

Daily Times, 1 December 2004

**Soomro signs two-offices bill** (Rana Qaisar)

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Mohammadmian Soomro on Tuesday signed the "President to Hold Another Office Bill" into law, enabling President Pervez Musharraf, who is currently abroad, to retain the office of army chief beyond the December 31 cut-off date. The National Assembly passed the bill on October 14 and the Senate on November 1. Under Article 75 of the Constitution, the president had 30 days to sign the bill after he was presented it. Gen Musharraf, who could have signed this bill any time in November, has chosen to avoid his name being on it in the same way that he, unlike General Ziaul Haq, had not allowed the mention of his name in the Constitution.

Dawn, 1 December 2004

**Role of ISI questioned in Senate** (Amir Wasim)

ISLAMABAD, Nov 30: The opposition on Tuesday questioned the "unlimited powers and political role" of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) while ministers and members of the ruling coalition tried to defend the working of the military's intelligence agency. Speaking on a motion moved by the opposition to discuss the recruitment policy of the ISI, People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) Senator Farhatullah Babar said the ISI had become a "state within state" and the time had come to review its charter and to evolve a mechanism to monitor its activities. Mr Hamid, Minister of State for Defence, termed the allegations levelled by Mr Babar on the ISI "wild and unjust."

Daily Times, 1 December 2004

**Pakistan could import electricity from Tajikistan**

ISLAMABAD: The government is considering importing 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Tajikistan to meet the country's energy requirements and has directed the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (NESPAK) to carry out a feasibility study into exporting electricity. Federal Minister for Water and Power Liaquat Ali Jatoi presided over a meeting on Tuesday to review the prospect of importing electricity from Tajikistan. He also directed the officials concerned to make a feasibility study for a road link between Pakistan and Tajikistan in order to increase trade between the two countries.

Daily Times, 2 December 2004

**India rejects December 6 for Baglihar talks: Foreign secretaries' talks rescheduled** (Shaukat Piracha and Khalid Mustafa)

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of Pakistan and India's foreign secretaries to discuss two peace and security and Kashmir has been deferred until December 27 and 28. The talks were earlier scheduled for December 23 and 24. Meanwhile, India has rejected Pakistan's proposal for talks on the controversial Baglihar dam project on December 6, saying only that it is willing to discuss the issue before the end of this month, sources told Daily Times on Wednesday. The decision to have one last meeting on the issue was made at a November 24 meeting between Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.

Dawn, 2 December 2004

**Pakistan vows to retain deterrence: Abizaid holds talks with Aziz**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 1: Pakistan on Wednesday vowed to maintain its conventional arms capability as a deterrent to war. "It is important for peace in the region that Pakistan maintains this (conventional arms capability), Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz told visiting Commander US Central Command General John P. Abizaid, who met him in Islamabad. Mr Abizaid arrived in Pakistan on Tuesday for talks with country's civil and military leaders on important bilateral and regional issues, with a special focus on ways to bolster defence ties, the latest developments in Afghanistan and the on-going war against terror. Aziz said he hoped the recent US arms sale worth 1.3 billion dollars for the Pakistan armed forces would go a long way in maintaining country's conventional arms capability.

The News, 2 December 2004

**Al-Qaeda-linked Chechen suspect killed in Quetta** (Muhammad Ejaz Khan)

QUETTA: A Chechen national, who was believed to have links to Al-Qaeda, was killed and 11 policemen were wounded in an operation against a gang of Chechen militants in Killi Paind Khan, in the outskirts of the provincial capital, on Wednesday morning. Meanwhile, a Chechen suspect told investigators that there were about 800 to 900 foreign nationals who had taken shelter in Wana. Police officials said they had "successfully" completed the operation against the Chechen militants, which was launched late on Tuesday night and continued till 7am on Wednesday.

Dawn, 4 December 2004

**Accord on restoring rail link reached: Khokhrapar-Monabao route** (Syed Irfan Raza)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 3: Pakistan and India have agreed to an early resumption of rail link between Khokhrapar and Monabao suspended since the 1965 war. The agreement was reached here on Friday at the end of two days of talks between railway officials of the two countries. According to the Pakistan Railways authorities, in the first phase the two sides would lay track wherever required and repair the existing line at a cost of Rs 2.10 billion. In a statement, Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said "It has principally been agreed that the train service between the two neighbouring countries would be started soon."

Daily Times, 4 December 2004

**Musharraf emissaries thrashing out deal with Benazir, Shahbaz**

LAHORE: The Musharraf regime and the Pakistan Peoples Party are currently negotiating a 'deal' or 'formula' for power sharing which, if it is clinched, could lead to the dissolution of parliament, fresh elections in 2005 and a relinquishing of the office of army chief by President Musharraf. Sources told Daily Times that the government has assured the PPP leadership that in the event a deal is clinched leading to fresh elections, the PPP will not be obstructed from galvanizing its vote bank and making a bid to re-enter the corridors of power. There is also talk of an interim administration acceptable to all stake-holders for the conduct of free and fair elections.

Dawn, 6 December 2004

**'Troops not being withdrawn'**

WASHINGTON, Dec 5: Pakistan troops were not withdrawing from the south Waziristan border region, which is considered a possible hiding place for Osama bin Laden, President Pervez Musharraf told the Washington Post in an interview published on Sunday. Gen Musharraf said Pakistani forces were still aggressively pursuing Osama but that recent security operations and interrogation had determined only that he was still alive. He said the US-led coalition did not have enough troops in Afghanistan, which had left "voids". He said the United States and its allies needed to speed the training and expansion of the new Afghan army.

Dawn, 6 December 2004

**Kashmir bus talks begin tomorrow** (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 5: Pakistan and India are all set to start the first round of twice-postponed politico-technical-level talks on the proposed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service in Delhi on Tuesday. The two-day talks follow a political decision by both sides to establish the first-ever bus service between the two capitals of the divided territory. A three-member Pakistani delegation headed by the Director-General for South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jalil Abbas Jilani, will leave for Delhi on Monday for the talks. The key question to be addressed during the meeting will be the documents on which Kashmiris will travel across the Line of Control (LoC). Another important issue to figure in the talks will be of the monitoring of the LoC crossings.

The News, 6 December 2004

**Altaf proposes APC on Kashmir** (Tahir Hasan Khan)

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement chief Altaf Hussain on Sunday proposed that a round-table conference of all political and religious parties be convened to evolve a consensus on the Kashmir issue. He warned that the country would suffer losses if the political and religious forces did not change their attitude and shun politics of accusation and counter-accusations. Altaf again proposed that a code of conduct be prepared for all political and religious parties in order to create a democratic culture in the country. He asked all the political and religious parties to discourage the politics of hatred and create a democratic culture in the country.

