supports international community's objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Ambassador Masood Khan, President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) said on Thursday. In a concluding statement to the forum, he said that Pakistan remained steadfast in this resolve. He urged the conference to work towards nuclear disarmament, prevent an arms race in outer space and address issues relating to the negotiations for a fissile materials treaty. The CD, which was established in 1979 as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community and has 65 members including the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, owes it to the world community to save the globe from a dangerous arms race and deliver them a secure future, he said. Pakistan assumed presidency of the 65-member conference on disarmament on July 11. Ambassador Masood Khan on August 26 will hand over the presidency to his successor Ambassador Manuel Rodriguez-Cuadros of Peru.

Daily Times, 26 August 2005

Make KBD now: Abbasi Committee (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Five members of the nine-member Technical Committee on Water Resources (TCRW) headed by ANG Abbasi want the Kalabagh Dam constructed immediately, saying that the reservations of Sindh and the NWFP had been removed with the changes made by WAPDA in the dam's design. The remaining members including ANG Abbasi were not in favour of the Kalabagh Dam but they had endorsed the dam as a carryover reservoir, a committee member told Daily Times on condition of anonymity. In the report submitted to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday, the TCWR defined surplus water which was more than the quantity required for consumption by Sindh, the lower riparian province, and enough water at the Kotri command area to stop sea intrusion.

Dawn, 26 August 2005

ADB offers \$3.2bn for new projects (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 25: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has decided to offer Pakistan \$3.2 billion during 2005-07 to help improve the country's infrastructure and alleviate poverty. Official sources told Dawn on Thursday that the ADB has asked the government to furnish the details of new development projects to be supported under the ADB's three-year Country Strategy Programme (CSP). The ADB has expressed its willingness to provide all the necessary financial and technical assistance to drastically improve the country's poor economic indicators. The sources said that Pakistan was also seeking ADB's assistance for undertaking mega water projects, including dams and reservoirs, to meet the water and power shortages. The ADB was told that Pakistan was interested in seeking adequate international financing for the Kalabagh dam and Bahshah dam.

The News, 26 August 2005

Water security essential for future growth: Shaukat

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday said water security was extremely critical for future growth and development of Pakistan and required construction of storage and distribution infrastructure. Talking to ANG Abbasi, Chairman Technical Committee on Water Resources, who presented Committee's report to him, he said availability of water was critical for economic development, employment in rural areas and raising the quality of lives of the people. The prime minister assuring equitable distribution of water called for enhancing water storage facility to meet the demand and overcome the capacity loss. The prime minister said two-thirds of the population lives in the rural areas with the livelihood depending on agriculture. He said availability of irrigation water was critical for their economic development.

Daily Times, 26 August 2005

Pakistani officials minting money in clearing Afghan goods (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: Kabul has alleged that Pakistani authorities concerned including army troops were minting money from Afghan exporters for clearing their goods. Afghanistan exports vegetables, fresh fruits, dry fruits, seeds, country drugs, spices, timber and scrap to Pakistan. "Afghan exporters have to give Rs 17,000 per truck in bribes to the political agent, Customs officials, army personnel and Pakistan Railways officials who are responsible for clearing the goods from the Torkham border to Peshawar due to which the prices of Afghan fruits do not remain competitive in Pakistani markets. This is inflicting huge monetary losses on the Afghan government as the Pakistanis do not buy Afghan fruits due to its high cost," Hedayat Amin Arsala, Afghan minister for commerce, stated in a written complaint to the Pakistani embassy in Kabul. Diplomatic sources told Daily Times that Kabul had expressed its concern on the issue twice before also seeking corrective measures by the Pakistani government.

Dawn, 26 August 2005

Hideout of Kazakhs razed: ISPR

PESHAWAR, Aug 25: Political authorities on Thursday demolished a hideout owned by a tribesman in Raghzai Killi of the North Waziristan Agency, on the charges of harbouring. Inter Services Public Relations said in a press release here that a tribesman Maulvi Asal Jan had rented out his compound to five Kazakhs, which was used for terrorist activities in the area. It said that during the operation five Kazakh nationals were arrested who admitted that the compound was used as a hideout. Tribal volunteers demolished the hideout in presence of the political authorities. The action was taken under collective territorial responsibility of the Frontier Crimes Regulation.

