

The News, 1 August 2006

Masses will reject opposition, says Musharraf

CHAKWAL: President Pervez Musharraf came down heavily on the opposition on Monday, saying that they wanted to destabilise the country when it was heading towards stability. The opposition was bringing a no-confidence motion against the prime minister and even wanted his (the president's) impeachment, but the people of Pakistan would reject it as they wanted a strong Pakistan, he said while addressing a public meeting at the football ground of the Government Sir Syed College Katas after laying the foundation stone of the Cadet College Katas. The college will be constructed at a cost of Rs 230 million.

The News, 1 August 2006

Local Taliban, foreigners part ways in N Waziristan

PESHAWAR: Tension is mounting between local Taliban and foreigners based in North and South Waziristan tribal agencies, as the government-sponsored Loya Jirga is making progress in crucial parleys to disengage the security forces and tribal militants. Majority of the foreign elements invited and housed by local tribesmen in Miranshah, headquarters of North Waziristan, as well as the troubled Mir Ali sub-division of the agency, locals and sources in the intelligence agencies said, have either left or planning to move out of the area.

Daily Times, 2 August 2006

MQM abstains from meeting called by president:

ISLAMABAD: President General Pervez Musharraf discussed the possibility of governor's rule or a caretaker set-up in Sindh with his government on Tuesday after the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) refused to attend a meeting that was expected to resolve the crisis in the Sindh government. The president directed Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz to cut off contact with the party, sources said. He said the MQM should submit its demands in writing and accept his decisions in case it wanted a resolution of the crisis over the resignation of MQM ministers.

The News, 2 August 2006

OPINION: A critique of the private sector in Pakistan (Mosharraf Zaidi)

Pakistan's favourite past-time is dissecting and criticising the government. The responsibility for any given piece of bad news as well as the entire range of long-standing structural issues in Pakistan is placed squarely on inefficient and ineffective governments. Ask a Pakistani which governments have been inefficient and ineffective, and the invariable answer will be, 'All of them!' Of course, some of the blame is well-founded. If nothing else, ample evidence of this exists in the form of a proliferation of reform efforts within the government -- all of which substantiate the view that better lives for all Pakistani citizens are dependent on better government processes and outcomes.

The News, 2 August 2006

OPINION: To India and Pakistan (Amanullah Khan)

For most of the time during their 60-year-long history as free nations, India and Pakistan have been fighting against each other at national and international levels and on political,

diplomatic, economic, military and media fronts. Seen from any angle, this nature of Pakistan-India relations has harmed both of them many, many times more than it has benefited them and will continue doing so. Instead of firing at each other from the front and stabbing each other in the back, both countries could have advanced hand in hand by supporting each other at the national and international levels. India, instead of begging for economic, technological and diplomatic charity from the sole super power, could have by itself become a super power while Pakistan, instead of acting as a yes-man of the US, could have been in a far better position. Both would have been playing most effective roles in international affairs besides commanding far higher respect in the comity of nations than they do today. Nonetheless, as they say, it is never too late to mend.

Daily Times, 5 August 2006

We didn't want Arbab in meeting with Musharraf: Farooq Sattar

KARACHI: The four-man delegation of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) had refused to meet President General Pervez Musharraf on August 1, because it wanted an exclusive audience, minus Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim, said MQM leader in parliament Dr Farooq Sattar

Daily Times, 5 August 2006

PML leaders accuse Rahim of weakening party

ISLAMABAD: Several Pakistan Muslim League (PML) leaders from Sindh have accused Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim of weakening their political standing in the province for the next general elections. A 21-member delegation of PML leaders met party President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence on Friday and complained against Rahim, sources privy to the meeting told Daily Times

Daily Times, 5 August 2006

EDITORIAL: MQM-Govt rift over, for now

Predictably, after a weeklong brinkmanship, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and the government have patched up and the MQM has decided to withdraw the resignations of its ministers. Therefore, for the time being at least, we can expect the two sides to play down their differences and work on the basis of the current modus vivendi. However, trouble between the two is not far off, given the dynamics of power in this country and the tenuous system put in place by General Pervez Musharraf — in which the possibility of the MQM breaking ranks with the ruling coalition cannot be entirely discounted

Daily Times, 6 August 2006

Pakistan, India expel diplomats

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Saturday ordered an Indian diplomat to leave the country after he was found involved in "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status", and India reciprocated with a tit-for-tat expulsion

Daily Times, 6 August 2006

Military suspects suicide attacker targeted Waziristan base

PESHAWAR: The military suspects that Friday's attack on a security forces' command base in South Waziristan was a suicide attack, army spokesman Maj Gen Shaukat Sultan

said on Saturday. "We suspect it was a suicide attack," Sultan told Daily Times. The attack is the first of its kind in South Waziristan and comes when a grand tribal jirga is trying to broker peace between militants and the government in the neighbouring North Waziristan

Daily Times, 6 August 2006

OPINION: Is the Sindh crisis really over? (Dr Hasan-Askari Rizvi)