Dawn, 6 December 2004

**Balochistan: politics and development** (Syed Fazl-e-Haider)

The Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan has reportedly given two key proposals: 1) Substantial increase in the royalty of the province on oil and gas, and 2) empowering the provinces to sign petroleum exploration and sale agreements with local and foreign firms. The proposals, the committee views, would achieve the twin objective of political reconciliation and opening up of petroleum blocks in Balochistan for the country's economic uplift. Mega projects being launched in Balochistan promise bigger foreign investment, better economic opportunities and greater development schemes in the country.

The News, 7 December 2004

**Pakistan, UK for addressing root causes of terror** (Hummaa Ahmad & Shahed Sadullah)

LONDON: President Pervez Musharraf and Tony Blair met on Monday here at 10 Downing Street for talks on matters that focused on the current relationship enjoyed by Pakistan and the United Kingdom and in the purview of international strategic issues that have impacted on the region since 9/11. In their earlier private talks together, President Musharraf and Blair agreed to broaden the relationship between Pakistan and the United Kingdom into a renewed and re-energised partnership for peace and prosperity in the context of common international strategic objectives, particularly against extremism and terrorism. The two leaders also welcomed the deepening defence relationship between Pakistan and the UK and agreed on further evolving the Defence Cooperation Forum into a wide-ranging dialogue to include regional and global security, including peace-keeping and training.

Daily Times, 7 December 2004

**Pakistan and India discuss maritime link**

RAWALPINDI: Pakistani and Indian officials discussed modalities for a maritime communication link between the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (MSA) and the Indian Coast Guard in New Delhi on Monday. Pakistan handed over a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) covering details on the use of proposed communication links to India. It was agreed that the MoU would be studied by India and finalised at another joint session in Pakistan in the near future.

The News, 7 December 2004

**Pakistan to pursue F-16 issue with US: FO** (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said it will continue to hold dialogue with the US government regarding Islamabad's legitimate requirement of the F-16 aircraft since Washington is now more sensitive to its (Pakistan's) defence needs. Replying to several

queries, Khan did not reveal whether the Bush administration had agreed to sell these planes to Pakistan or not. "President Bush might have said something. It is a talking point as we have a dialogue with the US government."

Daily Times, 8 December 2004

**First country, then democracy**

LONDON: President General Pervez Musharraf has made clear he has no intention of stepping down as army chief and becoming a purely civilian leader any time soon as he feels Pakistan needs him in uniform. "I think the country is more important than democracy," he said in an interview with the Daily Telegraph. The general said that required "unity of the political element, the bureaucratic element and the military element. I think I provide all this unity." Gen Musharraf promised earlier this year to quit the army, but said he had had to 'rethink' his promise. Politically, he said, Pakistan and the world had an interest in maintaining his firm leadership in turbulent times.

The News, 8 December 2004

**Senate okays bill on honour killing** (Asim Yasin)

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Tuesday passed the bill with a simple majority aimed at eliminating honour killing and other honour crimes committed in the name of Karo-Kari, Siyah-Kari and similar other customs from the society. Now it would be sent for ascent of President. The law, passed by both the Houses of the Parliament, deals with curbing the menace of Karokari and Siyah Kari and provides for rigorous punishments for those involved in this crime and provide better security for women. The bill would treat accused of honour killings as accused of murder and sentence enhanced to death, life imprisonment, and 25 years RI from 14 years. The opposition stage a token walkout from the House during the third reading of the bill showing their protest for not sending the bill to House Committee on Law for "correcting loopholes" in the law.

Dawn, 8 December 2004

**Rumsfeld coming to discuss arms sale** (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Dec 7: US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld begins a visit to India and Pakistan this week for talks on the sale of sophisticated missiles and other weapons to South Asia's two nuclear neighbours. He is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on Dec 9 and may visit Islamabad either on Wednesday or Friday although the Pentagon is refusing to disclose the itinerary of his visit to Pakistan. The visit comes as Pakistan is negotiating to buy F-16 fighters and other advanced military equipment from the US.

Dawn, 9 December 2004

**N-capable Hatf-IV test-fired**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 8: Pakistan successfully test-fired Hatf-IV (Shaheen-I), a nuclear-capable medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, it was officially announced here on Wednesday. The missile had already been tested and was capable of hitting targets within a radius of 700 kilometres, the announcement said. It could also carry other types of warheads. A statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) spokesman Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said that Hatf-IV (Shaheen-I) and other missile systems like Hatf-III (Ghaznavi) and Hatf-V (Ghauri) had been handed over to the Army's Strategic Force Command. The recently-conducted successful missile tests were indicative of the government's resolve to consolidate Pakistan's nuclear deterrence capability, he said. Meanwhile, Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said that the missile's test would not affect Pakistan-India relations.

The News, 9 December 2004

**France to back Pakistan for free market access to EU** (Hummaa Ahmad)

PARIS: President Jacques Chirac of France received his Pakistani counterpart Pervez Musharraf at the Elysee palace here on Wednesday for bilateral talks on a broad spectrum of international, regional and economic issues of mutual interest. While meeting with Chirac, the President explored areas of cooperation in defence and where France could assist in the field of avionics and electronics warfare as Pakistan is venturing into self-reliance and building its own defence capability, including manufacturing fighter aircraft. After the lunch meeting, President Musharraf addressed a news conference in the palace courtyard where he said that President Chirac had indeed agreed to support Pakistan's case for free market access in the European Union as well as the need for the elimination of trade tariffs and barriers to free trade.

The News, 9 December 2004

**Army operation in S Waziristan to end soon: ISPR** (Amir Mohammad Khan)

PESHAWAR: The military operation in South Waziristan would soon come to an end as negotiations for a political settlement are going on with the tribesmen along with army operation in Mahsud area, said Major General Shaukat Sultan, Director-General, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), here on Wednesday. Addressing a seminar on the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) at the Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, he said the part of South Waziristan inhabited by the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe had already been cleared, adding, the wanted people had surrendered to the government and they had showed good behaviour. But in Mahsud area, he said, there were certain pockets, where the operation continued. Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan said that the government had started payment of compensation to the victims of the army operation.

Dawn, 10 December 2004

**Musharraf sees new trade openings: Visit termed 'highly productive'**

ON BOARD PRESIDENT'S AIRCRAFT, Dec 9: President General Pervez Musharraf has described his visit to Latin America, the US, the UK and France as highly productive, saying it helped improve Pakistan's political and diplomatic relations with

these countries and also opened up new vistas of trade and economic cooperation. "The response, both in political and economic dimensions of the relationship, has been great, and now we will build on this through a consistent follow-up strategy." In reply to a question, he said it was a matter of pride for Pakistan that the world leaders had asked him to play a role in addressing major international issues, including the Palestine issue.