Daily Times, 26 August 2005

Pardoning Sarabjit is an insult to the nation: JI

KARACHI: Hardline Islamists on Thursday urged President Musharraf not to pardon an Indian spy, saying it would be a sign of weakness on the part of Pakistan. Munawar Hassan, secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami, said even to talk about pardoning the spy was an insult to the nation. "Spying is an accepted crime all over the world and there is no mercy for a spy anywhere," he said. "He (Musharraf) is very sensitive about the people involved in attacks on himself, so how can he be so insensitive about those who are involved in attacks on the country?" Najam Sethi, editor of Daily Times newspaper, said Musharraf faced a difficult decision. "Certainly the pressure from the Indian side is rising, and though no official request has been made so far, it would not be easy to turn down a request from Manmohan Singh," he said. reuters

Dawn, 26 August 2005

17 held on charge of gun-running

BEIJING, Aug 25: Seventeen Chinese have been charged with running guns from Pakistan in one of the largest arms-smuggling cases in China's history, state media said on Thursday. The defendants, who went on trial on Tuesday in the remote western province of Qinghai, neighbouring Tibet, are accused of buying more than 900 guns and 1,500 gun accessories in Pakistan, the China Daily said. They were sold in Kashgar, in China's restive far-western region of Xinjiang, and in Xining, capital of Qinghai, the China Daily reported.

Daily Times, 26 August 2005

'Pakistan issuing fewer visas than India'

NEW DELHI: India claimed on Thursday that the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi was issuing far fewer visas than the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed told the Rajya Sabha that Pakistan was not issuing short-term visas to Indians. The minister said that the Pakistani government had prescribed a processing period of a minimum of eight weeks for visas of Indian nationals. However, administrative procedures and grant of visas are a country's internal matter, he said. He added that different categories of visas had been provided for under the bilateral visa agreement signed between the two countries in 1974. The agreement provides for visas including diplomatic, non-diplomatic, official, visit and transit visas. iftikhar gilani

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

Assassination bid on President Musharraf: Five more sentenced to death

ISLAMABAD: Five people have been sentenced to death for their involvement in a 2003 attempt to assassinate President Pervez Musharraf in which 15 people were killed, an army spokesman said on Friday. "Five people have been given the death sentence," Army spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan said, adding that a low-ranking member of the military and four civilians were given the sentence a few days ago, but would not say which court heard the case. The sentences relate to Christmas Day 2003, when two suicide bombers rammed explosives-laden vehicles into Musharraf's motorcade in Rawalpindi near the capital.

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

No U-turn on Kashmir: Aziz

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said on Friday that Pakistan had not changed its policy on Kashmir and it would not take a one-sided u-turn in this regard. Talking to Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan who called on him at Prime Minister's House, Aziz said that the Kashmir issue could not be ignored for a longer period of time. He added that the Kashmir issue would be the focal point on the agenda of the upcoming meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New York. He said that Pakistan would neither withdraw from its principled stance on Kashmir nor would it give up its political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris. He said the sacrifices by the Kashmiris would bear fruit and the issue would be resolved according to their wishes.

The News, 27 August 2005

Tribesmen demand Shariat rather FCR (Rahimullah Yusufzai)

JAMRUD: Most speakers at a public meeting held here Friday to discuss Frontier Crimes Regulations said Shariat was their first choice as the supreme law for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. The well-attended meeting had been convened on the occasion of the visit of members of the FCR Reforms Committee to Jamrud. Tribal elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, social workers and NGOs representatives, numbering 25 and belonging to Jamrud and Bara tehsils, in their speeches highlighted the merits and demerits of the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR). The committee's chairman Justice (retd) Mian Ajmal, who is a former chief justice of Peshawar High Court, and its members Khalid Aziz, Sang-e-Marjan, Manzoor Ahmad, Nawabzada Inayat Khan, Wali Khan Afridi and Abdul Karim Mahsud attended the meeting and heard the tribal speakers for more than two hours.

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

Indo-Pak talks on economic and commercial cooperation (Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan have agreed to allow vessels of a third country to dock at their (Indian and Pakistani) ports to pick up cargo destined for the third country and in this regard both countries have also reaffirmed to amend the Shipping Protocol 1974. This was decided during the recent India-Pakistan talks on commercial and economic cooperation in New Delhi on August 9 and 10. A senior government official told Daily Times on Friday that India wanted third country vessels to operate in India and Pakistani ports to make trading easy under the amendment. He said that under the current arrangement Indian and Pakistani ships were not allowed to dock at each other's ports to drop off goods so that a vessel from a third country could pick them (the goods) up. He said the Pakistani government had in 1985 agreed to amend the Shipping Protocol 1974, but it did not materialise due to reasons not known.