The good news is that the Sindh ministerial crisis is over and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) have agreed to continue working together. The bad news is that the crisis can recur. Since the two sides cannot afford a complete break-up the symptoms have been suppressed but the root causes remain untouched. The coalition partners have agreed on an undisclosed framework for mutual cooperation and accommodation of the MQM concerns. However, as the competition for monopolising state patronage and state machinery intensifies against the backdrop of the general elections, the MQM and the PML are likely to again develop serious complaints against each other

Daily Times, 6 August 2006

Iran-China trade: Pakistan may offer transit facilities

ISLAMABAD: Iran has sought transit facilities from Pakistan in order to increase its trade with China as the two countries are eyeing an increase in trade to \$15 billion within the next few years, a senior government official told Daily Times on Saturday. Iran has sought transit facilities from Pakistan and we are negotiating the issue with Iranian authorities, the official said

Daily Times, 6 August 2006

Trade deficit may cross \$15b in current fiscal year

KARACHI: The country's trade deficit may cross \$15 billion in the current fiscal year as the central bank has predicted that the country's imports would total \$34 billion while exports would total \$19 billion for the 2006-07 fiscal year. Research Head at Invest Capital and Securities Khalid Iqbal Siddiqui said: "In the wake of the huge trade deficit that the country is facing right now, we feel that there is a need to correct the imbalance prevailing in the economy."

The News, 6 August 2006

EDITORIAL: The fight against Talibanisation

According to an agreement signed the other day in Islamabad, the US government has pledged \$3.5 million to the government of Pakistan to help it, as mentioned in one report, fight growing Talibanisation, especially in the settled districts of NWFP bordering FATA. The money is to be spent on putting in place new and repairing old paramilitary checkpoints along the borders of North and South Waziristan with the adjoining districts of NWFP. The Frontier Corps will be given the money and will use it also to purchase new vehicles, bullet-proof vests, night vision goggles and electronic jamming devices. The assistance comes following several incidents of violence by militants in Waziristan's neighbouring settled districts like Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. These are believed by many to be the fallout of growing Talibanisation in Waziristan where local Taliban have

taken matters in their own hands and gone about -- with seemingly no check or interference from the federal government -- implementing their own rigid interpretation of Islam in the process dispensing harsh and barbaric punishments.

Daily Times, 7 August 2006

EDITORIAL: NGOs under attack in Khyber Agency

Quite typically, someone has thrown a grenade at a women's vocational centre in Landi Kotal in the Khyber Agency run by the federal government as a part of the Tribal Areas. The centre belongs to an NGO helping local women acquire skills. Luckily no one was hurt because the school was empty of pupils, but the blast was clearly a shot across the bow from the fanatics enforcing Talibanisation in the area. Worryingly, this was the second attack in less than two months on the same centre that teaches occupational skills. Last month, a vehicle belonging to a British civil society organisation was blown up in Darra Adamkhel, 40 kilometres south of Peshawar

Daily Times, 7 August 2006

Suicide bomber dies as explosives detonate prematurely

QUETTA/HUB: A suspected suicide bomber was killed on Sunday in Balochistan when the explosives he was carrying detonated prematurely, police said. The man, aged about 25, was blown to pieces at around 8.00am while he was riding a bicycle along Zehri Street, the main market of the town of Hub, 600 kilometres south of Quetta, DSP Police Mohammad Rafiq said.

The News, 7 August 2006

Balochistan-Sindh water dispute

ISLAMABAD: Secretaries of the irrigation and power departments of Sindh and Balochistan could not turn up for a meeting here Saturday with Federal Minister for Water and Power Liaquat Ali Jatoi to resolve the water shortage issue in Balochistan due to the flood-like situation in Sindh and inclement weather in Quetta. An official said the Sindh-Balochistan issue would soon be resolved as Federal Minister Liaquat Ali Jatoi has shown firm resolve to solve this longstanding issue. "Due to massive monsoon rains and flood-like situation in Sindh, the secretary irrigation preferred to stay in the province to manage water flows. The Balochistan secretary could not come to Islamabad due to bad weather in Quetta and non-availability of flight."

The Nation, 7 August 2006

OPINION: India's Afghan policy (Saman Malik)

At long last, the cat is out of the bag - India is planning to send its troops to Afghanistan to fulfil its long-cherished dream of 'hot pursuit', irrespective of consequences (President Musharraf has promised a proportionate tit for tat). Encouraged by Rand Corporation's findings, contained in its Project Air Force, India wishes to have a permanent foothold in Afghanistan. The objective is to deprive Pakistan of depth in case of war (The CBMs and Nuclear Risk Reduction measures ostensibly reflect India wants peace, not war with Pakistan). The Project Air Force made the startling observations that: (a) India is a long-term partner of the US in counter-terrorism although it will not follow US policy in every instance. (b) Pakistan is an important – but uncertain - partner in counter terrorism.