Dawn, 10 December 2004

**Anti-terror bill gets Senate approval** (Raja Asghar)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 9: The Senate on Thursday passed a bill prescribing higher punishments for acts of terrorism, before being prorogued after a 14-day session. The Anti-Terrorism (Second Amendment) Bill, which the opposition said was unnecessary, had been passed by the National Assembly. The bill enhances both minimum and maximum punishments for several acts of terrorism, limits adjournment of cases and provides for appeals to be decided by special high court benches of at least two judges. "The power of the federal government is provided to transfer cases from a court in one province to a court in another province," the statement said. Offences like abduction and kidnapping for ransom, firing and use of explosives in places of worship and court premises have been brought within the exclusive jurisdiction of anti-terrorism courts.

Dawn, 10 December 2004

**'Defence ties with US vital for peace'**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 9: Cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in enhancing the country's conventional arms capability is vital for ensuring peace in region, says Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Pakistan, he said, wanted peace and it was essential to have a credible defence for peace. He was talking to a US congressional delegation which included members of the US International Relations Committee. The prime minister said that Pakistan's nuclear programme was a guarantee for regional peace, adding that it would maintain a minimum deterrence to play its role as anchor of peace in the region.

The Frontier Post, 10 December 2004

**200 security men killed in operations, says GOC Miscreants still hiding in FATA: Governor**

MIRANSHAH: A senior government functionary claimed here on Thursday alien terror suspects continued to hide in remote tribal areas, saying they had to register with the political administration or leave the region. Governor Iftikhar Hussain Shah, addressing a Mehsud jirga here, asked the tribesmen to convince the foreigners either to turn up for registration with local authorities or quit the areas immediately. Meanwhile, Kohat General Officer Commanding Maj. Gen Niaz Khattak said during the nine months operation in the tribal areas, as many 200 security personnel had been killed in the operations so far. He claimed 100 foreign terrorists were still present in the tribal areas. He pledged the operation would not be halted until complete elimination of terrorists.

The News, 11 December 2004

**Islamabad denies helping Riyadh develop nukes** (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says that though Islamabad has close relations with Saudi Arabia, they do not encompass nuclear and missile fields. Reports from Washington citing official Iranian sources claim that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement in 2003 in which Islamabad promised to help Riyadh develop nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them. "This is a totally false story intended to spread disinformation. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have close relations, but they do not encompass nuclear and missile fields", said Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan while speaking to The News.

The News, 11 December 2004

**Behind-the-scene US role in reconciliation move** (Rauf Klasra)

ISLAMABAD: Top diplomatic sources in Islamabad believe that US deputy secretary Richard Armitage played an important role in breaking the ice between General Pervez Musharraf and his main political adversaries - Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif - after a series of lengthy and exhaustive meetings. Diplomats involved in these background initiatives of US government confirmed that every time Mr Armitage met President General Pervez Musharraf and his political and military team during his regular visits to Islamabad, he discussed the possibility of the release of three top political prisoners. These sources said the move towards 'grand political reconciliation' was the direct result of a 'sustained pressure' of the US government on Pakistani authorities. Richard Armitage convinced General Pervez Musharraf that it was important that all the major stakeholders in the government and the opposition should start a process of grand political reconciliation, so vital to execute the reforms agenda that aimed at rooting out terrorism and militancy.

The Frontier Post, 11 December 2004

**11 killed, 25 hurt in Quetta bomb explosion** (Afzal Malik)

QUETTA: At least 11 people were killed and 25 others injured when a bomb planted on a bicycle exploded with a big bang near a military truck parked in a busy market here on Friday. The victims included a soldier, passers-by and vendors, witnesses said. Police said the device, weighing approximately 15-20 kilograms, exploded in Quetta's main Meezan Chowk near a military vehicle carrying soldiers visiting the area for weekly shopping. In a phone call to the Quetta Press Club from an undisclosed location, a spokesman for the so-called Balochistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the deadly explosion. He added the target was the military vehicle parked in the bazaar.

The News, 13 December 2004

**Indo-Pak talks on missile tests next week: FO**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India are due to meet in Islamabad next week to discuss a possible agreement on giving advance

notice to each other before conducting missile tests, Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said on Sunday. The expert-level talks on confidence building measures (CBMs) will be held December 14-15 in Islamabad, Khan told AFP. Pakistani and Indian officials would also discuss setting up a hotline between top foreign ministry civil servants to avoid the possibility of nuclear conflict because of any mishap or misunderstanding, Khan said. Though an informal agreement about prior notification of missile tests exists between the two South Asian neighbours, the meeting is expected to finalise the draft of a formal agreement.

The News, 13 December 2004

#### **Shaukat, Wen to hold formal talks on 15th**

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao will meet here on Wednesday to discuss issues of mutual interest. The main focus of the talks will be on economy. Some agreements and a number of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in the economic sector will also be signed. China has agreed to sign protocol during Shaukat Aziz' visit to extend concessions on 186 items covered under the existing PTA and extend tariff concession. The protocol to be signed between the two countries would also include initiatives to establish a joint study group (JSG) to develop a roadmap for bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), sources said.

Dawn, 14 December 2004

#### **Second round of nuclear CBM talks begins today**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 13: Pakistan and India begin the second round of expert-level talks on nuclear confidence-building measures here on Tuesday amid hopes of progress on a proposed agreement on advance notification of missile tests and dedicated hotlines between the foreign secretaries of the two countries. The meeting will be followed by the first round of expert-level talks on conventional issues. Sources said the two sides were likely to finalize an agreement on missile notification which would then be signed by the foreign secretaries at a meeting later this month.

The News, 14 December 2004

#### **Five LJ activists held in Multan**

MULTAN: Police on Monday arrested five activists of the outlawed Lashkar-i-Jhangvi from Multan district, who, during interrogation, disclosed that they had been given the task of getting funds for meeting the expenditures of the outfit and buying sophisticated weapons for terrorist activities. The leaders had planned to get money through robberies for their 'mission' of eliminating their rival sect. The LJ activists revealed their future terrorist plans targeting Lahore and Karachi. They said they were also involved in the release of the most-wanted group members, including Ijaz alias Jajji Tarar, Tariq Tipu, Shah Nawaz Kalhor, Zakiullah and Aziz Kutana, from Dera Ghazi Khan district jail.

Dawn, 15 December 2004

#### **CBM talks focus on notification of tests: Upgradation of hotlines discussed (Qudssia Akhlaque)**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 14: The second round of Indo-Pakistan talks on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) that began here on Tuesday zeroed in on formalization of pre-notification of missiles' flight testing and effective communication between the two countries to prevent misunderstandings and reduce nuclear-related risks. The two delegations would resume their discussions on nuclear CBMs on Wednesday. Delegates told Dawn later that the focus of the talks was to operationalise the June 20 statement issued after the first expert level meeting on nuclear CBMs between the two countries. The morning session was dedicated to discussions on the pre-notification of missile tests and drafts were exchanged for formulation of an agreement, it is learnt. In the afternoon session the two sides had a discussion on a joint statement to be issued at the conclusion of the talks. There was also discussion on establishing reliable communication and a general exchange on the respective security concepts, officials privy to the talks said.