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

'No probe into madrassa accounts'

ISLAMABAD: The government on Friday said that it would not check, investigate or even comment on audit details of accounts submitted by the seminaries, Online reported. Religious Affairs Secretary Vakil Ahmed Khan told Online that the government wanted to compile a database of madrassas in Pakistan to counter propaganda against them. He said that seminaries once registered with the government would not be asked for registration again. He said that objections raised on the registration forms by some individuals in the NWFP were pointless, adding that the government would agree on the report submitted by the seminaries on audit details of their accounts. "This will be the same report which the seminaries send to their respective wafaqs," he said. The federal secretary said that only a brief report of the accounts' audit would be sent to the registrar who would neither check nor investigate the figures. He added that the seminaries were not bound to disclose the names of their donors but they had been asked to submit details of their expenses and donations.

The News, 27 August 2005

Let us free prisoners by 31st: India

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the Indian government said on Friday it was ready to release all 177 Pakistani prisoners whose nationality has so far been confirmed by its Ministry of Interior. Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Shivshankar Menon told The News on Friday that his country was ready to free Pakistani prisoners on a reciprocal basis and if Islamabad agrees, it could all be done by the end of this month. Menon made a telephonic call to Secretary-General Pakistan Muslim League Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Friday morning to convey his government's readiness to release prisoners. However, he complained to the ruling party leader that the Pakistan Foreign Office was not responding to the Indian offer of releasing Pakistani citizens.

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

Pakistan allows consular access to Sarabjit

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday allowed consular access to Sarabjit Singh, facing execution in Pakistan for spying for India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), and involvement in several bombings. "The Government of Pakistan has intimated us that it has allowed consular access to Sarabjit Singh. The permission is for the Indian High Commission officials to meet Sarabjit Singh," Indian Press Counsellor Dr Ramesh Chandra told Daily Times. However, Chandra said the Pakistani government had not mentioned any dates for the meeting with Sarabjit Singh. "We are ready to meet him even now, this hour," he said when asked if the Indian High Commission would ask for the dates to meet Sarabjit Singh. Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh had taken up Sarabjit Singh's case with Pakistan's High Commissioner to India Aziz Ahmed Khan and had urged him to convey New Delhi's hope that Islamabad would treat it as a humanitarian issue.

Daily Times, 27 August 2005

Pakistan, India urged to take steps for prisoners' release

ISLAMABAD, Aug 26: The Senate standing committee on foreign affairs on Friday urged both Islamabad and New Delhi to take adequate measures for unconditional and immediate release of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails and Indians in Pakistani prisons. It also demanded consular access to the Pakistani prisoners in India. The committee was informed that the issue of Pakistani and Indian prisoners in each other's countries had been included in the agenda of talks between their interior, secretaries scheduled for Aug 28 in New Delhi. Foreign Affairs Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan told the committee led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed that the interior secretary had been directed to take up the issue with his Indian counterpart and India had agreed to discuss it.

The Nation, 27 August 2005

Pak hampering efforts to rebuild Afghanistan (FAIZUL HAQUE)

New Delhi - Ahead of Manmohan Singh's visit to Afghanistan, India has offered all possible support to Kabul to effectively deal with newly-emerging threats from Taliban. India also promised Friday that it would help Afghanistan in strengthening its security capabilities to quell efforts of such elements, apart from undertaking development projects worth \$50 million in the war-ravaged country. Indian Prime Minister Singh is scheduled to visit Afghanistan Sunday during which he may initiate among others a dialogue on major areas of cooperation with far reaching strategic consequences on the entire region. India's foreign secretary Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said his country was keen to develop trade and expand reconstruction work in the country. He, however, said that these efforts were hampered as Pakistan was denying transit facility.

The News, 27 August 2005

Oil refineries at Gawadar vital for Pakistan: President

KARACHI: President General Pervez Musharraf said on Friday that Pakistan must establish oil refineries at Gawadar to refine oil of Gulf countries for the international market. "If we can develop a large oil terminal and set up oil refineries at newly coming up Gawadar Port, located at the mouth of the Gulf, we can refine crude coming from the Gulf and going out to the world market," President Musharraf noted while speaking at the inauguration of \$480 million, 817 kilometres white oil pipeline from Port Qasim to Mahmood Kot, built by Pak-Arab Pipeline Company (PAPCO). Sindh Governor Dr Ishrat-ul-Ebad Khan, Chief Minister Dr Arbab Ghulam Rahim, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources, Amanullah Khan Jadoon, State Minister for Petroleum, SBP The President said the world oil prices were rising due to lack of refining capacity and not because of production shortage.