Daily Times, 8 August 2006

Gap between rich and poor widens

ISLAMABAD: The gap between the richest and the poorest 20 percent of the country has widened from a ratio of 3.76 to 4.15 in the last four years, according to a report regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) submitted by the Planning Commission. The report said that the ratio of the gap between the highest and lowest quintile had widened from a ratio of 10.40 in fiscal year (FY) 2000-01 to 12.02 in FY 2004-05 in the urban areas, compared to a slight decline from 2.22 to 2.19 in rural areas during the same period.

Daily Times, 8 August 2006

US Congress clears F-16 deal

ISLAMABAD: The US Congress has cleared the sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan and the deal does not contain any extraordinary security conditions, the Foreign Office said on Monday. Asked to comment on reports that the United States was insisting on extraordinary security precautions, FO spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said the agreement contained a standard clause to ensure that there was no transfer of technology to a third country. Pakistan signed similar agreements with other countries while selling or purchasing any equipment, she said. An exchange of a letter of offer from the United States and letter of acceptance from Pakistan would take place to finalise the deal, she said. Aslam dismissed press reports that the United States had conveyed to Pakistan that the equipment supplied for the war against terrorism should not be diverted for other uses. staff report

Daily Times, 8 August 2006

Militants claim killing 9 soldiers

QUETTA: Baloch insurgents on Monday claimed to have killed nine security personnel and injured 12 following clashes in Dera Bugti. Wadera Alam Khan, a spokesman for the Baloch insurgents, told reporters via satellite phone that violence had escalated on Monday after a brief break.

The News, 8 August 2006

Sherpao rules out talks with Balochistan warlords

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao Monday ruled out any dialogue with warlords of Balochistan while vowing to establish the writ of the government and move ahead with mega development projects to ameliorate lot of the people of that province.

The News, 8 August 2006

Dissidents not to reconcile with Arbab

KARACHI: A meeting between the disgruntled group of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Sindh and President General Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad on Monday failed to reconcile the dissidents with Sindh Chief Minister Dr Arbab Ghulam Rahim, sources said. Irate party leaders conveyed to President Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and PML chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain in the meeting held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr that it

was not possible for them to continue working with the chief minister, the sources disclosed to this correspondent.

The News, 8 August 2006

Rs 100bn to be spent on Balochistan infrastructure development: Shamim

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Communications Shamim Siddiqui has said that the federal government intends to spend more than Rs 100 billion on the development of infrastructure, including a roads network, in Balochistan over the next 10 years. He told a news conference at the Quetta press club on Monday afternoon that the government was going to implement Rs 40 billion worth of development projects in the roads sector in the next 3 to 4 years

Daily Times, 9 August 2006

Bill on prevention of violence against women:

ISLAMABAD: A bill for the prevention of violence against women was referred for further deliberations to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice despite opposition by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr Sher Afgan Niazi, as bills on Private Members' Day created divisions across party lines in the National Assembly on Tuesday.

Daily Times, 9 August 2006

PML fails to agree on Hudood laws amendment bill, delays tabling it

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League (PML) was unable to reach a consensus on the proposed amendments to the Hudood Ordinance in a parliamentary meeting on Tuesday, following strong reservations by several MNAs. The government decided to delay by a few days the introduction of the bill — Protection of Women Bill, 2006 — to amend the ordinance. Sources said that MNAs Omar Ayub Khan, Noorul Haq Qadri, Wajahat Hussain, Abdul Qadir Jillani and several others had opposed the bill. They had demanded that the prime minister refer the bill to the Council of Islamic Ideology for a "thorough review". Sources said some MNAs had proposed the bill be tabled after the general elections. The prime minister told the meeting he would not defer the bill for a long time, but would summon a meeting of religious scholars for their opinion

Daily Times, 9 August 2006

No UK hand in Balochistan: HC

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Sir Mark Lyall Grant rejected as "unfounded" charges of the alleged involvement of British secret agencies in the Balochistan insurgency. His denial came as a delegation of British MPs was questioned about the alleged involvement of British secret agencies in Balochistan in a closed-door meeting with members of the Senate Committee on Defence on June 3, a report by the Senate body said. The report will be tabled in the Senate soon.

Daily Times, 10 August 2006

President asks Sindh CM to consolidate PML

KARACHI: President General Pervez Musharraf has asked Sindh Chief Minister Arbab Rahim to work towards improving his Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party's prospects in Sindh in next year's elections by improving his relationship with disgruntled sections

of the party. According to official sources, the president, who arrived here on Tuesday night, held a one-on-one meeting with the chief minister on the political situation in the province.

The News, 10 August 2006

US report finds faults with Pakistan's human rights record

Washington: The US State Department in its report on world human rights has said that Pakistan's human rights record remained poor, with serious concerns, including abuse by security forces, treatment of women and religious minorities, child labour and human trafficking. The annual report, 2005 titled "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy" covers 95 countries, where US State Department officers are engaged in promoting human rights and democracy. In the fiscal year 2005, the United States allocated \$1.4 billion for human rights and democracy projects in these countries.

The News, 10 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Start of a rocky road?