Dawn, 15 December 2004

#### **Mulla Omar's top aide arrested**

QUETTA, Dec 14: US and Afghan forces have arrested Mullah Toor Naqibullah, the Protocol Officer and Chief Security Officer of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar in Kandahar. "Yes, we have arrested Mullah Toor Naqibullah along with Mullah Qayyum Angar, another Taliban man, near Kandahar," a senior Afghan official based in Spin Boldak told reporters in the border town of Chaman by telephone. He said they were arrested by the US and Afghan forces when they were going to Kandahar from Arghandab. A special operation has been in progress in southern Afghanistan against Taliban in which over 18000 US and Afghan troops are taking part.

Dawn, 15 December 2004

#### **PPP, PML-N working on code of conduct**

KARACHI, Dec 14: A four-member committee of the PPP and PML-N was working on a draft of code of conduct for political parties and certain constitutional amendments, said highly-placed sources on Monday. The body was formed after a telephonic discussion between Ms Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif on evolving political situation and the need for strengthening a common platform against anti-democracy dispensation. The committee has recently met in Islamabad and discussed the working draft which would be refined in the next meeting, said the sources. Once the draft was finalized, it would be sent to the Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy and to other political parties and organizations of civil society, they said.

Dawn, 16 December 2004

### **Pakistan worst performer in South Asia: Human development report**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 15: A child born in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries has better chances of living a good quality life in terms of human development than the average compatriot in Pakistan, says the UN Human Development Report 2004. Ranked 142nd, the report categorises Pakistan as the "worst performer in South Asia" in terms of human development index. The Human Development Index (HDI) focuses on three measurable dimensions of human development: living of a long and healthy life, being educated and having a decent standard of living.

Dawn, 16 December 2004

### **Nuclear talks end without agreement: Deal on Sir Creek survey** (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 15: Indo-Pakistan talks on nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures (CBMs) ended here on Tuesday without any tangible outcome despite exhaustive negotiations on formalizing an agreement on pre-notification of missile flight-testing. Although both sides worked hard on the text of the draft agreement, it could not be finalized due to sharp differences over the technical parameters and data that should be incorporated, and on the type of missile tests to which it would be applicable, they added. Meanwhile, on Sir Creek issue, India and Pakistan made headway at the talks in Rawalpindi on Tuesday with an agreement to conduct a joint survey of the boundary pillars in the horizontal segment in the Sir Creek area.

Dawn, 16 December 2004

### **China, Pakistan sign 7 accords in vital sectors: •Oil, gas exploration •high-level trade •Gwadar port improvement** (Bahzad Alam Khan)

BEIJING, Dec 15: Pakistan and China on Wednesday signed seven agreements in trade, communications and energy sectors and drew up a framework for greater economic cooperation. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz held one-to-one talks with Premier of the State Council Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People. The meeting lasted 60 minutes. A general framework agreement signed by the two countries relates to utilization of \$500 million preferential buyers' credit. Under the accord, loans would be extended to Chinese companies for setting up projects in Pakistan. The foreign secretary said a memorandum of understanding was signed on a protocol on Preferential Trade Agreement. The Chinese side agreed to restart work on the Gomal Zam dam which had come to a halt following the killing of a Chinese engineer.

Daily Times, 17 December 2004

### **Two suspected militants held**

KARACHI: Police arrested two suspected militants and seized explosives from their hideout on Thursday. The men belonged to the outlawed Sipah-e-Muhammad group, said Gul Hameed Summoon, a deputy inspector general of police in Karachi. Police seized nine kilogrammes of explosives during the raid in central Karachi, he said. The group has been blamed for a number of attacks on majority Sunni Muslims in Pakistan and was banned in August 2001.

The News, 17 December 2004

### **France to accelerate work on PAF, PN projects** (Muhammad Saleh Zaafir)

ISLAMABAD: France has assured Pakistan of accelerating pace of work in ongoing projects concerning defence requirements of Pakistan Air Force and Navy preferably. France will upgrade Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) Mirage aircraft that will bring the capability of about 120 plans at par in different characteristics with the high-tech multi-role F-16 and other high profile contemporarily plans. The overall up gradation of the Mirages will be completed by mid-2006 and that will pave the way for up gradation of more Mirage planes. The well placed official sources told The News here on Thursday that the high level delegation of French Armament Directorate, led by its director general, visiting Pakistan these days and discussing with authorities here about the in hand joint projects.

Dawn, 17 December 2004

### **China, Pakistan to strengthen defence ties** (Bahzad Alam Khan)

BEIJING, Dec 16: China assured Pakistan on Thursday of greater defence cooperation, especially in the supply of military hardware. Briefing newsmen on his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao at the Great Hall of the People, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said he also had an important meeting with the Chinese defence minister. "Traditionally, there has been great cooperation between Pakistan and China in the defence sector. My meeting with the defence minister was also in the same direction. But, significantly, President Hu expressed the desire to further strengthen the defence ties, which already benefit all the armed forces - the army, the navy and the air force - of Pakistan," he said.

Daily Times, 18 December 2004

### **Musharraf rules out mid-term polls**

KARACHI: President Pervez Musharraf on Friday ruled out mid-term elections, saying nobody should have such ideas because elections would be held in 2007 only. "Parliament will surely complete its term and nobody should have any doubt that general elections will be held in October 2007," President Musharraf told lawmakers from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) at Chief Minister's House in Karachi. He also rejected suggestions of general elections in 2005. "The year 2005 is the year for the local bodies (LB) elections, not for general elections," he said. President Musharraf said that he would not allow former prime minister Nawaz Sharif to come back to Pakistan. He said Pakistan Peoples Party chairperson Benazir Bhutto might come to Pakistan if she wanted but would have to face trial.

Dawn, 18 December 2004

### **BNP withdraws from parliamentary body**

QUETTA, Dec 17: The Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) has announced its disassociation from the parliamentary committee on Balochistan and withdrawal of its two members for what the party terms the government's anti-Baloch policies. Party secretary-general Habib Jalib Baloch said: "The government's unwillingness to stop work on the second phase of Gwadar seaport, to crackdown on Baloch students and the dispatching of new army units to the interiors of Balochistan indicated that the rulers were exploiting dialogue process to gain time." In this situation, he said, it would be a historical mistake either to become part of the negotiation process or to sit on the parliamentary committee or to suggest recommendations to the parliamentary sub-committee to work out solution of political issues of Balochistan.