The News, 28 August 2005

PM links transit trade with India to Kashmir solution

Shaukat says UN reforms being discussed with New Delhi; gas policy on Iran pipeline next week; new dams soon after deliberations on tech report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said Pakistan would only open the door to transit trade for India if the neighbouring country made progress on the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The prime minister was addressing a press conference at 90-Shahra-e-Quaid-e-Azam here on Saturday. Wagah border has always been open for passage of Afghan goods to India, but "reverse traffic" (transport of Indian goods through Pakistan) could not be allowed because that was part of the issue of transit trade between India and Pakistan, Shaukat said. However, Pakistan has informed India that it would allow a pipeline to pass through its territory if India was interested in buying gas from a third country, he added. The government would go it alone if India was not interested in building the gas pipeline because Pakistan needed to cater to its growing energy needs, he said. Pakistan would announce a gas policy in this regard next week, he added. Responding to a question on Vision East Asia, the prime minister said the idea was to learn from the successful experiences of others in the region, attract investment and increase trade with them.

The News, 28 August 2005

Madrassa, homes searched in N Waziristan

MIR ALI: Political authorities backed by around 200 armed Khassadars raided a village in North Waziristan to search a Madrassa and two homes following reports about the presence of foreign militants there on Saturday. However, the search did not yield anyone and the Khassadars (armed tribal force) returned to Miranshah, headquarters of North Waziristan. Tribal sources said the political authorities, accompanied by about a dozen local tribal elders, suddenly turned up at Khatti village inhabited by the Humzoni tribe. They said the Khassadars laid siege to the village and blocked escape routes. They searched the homes of local cleric Maulvi Sadiq Noor and his relation Saday Khan as well as the seminary named Neras-ul-Uloom. No suspect was found and nobody was arrested.

The News, 28 August 2005

Sarbjit's conviction not a design to hang the spy

ISLAMABAD: Sarbjit Singh alias Manjeet Singh's conviction by Pakistani courts is not part of a design to send a spy from an enemy country to the gallows but a consequence of a detailed account of open judicial process as followed in the world over including India. Detailed study of the voluminous court documents pertaining to the convicted Indian terrorist and spy, Manjeet Singh, clearly show that the man was handed down death sentence by the Pakistani courts on the basis of both official witnesses and the independent civilian eyewitnesses who saw the lately discovered Indian hero bombing three different places to kill 14 innocent and injure several dozens.

The News, 28 August 2005

No consular access to Pak prisoners in India

ISLAMABAD: New Delhi has been denying consular access to 208 Pakistani prisoners languishing in Indian jails by the Pakistan's High Commission. Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has formally conveyed request to the Indian ministry of external affairs at least six times since January this year but in vain. Sources in the foreign office revealed to The News here on Saturday that Pakistan has freed 795 Indian prisoners during the current year while India has released 183 Pakistanis during this period. Pakistan is sending a set of proposals for the release of the prisoners on mutual basis. The same will be made public by Monday next. The sources termed the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad's claim that his country was prepared to free Pakistan's prisoner by 31st of this month as "posturing and cosmetic" and against the facts.

Daily Times, 28 August 2005

Govt contacts Opp on Kalabagh Dam

ISLAMABAD: The government is contacting political parties opposed to the Kalabagh Dam and highlighting recent modifications to the dam's design to convince them to support the dam, senior government officials told Daily Times on Saturday. The Awami National Party (ANP), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and nationalist parties from Sindh are against the dam's construction. A report by the Technical Committee on Water and Resources (TCWR) says that Pakistan has enough water and needs dams – at least one immediately - on the Indus River to cater to the country's growing water and power needs. Officials in the Ministry of Water and Power said that National Security Council Secretary Tariq Aziz had contacted the ANP as part of the government's back channel diplomacy to pave the way for the KBD. Officials said that the ANP was reluctant to accept the government's proposal on dams because of its political position. However, the ANP was reportedly satisfied with the modified design of the Kalabagh Dam, under which the height of the dam had been reduced to address the concerns of the NWFP. No direct canal would be taken out from the dam to Punjab, to address the concerns of Sindh, the officials added. Daily Times, 30 August 2005