It was always felt that the government's courageous stand on proposing some significant amendments to the infamous Hudood ordinances was perhaps too good to be true. Tuesday's session of the National Assembly showed the difficult path ahead for those who want these discriminatory laws amended. As pointed out earlier in this space, notwithstanding the government's welcome intention to change the Hudood laws, there are many legislators in its own ranks who do not see eye to eye with the proposed amendments. During Tuesday's session, a female member of the treasury benches introduced two bills to amend the Hudood ordinances but found opposition from many male legislators and, as expected, from the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal. However, some female members of the MMA broke party ranks and this meant that the two bills were referred to parliament's standing committee.

Dawn, 10 August 2006

No-trust move on 23rd

ISLAMABAD, Aug 9: The combined opposition on Wednesday announced that it would submit a no-trust motion against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz with the National Assembly Secretariat on Aug 23 after compilation of a charge-sheet against the government. Briefing reporters after a meeting of leaders of all the opposition parties at the Parliament House, Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy chairman Makhdoom Amin Fahim said that the ARD would also take part in the public meeting being organised by the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal at Minar-i-Pakistan in Lahore on Aug 14.

Dawn, 10 August 2006

4,000 teachers for Fata shortly

PESHAWAR, Aug 9: NWFP Governor Ali Muhammad Jan Aurakzai assured the participants of a conference on Wednesday that the shortage of 4,000 teachers in educational institutions of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) will be removed in a couple of weeks.

Daily Times, 12 August 2006

'Quake money' used to finance UK plane bombing plot

KARACHI: A UK-based Islamic charity organisation remitted a huge amount of money to three individuals in three different bank accounts in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, in December last year with the sole purpose of helping its recipients and their organisations carry out the aircraft bombing plan in the UK, insider sources told Daily Times yesterday. An investigation carried out by Daily Times showed that Muslim Charity of UK remitted not so long ago a huge amount of money under the head of "earthquake relief" to the accounts of three individuals in three different banks — Saudi Pak Bank, Standard Chartered and Habib Bank Ltd. One of these banks is UK based and has its presence in Azad Kashmir because of a huge number of British citizens of Kashmir origin in UK. The money was transferred from UK to banks in Azad Kashmir through Barclays Plc..

Daily Times, 12 August 2006

Pakistan confirms key person's arrest

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday officially confirmed the arrest of a key person, Rashid Rauf, who is a British national but did not disclose any details of another six persons also said to have been arrested

Daily Times, 12 August 2006

2 military posts attacked in South Waziristan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Suspected militants fired dozens of rockets at two military posts in a tribal area in South Waziristan, but no injuries were reported, said a Wana government official. The two posts were targeted in separate attacks in Shakai, a mountain valley and former militant stronghold north of Wana, South Waziristan's main town, said the official. The 12 rockets fired in the first attack landed near a mountaintop security post, while the 15 rockets fired in the other attack landed in a field near another post in Landi Noor village, he said, adding that troops retaliated, but it was believed no assailant was hurt.

The News, 12 August 2006

EDITORIAL: UK terror arrests

From the arrests of 21 people (all born and raised in Britain) by the UK police on Wednesday, it seems that a major terrorist plot to attack the United States may have been averted. But America and Britain would be deluding themselves if they think that international terrorism is over. If the plot to bomb ten US-bound airliners hadn't been thwarted in the final stages in London, the venue of the July 7 and July 21 bombings last year, there would certainly have been mass murder on an unimaginable scale. Just last week, "a terrible thought" had occurred to journalist Robert Fisk, as he wrote in one of his articles, that there would be another 9/11. That threat is still very much there but what is more important is that both the US and the UK should try and understand what is causing some of their citizens to consider such extreme acts.

The News, 13 August 2006

UK terror plot probe focuses on two brothers

LONDON: The international investigation into a plot to blow up planes over the Atlantic zeroed on Saturday on brothers arrested in Pakistan and Britain, one named as a key al-Qaeda suspect who left the family's Birmingham home years ago and the other described as gentle and polite. British authorities, meanwhile, warned against complacency, saying the detention of several dozen suspects here and in Pakistan has not eliminated the danger. The terror threat level in Britain remained "critical" — its highest designation, and delays, flight cancellations and intense security continued to greet many travellers at London airports.

The News, 13 August 2006

50pc Pakistanis consider India as enemy

ISLAMABAD: Fifty-three per cent of Pakistanis see India as an enemy but more Pakistanis than before are willing to accept the conversion of the Line of Control (LoC) into an international border as a solution to the Kashmir problem. While in August 2003, 69 per cent Pakistanis said "No" to converting the LoC into an international border, in July 2006 this had come down to 58 per cent. These are the latest finding of Outlook which commissioned Gallup Pakistan, an affiliate of Gallup International, to conduct an opinion poll in 13 cities

Daily Times, 13 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Let's have a discussion on the F-16 purchase

Pakistan is close to signing a \$5 billion deal for an advanced F-16 fighter-jet package with the US. The deal is being criticised both in Pakistan and the United States, sometimes for the opposite reasons. US lawmakers want stepped-up security demands before the fighter-jet can be sold to Pakistan. Much of this pressure is being created at the behest of the India Caucus because New Delhi does not want Pakistan to get these planes.