Dawn, 18 December 2004

### **Hunt launched for key militants** (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 17: Military authorities in South Waziristan have launched a hunt for three top militants - Uzbek national Yaldeshev, Abdullah Mehsud, the self-proclaimed local leader, and Baitullah Mehsud, the commander of militant forces in Mehsud territory, sources told Dawn. They said that after dismantling militant camps, gaining control of the area and seizing tons of ammunition in South Waziristan, the troops in the region were now looking for the three key men. The authorities are confident that the three and other militants on the run will be captured soon, as they are facing an acute shortage of ammunition. The sources claim that Abdullah Mehsud is now left with only about 15 hardcore militants around him. It is learnt that an attempt made by the security forces last month for a truce with Mehsud did not succeed.

Dawn, 18 December 2004

### **Bush signs bill to help Pakistan meet threats** (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Dec 17: President George W. Bush on Friday signed a law a bill that, among other things, binds the US administration to help Pakistan overcome the internal and external threats it faces. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 includes concrete proposals for ensuring a long-term US engagement with Pakistan. Section 4083 gives Pakistan a glimpse of US commitment by waiving democracy-related and other sanctions for two years. Section 5108 opens the door to Pakistan receiving more US funding for education reform, with an emphasis on, but not limited to madrassahs. Section 1003 tries to allay Pakistani apprehensions that it is merely "an ally of convenience" by extending US assistance "at current levels" beyond 2009.

Daily Times, 19 December 2004

### **Aziz rules out national govt** ( Rana Qaisar)

ON BOARD PM'S PLANE: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Saturday ruled out the possibility of a government of national consensus, saying there was no need for one as the country was moving in the right direction. "National reconciliation does not mean that a government of national consensus be formed," Aziz said in an exclusive talk with Daily Times on the way back home from Shanghai on the conclusion of his four-day visit to China. Aziz said he would engage opposition parties in a dialogue about cooperation in national issues. He said the opposition had a right to criticise the government. "but when it comes to the national interest, we expect them to rise above personal and party consideration."

Dawn, 19 December 2004

### **China will install reactor at Chashma** (Bahzad Alam Khan)

KARACHI, Dec 18: China will install a nuclear reactor at the Chashma-II nuclear power plant early next year, officials accompanying Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz during his visit to China told Dawn on Saturday. They added that there was initially some concern in the Chinese government following the disclosure about Dr A.Q. Khan's involvement in the black market of nuclear arsenal. "But their misgivings have been allayed and they are now very comfortable with the command and control system of Pakistan's nuclear arms. They see it as an individual act for which the state is not responsible," officials added.

Dawn, 19 December 2004

### **Bomb blast at Quetta secretariat**

QUETTA, Dec 18: A powerful bomb exploded at the second floor of the ministerial block of the Balochistan Civil Secretariat on Saturday afternoon close to the offices of provincial Finance Minister Syed Ehsan Shah and Information Minister Matiullah Agha. The two ministers were not present in their offices when the explosion occurred. No one was killed or injured in the blast. The IGP has suspended the Deputy Superintendent of Police who is in charge of the security in the secretariat and has ordered an inquiry into the incident. Police also detained two security guards posted at the main gate of the secretariat for questioning. It was third time that bombs had exploded in the premises of the secretariat.

Daily Times, 19 December 2004

### **Two killed in attack on Rangers**

MULTAN: Two tribesmen were killed while seven others and five rangers were injured when Bugti tribesmen attacked a Rangers post in the border area near Rojhan late on Friday, a Rangers official said. Three soldiers are in a serious condition. "We retaliated when more than a dozen tribesmen attacked our post in the tri-border area on Friday night. We killed the two attackers and injured another seven," said the Rangers official, asking not to be named. The district police officers of Rajanpur and Jacobabad did not confirm or deny the report.

The News, 20 December 2004

### **Abdullah Mahsud claims responsibility for Quetta blast**

PESHAWAR: Wanted tribal militant Abdullah Mahsud on Sunday claimed responsibility for the recent bomb blast at the Civil Secretariat in Quetta. Muhammad Yousaf, claiming to be spokesman for Abdullah Mahsud, made the claim in a phone call from an unknown location. Speaking in fluent Urdu, he said more attacks would follow in different parts of Pakistan. "The battle is no longer confined to South Waziristan. The Quetta blast was carried out by our men in reaction to the announcement by the corps commander Peshawar offering a Rs 5 million reward for our commander Abdullah Mahsud's capture," the caller said. The man also claimed an attack on Saturday on a Rangers' check-post in Jacobabad.

Dawn, 20 December 2004

**Rashid wants talks with opposition** (Ashraf Mumtaz)

LAHORE, Dec 19: Information Minister Shaikh Rashid Ahmad says he is in favour of talks between the government and opposition parties to discuss their demands, but adds that a decision to extend an invitation to the parties can be taken either by the ruling party president or the prime minister. Some matters raised by the opposition were being discussed, he said. Contacts in one form or the other were there, Sheikh Rashid said, adding that at this juncture it would be premature to speculate on their likely outcome. When asked how the much talked-about national reconciliation would come about if President Gen Pervez Musharraf continued to insist that former prime ministers Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz could not return to the country.

The News, 20 December 2004

**US to be provided Iran-related N-material: report** (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has agreed to a plan to hand over all necessary source material regarding its dealings with Iran's nuclear programme to the United States, reports Asia Times Online. It states that Islamabad and Washington have agreed to the plan and in exchange the US will not take action against the most sensitive people suspected of involvement in the underground network, which facilitated the proliferation with Iran. Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan was not available for comments, as he is believed to be abroad. It is to be mentioned here that the Musharraf government is going a step forward by sharing information with all relevant world capitals, many of those expressed satisfaction.

The News, 20 December 2004

**C'wealth concerned over Musharraf decision**

LONDON: Commonwealth Secretary-General Don Mckinnon, expressing his concern over the announcement of President Pervez Musharraf not to shed his uniform by December 31, has said he (Musharraf) has not fulfilled his promise in this regard. He said the Commonwealth Ministerial Council would once again want to look into the matter of restoration of democracy in Pakistan. Mckinnon during his recent tour to Pakistan had said that the Commonwealth would have no objection if the Pakistani parliament mandated President Musharraf to hold dual office. President Musharraf had announced on Saturday he would continue as chief of the Army, insist that retaining his military role was crucial to his campaign against Islamic militants and in seeking a settlement over the Kashmir dispute with India.

Dawn, 20 December 2004

**China to 'double' investment**

LAHORE, Dec 19: China's private and public sectors would double their investment in Pakistan during the next couple of years, according to Federal Science and Technology Minister Naurez Shakoor, who accompanied the prime minister during his visit to China. He said the government would set up industrial parks where the Chinese investors would be free to make investment and get a number of concessions. This, he said, was like a breakthrough. The minister said the two countries would also exchange delegations of scientific experts and students.