Detailed judgement of local polls sanad case:

SC to take up qualifications of parliamentarians

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court will consider "at an appropriate time" the validity of an Election Commission notification allowing parliamentarians holding seminary education certificates (sanads) to contest the general elections in 2002. The SC said this in its detailed judgement, released on Monday, of a case regarding the eligibility of sanad holders to contest the local elections. The petitioners had said they should be allowed to contest the local elections because the EC notification of July 29, 2002, allowed candidates with similar degrees to contest the general elections to the national and provincial assemblies. They argued that if madrasa degrees were considered equivalent to bachelors degrees, the minimum education requirement for general election candidates, they should be considered equivalent to matriculation, the education requirement for local election candidates.

Daily Times, 30 August 2005

No military solution to extremism

President says no respite from terror until political disputes resolved

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf has said that there is no quick fix or military solution to the problem of extremism in Pakistan. "While we have to confront terrorism with force, the malaise of extremism has to be handled with care, as change cannot be imposed and pertains to the hearts and minds of people," Gen Musharraf said at a seminar on global terrorism here on Monday. "It will take years before it (extremism) is completely curbed," he said. The government was changing to the school syllabus "to project the true values of Islam" as part of long-term efforts to tackle extremism.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

Pakistani militant killed, two injured in Afghanistan (Mudassir Ali Shah)

KABUL: A 'Pakistani Taliban' was killed while two others suffered injuries in an overnight clash with security forces in the southwestern Helmand province, officials said on Tuesday. Haji Mohammad Wali, spokesman for the

Helmand province governor, said the body of the Pakistani fighter was still lying at the scene of the clash in Baghny district. He refused to say how armed Pakistanis had entered the troubled province despite improved border security. Helmand's Deputy Police chief Haji Mohammad Ayub claimed two Kalashnikov assault rifles, as many hand-grenades and a walkie-talkie had been seized from the combatants. Meanwhile, a Taliban sympathiser was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of a government servant. The detainee confessed to complicity in the murder, receiving arms from "Pakistan and delivering them to Taliban," a Helmand military official said.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

Women-less elections in NWFP condemned

ISLAMABAD: Members of the treasury and opposition in the National Assembly (NA) displayed rare unity on Tuesday, coming together to condemn the barring of women from voting in the local council elections in some districts of NWFP. Women members of parliament (MNAs), raised the matter through a calling attention notice, which was endorsed by the opposition. They held the federal and provincial governments responsible for the situation. Chaudhry Amir Hussain, speaker of the National Assembly, said that under Article 51 of the Constitution, women could not be restricted from voting. MNA Mehnaz Rafi said that women made up half of the population of Pakistan and deserved equal rights, according to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Referring to news reports, she said that women were deprived of their constitutional rights in NWFP, where the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) was in power. Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), demanded action against those who had restricted women from voting in the elections.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

Tripartite agreement to be extended till December 2006

PESHAWAR: Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have agreed to extend the tripartite agreement for the repatriation of Afghan refugees by nine months. The agreement, which will expire on March 2006, would be extended in its present form to December 2006 after approval by the respective governments and the UNHCR. A UNHCR press release said on Tuesday that the decision was taken during a meeting of the tripartite commission comprising representatives of the three parties in Kabul on Monday. It said that Pakistan's decision to close refugee camps in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) along the Afghan border was also discussed at the meeting. However, the press release did not give details. Pakistan had decided to close all refugee camps in FATA by August 31 for security reasons. The camps' residents had been offered a choice of either repatriating or relocating to other camps in Pakistan.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

PM asks MPs to prepare for 2007 general elections

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Tuesday asked parliamentarians of his Pakistan Muslim League party to gear up for the next general elections in 2007. The high voter turnout in the local elections and success of PML-backed candidates was a clear indication that the people support the new local bodies system and the government's policies, and parliamentarians must ensure this success translates into victory for the PML in 2007, Aziz told a group of MNAs, including ministers, who called on him. The prime minister urged the parliamentarians to keep in close touch with their constituents and educate them on the government efforts to improve standards of living and its domestic and foreign policy successes.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

Oil price likely to go up tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: The government is likely to pass on the recent oil price rise in the international market to Pakistani consumers, as it has already paid Rs 8 billion in the first two months of this fiscal year to contain prices. A Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources official told Daily Times the price of oil in the local market would go up tomorrow (September 1). He said prices had gone up from \$58 per barrel to close to \$70 per barrel in August. "We cannot absorb the losses anymore. The Oil Companies Advisory Committee will announce an increase in POL (petroleum, oil and lubricant) products this time," he said. Dr Ashfaq Hasan Khan, economic adviser to the Ministry of Finance, said the government had lost Rs 8 billion in the first two months of 2005-06 to keep domestic oil prices down.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