The Nation, 13 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Nuclear deal with China

PAKISTAN's move to acquire six nuclear reactors with a total power generating capacity of 2000MW from China within the next 10 years is highly welcome on several important counts. The developing configuration of political relations at the international as well as regional levels demands that in the interest of our security and development we should not necessarily look towards the West for help and diversify our economic, political and defence contacts, strengthening them with tried and tested friends. We have seen how the US cold-shouldered our legitimate demand for civilian nuclear technology, ignoring the role we have played in its War on Terror and its commitments of long-term friendship and favouring hostile India with the same technology, it seems, to spite us. On the other hand, Beijing's record of invariably coming to our aid in need is quite well known and its reliability unquestioned.

The News, 14 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Cause to celebrate?

Yet another independence day is before us. In the days leading to this August 14 there has been the usual welling up of patriotic fervour. The star and crescent has been hoisted on many a home and vehicle. Milli naghmas have flooded television and many a corporation seems to have jumped in the celebrations, hoping to cash in on selling its product during a major national holiday. When one was growing up this was a time of much celebration but the celebration itself was never on such a wide scale as it is now. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that twenty years ago there wasn't the wide variety of television channels that there is now, and not a single FM radio station. A lot seems to have changed, on the face of it, since the country's independence was celebrated, say, some twenty years ago. Well, some things have and some have not. For one, in both years, a military government was in place though some may say that the current one is at least a benevolent dictatorship and there is an elected parliament and prime minister. There is no government-driven — at least no overt — Islamisation campaign and the media is said to have been never freer than it is now. Society itself has undergone and is still undergoing a major transformation, driven some might say by the advent of television, the Internet and a mass credit-driven consumer culture.

Daily Times, 14 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Mullahs cannot win battle of veil for women

Pakistan was reluctant to take the veil because of the embarrassing fact that Fatima Jinnah and Begum Liaquat Ali Khan were national icons without the veil, but the order of the Taliban affected many parts of the country nonetheless. After a few incidents on The Mall in Lahore, religious seminarians found that it was no use threatening Pakistani women to take the veil if the government was not willing and the Constitution allowed a woman to become head of government and state. But the environment was scary enough to force Benazir Bhutto to start fingering beads in public and Hasina Wajid of Bangladesh to wear a pious head-band. The Taliban whipped unveiled women in Kabul, but could not do so in Mazar-e-Sharif. When foreign-inspired Islamists began beating up unveiled women in the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia, no one really took them seriously.

Daily Times, 14 August 2006

Clerics push govt MNAs to back Hudood laws

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Tariq Azeem said on Sunday that the government arranged a meeting between treasury MNAs and various religious leaders to develop consensus on the amendments to the Hudood Ordinance and hoped that the Protection of Women's Bill, 2006, would soon be presented in the National Assembly.

Daily Times, 14 August 2006

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Daily Times, 14 August 2006

Pearl film shot in Pakistan without permission

Washington: A Hollywood team making a movie about Daniel Pearl recently shot scenes in Karachi and Islamabad, as well as the countryside, without the permission of the government of Pakistan. Akram Shaheedi, press minister at the Pakistan embassy, told Daily Times on Sunday morning that no request by the film unit to shoot in Pakistan had been made to the embassy. He said all documentary and feature filmmakers must obtain permission and the right visa from the Pakistan government. Any unauthorised attempt to film without permission and without the knowledge of government authorities was illegal and regrettable, he added. He said he would be making inquiries, starting today, both here and in Islamabad.

Daily Times, 14 August 2006

MQM's launching campaign at Minar-e-Pakistan: I declare war on Punjab's feudals: Altaf Hussain

LAHORE: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader Altaf Hussain has announced a "declaration of war" on Punjab's feudal class and has promised to end discrimination and promote equality and justice in the province. Addressing the MQM's launch campaign at a well-arranged and disciplined gathering of more than 15,000 people at Minar-e-Pakistan on Sunday, Altaf said, "The time has arrived for the deprived to get up and discriminate against anti-people and anti-democratic forces." He said feudalism and democracy were opposites and could not work together.

Daily Times, 18 August 2006

Hudood amendment bill in NA today

ISLAMABAD: The government is to present a bill amending the Hudood Ordinances in the National Assembly today (Friday). The Protection of Women Bill 2006 was to be tabled in the NA earlier this month, but got held up after cabinet ministers and treasury MNAs raised objections to certain amendments, with some even demanding that the bill be delayed until after next year's general elections. A ministerial committee was formed to remove the objections, and President Gen Pervez Musharraf recently pressed members of the ruling party to pass the bill.

Daily Times, 18 August 2006

UK investigators get more time to question suspects

LONDON: British investigators were granted another week to question 23 suspects in an alleged plot to blow up as many as 10 trans-Atlantic jetliners, and a Pakistan official said authorities there were seeking a British Muslim, an Eritrean and a Pakistani in connection with the case. A suspect arrested on Tuesday was released without charge shortly after the hearing late on Wednesday in London, Scotland Yard said.