Dawn, 21 December 2004

**Four Al Qaeda activists arrested in Lahore**

LAHORE, Dec 20: Police on Monday claimed arresting four suspected Al Qaeda operatives, including a close associate of top terrorist Abu Fraj, allegedly involved in two attempts on the life of President Pervez Musharraf. The arrested men belonged to banned organizations Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Harkat Al Jihad Islami and had been working for the Al Qaeda network for some years, Lahore police chief (investigation) Chaudhry Shafqaat Ahmad said at a press conference. The police chief said that two more alleged terrorists had been rounded up on information gained from the four. Two hand-grenades, four pistols and 120 bullets are said to have been recovered from the arrested men's possession.

Dawn, 21 December 2004

**Polls on schedule in '07: Shujaat - National govt, martial law ruled out**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20: The general elections will be held according to schedule in 2007 and assemblies will complete their tenure for the first time in Pakistan's history, says PML President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. Ruling out any possibility of early elections, the PML chief said that the tenure of the assemblies could even be extended beyond 2007 if the opposition failed to give up its campaign for early elections. Reconciliation was possible with the opposition only on national issues and negotiations did not mean early polls or the formation of a national government, he said. He was addressing a press conference after presiding over a four-hour-long meeting to discuss the party's organizational matters. It was also attended by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

Dawn, 21 December 2004

**US sees 'lack of move' towards democracy**

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: The US State Department on Monday described President Pervez Musharraf's decision not to step down as Chief of the Army Staff as a "lack of move" towards democracy. Although supporting the demand for elections in Pakistan, the State Department official indirectly endorsed the Musharraf government's plan for holding elections in 2007, and not before, as demanded by the opposition. "We intend to continue to support the electoral process, which is currently scheduled to culminate in national elections in 2007," the spokesman said. The United States, he said, would like to see an election that meets international standards and includes the full participation of all political parties.

Daily Times, 22 December 2004

**Govt action in Rawalpindi exposes militarised democracy: HRCP**

LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is concerned about the government's crack down on the peaceful political activity in Rawalpindi, said Tahir Muhammad Khan, HRCP chairperson, and HRCP council members Afrasiab Khattak and Asma Jhanagir in a statement issued on Tuesday. "The impression being created is that the ruling junta is forcing the opposition into submission and forcible cooperation in order to perpetuate their agenda," said the statement, adding, "The activities of political forces, which do not operate on communal lines, are being restricted and curbed. This has not only created a political vacuum by enabling an environment for communalism, extremism and militancy but has encouraged the forces of intolerance."

Dawn, 22 December 2004

**Chinese team to discuss security arrangements: Gomal Zam dam construction (Zulfiqar Ali)**

PESHAWAR, Dec 21: A Chinese team will arrive in Islamabad next week to discuss security arrangements before restarting work on the Gomal Zam dam project in the South Waziristan tribal region, officials said. Brig (retired) Mushtaq, Wapda's General Manager, Project (North), said the head of the Sino Hydro company had been invited to visit Islamabad for a briefing regarding security arrangements. He said the Chinese delegation would present its new terms and conditions regarding security measures being taken by the government. "We are optimistic that the Chinese will soon resume work on the project," he said. The Sino Hydro company suspended work on the multi-billion project after its two engineers along with the security guards were kidnapped by militants on Oct 9.

Daily Times, 23 December 2004

**Four suspected terrorists caught (Mubasher Bukhari)**

LAHORE. Security forces arrested four suspected terrorists who were planning a suicide bombing in the city, intelligence officials told Daily Times on Wednesday. The suspects who were wearing jackets with several large pockets were disguised as street vendors, officials said, adding that security forces also seized explosives and weapons from their carts. The arrests came from the information gleaned from another suspected terrorist Tariq Gujjar, who was arrested four days ago. Gujjar told investigators that he was a member of an Al Qaeda gang. He said the gang planned to bomb the American Consulate in Lahore.

Dawn, 23 December 2004

**HR body draft bill cleared by cabinet**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 22: The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved a draft bill for setting up the Pakistan National Commission for Human Rights (PNHRC) to oversee human rights situation and violations, if any, in the country. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is already working (as an NGO) in the private sector and is funded by public donations. The cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, decided that the PNCHR will be headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court or any other eminent person of high stature.

Dawn, 23 December 2004

**Police to replace levies in Gwadar (Saleem Shahid)**

QUETTA, Dec 22: The Balochistan government has incorporated the revenue limits of five more districts of the province into 'A' area - including the coastal district of Gwadar - with immediate effect, a handout issued by the Home and Tribal Affairs Department said on Wednesday. Having been declared 'A' area, these districts will now come under police control and police would replace the levies (rural police) there. The Balochistan government has decided that all the 26 districts of the province would be declared police area over the next five years, abolishing the levies force. The move, however, has met with resistance from tribal elders and political parties, who maintain that Balochistan is a tribal society and the levies force was well-suited to police it.

Dawn, 23 December 2004

**PPP submits 2 resolutions in Senate**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 22: People's Party Parliamentarians (PPP) Senator Farhatullah Babar has submitted two resolutions in the Senate seeking to enlarge the scope of the law on declaration of assets and broaden the base of human rights. Talking to Dawn here on Wednesday, the PPP senator said he had moved these two resolutions after getting no response from the government in the previous Senate sessions when he raised these issues. The resolution, submitted by Mr Babar, states: "this House is of the view that the government should seriously consider on priority basis signing the Convention Against Torture." The PPP senator said civil rights movements and NGOs had been demanding that Pakistan should sign and ratify the convention. India had already signed it and Bangladesh was a state party to the convention.

Dawn, 24 December 2004

### **Musharraf had no hand in N-proliferation, says Powell**

WASHINGTON, Dec 23: US Secretary of State Colin Powell has said he does not believe President Pervez Musharraf was involved at any stage with the nuclear proliferation done allegedly by Dr A.Q. Khan. Mr Powell defended President Musharraf in an interview to the Christian Science Monitor published on Thursday. Asked if he thought Gen Musharraf was complicit at any time with the proliferation, Mr Powell said: "I have no reason to believe that. I have no evidence to that." When the interviewer suggested that the proliferation network could not have functioned without being noticed by the ruler of the country, Mr Powell said he knew how things worked in Pakistan and he still believed President Musharraf was not involved.

The News, 24 December 2004

### **Pakistan seeks concrete proposals (Mariana Baabar)**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called upon India to make the composite dialogue result-oriented and show flexibility on Kashmir as the foreign secretaries of the two countries meet next week. Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan in a weekly briefing said Pakistan expected the two sides to show results since there has been no breakthrough in the past phase of composite dialogue. These formal talks will discuss Jammu and Kashmir and peace and security in the region, as these two agenda items are specifically allocated to the foreign secretaries. However, the spokesman said the recent statements of the Indian leadership were not good for the upcoming meeting.