India and Pakistan to free hundreds of prisoners on Sept 12 (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan have agreed to release hundreds of fishermen and other prisoners held in each other's jails to strengthen their peace process, a joint statement and an Indian official said on Tuesday. "They have agreed to release on September 12, 2005, all fishermen and civilian prisoners who have completed their

sentences and whose national status has been confirmed," said the statement. An Indian Home Ministry official said this would affect 'hundreds' of prisoners, but did not give an exact number. The statement was issued after two days of talks in New Delhi between the home secretaries of both countries. India says there are 1,348 Indians in Pakistani prisons while Pakistan says more than 700 of its nationals are in Indian jails.

Daily Times, 31 August 2005

Indian diplomats visit death row prisoner in Pakistan

LAHORE: Indian diplomats, who met Indian prisoner Sarabjeet Singh at Kot Lakhpat Central Jail on Tuesday, said they were convinced about the prisoner's identity and that New Delhi would decide a further course of action over the prisoner's fate. Sarabjeet Singh, a resident of an Indian border village, was caught by Pakistani authorities in 1990 and was sentenced to death after allegations of espionage were proved in court. The Supreme Court in its August 18 decision upheld the sentence. Ever since, the Indian government, media and civil society organisations have been pleading for his release on humanitarian grounds. Pakistan on Tuesday granted an Indian request of consular access and Sarabjeet Singh's defence team has options of filing a review petition and appeal to President Pervez Musharraf for clemency.

Dawn, 31 August 2005

Energy treaty to be signed with India: Move towards gas pipeline plan (Khaleeq Kiani)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: Pakistan and India have agreed to sign the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), a global arrangement for security to energy-related trade and investments, as observers to ease import of natural gas through pipelines from Iran, Qatar or Turkmenistan. The federal cabinet, which will meet on Wednesday, is expected to approve a plan to make a request to the Energy Charter Conference to get the 'observer status'. The treaty was signed in 1994 and came into force in 1998. "This would lead to a number of positive developments for Pakistan without any obligation or liability and pave the way for becoming full member to the treaty," a senior official told Dawn.

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Ulema reject registration law (Ahmed Hassan)

ISLAMABAD, Aug 30: The Tanzimul Madaris Ahle Sunnat (Barelvi) on Tuesday rejected registration of seminaries under the amended law and said it would not cooperate in the process unless their reservations about changes made in the law were removed. Earlier last week, the Islamabad chapter of Wafaqul Madaris (Deobandi) had announced not to get their affiliated seminaries registered and had constituted a 19-member committee to deal with the government on the issue. Speakers at a convention organised here by Tanzimul Madaris on "Religious institutions and contemporary needs" also said that they would not abide by the government's dictates on the question of syllabus nor would they stop teaching the concept of Jihad as it was in the Holy Quran and Hadith. They rejected allegations that some religious schools were giving militancy training to students.

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Pakistan may also get N-cooperation from US: expert (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Aug 30: Pakistan can also receive civilian nuclear cooperation from the US if it can offer guarantees similar to what India is offering in return for the deal it has signed with the US, Stephen P. Cohen, an expert on India, Pakistan and South Asian security, told Dawn. Mr Cohen, a senior fellow at Washington's Brookings Institution, however, warned that because of Pakistan's past record the international community would like to verify Islamabad's assurances before offering it any deal. Other experts disagreed. They said that Pakistan should not expect similar cooperation from the US because it did not have a good record of protecting its nuclear assets. President Bush announced the deal to share civilian nuclear technology with India during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House last month. The US Congress is expected to debate the deal during the fall session which begins on Sept 6.

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Indian official due today

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: The Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran arrives in Islamabad on Wednesday on a three-days official visit to discuss a host of issues with his Pakistani counterpart. According to the Press Trust of India, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Mohammad Khan would hold wide ranging talks on issues of mutual interest, and bilateral relations between the two countries. The progress of the second round of talks would also be reviewed during their meeting including taking further the dialogue in a conducive manner. Meanwhile, Shyam Saran has issued a statement in New Delhi, in which he has expressed optimism and progress in some vital issues under discussion between the two neighbours.