Daily Times, 18 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Pakistan's frequent-fall problem

Yesterday this newspaper quoted General Pervez Musharraf as saying that foreign terrorists would not be allowed to operate from Pakistan or train in Pakistan's territory.

As a logical extension of this argument General Musharraf also said that the spread of extremism in Pakistan would not be tolerated either. This would be great news if only we hadn't heard it for the nth time. In fact, we see a pattern in these announcements: whenever Pakistan finds itself — for the right or wrong reasons — in the eye of a storm revolving around terror, General Musharraf assures the world and this nation that he will not allow terrorists — foreign or indigenous — to sully Pakistan's image. But damned be these terrorists who seem to have no regard either for General Musharraf's pronouncements or this country's image. They continue to operate and strike whenever they can without paying any heed to the fact that newspapers find these statements important enough to place them as lead stories

Dawn, 18 August 2006

Jaish denies link to UK terror plot

ISLAMABAD, Aug 17: An aide to the leader of banned militant group Jaish-i-Mohammad denied on Thursday that a British national arrested in Pakistan in connection with the plot to blow up US-bound airliners had ever been a member of the group.

Dawn, 19 August 2006

Six held for attack on US consulate

KARACHI, Aug 18: An intelligence agency has handed over six suspects, belonging to a proscribed jihadi outfit, to police in connection with the March 2 suicide attack outside the US consulate. "We have made progress in the US consulate suicide blast case and arrested six suspects," said a senior police official, requesting anonymity.

Dawn, 19 August 2006

Mastermind of UK plot in Afghanistan, US told

ISLAMABAD, Aug 18: Pakistan has sought US help to capture an Arab Al Qaeda terrorist who allegedly masterminded the foiled plot to blow up trans-Atlantic jetliners and operates out of Afghanistan's eastern mountains where hundreds of American troops are based, an intelligence official said on Friday. Pakistani authorities have passed details regarding the Al Qaeda member to the American military, including his whereabouts in the remote Nuristan and Kunar provinces on the Pakistan border, through which hundreds of militants and locals routinely cross, the official said.

The News, 20 August 2006

400 activists of banned outfits put on watch list

ISLAMABAD: In the light of President Pervez Musharraf's directives, a meeting of the Inter-Provincial Coordination Committee (IPCC) took a number of decisions on Saturday to fight extremism, sectarianism, the misuse of loudspeakers and take action against activists of banned organisations.

Daily Times, 21 August 2006

Govt to table Hudood amendment bill today

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: The government is due to present a Hudood amendment bill in the National Assembly (NA) today (Monday) after President General Pervez Musharraf directed the PML leadership to ensure full attendance of treasury MNAs in the house.

The bill, which seeks to amend two Hudood Ordinances, will be strongly opposed by the opposition, particularly the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The PPP has previously moved its own bill to amend the Hudood Ordinances. Sources said that the PPP may not oppose the essence of the bill, to amend the Hudood Ordinances, but is likely to raise technical objections that the bill is insufficient and was prepared in haste without proper consultation.

Daily Times, 21 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Government's cultivated ambivalence on madrassa reform doesn't bode well

Pakistani officials say they have arrested “a top Al Qaeda commander”, Mati ur Rehman, who allegedly masterminded the London plot to down America-bound airliners earlier this month. It is thought that Rehman had inducted in the plot the UK-based Rauf brothers, of whom the elder was identified as a member of Jaish-e-Muhammad of Kashmir jihad fame, also named in the attempt on the life of President Pervez Musharraf in 2003. Then the Jaish-e-Muhammad denied that the boys had any connection with it. Out came another explanation: the Al Qaeda mastermind was in fact from Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and so were the Rauf brothers

Daily Times, 21 August 2006

MMA launches 'Remove Musharraf' campaign with big bang

PESHAWAR: The opposition is united in and outside the assemblies in to remove Gen Pervez Musharraf, announced Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) leaders at a mammoth rally at Jinnah Park on Sunday. It was the first of a ‘Remove Musharraf’ movement launched by the MMA. Thousands of MMA and ARD activists gathered at Jinnah Park from all parts of the province. They held banners and placards inscribed with slogans “Go Musharraf go”, “Army should return to barracks peacefully”, and “The time has come for US agents to leave the country”.

Daily Times, 22 August 2006

No ties with Israel until Palestinian state established, says FO

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will not establish diplomatic relations with Israel until it moves towards a peace process and a free Palestinian state comes into being, Foreign Office spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam told reporters on Monday.

Daily Times, 22 August 2006

Four arrested for terror links

KARACHI: Four suspected militants were arrested on Monday for alleged involvement in terror plots in the country. Two suspected militants, Anwarul Haq and Usman Ghani, were arrested for their alleged involvement in a suicide attack on the US consulate on March 2 that killed US diplomat David Foy, his driver Iftikhar Ahmed, Rangers official Zafar and security guard Hasan Shehzad. Forty-nine other people were injured in the attack.

Dawn, 23 August 2006

Breakthrough in Waziristan

PESHAWAR, Aug 22: The government and militants in the restive North Waziristan agency are close to signing a peace agreement on Friday, according to credible sources. "August 25 will be like a red-letter day; both sides are keen to sign the peace agreement on Friday", the sources said.

Dawn, 23 August 2006

Deal on gas pipeline in final stages

ISLAMABAD, Aug 22: Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan envisage development of complete energy corridor under multi- billion dollar TAP project including two parallel gas and crude oil pipelines, railway track, road and optic fibre system, but India is interested in a gas pipeline alone.

Daily Times, 24 August 2006

MMA-ARD differences over Women's Protection Bill

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) and Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) leaders on Wednesday exchanged harsh words during a meeting held to finalise the no-confidence motion against the prime minister. Sources told Daily Times that serious differences between the two alliances emerged when MMA President Qazi Hussain Ahmed reacted to a recent statement by Pakistan People's Party Chairperson Benazir Bhutto and accused her of being more secular than General Pervez Musharraf.

The News, 24 August 2006

Pakistan-born man sentenced for terrorist plot in Australia

SYDNEY: An Australian man was sent to prison for 20 years on Wednesday for plotting a terrorist attack on the country's power grid that the sentencing judge said was intended to promote "violent Jihad" and ensure Australians never feel safe from bombings again.

The News, 25 August 2006

Bugti Qaumi Jirga abolishes Sardari system

DERA BUGTI: The first-ever tribal Jirga of its kind in the history of Dera Bugti held at the Jinnah Stadium here on Thursday unanimously announced to abandon the "Sardari system" in the Bugti tribe. The Jirga paid tributes to the government for its development activities in Balochistan, including Dera Bugti and thanked President Gen Pervez Musharraf "for emancipating the people of the area from the atrocities and excesses of the former tribal chief".

Daily Times, 26 August 2006

Ceasefire extension in North Waziristan

PESHAWAR: Tribal militants on Friday expressed displeasure over the slow-paced negotiations for a peace deal in North Waziristan and called on the government to accelerate efforts towards this end. A purported spokesman for the local Taliban, Abdullah Farhad, said that militants were unhappy at the slow-pace of peace negotiations with the Grand Jirga.

Daily Times, 26 August 2006

134 terror acts in 1st 5 months of 2006

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry said on Friday that 134 incidents of terrorism had taken place in the country during the first five months of the year. Addressing the National Assembly's Question Hour session, Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao said that 129 people had been killed and 354 injured in terrorist acts occurring between December 2005 and April 19, 2006.

Daily Times, 26 August 2006

'Reports about Osama's presence in Chitral baseless'

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) legislator Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali on Friday rejected US intelligence agencies' reports regarding Osama Bin Laden's presence in Chitral as "unauthentic and unjustified".

Dawn, 26 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Up against sardari system

THE sardari system is a medieval abomination whose continuation in the 21st century has done incalculable harm to Balochistan. Its Bugti-specific abolition on Thursday by the Bugti Qaumi Jirga should focus attention on this anachronism. Among other factors, the sardari system, revolving round the absolute powers of hereditary tribal chieftains — even the power of life and death over their subjects — has been a major cause of Balochistan's socio-economic backwardness. While abolishing the 'nawabi' system in the Bugti tribe, the Bugti Qaumi Jirga announced a number of other decisions, including the formation of conciliation committees to end feuds among various tribes. Later, some Baloch sardars criticised the Quetta jirga for its decision and challenged its right to do so. However, the mere fact that some sardars should have rallied to the defence of this retrogressive system makes one wonder whether they have a vested interest in its continuation. The horrors perpetrated by sardars on their own 'dissidents' is a story unto itself. Some sardars maintain private jails, and the punishment for disobedience can range from eviction from land to death.

Daily Times, 27 August 2006

Akbar Bugti killed in army operation

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI/ QUETTA: Nawab Akbar Bugti, leader of the Bugti tribe, president of the Jamhoori Watan Party and the driving force behind the anti-government rebellion in Balochistan, was killed in a massive military operation in the Bhambore Hills, an area between the cities of Kohlu and Dera Bugti.

Dawn, 27 August 2006

UK wants Rashid Rauf deported

PESHAWAR, Aug 26: UK has formally asked for deportation of a key suspect in the transatlantic flight bombing plot but Pakistan has indicated it still needs him for investigation, sources said. The sources said that Britain had approached the foreign affairs ministry in Islamabad seeking the deportation of Rashid Rauf, the main suspect.

Dawn, 27 August 2006

10 tribesmen released

MIRAMSHAH, Aug 26: The government on Saturday freed 10 tribesmen accused of attacking its troops near the Afghan border, in exchange for assurances that pro-Taliban militants will extend a ceasefire in the tribal region, an official said. The suspects, who were among dozens of alleged militants captured in the past year in North Waziristan, were released “as a gesture of goodwill,” said Iqbal Khattak, a deputy administrator in the region.

Daily Times, 28 August 2006

3 killed as riots rock Balochistan, Karachi

QUETTA: At least three people were killed as protests spread in Balochistan and Baloch-populated areas in Karachi after Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti’s death in a military operation late on Saturday. Protesters took to the streets of Quetta, burning vehicles, banks and a petrol station. Despite a curfew imposed by the Balochistan government in Quetta and Noshki districts and the deployment of paramilitary troops, three people – two bystanders and a policeman – were killed in an exchange of fire on Sunday. However, the provincial government lifted the curfew in Quetta at about 3pm on Sunday.

Daily Times, 28 August 2006

Operation against 'miscreants' will continue, says Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: The operation against “miscreants” in Balochistan will continue, the government decided at a meeting chaired by President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Sunday. Sources privy to the meeting, attended by senior government figures, told Daily Times that Gen Musharraf observed that Bugti’s killing would not stop the operation against “miscreants” to establish the writ of the government in Balochistan.

The News, 28 August 2006

Writ of state to be ensured: Musharraf

MURREE: President Pervez Musharraf on Sunday made it clear that the government would take every step to ensure its writ in Balochistan and other parts of the country and all steps would be taken to protect the lives of innocent people and no negligence in this regard would be tolerated. Addressing a high-profile meeting after hurriedly calling Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, PML chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and secretary-general Mushahid Hussain Sayed, interior minister and other high-ranking officials of intelligence agencies from Islamabad in the backdrop of the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, the president said the doors for negotiated settlement of all issue are always open.

The News, 28 August 2006

EDITORIAL: Bugti: a violent end

The death of Nawab Akbar Bugti during a military operation in the hills near Kohlu late on Saturday is tragic and could well be a defining moment in Pakistan’s chequered history. Viewed by his supporters as a defender of Baloch rights and by his detractors as a Sardar bent on blocking the progress of his people and perpetrating acts of sabotage, Akbar Bugti’s legacy will remain hotly disputed. Whatever the verdict of history,

however, the killing is the logical and unfortunate outcome of the recent approach to tackling the whole Balochistan issue and once again underlines the need for a political dialogue and non-military solution to end the crisis in that province. Of course, it is difficult for a government to sit back and watch as its officials, assets and vital installations are attacked, but what happened on Saturday is likely to inflame anti-government sentiment in Balochistan. Unfortunately, Mr Bugti's death could well be a watershed in the troubled relationship between Balochistan and the Centre. The government hopes that it will mark the beginning of the end of the strife in the troubled province. On the other hand, it may well reinforce the sharp mistrust of Islamabad, Punjab and the military among a section of the Baloch population. The repercussions of his death will cast a long shadow over Baloch-Centre relations for the foreseeable future. The interior minister has said that it all began when government helicopters were fired upon from a cave in the area and that this forced a response from security forces. Another minister said on Sunday that Bugti died when the roof of the cave he was hiding in collapsed under heavy retaliatory fire by security forces. There remain a number of other conflicting reports on the circumstances of his death that only an independent investigation will help clear.

Daily Times, 29 August 2006

Riots continue across Balochistan, Karachi

QUETTA: Violent protests against the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti continued across Balochistan and in Karachi on Monday, with one death and dozens of injuries reported. Shops were closed and roads blocked across Balochistan and Baloch-populated areas of Karachi on a strike called by the Baloch National Alliance, a group of four Baloch nationalist parties. However, a sign the riots were easing came in the restoration of air and train services to and from Quetta to normal after disruptions on Sunday

The News, 29 August 2006

ARD to join Sept 1 strike

ISLAMABAD: The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD) on Monday joined the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) in a countrywide shutter-down strike on September 1 against the killing of Nawab Akbar Bugti during a military operation.

Daily Times, 30 August 2006

6 more killed in Balochistan

QUETTA: Nawab Akbar Bugti's funeral prayers at Ayub Stadium on Tuesday were followed by violent protests and bomb blasts across the province, which killed five people and a policeman. Some mourners threw stones at police at the end of the funeral prayers, Reuters reported. Protesters on rooftops and police started firing at each other. Sporadic gunfire went on for several hours, in which one policeman was killed and several people were injured, said police. AP quoted a policeman as saying that mourners threw two grenades at police. According to AFP, four makeshift bombs went off near Ayub Stadium. The angry protestors damaged the stadium, and burnt President General Pervez Musharraf's effigy and the Pakistani flag. A bank and a tehsil office near the stadium were also burnt.

Daily Times, 30 August 2006

No-trust motion against Aziz fails

ISLAMABAD: The government comfortably defeated the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Tuesday, with the opposition falling 36 short of the 172 votes required to oust the leader of the house.

Daily Times, 30 August 2006

Hafiz Saeed arrested again

ISLAMABAD: Authorities detained Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, an hour after he was released following a court ruling his detention was illegal, his lawyer and spokesman said on Tuesday. Hafiz Mohammad Saeed was first placed under house arrest on August 10. But the Lahore High Court ordered his release on Monday. Released on Monday evening, Saeed was detained again an hour later, said his lawyer.