Dawn, 24 December 2004

### **ADB approves \$57m loan for Azad Kashmir**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 23: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday approved a \$57 million loan for multi sector rehabilitation and improvement of economic prospects in Azad Kashmir. The ADB's urban development specialist said: "Investment under the project, together with the needed strengthening of related public agencies, is expected to provide basis for sustainable economic growth, improve the well-being of about 3.4 million people and help reduce poverty in the state." The multi sector project, ADB's first in the state, had been crafted on the basis of a package of urgent needs and to fill investment gaps created over the years. Conditions of hundreds of kilometres of roads, dozens of bridges, schools, water supply and health facilities have deteriorated.

Dawn, 24 December 2004

### **Mahsud's offer to surrender rejected**

PESHAWAR, Dec 23: Authorities have turned down an offer to surrender from a former Guantanamo Bay inmate who is wanted for the kidnap of two Chinese engineers, a senior official said Thursday. According to the security chief for tribal areas on the Afghan border, Mehmood Shah, Mahsud had said in his offer that he "must be forgiven" for his past actions before he laid down arms but it was unacceptable to the authorities. Pakistan last week offered Rs5 million for information leading to the capture of the former Taliban fighter.

Dawn, 26 December 2004

### **Pakistan to float new ideas on Kashmir: Foreign secretaries meet tomorrow (Qudssia Akhlaque)**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 25: Pakistan will propose new ideas on the Kashmir issue as well as additional nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures at the foreign secretary-level talks opening here on Monday, it is learnt. The foreign secretaries will be in talks for two days to discuss the two-point agenda of Jammu and Kashmir and peace and security. Pakistan is likely to advocate early start of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and reiterate its demand for the Jinnah House in Mumbai to set up its consulate. The Baglihar dam dispute would also figure in discussions, the sources said.

Dawn, 26 December 2004

### **Indian fishermen to be freed**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 25: Pakistan has decided to release all the detained Indian fishermen who strayed into its territorial waters but not their boats, sources told Dawn on Saturday. "Consular access to 266 Indian fishermen detained in various jails in Sindh has been completed and they will be released soon via the Wagah border," the sources said. Pakistan is expected to formally convey this decision to the Indian government at the foreign-secretary level talks starting here on Monday.

Dawn, 26 December 2004

### **Four FC men die in ambush (Saleem Shahid)**

QUETTA, Dec 25: Four personnel of the Frontier Corps were killed and four others injured, two of them seriously, after their vehicle was ambushed, some 100km north of Turbat near Buleda area close to Pakistan-Iran border. "All the four FC men died on the spot as some unknown attackers hit their vehicle with a rocket," sources said here on Saturday, adding that the tragic incident took place late on Friday night. The assailants lobbed many rockets and opened indiscriminate fire with automatic weapons. One rocket struck the FC truck, resulting in the killing of four FC personnel and injuries to four more. The FC troops cordoned off the whole area and launched a massive manhunt following the incident.

Dawn, 26 December 2004

### **Man dies in Bannu blast**

BANNU, Dec 25: One person was killed and eight others were injured when a bomb ripped through a shop in the Mandan Gate bazaar here on Saturday. The explosion, which occurred at around 12.30pm, killed the shop owner, Haroon, on the spot. DSP Sikandar Khan, while speaking to journalists at a news briefing, said the blast was so powerful that the victim's body was found about 100 feet away from the shop where the blast took place. He said the victim had links with the banned

organization, Jaish-i-Muhammad.

Dawn, 28 December 2004

**Pakistan proposes 20 CBMs: Secretary-level talks begin** (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 27: Pakistan on Monday formally presented to India a list of 20 proposals on strategic, conventional and Kashmir-related CBMs were presented by Mr Riaz Khokhar, who led the Pakistani side at the second round of Indo-Pakistan foreign secretary-level talks on peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir that began here at the Foreign Ministry. A significant CBM, it is learnt, is the prior notification of military exercises and not to conduct joint exercises with any third country in disputed areas. Other proposals included no permanent relocation of strike formations towards Pakistan-India border and non-induction or deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems (ABMS), sources said. The Kashmir-related CBMs included substantive reduction of forces in occupied Kashmir and no additional deployment of regular forces there. Pakistan also proposed a Strategic Restraint Regime (SRR), containing its desired trio of conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional balance. The three new CBMs proposed by the Indian side were: admission of Pakistani students to Indian educational institutions and facilitating their visas, providing free treatment to Pakistani children and increasing the number of pilgrims and visits to shrines on both sides.

Dawn, 28 December 2004

**Uniform issue: MMA threatens to observe countrywide protest**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 27: The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) on Monday said it would observe January 1 as black day if President Pervez Musharraf did not quit the office of the army chief after the December 31 deadline. Jamaat-i-Islami (Punjab) Deputy Chief and member national assembly from Islamabad Mian Mohammad Aslam said the president should stand by his commitment or else face a mass movement. Speaking at a meeting of the local leaders, the MNA said workers of the religious parties' alliance would hold protests at different public places in the capital and erect black banners on January 1. The protest would not only be observed in Islamabad, rather demonstrations would be organized throughout the country on the same day, he added.

The Frontier Post, 28 December 2004

**Blast rocks Quetta** (Afzal Malik)

QUETTA: A bomb rocked the city at Adalat Road here at 0440 pm. The explosive device was planted in a drain close to the office of DCO and Director Public Relations. Two mechanics that were repairing a vehicle at the site of explosion escaped unhurt. There was no loss of any kind. Soon after the explosion, police and administration as well as Edhi Centre Ambulances reached the site. They cordoned off the area and started search. The bomb smashed the windowpanes but caused no casualties. No one has claimed responsibility for the blast.

The News, 28 December 2004

**Deal with Abdullah Mahsud likely** (Behroz Khan)

PESHAWAR: Another Shakai-style agreement between military authorities and wanted tribesmen from Mahsud tribe in South Waziristan is likely to be signed as negotiations between the two sides have reportedly gained ground in convincing the militants to lay down arms and broker peace with the government. "The wanted tribesmen, including Abdullah Mahsud and Baitullah Mahsud, have assured a Jirga of Mahsud elders to come to the terms with the government. Corp Commander Peshawar Lt-Gen Safdar Hussain has also given his word to grant amnesty to these elements," an ISPR source told The News here on Monday. The corps commander has accepted the invitation from these militants and their supporters to visit Mahsud heartland to sign an agreement, which can guarantee peace and help promote trust on both sides, the sources said. Abdullah Mahsud, the sources said, has also given assurance to the Jirga elders that he would not give protection to foreign nationals and that he was interested in brokering peace with the government.

Dawn, 29 December 2004

**Accord to take peace process forward: Fresh CBMs to be explored** (Hasan Akhtar and Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 28: The second round of Indo-Pakistan foreign secretary-level talks concluded here on Tuesday with a joint pledge to carry the peace process forward and explore other confidence-building measures (CBMs). No tangible progress was made on the key issue of Kashmir despite claims of flexibility from both sides, but they agreed to build on areas of convergence to make life easier for people on both sides of the divide. While no specific decisions were taken, the two sides discussed and further narrowed their differences on the draft agreement on pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles, and agreed to early finalization of a joint agreement draft which remained incomplete at a previous meeting of officials/experts.

Dawn, 29 December 2004

**Pakistan again offers safe gas supply to India from Iran: Aziz's meeting with Kharrazi** (Ahmad Hassan)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 28: Pakistan reiterated on Tuesday that it would be able to ensure safe supply of natural gas to rival India should New Delhi join a proposed project to bring gas from Iran via Pakistan. Speaking to Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khurshheed Mehmood Kasuri called for early implementation of the scheme. "Pakistan would welcome India joining the project while assuring it of security of supplies through Pakistani territory." Later, the Iranian foreign minister met Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. During the meeting, the two sides agreed to further explore the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project.

Dawn, 30 December 2004

**Aziz, Fazl fail to end rift on key issues**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, on Wednesday failed to resolve differences over the issue of President Pervez Musharraf's uniform. The two leaders held a one-to-one meeting at the Prime Minister's House and discussed the overall political situation, but neither of them offered any concession to help defuse the government-opposition stand-off over President Musharraf's retaining the army office beyond Dec 31. During the meeting, Maulana Fazl reiterated the opposition's viewpoint with regard to the MMA-government agreement on the issue.

Dawn, 30 December 2004

**Talks with India on Baglihar this week**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: Pakistan will dispatch to India a team led by the secretary water and power during the first week of January to "hold conclusive negotiations" with the Indian side for resolution of the Baglihar Dam issue. This was announced here on Wednesday after a high-level meeting presided over by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Final dates for the meeting of secretaries of water and power of the two countries are in the process of being finalized through diplomatic channels, the sources said, adding that the possible dates would be between Jan 3 and 7.

Dawn, 30 December 2004

**Deal in final stages for Chinese frigates**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: Negotiations with China and the US for the procurement of new frigates and aircraft for the Pakistan Navy are in final stages, said Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Shahid Karimullah on Wednesday. "Procurement of F-22P frigates from China is in final stages of contractual negotiations while the talks with the US are in progress and it would deliver two P-3C aircraft by the end of 2005," he said. He expressed the hope that with all these projects, the Pakistan Navy would be able to overcome the shortage of platforms.

Dawn, 30 December 2004

**Japan to resume aid: adviser (Ihtasham ul Haque)**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 29: Japan has agreed to resume its \$500 million annual assistance to Pakistan from 2005, said Prime Minister's Adviser on Finance Dr Salman Shah. Talking to Dawn here on Wednesday, he said the resumption of yen package loan by Japan was now expected to be over \$500 million with a view to help strengthen Pakistan's overall economy. Japan will be resuming its financial assistance under the 32nd Yen Package Loan. Most of the funding under the 31st Yen Package Loan had been offered to Pakistan before Tokyo suspended its assistance following nuclear tests conducted by the Nawaz government in 1998.

The Frontier Post, 30 December 2004

**Quetta-Kandahar bus service to begin soon: Owais**

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani has said that preparations for launching Quetta-Kandahar bus service are in final stage and it will be functional soon. He said that the bus service would be launched when Pakistani and Afghan consulates will sign the agreement. He said that decision to launch such service was taken when he met governor of Kandahar province three months ago. "A steering committee for bus service has been notified. It held its meetings and issued and finalised its tender three days."

Dawn, 30 December 2004

**Ambassador's brother shot dead (Dilawar Khan Wazir)**

WANA, Dec 29: The brother of Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar and a close friend of Afghan President Hamid Karzai was gunned down by unidentified terrorists in Wana, South Waziristan tribal region, on Wednesday morning. Mr Alam was also a local leader of the Paktoonkhwā Milli Awami party. Witnesses said the terrorists ambushed the car in front of the Wana Radio Station, inside the Scouts camp. They said the attackers sprayed Mr Alam's car with bullets and escaped in a white car. Mr Alam was taken to a local hospital in critical condition but died while being shifted to Peshawar.

Dawn, 31 December 2004

**Musharraf says he will keep army post: Cooperation offered to opposition (Ihtashamul Haque)**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 30: President Gen Pervez Musharraf declared on Thursday that he would retain the office of the army chief till 2007 because any change at this stage could prove 'dangerous' for the country. Addressing the nation over radio and television, President Musharraf claimed he had been allowed by parliament to keep both the offices. "I just cannot violate the constitution that now allows me to retain both offices," he said. The president enumerated various reasons for his decision to continue donning both hats. "One of the most important issues is to ensure harmony in the military and bureaucracy and to see that the current political system was moving in the right direction, therefore I decide that I would not shed my military uniform," he added.

Dawn, 31 December 2004

**ARD, MMA to launch joint struggle: President's two offices (Ahmed Hassan)**

ISLAMABAD, Dec 30: The opposition Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy and the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal on Thursday rejected President General Pervez Musharraf's decision to retain two offices and announced their decision to launch a joint struggle against him. Both the alliances said they would finalize a joint strategy to launch a combined struggle for upholding

the sanctity of the constitution, supremacy of parliament and restoration of democracy. The two alliances agreed on the joint agenda after the failure of Wednesday's meeting between the Leader of Opposition, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

Dawn, 31 December 2004

**Intelligence wing of NAB abolished** (Zulfiqar Ali)

PESHAWAR, Dec 30: The federal government on Thursday wound up the intelligence wing of the National Accountability Bureau across the country, officials said. NAB regional director Brig Hadeed confirmed the abolition of the intelligence wing. The wing consisting of retired and serving officials of the Inter-Service Intelligence had been set up to collect data about corrupt practices of those officials and politicians who possess assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

The News, 31 December 2004

**Political agent survives bomb attack** (Sailab Mahsud)

TANK: Asmatullah Khan Gandapur, political agent of South Waziristan agency, survived a bomb explosion that targeted his vehicle 7 kms from Tank town on the Tank-Wana road on Thursday evening. The political agent was returning to Tank after a day-long visit to the site of the under-construction Gomal Zam Dam in Khajuri Kach in the company of members of the Senate Standing Committee. Official sources told The News that the blast was caused by an improvised explosive device triggered by remote-control. The vehicle in which the political agent was seated was badly damaged and he and his driver had to be taken to Tank in other vehicles. Nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack.